



Ministry of
Children and Family
Development

Métis Children and Youth in Continuing Care

Descriptive Analysis

June 2018

Background

Métis Nation BC (MNBC) and the Métis Commission for Children and Families of BC (Métis Commission) expressed concerns that there is a pattern of Métis children and youth being moved from foster care to permanency without an adequate search for family members or kinship ties and without a robust cultural safety plan. In order to ensure that Métis children and families are appropriately supported, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) with MNBC and Métis Commission have established a Métis Practice Working Group (MPWG) (September 2017) to oversee, coordinate and strategize on systemic issues related to permanency planning for Métis children and youth who are served by MCFD and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. The Métis Practice Working Group has developed a work plan that prioritizes issues with actions targeted to resolve those issues by an identified lead person(s).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Métis Commission and Métis Nation BC with information about Métis children and youth in the continuing custody of the Ministry. The Provincial Director of Child Welfare (PDCW) completed a descriptive analysis of Métis children and youth in continuing custody (CCO) and examined permanency planning practice.

Terms of Reference

The descriptive analysis will provide a demographic profile of a cohort of Métis children and youth in continuing custody and will answer the following questions related to permanency planning practice:

- Is there a current care plan?
- Is there a current cultural plan?
- Is there a permanency plan?

The report presents demographic information and results from the review of permanency planning practice.

In the initial stages, the terms of reference included:

- 1) Was the Métis Commission notified of a continuing custody order and;

2) Is the child registered with the Métis Nation?

As the review progressed it was determined that this information was not fully available via the electronic database. As a result these questions were removed from the terms of reference and strategies to address these questions will be put in place.

Review Approach

The descriptive analysis focuses on 330 Métis children and youth in care placed under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) as of July 31, 2017. Ministry client demographic information was retrieved from the electronic case management system¹ (Integrated Case Management, ICM). A data collection tool was developed to collect the required information by reviewers to verify documentation and evidence to address the permanency planning questions stated in the Terms of Reference.

Limitations

This report is limited to Métis children and youth placed under a continuing custody order as of July 31, 2017. Physical file information was not in scope for this review.

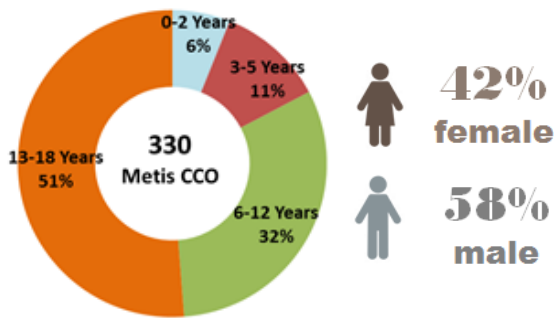
¹Including Best Practices case management system if applicable. Best Practices system is used by some Delegated Aboriginal Agencies.

1. Demographic Profile of Métis Children and Youth on a Continuing Custody Order (CCO)

This section focuses on the demographic information on the 330 Métis children and youth on a Continuing Custody Order as of July 31, 2017.

Age and Gender

Overall, fifty-one per cent (51%) were between 13 and 18 years old. Thirty-two per cent (32%) were between 6 and 12 years. Seventeen per cent (17%) were under the age of 6 years. There were 190 (58%) males and 140 (42%) females.



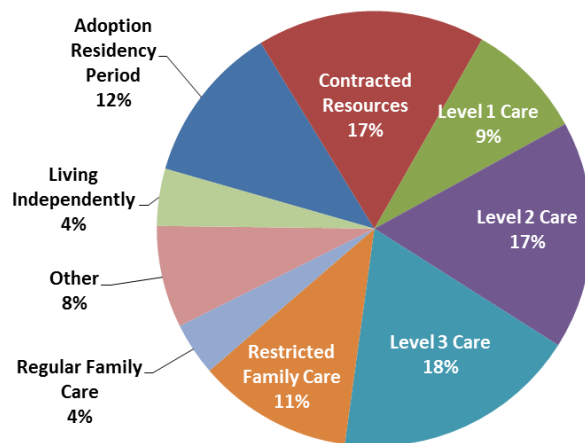
Sibling Groups

Sibling information was examined within the group of 330 Métis CCOs and based on information recorded in ICM. Of the 330 Métis CCOs, 165 children and youth had at least one sibling² within the group as follows: 83 had one sibling, 51 had two siblings, 20 had three siblings, 5 had four siblings and 6 had five siblings.

² The results do not include any siblings that may be in care or receiving services from MCFD outside of this group. The results for siblings are within the 330 records. Half and step siblings were excluded as the relation to the subject child is not known or may not be significant.

Types of Placement³

Children's needs range from reasonably straightforward to very complex, which requires different levels of care. Forty-four per cent (44%) of the cohort were living in a specialized foster care home (i.e. Level 1, 2 or 3), 11 per cent (11%) were placed in a restricted foster care home and 17 per cent (17%) were placed with a contracted residential resource (i.e. group home).

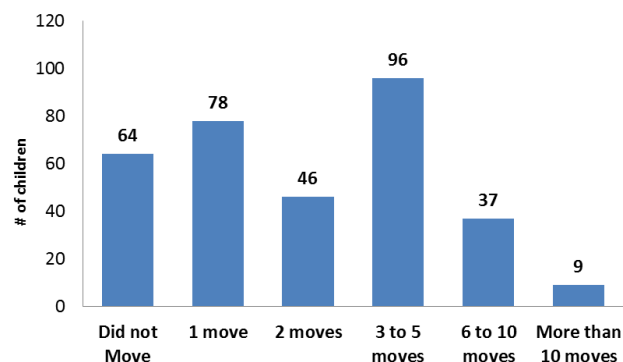


³ Other includes missing/runaway, placements with parents/relatives, other types of resources etc.

Placement Stability

Placement stability is an important factor for children and youth to develop secure relationships and attachments. While some placement changes may be beneficial, a child who experiences multiple and unplanned placement changes has been associated with negative outcomes, including increased behaviour problems and poor academic performance⁴. A study by Barth et al found a strong association between more than one placement move during the first year in care and the likelihood of three or more moves in subsequent years. Most moves in care occur within the first year of care, but generally, avoiding or minimizing moves while in care is an important goal of the Ministry⁵.

The following graph presents the breakdown of the 330 Métis children and youth by frequency of moves within their current episode of care.



There were 142 (43%) Métis CCO who had 1 or no moves, while 96 (29%) Métis CCO experienced 3 to 5 moves within their current episode in care. There were 9 Métis CCO who experienced more than 10 moves.

Reason for Care

When there is reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected, or is otherwise in need of protection, child welfare workers have the delegated authority to investigate and take appropriate action to ensure that child's safety. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* is the legislative authority for the province's child protection services. The CFCSA requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused, neglected, or is for any other reason in need of protection, must report it to the Director or a delegated social worker. These reports are investigated by child welfare workers, who take the most appropriate action that is least disruptive for the child. These actions may include:

⁴ Webster, D., Barth, R. P., & Needell, B. (2000). Placement stability for children in out-of-home care: A longitudinal analysis. *Child Welfare*, 79, 614-632.

⁵ MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 9 March 2017

- Providing or arranging the provision of support services to the family
- Supervising the child's care in the home, or
- Protecting the child through removal from the family and placement with relatives, a foster family or specialized residential resources

Reasons for a child being in care are prescribed in Section 13(1)⁶ of the *CFCSA*. The most common reason for removal was that the child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care (44%), followed by neglect by parent with physical harm (27%) and physical harm by parent (8%) for the 330 Métis CCOs.

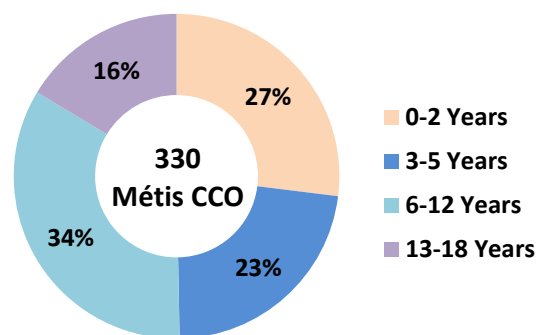
Reason for Care	#	%
Parent Unable/Unwilling To Care	233	44%
Neglect By Parent with Physical Harm	142	27%
Physical Harm By Parent	42	8%
Emotional Harm By Parent	31	6%
Parent Not Protecting From Abuse	20	4%
Time To Resolve/Strengthen Parenting	13	2%
Child Abandoned: Inadequate Provision	8	2%
Child's Behavioural Condition	7	1%
End Of Agreement: Parent Unable	7	1%
Parent Deceased: Inadequate Provision	5	1%
Sexual Abuse/Exploitation By Parent	5	1%
Death Of Guardian	4	1%
Child's Emotional Condition	3	1%
Awaiting Adoption Placement	2	0%
Child's Physical Condition	2	0%
Parent Receiving Treatment	2	0%
Temporary Parental Crisis	2	0%
Child's Developmental Condition	1	0%
Deprived Of Necessary Health Care	1	0%
Relinquish For Adoption	1	0%
Youth Cannot Return Home	1	0%
Total	532	100%

Note: File coding allows for up to three reasons for care in each record.

⁶ See Appendix 3 for complete list of Section 13 concerns.

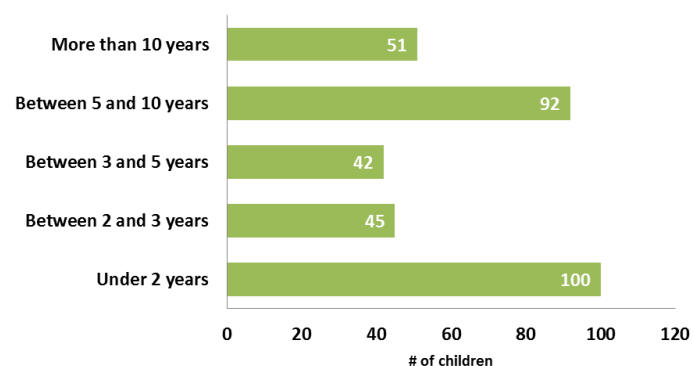
Age at Time of Becoming a CCO

The average age of the Métis children and youth cohort at time of being placed under a CCO was 6.5 years old. Nearly 85 per cent of the cohort was 12 years and under when placed under a CCO.



Length of Time on CCO

As of July 2017, the average length of time for the group of Métis children and youth placed on a CCO was 5.1 years. There were 100 Métis children and youth who have been placed under a CCO for under two years. Just over 40% were under a continuing custody for 5 years or more.



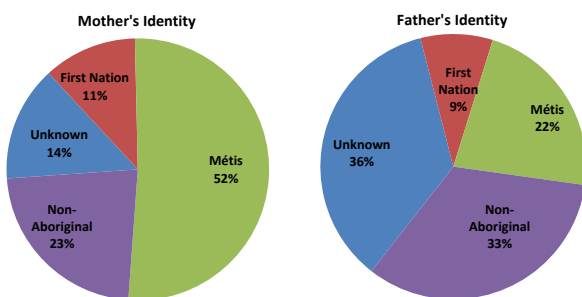
2. Parental/Grandparent Demographic Information

Métis Nation BC had an interest in learning more about the parents and grandparents of the 330 Métis CCOs. The following results present Aboriginal identity and history of being in care for individuals with information recorded in ICM.

Parental Identity

The Ministry's ICM system has the ability to record Aboriginal Status for all individuals or contacts in ICM as First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Nisga'a or non-Aboriginal. Family members who are recorded in ICM and have an identified relationship (i.e. parent) that is connected to the child, may also have Aboriginal identity information recorded.

Just over half (52%) of the children and youth has a mother identified as Métis and 23% identified as non-Aboriginal. Less than a quarter (22%) has a father identified as Métis and 9% identified as First Nation recorded in the ministry case record.



Note: Some Métis children and youth in care as CCO's may have the same mother/father. This breakdown does not tell the distinct number of mothers/fathers by Aboriginal status.

Parental/Grandparent History of Being in Government Care

Aboriginal children and youth continue to be overrepresented in the BC child welfare system that is complicated by the intergenerational effects of past colonial, federal and provincial policies. Rates of child removal are a common effect of the intergenerational trauma often seen in Aboriginal communities, where historical trauma has been passed from former generations to current generations. The following results present information about a parent or grandparent of the 330 Métis CCO of ever being in government care in BC.

Note: Results are based on family members who are recorded in ICM and have an identified relationship (i.e. parent, grandparent) that is connected to the child.

The following results were available for 328 of 330 records that contained parent or grandparent information related to the subject child.⁷

Of the 328 records, there were 156 Métis CCOs where either their parent(s) or grandparent(s) were identified as being a former child in care in ministry records. Some children may have the same parent or grandparent; the results below are not distinct counts of parents or grandparents.

There were 135 Métis CCO who had a mother who was formerly in care and 66 who had a father formerly in care. There were 45 Métis CCO whose mother and father were formerly in care. There were 3 Métis CCO where both mother and grandmother were formerly in care.

Note: Includes BC government child service records dating back to the 1960s. These records were converted to the ministry's former Management Information System (MIS). All child service records from MIS were converted to the ministry's new ICM

Table 1: Number of Métis CCO with a parent or grandparent who was formerly in care

Former Child in Care (Yes)				# of Métis CCO
Mother	Father	Grandfather	Grandmother	
√				135*
	√			66**
√	√			45^
			√	3
√			√	3

Note:

1. Figures are not mutually exclusive

2. This figure is a count of children and includes children who share the same parent.

* This means any child who has a mother who was a former child in care. This does not mean mother only.

**This result does not mean father only. A child may have a mother formerly in care.

^This result means a child has both mother AND father who were formerly in care

- 66 Métis CCOs whose father was a former child in care
- 3 Métis CCOs whose grandmother as a former child in care
- No Métis CCOs whose grandfather was a former child in care
- 135 Métis CCOs whose mother was a former child in care
- 45 Métis CCOs where mother AND father were former children in care
- 3 Métis CCOs where mother AND grandmother were former children in care

⁷ The remaining 2 records did not contain parent or grandparent information related to the subject child at the time of data extraction.

3. Permanency Planning Review Results

This section presents the results of the permanency planning questions outlined in the Terms of Reference. All 330 Métis CCO electronic records were reviewed to determine the following:

Is there a recent care plan? ⁸

Is there a recent care plan?	# of Records	%
Yes	242	73%
No	88	27%
Total	330	100%

Is there a cultural plan?

Is there a cultural plan?	# of Records	%
Yes	226	68%
No	104	32%
Total	330	100%

Is there a permanency plan?

Is there a permanency plan?	# of Records	%
Yes, plan documented in permanency domain	302	92%
No	28	8%
Total	330	100%

⁸ An examination of care plans in ICM files was completed for this report in December 2017. A care plan was considered “recent” if created after October 30, 2016.

4. Next Steps

This review will be used by the Métis Practice Working Group as a document to inform and assist in planning for Métis children in care going into the future. The focus will always be to reduce the numbers of Métis children in care. We now have a road map for possible action. We will continue to look closely at the areas of family placement and more robust cultural planning for Métis children in care. At the same time we will use this review to become focussed on a work plan with actions and tasks necessary to make meaningful change based on the results of this review. The work plan will be developed and agreed to by the Métis Practice Working Group membership. The highlights of this planning will continue to be made public as developments occur.

Appendix 1: Additional Data Tables

Table A1: Number of Métis CCO by SDA and DAA, as of July 2017

SDA/DAA Sample Distribution	#	%
SDA 11 - Kootenays	9	3%
SDA 12 - Okanagan	37	11%
SDA 13 - Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	28	8%
SDA 21 - East Fraser	10	3%
SDA 22 - North Fraser	19	6%
SDA 23 - South Fraser	13	4%
SDA 24 - Vancouver/Richmond	8	2%
SDA 25 - Coast/North Shore	3	1%
SDA 31 - South Vancouver Island	32	10%
SDA 32 - North Vancouver Island	17	5%
SDA 41 - Northwest	5	2%
SDA 42 - North Central	24	7%
SDA 43 - Northeast	13	4%
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society	41	12%
Ktunaxa-kinbasket Family & Child Services	3	1%
Métis Family Services	64	19%
Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Community & Human Services	2	1%
Vancouver Aboriginal Child And Family Services Society	2	1%
Total	330	100%

Note: The above figures for SDA include the count of Métis CCOs from MCFD offices only.

Table A2: Care Plan Result by SDA/DAA

Is there a recent care plan?	Yes	No	Total
SDA 11 - Kootenays	5	4	9
SDA 12 - Okanagan	25	12	37
SDA 13 - Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	24	4	28
SDA 21 - East Fraser	8	2	10
SDA 22 - North Fraser	16	3	19
SDA 23 - South Fraser	11	2	13
SDA 24 - Vancouver/Richmond	7	1	8
SDA 25 - Coast/North Shore	3		3
SDA 31 - South Vancouver Island	16	16	32
SDA 32 - North Vancouver Island	12	5	17
SDA 41 - Northwest	4	1	5
SDA 42 - North Central	19	5	24
SDA 43 - Northeast	11	2	13
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society	21	20	41
Ktunaxa-kinbasket Family & Child Services		3	3
Métis Family Services	56	8	64
Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Community & Human Services	2		2
Vancouver Aboriginal Child And Family Services Society	2		2
Total	242	88	330

Table A3: Cultural Plan Result by SDA/DAA

Is there a cultural plan?	Yes	No	Total
SDA 11 - Kootenays	3	6	9
SDA 12 - Okanagan	12	25	37
SDA 13 - Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	22	6	28
SDA 21 - East Fraser	8	2	10
SDA 22 - North Fraser	12	7	19
SDA 23 - South Fraser	10	3	13
SDA 24 - Vancouver/Richmond	5	3	8
SDA 25 - Coast/North Shore	2	1	3
SDA 31 - South Vancouver Island	20	12	32
SDA 32 - North Vancouver Island	11	6	17
SDA 41 - Northwest	5		5
SDA 42 - North Central	20	4	24
SDA 43 - Northeast	13		13
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society	25	16	41
Ktunaxa-kinbasket Family & Child Services	1	2	3
Métis Family Services	55	9	64
Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Community & Human Services	1	1	2
Vancouver Aboriginal Child And Family Services Society	1	1	2
Total	226	104	330

Table A4: Permanency Plan Result by SDA/DAA

Is there a permanency plan?	Yes, plan documented in permanency domain	No	Total
SDA 11 - Kootenays	8	1	9
SDA 12 - Okanagan	30	7	37
SDA 13 - Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	26	2	28
SDA 21 - East Fraser	9	1	10
SDA 22 - North Fraser	17	2	19
SDA 23 - South Fraser	12	1	13
SDA 24 - Vancouver/Richmond	8		8
SDA 25 - Coast/North Shore	3		3
SDA 31 - South Vancouver Island	28	4	32
SDA 32 - North Vancouver Island	17		17
SDA 41 - Northwest	5		5
SDA 42 - North Central	22	2	24
SDA 43 - Northeast	13		13
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society	40	1	41
Ktunaxa-kinbasket Family & Child Services	2	1	3
Métis Family Services	59	5	64
Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Community & Human Services	2		2
Vancouver Aboriginal Child And Family Services Society	1	1	2
Total	302	28	330

Table A5: Identified Permanency Goal

Permanency Goal	#	%
Adoption	154	47%
Relationship with a significant adult who is a mentor into adulthood	63	19%
Transfer of Custody to a Person who is not a Parent, CFCSA s. 54.1	39	12%
Reunification with Family	32	10%
Reunification with Family and Concurrent Planning Initiated (according to Child Protection Response Policy 3.8(5))	18	5%
Relationship with a significant adult who is an advocate and/or surrogate decision maker into adulthood	12	4%
Need to check physical file	10	3%
No permanency goal identified in ICM or physical file	1	0%
Cancellation of CCO CFCSA s. 54	1	0%
Total	330	100%

Appendix 2: Glossary

Restricted Care	Foster care provided by relatives or family friends
Regular Care	Foster care provided by a family who has not previously known the children provides care
Specialized foster care	Foster care provided to children with mental or physical disabilities, or emotional or behaviour problems, across three levels of home types.
Level 1	Provides care for up to six children in care with multiple developmental needs and challenging behaviours.
Level 2	<p>Provides care for up to three children in care with any combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More complicated developmental needs• More complex health needs• Behaviours that interfere with their quality of social interactions and daily functioning <p>The family may also provide specialized assessment and intervention services as a member of the child's care team.</p>
Level 3	<p>Provide care for a maximum of two children in care. Level three family care homes care for children who have similar needs to those children placed in level two homes in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most extensive daily care• Additional support and supervision for health care (e.g. tube feeding) and interventions related to mental health concerns – including behaviours that may pose a risk to self or others <p>The family may also provide specialized assessment and intervention services as a member of the child's care team.</p>
Contracted Residential Agencies	<p>There are two types of Contracted Residential Agency Caregivers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Caregivers who are employed by a contracted agency to provide care in their own home or caregivers in a home owned by their employer2. Caregivers who are employed by a contracted agency to work in a staffed residential home where care is provided by rotating employees. <p>These caregivers do not have an agreement with the Director.</p>

Appendix 3 – Child Family and Community Service Act - Section 13

When protection is needed

13 (1) A child needs protection in the following circumstances:

- (a) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed by the child's parent;
- (b) if the child has been, or is likely to be, sexually abused or exploited by the child's parent;
- (c) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by another person and if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child;
- (d) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed because of neglect by the child's parent;
- (e) if the child is emotionally harmed by
 - (i) the parent's conduct, or
 - (ii) living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child resides;
- (f) if the child is deprived of necessary health care;
- (g) if the child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment;
- (h) if the child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care;
- (i) if the child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's safety or well-being;
- (j) if the child's parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care;
- (k) if the child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care;
- (l) if the child is in the care of a director or another person by agreement and the child's parent is unwilling or unable to resume care when the agreement is no longer in force.