



## Family Wellness Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan 2023-2028



**Department of Family Services** September, 2024

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# Message From the Minister

As Minister of the Department of Family Services, I am pleased to introduce the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan. This plan has been developed in direct response to the 2023 OAG Report and the invaluable feedback from Nunavummiut.



This plan builds upon the foundation laid by the Family Wellness Strategic Framework developed in 2023 and represents our

government's commitment to making significant and necessary changes to child and family services within our communities. We recognize that the child welfare system in Nunavut is in crisis, as highlighted by the Auditor General in May 2023. The findings of that report underscore the urgent need for reform, and we are determined to respond with concrete actions that will bring about meaningful improvements.

Understanding the gravity of this situation, our department conducted extensive engagements with stakeholders, including Nunavut Tunngavik, Inuit organizations, and the general public. These consultations were crucial to ensuring that the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan is not only amplifying community voices but is also aligned with the needs and realities of Nunavummiut. This plan is a collective effort, born out of the shared vision of a more supportive, inclusive, and effective child and family services system. The Ilagiitsiarniq Plan outlines specific objectives and clear actions with timelines that the Department is committed to implementing. Successfully achieving these goals will necessitate continuous collaboration with communities, Inuit organizations, and other government departments. Moreover, the Department will require increased resources to effectively carry out the necessary changes and establish a child and family services system that truly meets the needs of children and youth in Nunavut. These resources are crucial to ensuring that we can provide comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and responsive services that address the unique challenges faced by Nunavummiut families.

It is imperative that we address the root causes identified by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), and this will necessitate a whole of government approach—a principle that is deeply embedded in the actions outlined in this plan.

This plan has been meticulously designed not only to address the immediate challenges highlighted in the OAG report but also to ensure that the Department of Family Services can meet and exceed the expectations of Nunavummiut. We are committed to continuous improvement, and we understand that this journey requires us to remain accountable and transparent at every step.

As we move forward, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all those who supported the development of this plan, particularly the Nunavummiut who participated in consultations and shared their feedback. Your voices have been heard, and your contributions have been instrumental in shaping the direction of this plan.

Together, we can implement meaningful and lasting changes to enhance the well-being of our families. By working in partnership, we can create a child and family services system that truly reflects the values, culture, and needs of our communities.

Qujannamiik, Ma'na, Koana, Thank you and sincerely,

Honourable Margaret Nakashuk, *Minister of Family Services* 



# Acknowledgements

The Department of Family Services would like to acknowledge and express gratitude to all the communities, stakeholders, and members of the public who took the time to share their input and feedback. These contributions were invaluable and played a crucial role in shaping the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan, ensuring it reflects the needs and aspirations of Nunavummiut.

We also extend our thanks to the OAG for their guidance and support following the release of the audit report. Their insights have been instrumental in identifying the areas where improvements are most needed.

The Department is equally grateful to NTI, members of the Katujjiqatigiinniq Nunavut Partnership Committee, and members of the Ilagiitsiarniq working group for their ongoing collaboration and dedication to supporting this important work. Their partnership has been essential in aligning our efforts and ensuring that the plan is comprehensive and effective.

In addition, the Department of Family Services wishes to recognize the hard work, dedication, and perseverance of the Family Wellness staff. Their commitment to engaging with communities, developing the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan, and supporting Nunavummiut through challenging circumstances has been commendable and integral to our progress.

We acknowledge that Nunavummiut families require support and assistance across a broad range of areas, some of which are not directly related to the Department of Family Services' mandate. Because of this, in addition to the actions outlined in the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan, the Department (and government more broadly) is dedicated to a whole of government approach to supporting Nunavummiut through additional initiatives, including Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy, the GN's Elders Strategy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the Nunavut 3000 initiative in collaboration with NTI's Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan (NIHAP). These initiatives are crucial to addressing the broader social determinants that impact the well-being of children and families in Nunavut.

The Department of Family Services acknowledges that the current child and family services system has not adequately met the needs of children and youth in Nunavut. We are committed to learning from past shortcomings and are determined to improve our programs and services to better support Nunavut's children and families moving forward. Through the implementation of the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan and our broader collaborative efforts, we aim to build a system that truly serves the best interests of Nunavut's children, youth, and families.



# Introduction

This report outlines the Department of Family Services' Family Wellness Ilagiitsiarniq Plan and provides an overview of associated engagement findings.



## 1.1 Overview of the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan

In May 2023, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Canada released a report describing shortcomings of Nunavut's child and family services system in protecting children. The report included calls for changes in how the Department of Family Services carries-out its child protection responsibilities under the *Child and Family Services Act*. Specific areas noted in the report included the way the Department conducts investigations, carries-out prevention and non-crisis intervention to support families, and develops and carries-out plans of care for children and youth who are under the care of the Department. The OAG report also referenced other concerns related to a lack of orientation and training for new staff, gaps in following Department standards and procedures, training on the job, and incomplete record keeping.

The Department's Family Wellness Strategic Framework, developed in 2023, was created in response to the OAG Report. The Framework represents the Department of Family Service's commitment to accountability and to fostering positive change for community and family well-being. "This Strategic Framework charts a course toward a future where family wellness stands at the forefront of our priorities. It is a blueprint designed not only to address the challenges highlighted in the report but also to proactively create an environment where families and employees thrive."

- Honourable Margaret Nakashuk, Minister of Family Services

Based on the Family Wellness Strategic Framework, the Department of Family Services conducted engagements across Nunavut to develop an action plan to address the gaps identified in the report and to move forward in improving Family Wellness Services for Nunavummiut.

The Department of Family Services has developed Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan to action its commitments to better support and protect children, changing the system to better support Inuit families and improve child welfare.

The Strategic Plan was named after the Inuktitut term for family wellness, "Illagiitsiarniq" and outlines priorities and associated actions to enhance programs and services.

This report will outline the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan's development process, as well as the finalized priority areas, action items, and implementation timelines.

The Department of Family Services has also created a Quality Assurance Framework and a Change Management Strategy, detailed in this report, to outline its commitment to continuous improvement. These tools include robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to ensure accountability, track progress, and effectively manage change as the Department works towards achieving its strategic goals.

### 1.2 Priorities of the llagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan

The Ilagiitsiarniq Plan includes seven priorities for the Division of Family Wellness. These were originally developed in the Strategic Framework and have been refined based on engagement.





#### PRIORITY 1 Strengthening Organizational Efficiency

Establish robust internal protocols and system improvements to enhance efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of family services and child welfare operations.



#### PRIORITY 2 Enhancing and Optimizing Adoption, Foster Care, and Kinship Services

Develop comprehensive training programs for prospective adoptive and foster families and strengthen kinship care programs by providing resources and support to relatives caring for children.



#### **PRIORITY 3**

Enhancing Culturally Relevant and Community Centered Family Wellness Programs and Services

Design and implement services tailored to the cultural and specific needs of Inuit families, recognizing the importance of preserving cultural identity and integrating traditional knowledge and practices into service delivery.



#### PRIORITY 4 Enhancing Standards, Training, and Collaboration for Effective Child Welfare Investigations

Implement standardized investigative procedures to ensure consistency and fairness while establishing clear communication channels with law enforcement and other federal and local government agencies to facilitate investigations.



#### PRIORITY 5

Enhancing Case Management Quality, Efficiency, and Collaboration

Strengthen case management practices to ensure individualized and effective support for children and families.

### PRIORITY 6

#### Enhancing Oversight and Effectiveness of Out-of-Territory Specialized Services

Offer comprehensive support for families and children residing OOT to ensure their unique needs are met and developing a monitoring plan to ensure that children and youth are supported.



#### PRIORITY 7 Strengthening Recruitment, Retention, and Workforce Development

Develop and implement creative approaches to attract and retain skilled professionals while fostering a supportive work environment.

# 2 Methodology

This section of the report outlines the guiding principles that the Department of Family Services used when developing the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan. This section also describes the engagement, including the data collection and analysis process, the partners and stakeholders involved in engagements and the topics of engagement.

## 2.1 Guiding Principles

Prior to undertaking any engagement, the Department of Family Services outlined a number of guiding principles that would lead staff through the engagement process and development of the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan.

The engagement methodology used in development of the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan was informed by guiding values which recognize the wisdom behind the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and promote collaboration.



As part of the development of the Strategic Framework and Strategic Plan, the Department of Family Services reflected on the muskox. The collective survival strategy of muskoxen is aligned with the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan, as it aims to create an environment that nurtures and protects children, while promoting the development of healthy families.



The guiding principles for the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan also reflect the foundational blocks of the Qaggiq. Through continued support and collaboration with the Department of Family Services we will see an increase in capacity and improved services for all Nunavummiut. The guiding principles reflected in the Strategic Framework were carried forward to the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan, and include:



# **Ilagiitsiarniq Action Plan Summary of Engagement Findings**

This section outlines the structure of the Ilagiitsiarnig Action Plan and the content that will inform the plan.

#### 3.1 Awareness and Accessibility of Services

The Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan has been developed across seven priorities that illustrate where attention should be focused. These priority areas are:



#### **PRIORITY 1:**

**Strengthening Organizational Efficiency** 



**PRIORITY 2:** 

Enhancing and Optimizing Adoption, Foster Care, and Kinship Services



#### **PRIORITY 3:**

Enhancing Culturally Relevant and Community-Centered Family Wellness **Programs and Services** 



#### **PRIORITY 4:**

Enhancing Standards, Training, and Collaboration for Effective Child Welfare Investigations



#### **PRIORITY 5:**

Enhancing Case Management Quality, Efficiency, and Collaboration



#### **PRIORITY 6:**

Enhancing Oversight and Effectiveness of Out-of-Territory **Specialized Services** 



#### **PRIORITY 7:**

Strengthening Recruitment, Retention, and Workforce Development

Within each priority area, multiple objectives have been identified. Each objective also includes actions to outline what the Department will be focusing on. These actions also include outcome/ impact statements and timelines to support with monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan. The Department will also create key performance indicators to internally monitor the progress of implementation.

## 3.2 Ilagiitsiarniq Action Plan

The Ilagiitsiarniq Plan has been developed based on the engagement feedback that was collected by the Department of Family Services. This included feedback from a variety of stakeholder meetings, community consultations, and survey responses.

Within the seven priorities that have been identified, there are a total of 37 objectives. Each objective has one or more actions. The Ilagiitsiarniq Plan includes a total of 80 actions. 68 of these actions will be led by the Department of Family Services, and the remaining 12 will require support from other departments.

As the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan is a long-term plan, timelines have been included to inform the implementation of the actions. The timelines have been grouped into three categories: short-term (implemented within 1 year), medium-term (implemented between 2-3 years), and long-term (implemented in 4 or more years). Some actions are dependent on the Department of Family Services' ability to secure funding and resources to assist with implementation.

#### **Priority 1. Strengthening Organizational Efficiency**

Feedback from community stakeholders illustrated the need to establish stronger standards, regulations, and procedure. Under this priority, DFS will establish robust internal protocols and system improvements to enhance efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of family services and child welfare operations. Greater and consistent communication were also recommended so that community members are aware of how to access funding for programs offered by the Department of Family Services.

- 1. Enhancing service delivery through updated policies and procedures
- 2. Strengthening organizational structure and processes
- 3. Fostering collaboration and feedback mechanisms with stakeholders
- 4. Establishing and maintain high standards of service delivery
- 5. Developing a comprehensive community-level integration services strategy, and;
- 6. Establishing a client relations function.

These objectives will be achieved through the following actions outlined in the table below.

Ob	jective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline	
PRIORITY 1: Strengthening Organizational Efficiency						
1.	Enhancing Service Delivery through Updated Policies and Procedures	1.1. Review and update the CFS Standards and Procedure Manual to include placement standards, prevention and protection services, and transition plans for children and youth in the care of the Director.	Enhanced clarity and consistency in service delivery, leading to better outcomes for children and families.	FS	Medium term	
		1.2. Develop and implement a community-based collaborative child welfare service delivery model.	More effective support for children and families.	FS	Short term	
		1.3. Develop clear policies for LCA and codes to track usage (e.g., purchase food).	Appropriate use of resources.	FS	Medium term	
		1.4. Begin legislative changes to amend and update CFSA, Adoption Act, Aboriginal Custom Adoptions Act.	Legislation that reflects current best practices and community needs, including provisions for the development of an adult protection team.	FS	Short term	
		1.5. Implement One Client-One Plan Model.	Improved service delivery for clients.	FS	Long term	
2.	Strengthening Organizational Structure and Processes	2.1. Conduct an HR-focused environmental scan of all regional offices, including HQ, to identify gaps, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.	Improved understanding of workforce needs and targeted interventions to address issues.	FS	Short term	
		2.2. Conduct an organizational review and re-organization of the Family Wellness division.	More efficient support for service delivery.	FS	Short term	

Ob	jective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
3.	Foster collaboration and feedback mechanisms with stakeholders	3.1. Create comprehensive program materials and develop feedback mechanisms.	Improved communication and engagement with partners, communities, and service users, facilitated by comprehensive public-facing materials and identification cards for social workers.	FS	Short term
4.	Establishing and Maintaining High Standards of Service Delivery	4.1. Develop a Quality Assurance Program that integrates Inuit knowledge and practices, to ensure the delivery of high- quality, culturally sensitive services.	Enhanced service quality and accountability through the upholding of high standards of care, fostering of accountability, and promotion of continuous improvement, leading to improved well- being for children, youth, and families in Nunavut.	FS	Long term
		4.2. Recruit a Territorial Quality Assurance Manager.	Enhanced compliance and service standards.	FS	Short- term
		4.3. Implement monitoring and accountability frameworks to ensure adherence to policies, procedures, and legislation.	Increased accountability and reduced instances of non-compliance.	FS	Medium- term
5.	Developing a Comprehensive Community- Level Integration of Services Strategy	5.1. Work with impacted Departments to revise existing agreements to improve service coordination for the delivery of services for children and youth and enable structured interagency meetings across Nunavut.	Improved interagency coordination results in more integrated and effective services for young people.	FS, HEA, JUS, EDU	Medium- term
6.	Establishing a Client Relations Function	6.1. Engage with clients and families to address concerns and improve conflict resolution through dedicated client relations.	Promptly addressed concerns improve trust and satisfaction among clients and families.	FS	Short- term

#### **Priority 2. Enhancing and Optimizing Adoption, Foster Care,** and Kinship Services

A key theme from engagement sessions was the need for increased financial support and improved communication for foster parents, with 13% of stakeholders identifying these as critical areas.

Community members emphasized the importance of traditional Inuit family practices, parenting workshops, and early intervention programs, alongside more support for parents struggling with substance abuse, and better promotion of foster care services to align with Inuit kinship practices.

- 7. Enhancing the Effectiveness and Compliance of the Foster Care System
- 8. Optimizing Workforce Management to Better Support Foster Care Services
- 9. Strengthening Recruitment and Support for Foster Caregivers
- 10. Expanding Resources and Services to Support In-Territory Placement
- 11. Incorporating Nunavut-Specific Training and Cultural Competency
- 12. Improving Kinship Visitation Protocols
- 13. Evaluating and Improving the Foster Parent System

O	bjective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline	
	PRIORITY 2: Enhancing and Optimizing Adoption, Foster Care, and Kinship Services					
7.	Enhancing the Effectiveness and Compliance of the Foster Care System	7.1. Conduct quality reviews to monitor compliance with key foster care requirements and standards of practice.	Improved quality and safety of care for children, leading to better protection and well-being.	FS	Medium- term	
		7.2. Update Foster Care Standards and Procedures to reflect leading practices.	Alignment with the latest research and best practices enhances overall system effectiveness and reliability.	FS	Long-term	

Ob	jective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
8.	Optimizing Workforce Management to Better Support Foster Care Services	8.1. Recruit a Territorial Quality Assurance Manager.	Manageable caseloads lead to more personalized and effective support for foster families and children.	FS	Medium- term
		8.2. Expand capacity within the adoptions team to enhance permanency planning.	Faster and more stable placements for children in need.	FS	Short- term
9.	Strengthening Recruitment and Support for Foster Caregivers	9.1. Recruit custom adoption commissioners to streamline adoption processes.	Improved adoption outcomes and efficiency.	FS	Long-term
		9.2. Improve recruitment of foster parents and target extended family placements by updating the foster parent manual, developing a recruitment strategy, launching an awareness campaign, and establishing a feedback loop for foster parents.	Attract more qualified foster parents and extended family placements for better support and stability for children.	FS	Long-term
		9.3. Provide enhanced training and financial support to Nunavut foster caregivers and extended family members.	Improved quality of care and support for children in foster care.	FS	Medium- term
10.	Expanding Resources and Services to Support In-Territory Placement	10.1. Explore opportunities to increase funding for not-for-profits to construct group homes and facilities within the territory.	Expanded in-territory placement options allow more children to remain close to their communities and families.	FS	Long-term
		10.2. Expand resources and services for parents and guardians to support reunification.	Ensures children can return to safe and supportive home environments.	FS	Long-term
11.	Incorporating Nunavut- Specific Training and Cultural Competency	11.1. Require Nunavut-specific training for out-of-territory caregivers, including cultural competency and Inuit societal values (ISV) as part of the procurement and contracting process.	Enhanced cultural competency and relevance lead to more culturally sensitive and effective care for children.	FS	Short- term

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
12. Improving Kinship Visitation Protocols	12.1. Review and propose increased visitation and communication with parents and foster parents by exploring opportunities for additional funding and incorporating expanded guidelines into the standard manual.	Strengthened family bonds and support improve the overall well-being and stability of children in foster care.	FS	Medium- term
13. Evaluating and Improving the Foster Parent System	13.1. Monitor and evaluate the current foster parent system as per the Quality Assurance Framework, by incorporating effective feedback mechanisms to identify gaps and areas for improvement.	More effective and supportive foster care services enhance outcomes for children and caregivers.	FS	Long-term
	13.2. Survey existing foster parents to understand their challenges and needs.	Targeted improvements and support ensure a more positive and sustainable fostering experience.	FS	Long-term

#### Priority 3. Enhancing Culturally Relevant and Community-Centered Family Wellness Programs and Services

Community members emphasized the need for family and youth-focused, on-the-land programs that teach traditional Inuit skills like hunting and fishing, which are vital for cultural preservation and mental health.

In addition, community members also highlighted the need for culturally informed parenting programs. A consistent recommendation was for the Department to offer culturally informed parenting programs and workshops to young families.

Additional suggestions included developing therapeutic programs and creating recreational spaces for vulnerable children, alongside better engagement with communities to ensure services reflect Inuit values and lived experiences. Improving cultural competency of non-Inuit staff was a key area that arose in engagements. Participants stressed that addressing the loss of cultural knowledge and shifting to a strength-based approach rooted in Inuit values is key to improving child and family services.

Community members also highlighted a need for more resources and infrastructure to support health and mental health needs within Nunavut. This included more funding for housing, clothing (especially winter wear), mental health facilities, treatment centers, and support for homelessness. It is also important that these supports be accessible within the territory to reduce the need for out-of-territory care.

- 14. Integrating Inuit Cultural Practices
- 15. Ensuring Cultural Competency
- 16. Fostering Community Collaboration
- 17. Ensuring Cultural Relevance

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline		
PRIORITY 3: Enhancing Culturally Relevant and Community-Centered Family Wellness Programs and Services						
14. Integrating Inuit Cultural Practices	14.1. Collaborate with the Department of Health to ensure ongoing access to culturally appropriate and traditional mental wellness supports for Nunavummiut.	Improved mental health outcomes and overall well-being for children, youth, and families through culturally appropriate supports.	HEA, FS	Medium- term		
	14.2. Continue to deliver and develop family support and parenting programs tailored to Inuit.	Enhanced parenting skills and strengthened family bonds within the community.	FS	Long-term		
	14.3. Expanding funding opportunities for child and family wellness programs incorporating traditional practices.	Securing funding enables sustainable delivery of culturally relevant services to meet community needs.	FS, HEA, JUS, EDU	Long-term		
15. Ensuring Cultural Competency	15.1. Mandate comprehensive cultural training for all departmental staff.	Enhanced service delivery through staff equipped to deliver Inuit-specific services.	FS	Medium- term		

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
	15.2. Ensure ongoing cultural orientation training for staff.	Continuous cultural training enhances staff cultural competency, leading to more effective and respectful service delivery.	FS	Medium- term
16. Fostering Community Collaboration	16.1. Develop a communication plan aligned with Inuit societal values.	Improved communication strengthens partnerships, increases community trust, and fosters ongoing engagement with clients and the public.	FS	Long-term
	16.2. Explore existing resources and funding opportunities for a whole-of-government approach to community well-being.	Coordinated approach enhances community well-being by ensuring efficient use of resources and comprehensive support services.	FS, HEA, JUS, EDU, NHC, CH	Medium- term
	16.3. Ensure awareness of funding opportunities through a dedicated campaign and establish a prevention-focused funding mechanism for Family Safety and Youth initiatives.	Increased awareness and access to funding empower communities to develop and sustain prevention-focused programs.	FS, HEA, JUS, EDU	Long-term
17. Ensuring Cultural Relevance	17.1. Implement a cultural relevance assessment for each Family Wellness program.	Regular assessments ensure programs remain culturally aligned and responsive to evolving community needs.	FS	Long-term
	17.2. Provide clients with documents in their preferred language.	Offering documents in preferred languages improves communication and accessibility, leading to higher client satisfaction and engagement.	FS	

#### **Priority 4. Enhancing Standards, Training, and Collaboration** for Effective Child Welfare Investigations

Engagement feedback emphasized the need for comprehensive onboarding and ongoing training to address delays, inefficiencies, and ensure consistency across regions. A significant 86% of respondents highlighted the importance of strengthening investigations into child abuse and neglect. Key areas for improvement included training on form completion, privacy and confidentiality, record-keeping, conducting investigations and interviews, and sensitivity training to ensure appropriate attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, training on relevant legislation and policies was deemed crucial, with community members suggesting that all staff be made aware of their legal responsibilities and processes, and how to effectively communicate these to families. The need for more trained staff was also raised, particularly in communities lacking social workers or where additional training is required.

Furthermore, the importance of educational support for children, especially those in foster care, was underscored, with suggestions for collaboration between the Department of Family Services and the Department of Education to provide tutoring and ensure stability in schooling.

- 18. Ensuring High Standards in Investigations
- 19. Developing a Skilled Workforce
- 20. Enhancing Collaboration and Feedback
- 21. Establishing a Robust Framework for Monitoring and Escalation

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline	
PRIORITY 4: Enhancing Standards, Training, and Collaboration for Effective Child Welfare Investigations					
18. Ensuring High Standards in Investigations	18.1. Make comprehensive updates to the CFS Standards and Procedures Manual.	Enhanced investigation practices lead to more accurate and thorough case handling, improving child safety and welfare.	FS	Medium- term	
	18.2. Streamline referral procedures to the Umingmak Centre.	Timely and appropriate support for children in need through efficient referral processes.	FS	Medium- term	

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
	18.3. Establish a process for information transfer and protocol adherence.	Improved case continuity and support for families through better information transfer and strict protocol adherence.	FS	Medium- term
19. Developing a Skilled Workforce	19.1. Implement continuous training programs.	Improved competency and effectiveness of staff through ongoing training, leading to better investigation outcomes.	FS	Medium- term
20. Enhancing Collaboration and Feedback	20.1. Conduct staff engagement sessions and develop feedback surveys.	Foster a collaborative environment and continuous improvement in investigation practices through regular engagement and feedback.	FS	Medium- term
	20.2. Foster a partnership with the Department of Education to enhance support for at- risk children through better communication and shared resources.	Comprehensive support for at-risk children through strengthened interdepartmental collaboration.	FS, EDU	Medium- term Medium-
	20.3. Perform periodic quality reviews and follow-ups with regional meetings to strategize on improving compliance, and to ensure that families requiring ongoing assessments, services and supports post-investigation.	Ensure compliance and continuous improvement in service delivery through regular quality reviews and follow-ups.	FS	
21. Establishing a Robust Framework for Monitoring and Escalation	21.1. Develop an escalation reporting procedures manual.	Timely resolution of complex cases and accountability in investigations through clear escalation procedures.	FS	

#### Priority 5. Enhancing Case Management Quality, Efficiency and Collaboration

88.9% of respondents emphasized the critical importance of enhancing the quality, efficiency, and collaboration within case management. Community members highlighted the need for integrated, wrap-around care that promotes collaboration among service providers to deliver holistic support.

A strong focus was placed on developing formal reunification plans to ensure smooth transitions for children returning from out-of-territory placements, with an emphasis on maintaining cultural and community ties. Where reunification is not possible, adoption should be pursued to provide children with stable and supportive family environments.

Stakeholders also called for improved communication and responsiveness from Department of Family Services staff, noting challenges such as delayed responses, repetitive sharing of information, and lack of follow-up. Involving families in care planning, clearly explaining processes, and implementing consistent communication protocols were suggested to enhance collaboration. Virtual meetings and other online services were also recommended to improve access and engagement.

- 22. Elevating Quality and Compliance of Case Management
- 23. Enhancing Family Reunification and Transition Support
- 24. Ensuring Effective Case Management through Training and Feedback
- 25. To engage and gather feedback from staff on case management practices, facilitating continuous improvement.
- 26. To ensure case management practices are effective, culturally sensitive, and aligned with permanency goals.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
PRIORITY 5: Enhancing Case Management Quality, Efficiency, and Collaboration				
22. Elevating Quality and Compliance of Case Management	22.1. Conduct quality reviews and compliance audits focusing on Individual Care Plans, Documentation, and Services.	Ensure high standards in case management, leading to better outcomes for children and youth.	FS	Medium- term

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
	22.2. Update standards for contact, incident reporting, and care agreements to reflect leading practices.	Enhance consistency and effectiveness of case management practices.	FS	Medium- term
	22.3. Revise case management standards to include comprehensive steps for permanency planning both in and out of territory.	Ensure better long- term outcomes for children through comprehensive permanency planning.	FS	Short- term
	22.4. Ensure meticulous handling of multi-jurisdictional cases.	Improve coordination and outcomes across regions through meticulous handling of multi-jurisdictional cases.	FS	Short- term
23. Enhancing Family Reunification and Transition Support	23.1. Implement enhanced family reunification support.	Facilitate smoother transitions and better outcomes for families through strengthened reunification support.	FS	Long-term
	23.2. Restructure the Family Wellness Division for clear delineation of functions.	Improve efficiency and focus in service delivery by clearly separating investigative and case management functions.	FS	Short- term
	23.3. Leverage the Family Wellness Planning Committee for collaborative permanency planning.	Ensure that permanency plans are well-informed and tailored to each child's needs through collaborative planning.	FS	Medium- term
	23.4. Increase capacity within the adoptions team.	Expedite the adoption process and improve permanency outcomes for children through increased team capacity.	FS	Short- term

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
24. Ensuring Effective Case Management through Training and Feedback	24.1. Provide comprehensive training on Matrix Case Management.	Enhance staff competence and confidence in using the Matrix system.	FS	Short- term
25. To engage and gather feedback from staff on case management practices, facilitating continuous improvement.	25.1. Conduct surveys to understand staff challenges and opportunities in case management following Matrix implementation.	Identify areas for improvement and support continuous enhancement of case management practices through regular feedback.	FS	Short- term
26. To ensure case management practices are effective, culturally sensitive, and aligned with permanency goals.	26.1. Develop quality assurance processes utilizing Matrix.	Ensure accurate data collection and effective case management through enhanced quality assurance processes.	FS	Long-term

#### Priority 6. Enhancing Oversight and Effectiveness of Out-of-Territory Specialized Services

A significant portion of engagement feedback emphasized the importance of keeping children within their communities or, at the very least, within the territory. Community members recommended formal reunification plans to ensure smooth transitions for children returning from out-of-territory placements, emphasizing the priority of maintaining cultural and kinship connections. If reunification is not possible, adoption should be pursued to provide stable family environments.

Community members also stressed the need for prioritizing extended family placements when children cannot remain at home, noting that this would offer more consistent care and support. Additionally, they called for more local infrastructure, medical capacity, and resources— especially for children with disabilities—to reduce the trauma associated with removing children from their families and to ensure long-term stability within their communities. Programs like summer activities that connect children to their roots were suggested as a way to maintain cultural ties and well-being.

- 27. Ensuring Management and Oversight
- 28. Assessing and Fulfilling Human Resource Needs for the OOT program
- 29. Enhancing Staff Knowledge and Skills on the OOT program
- 30. Collaborating and Strengthening Support Services in Nunavut
- 31. Develop personalized transition and repatriation plans with clients and families to minimize out-of-territory placements.
- 32. To continuously improve the OOT Program through detailed status reporting and gap analysis.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline	
PRIORITY 6: Enhancing Oversight and Effectiveness of Out-of-Territory Specialized Services					
27. Ensuring Management and Oversight	27.1. Conduct thorough reviews of children in OOT Specialized Services and monitor adherence to minimum contacts and case reviews.	Improved oversight and adherence to standards will ensure consistent and quality care for children in OOT services.	FS	Short- term	
	27.2. Implement a streamlined accountability process for the approval of OOT services for all children and youth, including clear criteria and guidelines for documentation submission, review, and decision-making.	A transparent accountability process will ensure fair and consistent decision-making for OOT placements.	FS	Short- term	
	27.3. Centralize OOT cases under a dedicated team and establish centralized data collection for the OOT system.	Centralized management and data collection will improve efficiency and data accuracy, leading to better service delivery.	FS	Short- term	
	27.4. Update the RFP process to include licensing and accreditation status requirements for residential placements.	Ensuring residential placements meet licensing and accreditation standards will enhance the quality and safety of care provided.	FS	Short- term	

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
28. Assessing and Fulfilling Human Resource Needs for the OOT program	28.1. Evaluate the OOT Program to identify and allocate necessary human resources for its optimal delivery.	Proper allocation of human resources will ensure the effective and efficient delivery of OOT services.	FS	Medium- term
29. Enhancing Staff Knowledge and Skills on the OOT program	29.1. Develop and integrate a training program on OOT placements into the employee mandatory training program.	Comprehensive training will improve staff competency and confidence in managing OOT placements.	FS	Medium- term
30. Collaborating and Strengthening Support Services in Nunavut	30.1. Collaborate with the Department of Health to explore what services could help reduce the need to send children outside the territory for treatment.	Improved local pediatric services will reduce out-of- territory placements and keep children closer to home.	HEA, FS	Long-term
	30.2. Seek ways to strengthen local resources, assets, and services in communities through collaboration with the GN and external partners.	Enhanced local resources and services will reduce the need for out-of- territory placements, keeping children closer to their communities.	FS	Medium- term



Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
31. Develop personalized transition and repatriation plans with clients and families to minimize out- of-territory placements.	31.1. Develop transition and repatriation plans for each OOT client in collaboration with the family.	Direct engagement with families will ensure that the unique needs of each child are met, improving overall care and support. Smooth transitions and repatriation plans will improve the reintegration process for children returning to their communities.	FS	Long-term
	31.2. Engage directly with children out of territory and their families to assess their needs.	Enhanced needs assessments and tailored support for children out of territory, along with improved case management processes, result in a more responsive and efficient support system for children and families in Nunavut.	FS	Short- term
32. To continuously improve the OOT Program through detailed status reporting and gap analysis.	32.1. Develop a monitoring plan for the OOT Program and revise key OOT standards to align with program objectives.	A robust monitoring plan and updated standards will ensure the OOT Program meets its objectives and maintains high quality.	FS	Medium- term
	32.2. Develop comprehensive status reports detailing reviews conducted, gaps identified, and resolution strategies for the OOT Program.	Regular status reports will provide transparency and accountability, driving continuous improvement in the OOT Program.	FS	Short- term
	32.3. Connect with Client Liaison Officers in key locations to gather insights on challenges and opportunities in OOT care.	Insights from liaison officers will help identify and address challenges, improving overall OOT care.	FS	Medium- term

#### Priority 7. Strengthening Recruitment, Retention, and Workforce Development

The second most prevalent theme from engagements, identified by 19% of stakeholders, was the need to support staff within the Department of Family Services, focusing on recruitment, retention, training, and resources. Feedback emphasized the importance of addressing staff well-being, preventing burnout, and managing high caseloads by recruiting more staff, particularly local hires, to create consistent services in each community. Recommendations included offering enhanced mental health support, such as counseling and resiliency training, to improve staff effectiveness.

Additionally, community members highlighted the need for more permanent positions and specialized roles, such as social workers and adoption experts, to improve service coordination. Comprehensive onboarding and ongoing training were also seen as crucial to addressing delays, inefficiencies, and ensuring consistency across regions. Specific training areas identified included investigations, legal responsibilities, privacy, and communication protocols with families. To improve service delivery, feedback called for faster response times, more frequent client monitoring, and consistent follow-ups, with managers given the authority to make financial decisions. Regular monitoring and data collection were recommended to increase accountability and evaluate program effectiveness.

- 33. Improving Recruitment and Retention Processes
- 34. To expedite the recruitment process and develop strategies for growing a skilled Inuit and northern workforce
- 35. Ensuring Comprehensive Training and Professional Development
- 36. Enhancing Living and Working Conditions
- 37. Establishing a Quality Assurance Framework

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
PRIORITY 7: Strengthening Recruitment, Retention, and Workforce Development				
33. Improving Recruitment and Retention Processes	33.1. Conduct an operational review to identify efficiencies and areas for improvement with respect to CSSW recruitment.	Streamlined recruitment processes and enhanced retention strategies.	FS	Medium- term

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
34. To expedite the recruitment process and develop strategies for growing a skilled Inuit and northern workforce.	34.1. Collaborate with the Department of Human Resources to fast-track the recruitment and onboarding of critical positions.	Quickly fill critical positions and address workforce shortages.	HR, FS	Short- term
	34.2. Develop an incentive program to increase recruitment and retention, reduce fly-in/out, and recruit local CSSW through mentorship programs for new local graduates.	Enhanced local recruitment and retention, building a more stable and skilled workforce.	FS, HR	Long-term
	34.3. Create and implement a new model for CSSW in- depth onboarding and gradual assumption of duties.	Well-prepared and supported new hires leading to higher retention rates.	FS	Long-term
	34.4. Implement Inuit Employment Plans (IEP) and partner with educational institutions, such as Nunavut Arctic College, to expand relevant programs and create pathways for internships and priority hiring.	Increased recruitment efficiency and a more diverse, skilled workforce aligned with community needs.	FS, HR, NAC	Short- term
35. Ensuring Comprehensive Training and Professional Development	35.1. Update core training programs, ensure consistent delivery across all regions, provide ongoing cultural safety training, and identify and fill gaps in training materials. Recruit a Manager, Training.	Improved staff competency and service delivery across all regions.	FS	Medium- term
	35.2. Provide continuous professional development opportunities for staff growth and career advancement.	Higher job satisfaction and retention.	FS	Medium- term

Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timeline
36. Enhancing Living and Working Conditions	36.1. Collaborate with Nunavut Housing Corporation and Human Resources for efficient housing allocation.	Improved living conditions for staff, enhancing their well- being and retention.	NHC, HR, FS	Long-term
	36.2. Collaborate with Community and Government Services for efficient office space allocation, use of modular spaces, GN office consolidation, repurposing and renovating surplus assets, and optimizing the limited supply of land parcels.	Better working environments, improving staff productivity and satisfaction.	CGS, FS	Long-term
	36.3. Launch a Counselling Service available to all DFS staff.	Better working environments, enhanced mental health and well-being support for staff.	FS	Short Term
37. Establishing a Quality Assurance Framework	37.1. Develop quality assurance processes to evaluate recruitment, onboarding, and training programs.	Ensured effectiveness and consistency of recruitment, onboarding, and training efforts.	FS	Long-term
	37.2. Establish confidential feedback channels for staff.	Continuous improvements in recruitment, retention, and training strategies, leading to better staff experiences and outcomes.	FS	Medium- term

## 3.3 Implementation

As we move forward with implementing the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan, our focus is on establishing a framework of expected outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs). While this next section provides an initial guide for measuring progress, the details and depth of this work will evolve over the coming months to ensure alignment with Inuit societal values and the priorities of children, youth, families, and communities across Nunavut.

The actions outlined in this plan are designed not only to improve service delivery but also to ensure the deep integration of culturally relevant practices into all aspects of child and family services. The identified KPIs will serve as the foundation for ongoing progress evaluation, ensuring accountability and transparency as we strive for better outcomes. Alongside targeted monitoring strategies, these KPIs will enable us to track success, providing data to refine and adjust our initiatives while keeping the well-being and cultural connectedness of Inuit children and families as a top priority.

#### **Broad Framework:**

- 1. **Phased Rollout:** Implementation will follow a phased approach, beginning with the establishment of foundational elements such as standards of practice, staffing capacity, and initial service enhancements. This will allow for iterative refinement as we assess the impact of each phase.
- 2. **Cultural Integration:** Every step of implementation will prioritize the deep integration of Inuit societal values into policies, practices, and service delivery models. Culturally competent training and staff development will be central to ensuring that services reflect the needs and values of the communities we serve.
- 3. **Capacity Building:** We will invest in building the capacity of our workforce through comprehensive training, clear standards of practice, and improved resource allocation. This will support a more resilient, responsive, and efficient system to better serve children, youth, and families.
- 4. **Data-Driven Adjustments:** A continuous cycle of monitoring, evaluating, and refining our strategies will be embedded in the implementation process. KPIs will guide this process, enabling us to *report progress*.

# **4** Summary of Engagement Findings

This following section summarizes the "What We Heard" report, with the full report available in Appendix A, highlighting key findings from stakeholder meetings, community consultations held during the summer of 2024, and the online survey. The engagements were organized into the following four categories:

- Awareness and Accessibility of Services: Assess how well Nunavummiut understand and access Child and Family Services in their communities
- **Experiences and Challenges:** Highlight the experiences and difficulties Nunavummiut have encountered with Child and Family Services
- **Feedback on Priorities:** Show the level of support Nunavummiut expressed for the proposed priorities to illustrate how supportive Nunavummiut were of proposed priorities
- **Opportunities for Improvement:** Identify areas for enhancement to be included in the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan

## **Engagement Process**

To ensure a comprehensive process was employed, a variety of methods were used to engage partners and stakeholders for the development of this Plan. These included:

- Public consultation sessions and meetings with community stakeholders in selected communities (Iqaluit, Arctic Bay, Qikiqtarjuaq, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk)
- Meetings with key stakeholders, including the Representative for Children and Youth Office, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and Regional Inuit Associations
- Letters to stakeholders seeking their feedback and insight on the Family Wellness Strategic Framework
- Letters to stakeholders informing them of the development of the llagiitsiarniq Plan
- An online survey mechanism to provide feedback with paper copies distributed to partners and stakeholders

The information and ideas heard from Nunavummiut, our partners and stakeholders through the consultation process provides the foundation for the strategy.

## **Engagement Topics**

During engagements, the Department of Family Services focused on a range of topics related to the strategic directions and priorities outlined in the Family Wellness Strategic Framework. The engagement topics included:

- Familiarity with child and family services provided by the Department of Family Services
- Challenges observed or experienced with child and family services
- Improvements to child and family services
- Importance of focusing on improving the internal workings of child and family services, including training, following standards, and process improvements
- Enhancement of adoption, foster care, and extended family (kinship) services
- Services that are culturally relevant and sensitive to Inuit values
- Strengthening investigations into child abuse and neglect
- Providing support for Inuit children and youth receiving care outside of Nunavut
- Addressing staffing challenges through recruitment and retention strategies
- Community involvement in the planning and delivery of child and family services

Please refer to Appendix B for the research questions used during engagements with partners and stakeholders. Appendix C outlines the questions and responses collected through the online survey.

## **Partners and Stakeholders**

External partners and stakeholders engaged throughout the consultation process include, but were not limited to, the Representative for Children and Youth Office, NTI., Regional Inuit Associations, the Office of the Auditor General, and the general public.

In addition, the Department of Family Services established a working group in March 2024 to collaborate with GN partners and to discuss the Strategic Framework. Regular weekly meetings were held to support a "whole of government" approach to developing the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan and how by working together, we could close the gap of continual systemic issues. Members of the working group included representatives from NTI, the Departments of Health, Education, Culture and Heritage, Community and Government Services, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Human Resources and Nunavut Housing Corporation. These representatives were provided with opportunities to discuss concerns, share feedback, and present new ideas to support the development of the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan.

An important outcome of the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan is to fundamentally change child protection in Nunavut with a formalized and operationalized role for Designated Inuit Organizations. By finalizing the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan and developing a Terms of Reference to continue our collaboration and meaningful engagement with our key partners, the Department of Family Services can achieve this outcome. The Nunavut Partnership Committee also has a number of additional outcomes that relate to the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan, including co-developing a prevention plan for child welfare as well as an infrastructure pathway to keep more Nunavut children within the territory.

## Feedback on Strategic Priorities

The survey administered by the Department of Family Services also solicited feedback from Nunavummiut on the priorities to be included in the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan.

Overall, the seven strategic priorities identified by the Department of Family Services within the Ilagiitsiarniq Framework and Plan were validated by survey responses.<sup>1</sup> An overwhelming majority of survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with the relevance and/or importance of each strategic priority outlined by the Department of Family Services.

- **97%** of respondents indicated that promoting organizational excellence through a focus on improving the internal workings of child and family services, including training, following standards, and process improvements was either important or very important.
- **94.8%** of respondents identified staff recruitment and retention as either very significant or significant to delivering high quality services.
- **88.9%** of respondents indicated that improving case management is extremely important.
- **86%** of respondents identified the importance of strengthening investigations into child abuse and neglect as essential.
- **85%** of respondents indicated that prioritizing culturally relevant child and family services sensitive to Inuit values were either critical or somewhat critical.
- **77.8%** of respondents identified providing support for Inuit children and youth receiving care outside of Nunavut as either very important or important.
- **63%** of respondents identified the enhancement of adoption, foster care, and extended family (kinship) services as a crucial need for their community.

Overall, a majority of survey respondents felt that the proposed priorities for inclusion in the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan aligned with the needs of their communities.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C for full summary of survey responses.

## 4.1 Alignment with Other GN Priorities

It is important to acknowledge that the themes listed above are aligned with other GN initiatives. As the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan is focused on child and family services, it will not delve into other systemic issues related to child welfare, such as mental health supports and the need for mental health and counselling services. However, this theme directly aligns with Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy which includes commitments to strengthen mental health services. Other examples of GN initiatives that cover themes identified in the received feedback include the GN's Elders Strategy, which aligns with identified feedback to increase Elder involvement and input in programs and services.

Furthermore, the GN has also developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which is aligned with feedback that speaks to the need for increased financial supports, including for housing or food. The GN has also been supporting housing through the Nunavut 3000 initiative and NTI through its Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan (NIHAP), both of which are aligned with some of themes and associated engagement findings. Given this alignment, not all feedback is directly addressed within the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan; in some cases, the feedback provided is already being actioned through other GN or NTI initiatives. This underscores the need for a whole-of-government approach to supporting Nunavummiut and increased collaboration across GN Departments and Inuit organizations.

The following section summarizes the feedback received, organized by theme from the most to least prevalent. A detailed description of each of these themes can be found in Appendix A – What We Heard Report.

## 4.2 Summary of Feedback on Ilagiitsiarniq Plan

**Inuit Services Reflecting Community Involvement (25%)** Feedback emphasized the need for the Government of Nunavut (GN) to better align family and child services with Inuit values, culture, and lived experiences. Participants noted that issues affecting Inuit families are rooted in colonialism and the erosion of cultural knowledge, leading to family disunity and social challenges. Suggestions included shifting from a deficit-oriented to a strength-based approach rooted in Inuit culture, increasing community involvement, and incorporating Inuit traditional knowledge into services. Specific recommendations included establishing elder roles in service delivery, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring services are culturally relevant.

**Supporting Staff (19%)** There was a strong call for better support for Department of Family Services staff, including recruitment, retention, and training. Participants highlighted the need to prevent staff burnout, recruit locally, and offer mental health support. Feedback also stressed the importance of increasing Inuit representation among staff and improving cultural competency training for non-Inuit employees. Suggestions included comprehensive onboarding, ongoing training, and enhanced leadership to create a positive workplace environment.

**Role and Communication of GN (19%)** Participants emphasized the need for better coordination between GN departments and improved communication with communities. There were concerns about inconsistent service delivery and a lack of understanding of departmental roles. Recommendations included more inter-agency meetings, better engagement with community members, and increased visibility and responsiveness of GN staff. Participants also called for clearer communication protocols and more consistent follow-ups with clients.

**Supporting Parents and Foster Parents (13%)** Feedback highlighted the need for increased financial support and better housing for families, as well as improved communication and follow-up with foster parents. Participants suggested more culturally informed parenting programs, greater promotion of foster care services, and the creation of a foster family association. There were also calls for more support for parents dealing with substance abuse and greater efforts to keep children connected to their communities.

**Health Supports (10%)** Participants stressed the importance of integrating Inuit traditional knowledge into health and mental health services. There was a demand for more culturally relevant counseling, trauma-informed care, and addiction services. Feedback also highlighted the need for more community-based mental health services and better coordination between GN departments to support holistic care.

**Keeping Children Within Their Community (7%)** There was a strong emphasis on keeping children within their communities or at least within the territory. Participants stressed the importance of maintaining cultural and kinship connections and recommended formal reunification plans for children placed out-of-territory. Feedback also called for more medical and social service infrastructure within communities to support children locally.

**Youth Programs (5%)** Participants called for more youth-focused programs, particularly those that take place on the land and emphasize traditional skills. There was also a need for educational support for children in foster care and programs to help at-risk youth. Suggestions included partnerships between GN departments to provide therapeutic justice programs and more recreational spaces for children.

**Safe Homes (2%)** Feedback underscored the need for safe spaces for children, particularly those affected by family issues such as addiction and mental health struggles. There were also calls for more support for women seeking safe housing, with recommendations for faster and more coordinated services between GN departments.

**Other Comments** Additional feedback included concerns about the transparency of the child welfare system, the need for earlier intervention in abusive homes, and the importance of supporting Elders with financial and emotional resources.

The Ilagiitsiarniq Plan addresses these themes through various actions, such as improving recruitment and retention, enhancing cultural competency, increasing community engagement, and expanding support for parents, children, and youth. The plan also includes measures to strengthen inter-departmental coordination and ensure culturally relevant care is available across the territory.

# 5 Measuring Our Progress

As we move forward, the anticipated outcomes of the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan will be closely monitored and measured to ensure their effectiveness. While we have clearly identified key priorities, the work of refining specific measurement tools and evaluation methods will continue, guided by collaboration with Inuit communities. Baseline metrics will be introduced for areas that require deeper tracking, such as enhanced access to prevention and early intervention services, as well as improvements in the safety, well-being, and cultural connectedness of children, youth, and families.

These measurement efforts will build on previous evaluations and ensure that Inuit culture, values, and community priorities are fully embedded in the ongoing development of policies, programs, and services. The focus remains on achieving the desired outcomes, with ongoing refinement and assessment supported by continuous collaboration with Inuit communities and stakeholders.

## Outcome 1: The System is Resilient, Efficient, and Trusted by the Public

The organizational structure, standards of practice, and human resources within the Department of Family Services are strengthened to ensure a resilient and efficient system that garners and maintains public trust. This will improve capacity to meet the needs of children, youth, and families in a culturally relevant and timely manner, enhancing client experience and organizational efficiency.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

### 1. Standards of Practice Development:

- » Percentage of updated standards of practice developed and implemented across all service areas by the end of the fiscal year.
- » Number of training sessions conducted to ensure staff adherence to new standards of practice.

## 2. Human Resources Structure and Capacity:

- » Staff-to-client ratio maintained at or below the target threshold across all regions.
- » Percentage decrease in staff turnover rates year-over-year, with a specific focus on remote communities.
- » Percentage of staff completing annual professional development and training programs aimed at enhancing capacity.

## 3. Client Experience Systems:

- » Percentage of client satisfaction survey responses indicating positive experiences with service delivery.
- » Number of enhancements made to client service delivery systems based on feedback and evaluations.

These measures are linked to objectives #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 18, 21, 24, 27

**Outcome 2:** Children and youth involved in child welfare services are safe, healthy, and well-supported.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. **Reduction in recurrence of child welfare interventions:** Percentage of children and youth re-entering child welfare services within a year of exiting.
- 2. **Health and wellness assessments:** Percentage of children and youth who receive annual physical, mental health, and developmental assessments.
- 3. **Safety audit results:** Frequency and findings from safety audits of placements.

These measures are linked to actions #4, 5, 6, 21, 27, 32

**Outcome 3:** Inuit societal values and perspectives are more deeply integrated into child welfare legislation, policy, practice, research, and evaluation.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. Cultural training for staff: Percentage of staff completing Inuit-specific cultural competency training annually.
- 2. Integration of Inuit research methodologies: Number of research and evaluation projects that incorporate Inuit perspectives and knowledge systems.

These measures are linked to actions #11, 14, 15, 17

**Outcome 4:** Children and youth engaged with child and family services have stronger connections with their families, communities, and Inuit culture.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. **Cultural engagement programs:** Percentage of children and youth participating in Inuit cultural programs and activities in their local communities.
- 2. **Family reunification rates:** Rate of children in care reunified with their families and communities annually.
- 3. **Cultural connection audits:** Results from bi-annual reviews of cultural connectedness and family engagement in care plans.

These measures are linked to actions # 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

**Outcome 5:** Department of Family Services staff and partners deliver services that are culturally aligned with the needs of Inuit communities.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. **Cultural alignment reviews:** Annual review of service delivery protocols and standards to ensure cultural alignment with Inuit societal values.
- 2. **Staff cultural competency evaluations:** Percentage of staff participating in cultural training annually.
- 3. **Partnership growth:** Number of new partnerships with Inuit-led service providers or community organizations.

These measures are linked to actions # 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20

**Outcome 6:** Children placed outside of Nunavut receive high-quality support, culturally competent care, and personalized transition and repatriation plans, maintaining strong connections to their families and communities throughout the process.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. **Transition plan completion rate:** Percentage of children placed outside Nunavut with a completed and active transition and repatriation plan.
- 2. **Family contact frequency:** Frequency of family visits and communications for children placed outside Nunavut.
- 3. **Cultural continuity audits:** Annual review of cultural practices maintained in out-of-territory placements.

These measures are linked to actions #23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32

**Outcome 7:** Children, youth, and families have improved access to culturally relevant prevention and early intervention programs that reflect Inuit societal values.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. Enrollment in prevention programs: Increase in the number of families accessing early intervention and prevention services.
- 2. Program satisfaction rates: Results from annual family satisfaction surveys on prevention and early intervention programs.
- 3. Reduction in risk factors: Percentage decrease in identified risk factors for child welfare involvement due to early intervention.

These measures are linked to actions #26, 27, 28.

**Outcome 8:** Children and youth have increased access to safe, stable, and ongoing care and support within their communities.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. Care stability rate: Percentage of children remaining in their initial placement for 12 months or longer.
- 2. In-community care placements: Percentage of children placed within their home communities.
- 3. Community care network growth: Number of new care providers recruited within Inuit communities.

These measures are linked to actions #14, 16, 20, 30

**Outcome 9:** Kinship caregivers receive enhanced support to promote the health and well-being of children requiring out-of-home care.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. Caregiver support program participation: Percentage of kinship caregivers enrolled in support programs annually.
- 2. Kinship placement stability: Rate of placement disruptions in kinship care arrangements.
- 3. Training completion rates: Percentage of kinship caregivers completing required training modules.

These measures are linked to actions # 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

**Outcome10:** Service delivery staff within the Department of Family Services receive enhanced support and resources to ensure a positive and effective working environment, with staffing levels aligned to meet the needs of the community and provide high-quality, culturally appropriate care.

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- 1. Staff satisfaction surveys: Percentage of staff reporting satisfaction with workplace resources and support.
- 2. Staffing levels: Ratio of caseworkers to children and youth served, with targets for remote communities.
- 3. Workforce retention rates: Annual turnover rate of staff in Nunavut communities.

These measures are linked to actions #9, 19, 25, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.

# 6 Path Forward

The Department of Family Services is committed to improving child and family services to best meet the needs of Nunavummiut.

The Department recognizes that child welfare services in Inuit communities face ongoing systemic challenges. These systemic issues are multifaceted and deeply rooted in historical, social, economic, and cultural factors. There is also generational trauma from the impacts of colonization, specifically regarding residential schools, the 60's scoop and other colonial policies. Inuit are also facing socioeconomic disparities, such as poverty and overcrowding due to housing shortages. In addition, Nunavut faces limited access to services, such as healthcare, all which contribute to the challenges faced by Inuit families and children and lead to gaps in the child welfare system. Steps to address these challenges, including the lack of physical infrastructure, such as adequate housing, enhanced health care services, as well as the need for expanded in-territory support, are essential to help communities support children effectively. Expanding services for substance use, mental health and neurodiverse needs in-territory will require a whole of government approach to help support all Nunavummiut. Addressing these challenges require a community-based approach to child welfare. Aligned with the actions outlined in the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan, the Department of Family Services will shift focus from crisis intervention to prevention. This too will require a whole of government approach and require input from key stakeholders and partners. Focusing on preventative services and providing more resources for family preservation, such as parenting programs, financial support, and access to health services, could help reduce the need for child welfare interventions.

The successful implementation of the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan will depend on effective planning, collaboration, and continuous engagement with stakeholders, and the necessary supports and resources to carry out the plan's actions.

It is important to recognize that child welfare is everyone's responsibility and a whole of Nunavut approach is required to address the findings from the OAG report and successfully implement the llagiitsiarniq Plan. Similar to the development of this plan, collaboration with key stakeholders and partners will be required to support the implementation of the llagiitsiarniq Plan. This includes the ongoing partnership with NTI, including through the Nunavut Partnership Committee. The Department will continue to seek direct input from NTI to ensure Inuit participation in the design and development of programs and policies through Article 32.

The Department of Family Services is committed to the full implementation of the Ilagiitsiarniq and will provide ongoing progress updates to the legislature on the Department's progress to improve services for child and family services within Nunavut. To support this effort, the department has contracted an external resource to monitor and evaluate the plan, including its implementation.

In conclusion, the Department of Family Services remains dedicated to addressing the systemic challenges facing child welfare services in Nunavut. By prioritizing prevention, enhancing resources, and fostering collaboration with key stakeholders, we aim to build a more resilient and supportive environment for Nunavummiut families. The successful implementation of the llagiitsiarniq Plan is a critical step toward this goal, and we are committed to ensuring that the necessary resources and efforts are in place to achieve meaningful and lasting improvements in the well-being of children and families across the territory.

## Appendix A: What We Heard

This section of the report provides a summary of the engagement findings gathered through stakeholder meetings, community consultations, and the online survey and is structured according to the following four categories:

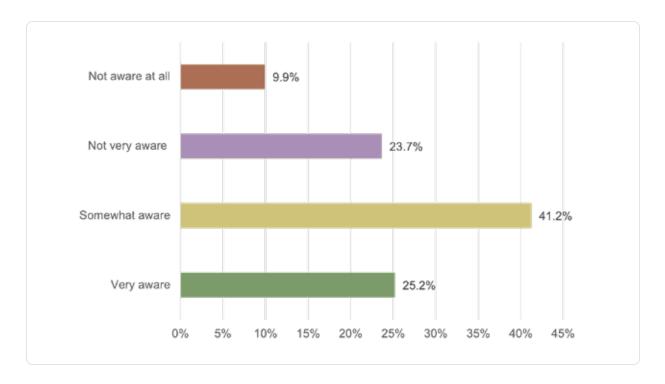
- Awareness and Accessibility of Services to outline how aware Nunavummiut are of the Child and Family Services within their communities
- Experiences and Challenges that Nunavummiut have faced in relation to Child and Family Services
- Feedback on Priorities to illustrate how supportive Nunavummiut were of proposed priorities
- Opportunities for Improvement to identify items to include in the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan

As the survey included specific questions for respondents to answer, the quantitative data in Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 is reflective of survey data only. Qualitative data outlined in Section 3.4 reflects engagement findings from surveys, stakeholder meetings, and community consultations.

## 6.1 Awareness and Accessibility of Services

As part of the survey offered by the Department of Family Services, Nunavummiut were asked to rate their awareness of services offered by the department in their communities. As displayed in Figure 1, over 65% of respondents indicated that they were either somewhat aware or very aware of available Child and Family Services. Only a small proportion of respondents (9.9%) indicated they were not aware at all.

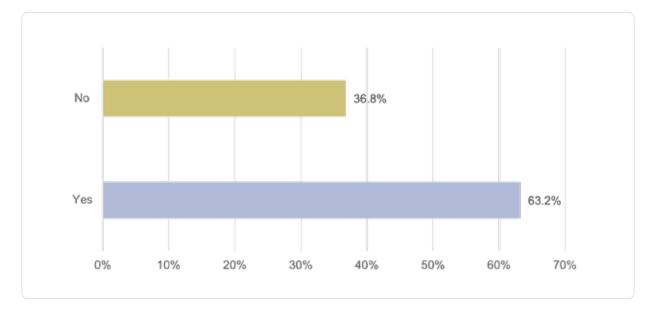
### Figure 1:



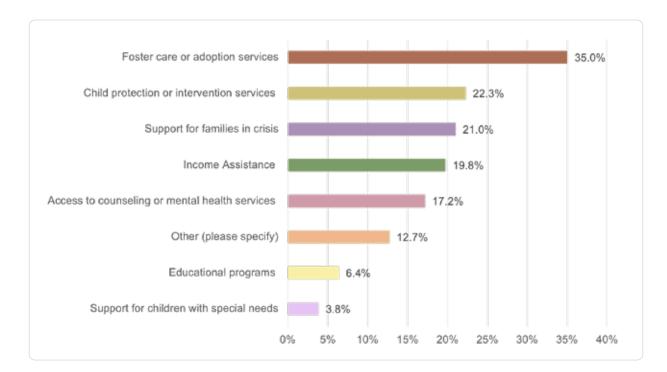
How aware are you of the Child and Family Services available in your community?

This high level of awareness corresponds with reported levels of direct experience with Child and Family Services. As shown in Figure 2, a majority of respondents (63.2%) reported that they or a member of their family had used Child and Family Services in the past.

## Figure 2: Have you or a member of your family ever used child and family services in Nunavut?



As displayed in Figure 3, the most common services accessed by respondents were foster care and adoption services (35%); child protection and intervention services (22.3%); support for families in crisis (21%); and income assistance (19.8%). The least common services accessed include supports for children with special needs (3.8%) and educational programs (6.4%).

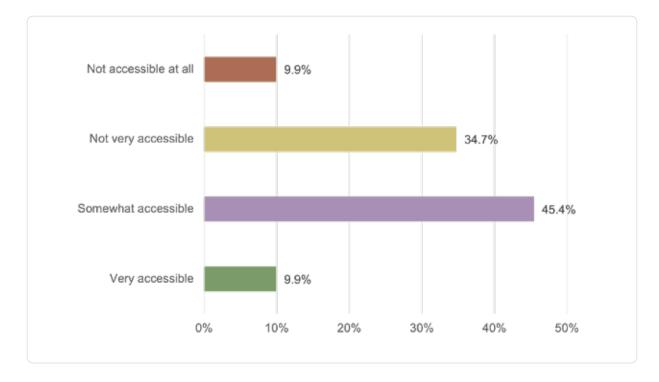


## Figure 3: Child and family services accessed by survey respondents<sup>2</sup>

It is unclear if the trends in service use documented in Figure 3 are representative of the scope of need in communities or if they are instead indicative of the relative availability between different services. When asked about the accessibility of services (Figure 4), the majority of respondents indicated that services were either somewhat accessible (45.4%) or not very accessible (34.2%). These findings suggest that there are opportunities to improve the accessibility of services for Nunavummiut.

<sup>2</sup> Note: the corresponding survey question for this graph included a 'not applicable' response option. This response was chosen by 26.1% of respondents lacking direct experience with child and family services. This response has been removed from the graph to display data on those with direct experience.

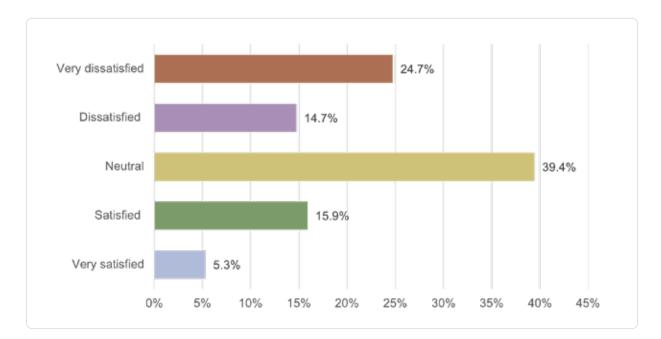
## Figure 4: How would you rate the accessibility of these services?



## 6.2 Experiences and Challenges

The survey administered by the Department of Family Services posed several questions related to satisfaction and perceived strengths, as well as shortcomings of services offered in Nunavut communities.

Survey findings depicted in Figure 5 suggest that Nunavummiut tend to have low levels of satisfaction toward child and family services in Nunavut. While a neutral level of satisfaction was the most common response (39.4%), a higher number of respondents (39.4%) reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied compared to those reporting being satisfied or very satisfied (21.2%).



#### Figure 5:

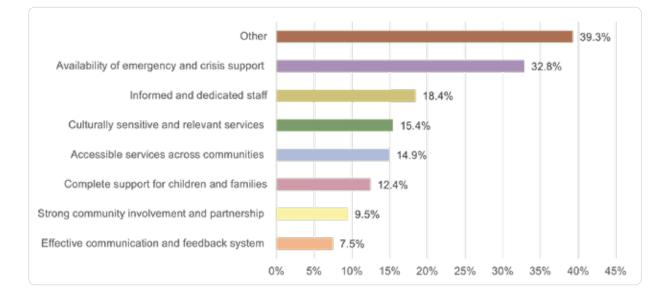
#### How satisfied were you with the services provided?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Note: the corresponding survey question for this graph included a 'not applicable' response option. This response was chosen by 26.5% of respondents lacking direct experience with child and family services. This response has been removed from the graph to display data on those with direct experience.

As shown in Figure 6, the majority of responses that provided comments for the "other" option felt that this question was not applicable and that these strengths were not reflective of the child and family services offered in their community. Following the other option, the availability of emergency and crisis support (32.8%) and informed and dedicated staff (18.4%) were identified by Nunavummiut as the key strengths of existing child and family services. The majority of responses that provided comments for the "other" option felt that this question was not applicable and that these strengths were not reflective of the child and family services offered in their community.

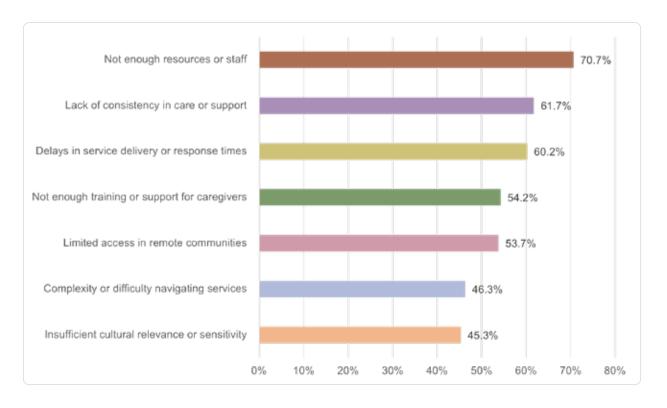
#### Figure 6:

## What do you believe are the strengths of the child and family services currently available in your community?



These strengths can be contrasted with the challenges or issues displayed in Figure 7. As shown, despite staff dedication being identified as a strength, a majority of respondents (70.7%) cited not enough resources or staff as the top issue facing child and youth services. Other top challenges include a lack of consistency in care or support (61.7%) and delays in service delivery or response times (60.2%).

## Figure 7: What challenges or issues have you observed or experienced with these services?



## 6.3 Feedback on Strategic Priorities

The survey administered by the Department of Family Services also solicited feedback from Nunavummiut on the priorities to be included in the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan.

Overall, the seven strategic priorities identified by the Department of Family Services within the Ilagiitsiarniq Framework and Strategic Plan were validated by survey responses.<sup>4</sup> An overwhelming majority of survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with the relevance and/or importance of each strategic priority outlined by the Department of Family Services.

- 97% of respondents indicated that **promoting organizational excellence** through a focus on improving the internal workings of child and family services, including training, following standards, and process improvements was either important or very important.
- 94.8% of respondents identified **staff recruitment and retention** as either very significant or significant to delivering high quality services.

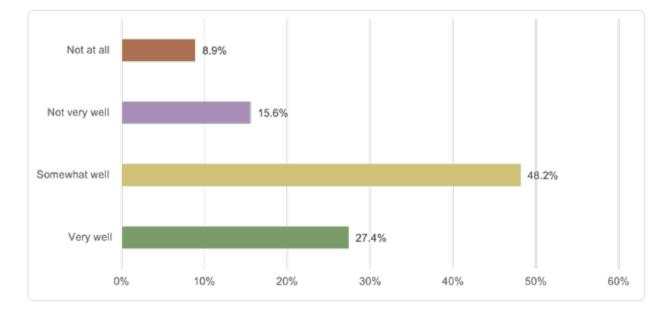
<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for full summary of survey responses.

- 88.9% of respondents indicated that **improving case management** is extremely important.
- 86% of respondents identified the **importance of strengthening investigations into child abuse and neglect** as essential.
- 85% of respondents indicated that prioritizing culturally relevant child and family services sensitive to Inuit values were either critical or somewhat critical.
- 77.8% of respondents identified **providing support for Inuit children and youth receiving care outside of Nunavut** as either very important or important.
- 63% of respondents identified the **enhancement of adoption, foster care, and extended family (kinship) services** as a crucial need for their community.

Overall, a majority of Nunavummiut felt that the proposed priorities for inclusion in the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan aligned with the needs of their communities (see Figure 8).

## Figure 8:

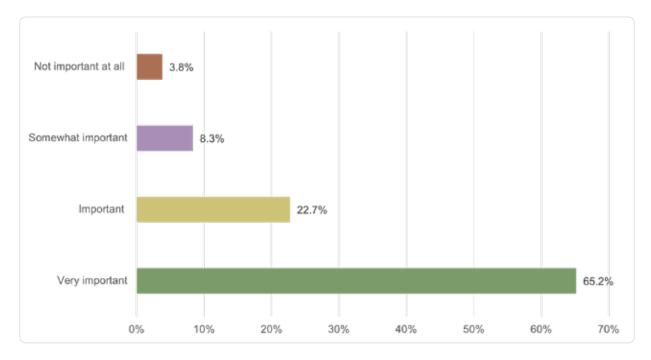
How well do you think the above strategic priorities meet the needs of your community?



While responding positively to the identified priorities, a majority of respondents also indicated that it was important for the Department of Family services to prioritize community involvement in the ongoing planning and delivery of child and family services (see Figure 9).

### Figure 9:

How important do you think community involvement is in the planning and delivery of child and family services?

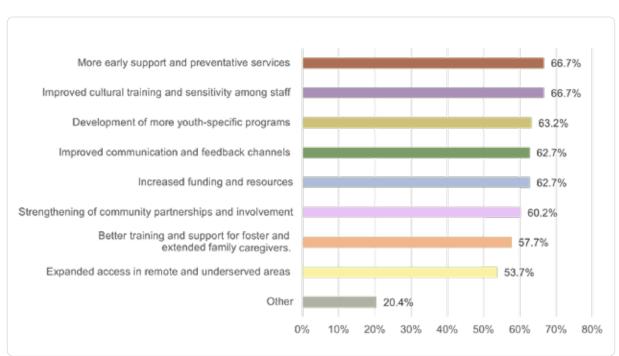


These findings were reflected on and considered when the Department of Family Services developed and finalized the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan.

## 6.4 Opportunities for Improvement

In addition to providing feedback on the strategic priorities, Nunavummiut were asked how the Department of Family Services could improve the quality of its services and programs in the survey. Figure 10 presents survey responses on improvements or changes to improve child and family services. As shown, increasing early support and preventative services and cultural training among staff (66.7%) was the most commonly identified area for improvement.

#### Figure 10:



What improvements or changes would you like to see in child and family services in Nunavut?

As the question also included option for "other," respondents were provided with an opportunity to identify and expand on alternative opportunities for improvement. Provided suggestions included:

- Emphasis on Inuktitut and bilingualism
- Early intervention support and collaboration with rehabilitation professionals
- Increased Inuit employment and legislation that reflects Inuit values and practices
- More awareness of what is available
- More staff
- Greater interdepartmental and community coordination

Many of these suggestions align with the key themes outlined in the next section. These opportunities are also addressed within the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan by the following actions:

- Work with impacted Departments to review and revise existing agreements to improve service coordination for the delivery of services for children and youth and enable structured interagency meetings across Nunavut.
- Develop a communication plan aligned with Inuit societal values.

- Ensure awareness of funding opportunities through a dedicated campaign and establish a prevention-focused funding mechanism for Family Safety and Youth initiatives.
- Provide clients with documents in their preferred language.
- Develop an incentive program to increase recruitment and retention, reduce fly-in/out, and recruit local CSSW through mentorship programs for new local graduates.
- Implement Inuit Employment Plans (IEP) and partner with educational institutions, such as Nunavut Arctic College, to expand relevant programs and create pathways for internships and priority hiring.

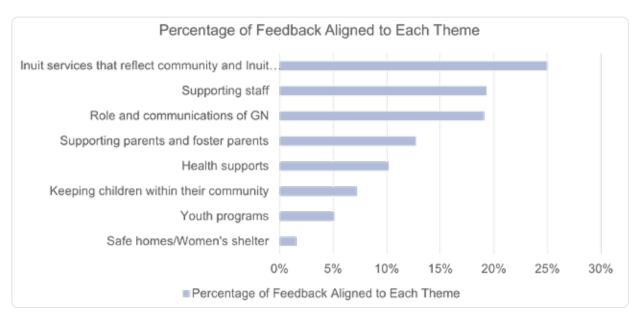
Survey and engagement session feedback captured further qualitative information on challenges related to the ability of child and family services to meet the needs of Nunavummiut and made a number of recommendations to improve the quality of services and programs. This feedback is outlined below.

## **6.4.1 Identified Themes**

Qualitative feedback on opportunities for improvement were analyzed and grouped into the following distinct themes:

- Inuit services that reflect community and Inuit organization involvement
- Supporting staff
- Roles and communications of the Government of Nunavut (GN)
- Supporting parents and foster parents
- Health supports
- Keeping children within their community
- Youth programs
- Safer homes

Figure 11 outlines the percentage of feedback that aligned with the identified themes above. This illustrates that the most common theme was that Inuit services reflect community and Inuit organization involvement.



### Figure 11:

## How much feedback is aligned to the identified themes?

There were some comments from the engagements that did not align with the themes above. These were grouped together and are described in an "other" section.

## 6.4.2 Alignment with Other GN Priorities

It is important to acknowledge that the themes listed above are aligned with other GN initiatives. As the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan is focused on child and family services, it will not delve into other systemic issues related to child welfare, such as mental health supports and the need for mental health and counselling services. However, this theme directly aligns with Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy which includes commitments to strengthen mental health services. Other examples of GN initiatives that cover themes identified in the received feedback include the GN's Elders Strategy, which aligns with identified feedback to increase Elder involvement and input in programs and services. Furthermore, the GN has also developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which is aligned with feedback that speaks to the need for increased financial supports, including for housing or food. The GN has also been supporting housing through the Nunavut 3000 initiative and NTI through its Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan (NIHAP), both of which are aligned with some of themes and associated engagement findings. Given this alignment, not all feedback is directly addressed within the llagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan; in some cases, the feedback provided is already being actioned through other GN or NTI initiatives.

This underscores the need for a whole-of-government approach to supporting Nunavummiut and increased collaboration across GN Departments and Inuit organizations.

## 6.4.3 Reoccurring, Cross-cutting Themes

When analyzing the feedback, thematic sub-categories emerged that were aligned with multiple themes (i.e., were cross-cutting and applicable to multiple themes). For example, cultural relevance was a prevalent sub-category that cut across nearly every identified theme. Table 3 illustrates which sub-categories appeared within each theme.

### Table 3:

## Cross cutting sub-categories within themes

	Sub-Categories				
Theme	Cultural Relevance	Community and Inuit Organization Involvement	Recruitment and Retention	Family Involvement	Resources and Programs
Inuit services that reflect community and Inuit organization involvement	V	V	V		~
Supporting staff	✓		✓		✓
Role and communications of GN	V	~			~
Supporting parents and foster parents	~	~			~
Health supports	<b>v</b>	~			✓
Keeping children within their community	V			V	V
Youth programs	✓	~			✓
Safe homes				~	~

Although some thematic subcategories and comments were shared during discussions spanning multiple themes, such feedback has not been repeated in each of the sections below (i.e., for each theme). For brevity, comments are presented in terms of the theme relative to which they were most often discussed. For example, within the Inuit services theme, a priority engagement finding was a need to hire more Inuit staff. While this feedback was also provided in terms of supporting staff and the role and communications of GN themes, the feedback was not repeated in those thematic sections.

The following section summarizes the feedback received by theme (organized by the most prevalent theme to least prevalent).

## 6.4.4 Inuit services that reflect community and Inuit organization involvement (25%)

A key theme from engagement sessions is that the Government of Nunavut's approach to family and child services does not reflect Inuit values, culture, and lived experiences. This was the most popular theme with 25% of feedback aligning with this sentiment. Many participants highlighted that the issues affecting Inuit children and families are deeply rooted in colonialism, the imposition of western/southern lifestyles, and the loss of Inuit cultural knowledge. The loss of cultural knowledge was positioned by participants as contributing to a decline in family and community unity, and increases in both substance use and violent behaviors in the home.

## **Cultural Relevance**

A key area that was highlighted from engagements was the need for Inuit cultural values and knowledge to be emphasized. Community members suggested that there is an opportunity to shift from a deficit-oriented approach to a strength-based approach to the delivery of child and family services. For many community members, prioritizing a strength-based approach rooted in Inuit cultural values and knowledge was linked to addressing root issues contributing to child and family issues in Nunavut. This was highlighted in other feedback shared concerning the importance of incorporating Inuit traditional knowledge and methods into programs and services that are sensitive to Inuit, as the population is still healing from colonization and attempted assimilation by the Canadian government.

## **Community and Inuit Organization Involvement**

Community members mentioned that the Department of Family Services could benefit from maintaining proactive and consistent relationships with communities. For example, community members observed that the Department could better engage communities to ensure services and programs meet their needs. This would help ensure that services and programs are designed in a way that reflects lived experiences and lifestyles of the communities in which they

are implemented. Many engagement session and survey participants emphasized that there is broad support and existing opportunities for Inuit to be more involved in working directly with the Department. This could also help provide communities with a better understanding of Departmental processes, programs, and standards.

Another comment that was consistently raised by community members was a desire to see Elders in formal roles to support the delivery of child and family services in communities. This was highlighted as an opportunity to infuse Inuit values, knowledge, and language into the delivery of services and support broader intergenerational knowledge exchange. Specific recommendations shared to establish a role for Elders included:

- Establishing Elders committees to participate in the development and implementation of services;
- Developing parenting support programs led by Elders;
- Organize Elder-youth mentorship programming and workshops to support intergenerational bonding and learning
- Recruiting Elders to work alongside mental health and childcare workers; and,
- Partnering with Elders to support promotion of child and family services.

This feedback aligns with the GN's Elders Strategy to increase Elder involvement and input in programs and services. Some of the objectives in the Elders Strategy include increasing support for Elder's committees and programming, improving communications with Elders, and establishing partnerships with Inuit organizations to ensure effective implementation of strategic actions.

## **Enhancing Cultural Competence of Staff**

Improving cultural competency of non-Inuit staff was a key area that arose in engagements. In addition, community members stressed the importance of increasing Inuit representation within the Department as Inuit feel more comfortable sharing their experiences with Inuit staff. This was especially true for individuals that had Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun as their first language. Community members shared that the inability to express oneself in an Inuit language is a barrier to effectively communicate issues to department staff. For example, a community member shared that the Healing by Talking program could be improved by always having at least one Inuit staff available.

For many community members, increasing recruitment of Inuit and Inuktitut speakers as counselors, coordinators, and other frontline staff positions is a key way to improve the performance of Department of Family Services programs and services. Community members also expressed a need to increase cultural competency among non-Inuit staff and service providers. As the majority of family and child services staff working in communities are non-Inuit or from a Southern jurisdiction, many staff lack experience and knowledge in Indigenous culture and history. Community members suggested that mandatory Inuit cultural competencies covering Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) values and Inuit history would help to build trust with staff, improve the department's relationship with communities, and increase the overall quality of services.

## **Resources and Programs**

Community members also spoke to the need to reform existing programs so that they are informed by Inuit culture and values. Many participants highlighted a desire to see the Department expand support for traditional kinship and adoption practices. Community members felt that traditional approaches were superior alternatives to current approaches, which tend to result in Inuit children being place with non-Inuit families, many of which are located outside communities and/or the territory.

In addition, community members also highlighted the need for culturally informed parenting programs. A consistent recommendation was for the Department to fund and partner with Inuit organizations/individuals to offer culturally informed parenting programs and workshops to young families. Furthermore, community members consistently mentioned the need for the Department to expand cultural programming for youth, such as camping, hunting, fishing, and other on-the-land activities. These programs, especially those that can be available for children adopted or fostered outside their home communities, were understood as essential to ensuring that youth maintain a strong link to Inuit culture and support their overall well-being.

Quotes

We need more culturally relevant and proactive resolutions for our families who live in violence, suffer from intergenerational trauma, sexual abuse, and child abuse."

Children need continuity, children need structure, we need parenting programs around the IQ principles and Inuit specific." Engage the community through existing committees and working groups (DEAs, Council/Hamlet). No need to create more committees and working groups especially in smaller communities since there are not enough people to fill these committees. Make the process less formalized and engage them in storytelling to allow community members to meaningfully contribute the development and delivery of services in their community." Although this theme is largely addressed by the GN's Elders Strategy, which seeks to increase Elder involvement and input in programs and services, the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan will also include the following actions that help address this theme:

- Develop and implement a community-based collaborative child welfare service delivery model.
- Create comprehensive program materials and develop feedback mechanisms.
- Engage with clients and families to address concerns and improve conflict resolution through dedicated client relations.
- Monitor and evaluate the current foster parent system as per the Quality Assurance Framework, by incorporating effective feedback mechanisms to identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Continue to deliver and develop family support and parenting programs tailored to Inuit.
- Mandate comprehensive cultural training for all departmental staff.

## 6.4.5 Supporting staff (19%)

The second most prevalent theme that arose from engagements was a need to support staff, with 19% of feedback shared by stakeholders identifying this as a key area for improvement. This included supporting recruitment, retention, training, and resources for Department of Family Services staff.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

Engagement feedback highlighted a need for the Department to support staff well-being and prevent burnout. Related to this, was an opportunity for the Department to recruit more staff to help current staff manage the high caseloads and job demands. A recruitment challenge identified was reluctance to relocate for work, which highlights a need to prioritize local recruitment. One specific recommendation provided was that at least one staff member reside in each community permanently to create consistent services for community members. Feedback shared also noted a need to support the mental health of staff. It was suggested that enhanced counseling services be made available for staff, along with resiliency training for front-line Department of Family Services personnel who work directly with families in the community. Providing these supports could help staff better cope with the demands of their roles and improve overall effectiveness in their work.

Feedback also mentioned a lack of permanent positions, which could be a factor contributing to high turnover rates. Other comments noted the absence of consistent vehicles for work use, and that staff needed housing to remain within communities.

To support greater recruitment and retention, community members suggested creating family centers outside of the community with permanent staff. The feedback underscored the need for recruiting more experienced and culturally aligned individuals, such as Inuit social workers, who understand the unique context of Nunavut's communities. Moreover, it was suggested that increasing community member involvement in services would support greater retention and improve the quality of services.

Feedback also indicated a demand for more specialized roles, such as social workers, case workers, adoption experts, program officers, and service providers focused on out-of-territory clients, to improve service coordination.

## **Cultural Relevance Training**

A need for cultural training and workshops was cited, particularly for staff from outside Nunavut. It was suggested that cultural training should include education on traditions, norms, language, and the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles. Additionally, some suggested including community members and Elders in training to ensure a deep and respectful understanding of local community dynamics.

More broadly speaking, engagement findings also indicated there is a need for long-term, strength-based training programs that span several years rather than weeks. It was suggested that a longer-term approach to training would provide staff with a thorough understanding of community dynamics and build a strong foundation for effective engagement with communities.

## **Additional Staff Training**

Engagement feedback pointed to a need for comprehensive onboarding and ongoing training to help address delays and inefficiencies, and support consistency across regions. For example, a comment was shared that caseworkers need to investigate the who, what, when, where, why and how, and trained specialists are needed for serious incidents. Specific areas highlighted included providing training on filling out forms, privacy and confidentiality, record-keeping, conducting investigations and interviews, and sensitivity training to ensure workers demonstrate appropriate attitudes and behaviours. Another area that was highlighted was training on relevant legislation and policies. Community members suggested that all staff be made aware of their legal responsibilities and processes, as well as how to effectively communicate these protocols to families. In addition, the availability of trained staff was also identified. Some communities do not have a social worker and spoke to some workers needing more training.

Feedback shared also spoke to experiences of disjointed communication and slow service when staff were unaware of how to handle their situation or who to involve. A recommendation was that a clear chain of command be implemented to ensure staff are knowledgeable of how to coordinate a response, communicate the approach effectively, and handle situations efficiently. Related to this, community members called for faster service delivery, more frequent monitoring of clients, and more consistent follow-ups to ensure that each child received consistent support. One specific recommendation was to grant managers the ability to make financial decisions to facilitate quicker responses. Finally, it was also recommended that regular monitoring and data collection be implemented to increase accountability, determine the effectiveness of programs and identify areas for improvement.

## **Supportive Leadership**

Feedback from the engagements revealed issues specifically related to leadership and support within the Department. Comments were shared regarding the lack of bereavement time for staff and time to process emotional challenges. Other feedback shared commented on a need for more supportive and effective leadership to create a positive and inclusive workplace, which could help address some of the emotional demands of the job and support employee mental health and overall job satisfaction.

Juotes

As a community partner that deals with
 Family Services we often struggle with
 inadequate staff, poorly trained staff and
 lack of staff as well as transient staff.
 This makes it difficult to have a working
 relationship with them while offering the
 community the support that is needed"

There needs to be data and also policies and procedures that everyone needs to follow" This theme is addressed in the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan through the priority area of Strengthening Recruitment, Retention, and Workforce Development. Within this priority area, the Department of Family Services will support staff through the following actions:

- Conduct an operational review to identify efficiencies and areas for improvement with respect to CSSW recruitment.
- Collaborate with the Department of Human Resources to fast-track the recruitment and onboarding of critical positions.
- Develop an incentive program to increase recruitment and retention, reduce fly-in/out, and recruit local CSSW through mentorship programs for new local graduates.
- Implement Inuit Employment Plans (IEP) and partner with educational institutions, such as Nunavut Arctic College, to expand relevant programs and create pathways for internships and priority hiring.
- Update core training programs, ensure consistent delivery across all regions, provide ongoing cultural safety training, and identify and fill gaps in training materials. Recruit a Manager, Training.
- Launch a Counselling Service available to all DFS staff.

## 6.4.6 Role and communications of GN (19%)

Another common theme identified in engagement in 19% of the feedback received was related to the role and communications of the GN. This theme pertained to the Department of Family Services, as well as other Departments, including Health, Education, and Justice.

## **Coordination Between GN Departments**

Community members shared comments regarding a need for inter-agency meetings between front line service providers to ensure solutions were provided when a child's needs span different departments. Related to this, comments included that the roles and mandates of each department are not fully understood by community members. There is a need for departments to operate and cooperate with one another to maximize the assistance and interventions provided to clients. Another suggestion was that a consistent case management system be used in all communities to support information sharing between departments as often times, required paper work is not completed.

Specific comments noted that there are opportunities for greater collaboration between the Department of Health and the Department of Family Services, as well as with local organizations. Other collaborations mentioned included the Department of Justice working closely with Department of Family Services to support victims, including providing interpretation services for different community dialects.

## **Community and Inuit Organization Involvement**

Community members spoke of memories of the 60's Scoop and how many people are not convinced that government involvement will provide solutions or help situations. The Department of Family Services has an opportunity to establish relationships and build trust with communities by being more visible and present in communities, such as through in-person visits and engaging people with follow-ups, which is particularly helpful in smaller communities.

Other comments shared by community members referred to a need for greater support from Department of Family Services staff. For example, some stakeholders noted that having calls and emails returned by staff with more consistent service would be helpful. In addition, stakeholders have also shared challenges in speaking to multiple people and having to reshare information and files each time, with no resolution or follow through.

Involving clients in their care plans and listening to what the family needs was also suggested, as well as taking time to explain processes and answer questions from families. One suggestion included having clear protocols and practices for communication to ensure stakeholders are on same page. Other suggestions included having phone calls or services online, such as virtual meetings.

Greater and consistent communication were also recommended so that community members are aware of how to access funding for programs offered by the Department of Family Services. Suggestions from community members included providing pamphlets, rack cards, leaflets, emails, radio shows, social media posts as well as inter-departmental monthly community meetings. Community members were also supportive of town halls and open houses to help stay up to date on information from the Department. These regular communications could also help ensure that progress and positive information is shared with communities.

Community members also shared feedback regarding a need to engage with community members in an ongoing, proactive way. A suggestion to support increased engagement could include compensation for Elders to incentivize regular and increased participation. Another suggestion provided was to more frequently administer surveys and follow up on the feedback received. Other suggestions included creating a committee for community members to offer support and oversee or overrule decisions that non-Indigenous workers make on behalf of Inuit children. There were many comments regarding the willingness of the Department to be open to new ideas and approaches and to recognize Elder voices, as well as voices from young families.

## **Resources and Programs**

Community members shared a great deal of feedback about the services offered by the Department of Family Services. For example, comments included that the Department of Family Services should support people of all ages, and not only children, noting that services are available to children, and Elders, but not to adults in between who are also seeking help.

It is also important to ensure that children in care, in territory and out-of-territory, are monitored and supported to ensure children do not fall through the cracks. Finally, it was shared that the Department of Family Services has an opportunity to create Inuit specific interventions and policies to keep children and families safe.

## Quotes

Community members wish to work together with the GN and its departments because they want conditions to improve."

Massive disconnect between policy, practice, and follow through."

In general, the GN aren't being communicative with the people. Oftentimes, this reaches a point where people no longer wish to speak up, as they're accustomed to this pattern."

The feedback shared within this theme is addressed by the Department of Family Services through multiple action items within the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan, including:

- Work with impacted Departments to review and revise existing agreements to improve service coordination for the delivery of services for children and youth and enable structured interagency meetings across Nunavut.
- Engage with clients and families to address concerns and improve conflict resolution through dedicated client relations.
- Monitor and evaluate the current foster parent system as per the Quality Assurance Framework, by incorporating effective feedback mechanisms to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

# 6.4.7 Supporting parents and foster parents (13%)

Another theme that emerged from the engagement sessions was the need for increased financial support and better housing for families, with 13% of stakeholders identifying this as a key area for improvement. Respondents also stressed the importance of improved communication and regular follow-ups from Family Services with foster parents. Additionally, there was a strong call for greater support for parents through community-based parenting workshops and traditional skills training grounded in Inuit culture and family practices. Some of the feedback shared aligns with the GN's Inunnguiniq Parenting Program which aims to bring back Inuit parenting teachings and practices in ways that work today and rebuild strengths of Inuit parenting with Inunnguiniq practices.

## **Financial Support**

Several community members indicated a need for financial support to address food insecurity, low income, high cost of living and housing costs. These were noted as primary challenges impacting their ability to foster and take care of their children. Some community members spoke to the financial assistance rates that are currently provided and questioned if these were adequate to support foster parent financial costs. Related to this, comments were also shared that family members often assume the responsibility of caring for a child who has been removed from their parents, without follow-up or financial support. It was also noted that Elders and grandparents in particular, have limited financial resources to care for children. This feedback is related to and aligned with the GN's Poverty Reduction Strategy which includes a focus on increased financial supports, including for housing or food.

Many community members also noted challenges related to housing, highlighting that the housing shortage in Nunavut prevents families from providing a safe and healthy environment for children. To address this issue, it is important to explore programs that could help families move to larger homes. This support could help avoid relocating children to other communities because of a lack of space in foster homes. This feedback demonstrates a need for investments and interventions to address Nunavut's housing crisis. While this is not addressed in the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan, the GN and NTI have existing initiatives, such as the Nunavut 3000 initiative and the NIHAP, that address this.

## **Communication and Follow-Up**

Other feedback shared by community members suggested a need for improved communication and regular follow-ups with foster parents. Several instances were shared when Department staff did not complete the necessary paperwork or communicate regularly with foster parents. One community member mentioned that caseworkers should be completing regular in-person visits to check homes and provide support. They also emphasized the importance of improving communication, oversight, and connection with all children, particularly those living outside of Nunavut

Community members also shared that better communication with parents and guardians is needed, particularly to explain the process and what will happen when a child is being 'apprehended'.

### **Resources and Programs**

Many community members reported struggling with learning how to parent and having difficulty finding resources on parenting. Community activities and parenting workshops with Elders that reflect traditional lnuit family practices were suggested by community members as supports that could support early intervention training and help preserve community knowledge. Recommendations for programs that focused on disciplining children, cooking, financial literacy, and traditional lnuit parenting skills were also provided. Other comments were shared on supporting parents who are dependent on alcohol and/or drugs and raising awareness and educating parents about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and its impact on children. Additionally, it was suggested that families could benefit from training or workshops to help build relationships between biological and adoptive families, as well as courses for parents on addressing children's questions about their situations.

Community members also noted that there was not enough promotion of foster care services and the process of becoming a foster parent. To address this, they suggested creating pamphlets that detail the processes and services provided by Family Services. They also suggested organizing meetings with Elders to discuss and adjust the foster care system to better align with traditional Inuit kinship practices.

Other suggestions provided included creating a foster family association to support and train foster families, implementing a mandatory course for prospective foster parents, and screening applicants to ensure their commitment to fostering is genuine. Additionally, it was recommended to establish a program where individuals who have grown up in foster care can speak with current foster children to explore their thoughts and feelings and provide support.

# Quotes

Overcrowded housing and ongoing municipal services makes it difficult to want to foster and adopt."

It's hard for me to try to cope and try to learn how to be a parent because I don't understand how to be a parent and I'm learning." Ten years ago, I was fostering kids, we take them in because we love them. Today, I started fostering again and I noticed it's still the same amount per kid. And we all know the cost of living in Nunavut is very expensive. Foster parents, I feel for them. We take kids in because we love them. We want them to be safe."

The Department of Family Services is committed to parents and foster parents. The Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan includes a number of actions that directly address the feedback shared above:

- Engage with clients and families to address concerns and improve conflict resolution through dedicated client relations.
- Improve recruitment of foster parents and target extended family placements by updating the foster parent manual, developing a recruitment strategy, launching an awareness campaign, and establishing a feedback loop for foster parents.
- Provide enhanced training and financial support to Nunavut foster caregivers and extended family members.
- Expand resources and services for parents and guardians to support reunification.
- Review and propose increased visitation and communication with parents and foster parents by exploring opportunities for additional funding and incorporating expanded guidelines into the standard manual.
- Survey existing foster parents to understand their challenges and needs.
- Continue to deliver and develop family support and parenting programs tailored to Inuit.
- Expanding funding opportunities for child and family wellness and prevention programs incorporating traditional practices.

# 6.4.8 Health supports (10%)

A prominent theme that arose during the engagement sessions was related to increasing access to, and awareness of, health and mental health services and supports within Nunavut. 13% of feedback shared by stakeholders identified this as a key area for improvement This related to the Department of Family Services as well as the Department of Health.

### **Cultural Relevance**

Community members emphasized that incorporating Inuit traditional knowledge and culturally relevant methods into the health and mental health care for Nunavummiut in the foster system is essential. A need for traditional counseling practices and respect for Inuit ways of raising children, which differ from Western methods was highlighted as these can help address intergenerational trauma and the effects of colonization. Programs should include traditional practices, such as involving Elders in counseling, using on-the-land healing methods and using Inuit approaches to discipline and child-rearing.

Community members advocated for the use of trauma-informed care, including specialized programming and support to help Inuit families overcome generational trauma and prevent further suffering. Community members emphasized the need to acknowledge and address the effects of historical trauma on current generations to break the cycle of sending children into foster care.

## **Community and Inuit Organization Involvement**

In addition to involving Elders in programs, increased community involvement and support are essential for the success of adoption and foster care systems. Community members stressed the importance of creating a positive, stigma-free space for mental health services and involving other community members in support networks. These suggestions included engaging other GN Departments such as Health and/or Education, building better partnerships with community agencies and local Inuit organizations, and fostering a supportive community environment. Feedback shared noted that there should be opportunities for all to gather on the land or in community centers to help build relationships and foster a sense of community pride and responsibility.

Community also members noted a need to build trust between the community and Family Services staff, particularly focusing on education and transparency on health services and the impacts of healthcare decisions. For example, informed consent processes for expectant mothers should be widely publicized, with education on what informed consent entails and how to provide it made available at health centers or through Family Services.

## **Resources and Programs**

Community members also highlighted a need for more resources and infrastructure to support health and mental health needs within Nunavut. This included more funding for housing, clothing (especially winter wear), mental health facilities, treatment centers, and support for homelessness. It is also important that these supports be accessible within the territory to reduce the need for out-of-territory care. Community members also emphasized the need for wrap-around integrated care and effective case management to support collaborative and holistic care.

In addition, community members highlighted the need for better education and knowledge, more support for single parents, and programs to help families learn how to functionally cope with daily stresses and emotions. It was also noted that increased support for victims of domestic abuse and more involvement from teachers, principals, nurses, and doctors can help to improve mental health care.

Community members stated a significant demand for more robust mental health services, including counseling provided by qualified Indigenous professionals, across the territory and for those children who are placed in out-of-territory care. Specific services mentioned include grief counseling, trauma therapy, addiction support, psychological assessments, family abuse therapy, anger management, and therapy for sexual abuse and violence. This feedback aligns with GN's Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy, which prioritizes objectives of ensuring access to a continuum of mental wellness services for Inuit and healing unresolved trauma and grief. This feedback is further addressed in the commitments of the Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy which is to strengthen mental health services. As part of this commitment, the GN has identified several actions, including enhancing access to Inuktut-speaking counsellors, revising the Nunavut Mental Health Act, and increasing addictions treatment. Another common sentiment shared was a need to ensure that culturally appropriate counseling be made available to parents and children. Community members also advocated for the use of technology, such as Zoom, to provide therapy and support remotely.

Additionally, grief support was shared as a crucial support for parents who lose children to illnesses or who choose to place their children up for adoption, helping them navigate the difficult experiences of integrating into foster or adoptive families. It was also suggested that promoting programs for personal wellness, parenting skills, and household counseling could help alleviate many pressures that might lead parents to consider foster care for their children.

## **Substance Abuse and Addiction Services**

Many community members raised the issue of substance abuse as playing a significant role in foster care cases, and community members called for more addiction support services, treatment centers, and rehabilitation programs for parents, accessible either virtually or within the territory. Keeping communities substance-free and providing education on the effects of drugs and alcohol were often highlighted. Community members mentioned the need for more funding for addiction services, specialized care, and culturally appropriate treatment centers.

# Quotes

With a population mean of age 25, child support services, parenting skills and mental health needs are in high demand in the territory."

I try to go for counselling in this community. There's nothing here for me. And even when I go to the KIA or to my Inuit organizations, they tell me there is no help for me until I turn a certain age." There's the question of how to help parents who are struggling with mental health but are also struggling with taking care of children. Some people who struggle with mental health will attempt self-medication using alcohol, often to detrimental effect." As part of the whole-of-government approach, the Department of Health and the Department of Family Services will be working together to address the feedback shared regarding health supports. In addition to existing initiatives, such as Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy, the Department of Health is working collaboratively with partners, including NTI and Indigenous Services Canada to establish components of the Addictions and Trauma Treatment System and an Aqqusariaq facility to meet the specialized health care needs of clients, such as pregnant people, through access to pediatrics and obstetric services.

Other initiatives include partnerships with Ilisaqsivik Society and Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre to support culturally relevant programming, such as on-the-land addictions programs. Teams of Inuit counsellors are also made available to travel to Nunavut communities following traumatic events such as suicides or other unexpected deaths impacting the community. In addition, the Department of Health is committed to increasing the number of Inuit in health care positions to support culturally relevant care that can be delivered in Inuktitut.

The Department of Family Services will continue to collaborate with the Department of Health to address received feedback, including through the following actions within the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan:

- Collaborate with the Department of Health to ensure ongoing access to culturally appropriate and traditional mental wellness supports for Nunavummiut.
- Expanding funding opportunities for child and family wellness and prevention programs incorporating traditional practices.
- Explore existing resources and funding opportunities for a whole-of-government approach to community well-being.
- Ensure awareness of funding opportunities through a dedicated campaign and establish a prevention-focused funding mechanism for Family Safety and Youth initiatives.
- Collaborate with the Department of Health to explore what services could help reduce the need to send children outside the territory for treatment.

# 6.4.9 Keeping children within their community (7%)

7% of engagement feedback revealed an additional theme pertaining to the Department prioritizing keeping children within their community. Community members made several recommendations for the Department to enable children to remain in, or connected with, their home community.

## **Cultural Relevance**

There were many comments from community members that children should stay within their communities, or at least within the territory. Community members stressed that relocating children out-of-territory should not be an option or should only be a last resort after all other options have been exhausted. Comments suggested that removing children from their communities severs their cultural and kinship connections, leaving them isolated and traumatized. A few community members discussed how their own experience in the foster system severed their connection to culture and family and took an immense toll on their well-being.

There was a strong call for formal reunification plans to ensure a smooth transition home for children that were placed out-of-territory and wished to return. Reuniting families when it is safe to do so should be a high priority for the Department to ensure children maintain their cultural and community connections. It was also suggested that if reunification is not possible, adoption should be pursued to provide children with a stable family environment.

In the event that relocating the child was unavoidable, community members stressed that the Department should invest in and maintain a connection between the child and their community. For example, one participant suggested funding a summer program in which children return to their communities and participate in hunting, fishing, and camping to stay connected to their roots. It was noted that it is very important to track every child in care and ensure that plans for cultural learning and support are provided and in place. In addition, these children need to be visited in-person to ensure their safety and be allowed to visit home.

## **Family Involvement**

Another comment that was frequently made was that children should be kept with extended family when staying at home is no longer an option. Some community members observed that foster parents treat their foster children differently than their own, which harmed the foster child's sense of belonging. It was stressed that prioritizing family members for foster placements would help ensure more consistent care and support.

### **Resources and Programs**

Community members underscored the need for more medical capacity, infrastructure and facilities within communities, particularly those run by Inuit or Indigenous organizations. It was also mentioned that resources are needed to specifically support children with disabilities. Building the necessary infrastructure and resources locally was identified as essential for providing adequate support and minimizing the trauma associated with children being removed from their family.

It was also noted that laws and procedures should support the establishment of local social service facilities and ensure long-term placements are provided for children to ensure they have stability. Furthermore, some recommended that if certain communities do not have viable foster options, the Department should prioritize identifying other communities within Nunavut and flow resources to them as opposed to looking South.

Comments were also made that the Department should invest in programs at home and in the community that enable children to experience more stability and positivity. Other recommendations were that the Department should invest in home- and school-based activities such as creative arts programs to provide positive outlets for youth and support their remaining at home or in community.

Inotes

Unfortunately we do not have the capacity and facilities to look after children with disabilities or special needs. All kids of any age and issues deserve proper care and attention"

Reuniting families when it is safe to do so should be a high priority for children in foster care. Getting parents the help that they need if they are willing to do so." Children should not be sent out of territory except when absolutely necessary. When they are sent out, it is crucial to help them maintain their connections to their families and their home and try to help them get to a place where they can come back if they want to (but not force them to come back if they don't)." To address the feedback related to keeping children within their community, and within the territory, the Department of Family Services have committed to the following actions within the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan:

- Improve recruitment of foster parents and target extended family placements by updating the foster parent manual, developing a recruitment strategy, launching an awareness campaign, and establishing a feedback loop for foster parents.
- Explore opportunities to increase funding for not-for-profits to construct group homes and facilities within the territory.
- Collaborate with the Department of Health to explore what services could help reduce the need to send children outside the territory for treatment.
- Seek ways to strengthen local resources, assets, and services in communities through collaboration with the GN and external partners.
- Engage directly with children out of territory and their families to assess their needs.

# 6.4.10 Youth programs (5%)

Another prominent theme that arose during the engagement sessions was the need for new and/or expanded programs for youth and parents. 5% of the feedback shared by stakeholders spoke to this theme. These programs related to the Department of Family Services as well as the Department of Justice.

### **Cultural Relevance**

Community members emphasized a specific focus on youth-focused programs and workshops that take place on the land, highlighting that the land is central to Inuit culture. These culturally relevant programs and camps are essential for children's well-being and cultural preservation, as they teach traditional skills and allow hands-on cultural experiences. On-the-land programming for youth, including subsistence living like hunting, fishing, camping was specifically suggested. Having a cabin or cottage where children can gather and work on projects was also suggested. It was noted that these programs could help youth address immediate needs of food and housing, while also preserving traditional skills and knowledge, building a sense of community and positively contributing to positive mental health. It was suggested that these programs offer a break from work/school and home, providing a necessary third space for youth and children to gather and engage in meaningful activities.

## **Resources and Programs**

Community members also placed great emphasis on educational support for children, especially those in foster care. They commented that children in smaller community's struggle with basic literacy in both Inuktitut and English. It was suggested that the Department of Family Services could collaborate with the Department of Education to provide tutoring and additional support to students in the foster care system, and that the Department of Education extend this help to children in other provinces and territories to ensure they are not left out. Additionally, community members remarked that maintaining stability in schooling is crucial, as frequent changes in homes can lead to disruptions in education which may lead to poor performance or could lead to students dropping out. It was stated that keeping children in the same school despite changes in their living situation can help maintain a sense of normalcy.

Other suggestions referenced a partnership between the Department of Family Services and the Department of Justice to develop programs to keep children out of jail and support those who may be experiencing behaviour issues as a result of the turbulent situation at home. Suggestions for such programming included therapeutic justice programs incorporating culturally relevant events, such as hunting or travel to other Nunavut communities where children can build their skills, self-confidence, and learn positive coping strategies. It was also suggested that group homes, mental health, and behavioral support services, along with more child advocates and community liaisons, are essential for addressing the needs of vulnerable children.

Additionally, community members recommended creating additional recreational spaces for kids, where they can learn and engage in various activities outside the home. A facility for Nunavut children, staffed with individuals who can provide proper care and attention was suggested. This facility could offer programs that promote wellness and build confidence for children while also providing support and educational workshops to parents.

# Quotes

Programs are important to communities for bonding and healing. This needs to be ongoing." Children deserve healthy homes, and healthy parents. This can be improved by offering specific program that supports personal wellness and promotes confidence for parents so they can be the best version of themselves for their kids"

In Iqaluit, whenever a child switches homes which can be often, they switch elementary schools. This is highly disruptive to them in an already challenging time. Perhaps more effort could be made to keep some normalcy for them and keep them in one school all year regardless of how often they move homes."

Similar to the theme of keeping children within the community, there are commitments that the Department of Family Services has included within the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan that support youth programs and address feedback related to this theme:

- Expanding funding opportunities for child and family wellness and prevention programs incorporating traditional practices.
- Explore existing resources and funding opportunities for a whole-ofgovernment approach to community well-being.
- Ensure awareness of funding opportunities through a dedicated campaign and establish a prevention-focused funding mechanism for Family Safety and Youth initiatives.
- Foster a partnership with the Department of Education to enhance

# 6.4.11 Safe homes (2%)

The final theme that arose from engagements in 2% of the feedback shared was the need to provide safe homes for women and children.

### **Resources and Programs**

Engagement findings clearly outlined that safe spaces are required for children and youth. Community members spoke to having safe spaces for children as the group homes available do not always provide the best care to children. Many children at a young age witness their parents struggling with mental health issues, addiction, and trauma and as a result, this is normalized. Other comments spoke to the difficulties of having safe places for teenagers within the community.

In addition to safe spaces for children, some comments focused specifically on having safe homes for women. Comments shared indicated that the process for women to access housing support elsewhere can take a long time and as a result, some women end up returning to unsafe environments. Suggestions noted that the system could be faster and smoother if there was increased collaboration and coordination between Departments. In particular, greater collaboration is required between the Department of Family Services and the Department of Health. It was also suggested that these safe homes include counselling services and addiction support for those who are struggling with alcoholism.

Juotes

- I feel strongly that if you have a safe home for a child until they are at least five, it sets a standard of how their life will be."
- There are struggles with getting women and children into safe houses in Iqaluit.
  When children are involved, Social
  Services must step in during crisis, as well as mental health. The process takes a long time, so someone trying to leave may end up returning to an unsafe environment. "

For us that didn't know about alcohol, we have hurt a lot of people, especially our children. This has affected so many people. Especially the younger children...generation. When communities are going towards Pond Inlet women's shelter. They need more of them in each of the communities. It will help so many families that are in need. It's hard to try to control our lives with the alcohol affecting us." The Department of Family Services is committed to support safe spaces for children, youth, and women. Some actions within the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan help to address feedback related to this theme:

- Expanding funding opportunities for child and family wellness and prevention programs incorporating traditional practices.
- Explore existing resources and funding opportunities for a whole-ofgovernment approach to community well-being.

# 6.4.12 Other

There were a few comments that were shared in engagements that did not fall within the themes identified above. These comments are described below.

## **Supporting Children**

Some comments on the system included having more transparency. These comments spoke to children being removed from homes and then returned without solving the reason why they were removed. In addition, unofficial placements with families stepping in to house children are not reflected in Department data.

Another comment shared was that the Department's policies sometimes hinder the best options. For example, an older sibling may be denied foster care and as a result, the younger siblings remained in an abusive home without food.

Some comments spoke to the need to identify unfit parenting and remove children from abusive environments sooner, and increased funding for the foster care system. Other comments included being more open to non-Inuit adoptions, focusing on child well-being first and then cultural sensitivity.

## **Support for Elders**

Other comments provided related to providing support for Elders. Comments were shared that Elders need financial support and are unable to keep up with their bills. Some comments included Elders having to go back to work after retirement. Other shared that Elders need someone to speak with and there are not enough supports for them. These comments are addressed through the GN's Elders Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy, which includes a focus on providing increased financial supports, including for housing or food.

# Quotes

I think that these are all very important points to focus on however I'm worried that each will take a long time to correct and will be very difficult to do at the same time. It sounds great but I will wait to see these changes in action. Making the changes transparent and clear for anyone to see is critical."

How can social advocacy help adults? When compared to children and youth clients, adults may not receive a lot of support." Starting from infant to prenatal.... infant...young adults and everything like that. I don't see anything for Elders. The Elders need somebody to talk to. They hold a heavy load but they want to express it all."

# Appendix B: Engagement Session Questions

The following questions were asked during engagement sessions:

- How familiar are you with the child and family services and programs provided by the Family Services Department in your community?
- Has anyone in your family, including yourself, ever used child and family services in Nunavut?
- How would you rate the accessibility of these services? When you need assistance, do you know how to access these services?
- Are you able to connect with the Family Wellness Division and staff in your community? Do you receive support in a timely manner?
- What challenges or issues have you observed or experienced with these services?
- What improvements would you like to see in child and family services in Nunavut? What changes would like to ideally see in terms of services and programs and how would you like to have them delivered?
- Are the current programs and services meeting your needs? If not, what new program or service would you like Family Services to offer?
- Family Services aims to create an environment of continuous improvement by implementing best practices. How important do you think it is to focus on improving the internal workings of child and family services, including training, following standards, and process improvements?
- Is the enhancement of adoption, foster care, and extended family (kinship) services a priority that resonates with you as a crucial need for the community?

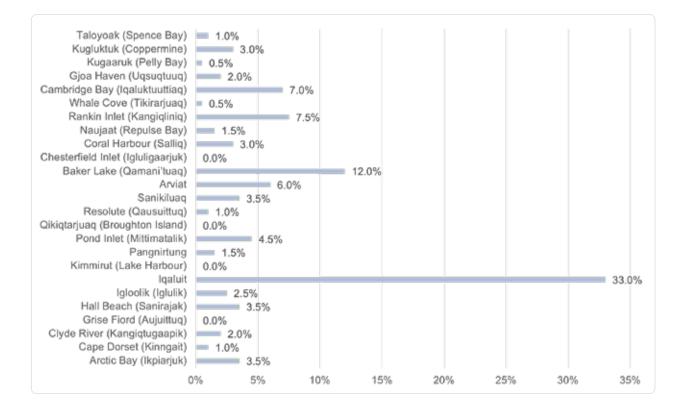
- The Ilagiitsiarniq framework prioritizes services that are culturally relevant and sensitive to Inuit values. How critical do you think this focus is for child and family services?
- Strengthening investigations into child abuse and neglect is a key priority for the department. How essential do you find this focus in protecting children and families?
- Providing support for Inuit children and youth receiving care outside of Nunavut is highlighted. How important do you believe this support is?
- Addressing staffing challenges is a key priority. How strongly do you believe the impact of recruitment and retention strategies is on service quality?
- How well do you think the identified priorities align with the needs of your community regarding child and family services?
- Do you have any other thoughts, suggestions, or concerns regarding the strategic priorities for child and family services in Nunavut?
- How important do you think community involvement is in the planning and delivery of child and family services? Do you have any suggestions for how community members can be more involved in the development and /or delivery of these services?
- Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns, regarding child and family services in Nunavut?

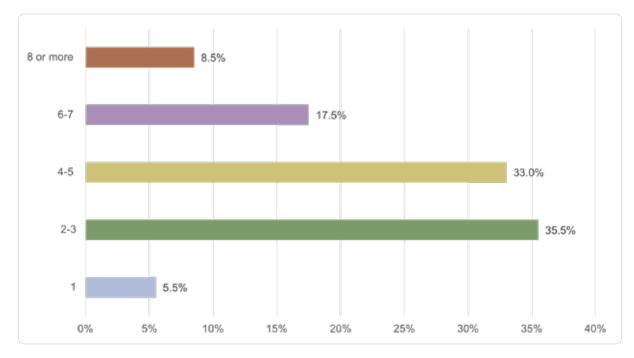
# Appendix C: Survey Questions and Responses

The survey included multiple questions (some of which are not reflected in the body of the report). These questions and responses are included below for reference.

#### Figure 12:

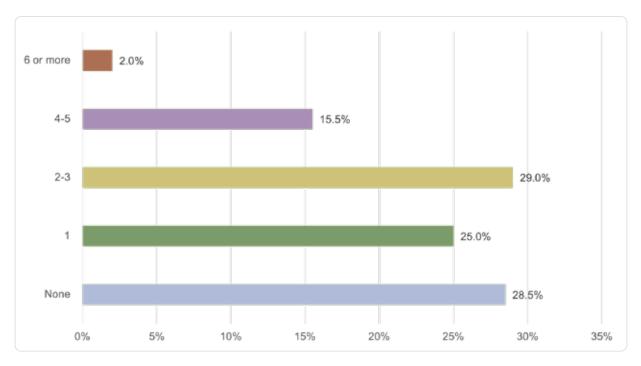
#### Please select the community you currently live in



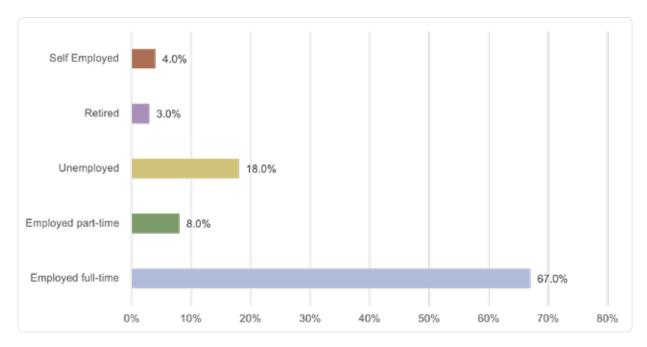


## Figure 13: How many people currently live in your household?

### Figure 14: How many children under the age of 18 live in your household?

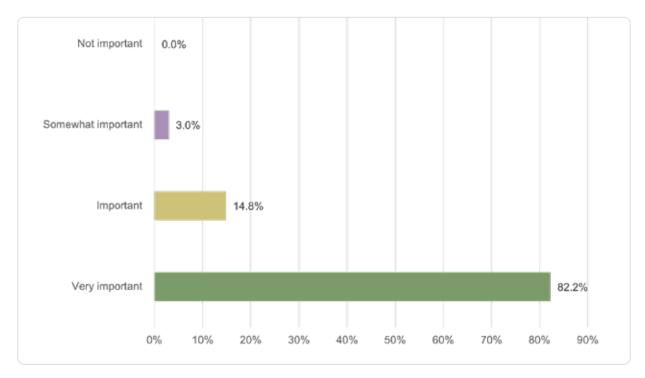


### Figure 15: What is your current employment status? (Answered: 194 Skipped: 63)



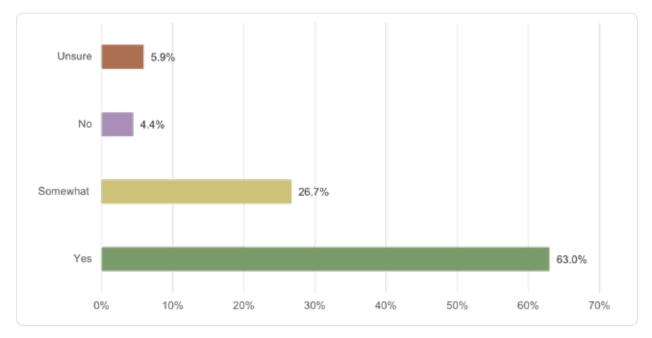
#### Figure 16:

How important do you believe it is to focus on improving the internal workings of child and family services, including training, following standards, and process improvements?



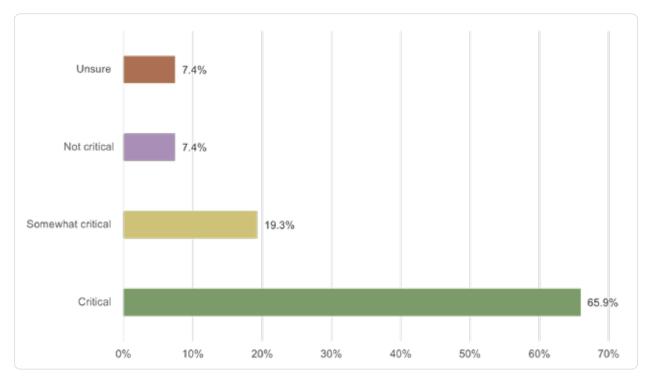
#### Figure 17:

Is the enhancement of adoption, foster care, and extended family (kinship) services a priority that resonates with you as a crucial need for the community?



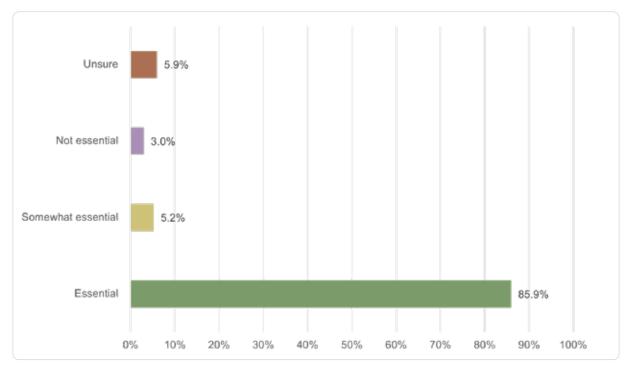
#### Figure 18:

The Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Framework prioritizes services that are culturally relevant and sensitive to Inuit values. How critical do you think this focus is for child and family services?



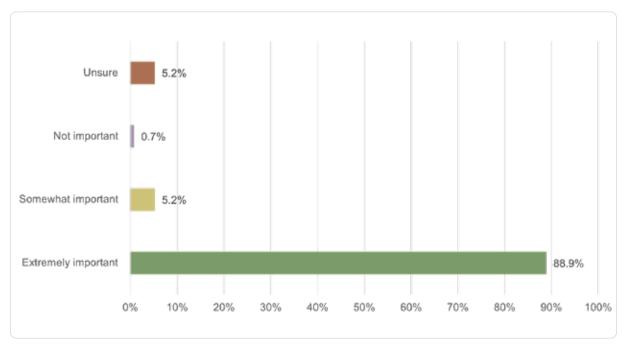
#### Figure 19:

How essential is strengthening investigations into child abuse and neglect for protecting children and families?



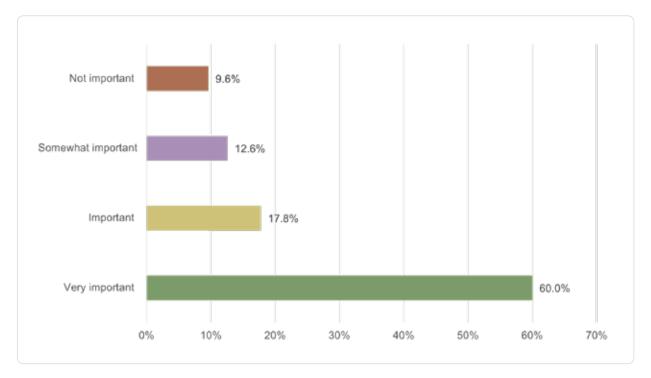
#### Figure 20:

How important is enhancing our case management for child protection to ensure that services are personalized and effectively meet the individual needs and circumstances of each child and family?



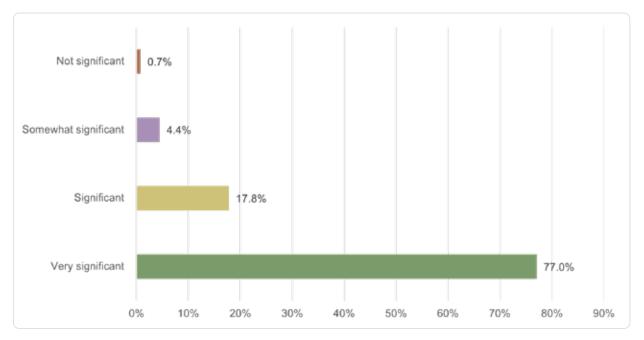
#### Figure 21:

# How important is providing support for Inuit children and youth receiving care outside of Nunavut?



#### Figure 22:

As part of our strategic plan, we aim to prioritize the recruitment and retention of social workers. How important do you consider this focus to be for achieving our staffing goals and ensuring high-quality service delivery?

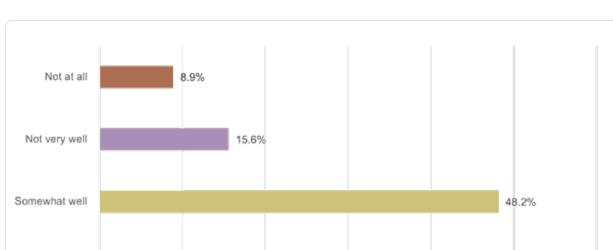


#### Figure 23:

Very well

0%

10%



27.4%

30%

40%

50%

60%

How well do you think the above strategic priorities meet the needs of your community?

20%

# Appendix D: Engagement Session Questions

This section outlines the Quality Assurance (QA) Framework for Child and Family Services in Nunavut, including the key components, principles, and strategies. The framework elaborates on the processes and methodologies designed to ensure that services are delivered at the highest standards, with a strong emphasis on cultural relevance, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The QA Framework for Child and Family Services in Nunavut is designed to ensure that services provided to children, youth, and families are both effective and culturally relevant. This framework is crucial for maintaining high standards of care, fostering accountability, and promoting continuous improvement in service delivery. Given the unique cultural context of Nunavut, the framework integrates Inuit knowledge and practices, ensuring that services respect and reflect the values and traditions of the community.

# 6.5 Foundational Components of the QA Framework

The QA framework is built on several foundational components. These include setting clear standards and benchmarks aligned with cultural values, conducting regular monitoring and evaluation, establishing effective feedback mechanisms, and fostering continuous improvement processes. Each of these components plays a critical role in ensuring that services are delivered at the highest quality and are continually evolving to meet the needs of the community.

 A solid QA framework provides a structured approach to evaluating and enhancing service delivery. By establishing clear, culturally appropriate **standards and benchmarks**, organizations can consistently and objectively measure performance.

#### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Regularly assessing and refining our practices ensures that services remain relevant, effective, and culturally responsive to the evolving needs of Nunavut's children and families.

- **Monitoring and evaluation** is essential for identifying areas of strength and improvement, particularly in how services resonate with and respect the cultural context of the communities served.
- The framework also plays a vital role in fostering **accountability**. When standards are transparent and well-communicated, all stakeholders, including service providers, policymakers, and the community, can hold each other accountable. This mutual accountability ensures that services are delivered with integrity and in accordance with best practices that honor Inuit traditions and values.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Effective feedback mechanisms are integral to the QA Framework. They allow for continuous input from all stakeholders, including children, youth, families, and community members. These mechanisms are designed to be inclusive and culturally sensitive, ensuring that all voices are heard and respected. The feedback collected is used to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to service delivery.
- **Continuous improvement** is another cornerstone of the QA framework. By regularly assessing performance against established standards, organizations can identify gaps and promptly implement corrective actions. This ongoing evaluation and refinement process helps keep services relevant, effective, and responsive to the changing needs of children and families while always considering the cultural implications of these changes.

Implementing the QA framework enhances the critical elements of governance/accountability, training/development, and recruitment/retention, ensuring that services are delivered efficiently and responsively to the community's needs. Strengthening governance and accountability provides clear standards and expectations, which support staff development and promote professional growth. A focus on training/development equips the workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality services. Additionally, the framework enhances recruitment/retention by identifying and addressing inefficiencies, optimizing the use of resources, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

By embedding these critical elements into service delivery, the QA framework ensures that Child and Family Services in Nunavut care provided with the highest level of care while respecting and integrating Inuit traditions and values.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential to ensuring that the QA Framework for Child and Family Services in Nunavut operates at the highest standards. The M&E processes are designed to track service quality, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that services are delivered effectively and consistently. By establishing clear performance indicators, conducting

regular audits, implementing robust feedback mechanisms, and assessing the quality of care, the framework ensures that services meet the needs of children, youth, and families.

# 6.6 Key Components of the M&E Framework

#### Table 6:

Key Components of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

M&E Element	Description	Purpose	Key Activities
Performance Indicators	Quantifiable measures that assess various aspects of service delivery, such as safety, well-being, and client satisfaction.	To continuously assess service quality and identify areas for improvement.	<ul> <li>Establishing clear indicators.</li> <li>Regular monitoring to assess service effectiveness.</li> <li>Identifying areas needing intervention.</li> </ul>
Service Audits	Objective reviews of service delivery processes and outcomes to ensure compliance with established standards.	To maintain high service quality and identify areas for enhancement.	<ul> <li>Conducting comprehensive audits covering all service delivery aspects.</li> <li>Reviewing compliance and identifying potential improvements.</li> </ul>
Feedback Mechanisms	Channels for stakeholders, including children, families, and community members, to share their experiences and offer input on service delivery.	To ensure services are responsive to the needs and expectations of the community.	<ul> <li>Analyzing feedback trends</li> <li>Informing service improvements based on stakeholder input.</li> </ul>
Serious Occurrence Reviews	Multidisciplinary reviews of serious occurrences and fatalities to identify systemic issues and prevent future incidents.	To prevent similar incidents and improve service safety and effectiveness.	<ul> <li>Conducting thorough reviews of incidents.</li> <li>Developing recommendations for prevention.</li> </ul>
File Reviews	Assessments of the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of case documentation.	To ensure all records meet the required standards and provide feedback for staff improvement.	<ul> <li>Reviewing case files.</li> <li>Providing feedback to staff.</li> <li>Guiding training and process improvements.</li> </ul>
Quality of Care Reviews	Evaluations of the overall effectiveness of services, focusing on safety, effectiveness, and quality of care provided to children and families.	To continuously enhance services to meet the highest standards of care.	<ul> <li>Conducting quality reviews.</li> <li>Developing and implementing improvement plans based on review findings.</li> </ul>

Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) is essential for measuring service quality and outcomes. KPIs are quantifiable measures that assess various aspects of service delivery, such as safety, well-being, and client satisfaction. Regular monitoring of these indicators allows for the continuous assessment of service quality and the identification of areas that may require intervention or improvement.

Regular auditing of services provides an objective review of service delivery processes and outcomes, ensuring compliance with established standards and identifying potential areas for enhancement. The audit process is comprehensive, covering all aspects of service delivery, and is essential for maintaining high service quality.

Regular feedback mechanisms provide a way for stakeholders, including children, families, and community members, to share their experiences and offer input on service delivery. This feedback is analyzed to identify trends and inform service improvements, ensuring that services are responsive to the needs and expectations of the community.

Additionally, the framework includes file reviews including comprehensive reviews of serious occurrences to identify systemic issues and prevent future incidents. The insights gained from these reviews are used to develop recommendations for preventing similar occurrences in the future.

Finally, quality of care reviews is conducted to assess the overall effectiveness of services. These reviews focus on the safety, effectiveness, and quality of care provided to children and families. The results are used to develop and implement improvement plans, ensuring that services are continuously enhanced to meet the highest standards.

The M&E framework for Child and Family Services in Nunavut must be a comprehensive system designed to ensure that services are delivered effectively and in line with established standards. Through continuous monitoring, regular audits, feedback mechanisms, and quality reviews, the framework promotes accountability, continuous improvement, and high-quality care for children, youth, and families.

# 6.7 Intersection with Matrix Case Management and Data System

The intersection between the Matrix Case Management and Data System and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms is important for the successful implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework. The Matrix system provides centralized data management, real-time monitoring, enhanced reporting, and feedback capabilities that support key functions such as tracking performance indicators, conducting audits, and analyzing stakeholder feedback.

Key points include:

- 4. **Data Integration:** The Matrix system centralizes data collection for KPIs and audits, ensuring all relevant data is systematically analyzed and easily accessible.
- 5. **Real-Time Monitoring:** The system supports real-time case management, enabling timely interventions and continuous improvement through up-to-date information.
- 6. **Enhanced Reporting and Feedback:** The system's reporting capabilities facilitate comprehensive feedback collection and analysis, ensuring stakeholder insights are acted upon.
- 7. **Alignment of Timelines:** Coordinated development timelines for M&E mechanisms and the Matrix system are essential to avoid delays and ensure seamless integration.
- 8. **Training and Capacity Building:** Comprehensive staff training is necessary to effectively use the Matrix system in M&E processes.
- 9. **Continuous Improvement:** Feedback loops within the system help refine tools and processes for continuous improvement.

By aligning these systems and processes, the Department can enhance data integration, real-time monitoring, and reporting, supporting a responsive and effective child protection system in Nunavut.

## **Continuous Improvement in Training and Development**

Continuous improvement in training and development is essential to ensuring that staff within Child and Family Services in Nunavut are adequately prepared to meet the challenges of child protection and family wellness. The current training framework, which includes CORE training, has laid a strong foundation by establishing critical standards of practice. However, there is a need to expand and refine this framework to fully address the comprehensive training requirements necessary for effective service delivery.

The enhanced training program will be designed to be thorough and responsive, ensuring that all staff are equipped with the essential skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively. A dedicated team of training specialists will be responsible for developing and disseminating these programs, ensuring that they are continuously updated to reflect new policies, practices, and cultural insights.

Foundations Training includes orientation to the *Child and Family Services Act*, familiarization with regional office operations, and an introduction to Inuit cultural practices. This training ensures that new staff members understand the legal and cultural context of their work, laying the groundwork for effective practice.

Essential Skills and Competency Training builds on this foundation with detailed modules such as Trauma-Informed Care, which equips staff to recognize and respond to the impacts of trauma, and Best Practices in Child Protection, which teaches effective strategies for protecting vulnerable children. Another key component is Inuit Cultural Competence training, which ensures staff can deliver culturally appropriate services by understanding and respecting Inuit values and traditions.

Advanced Training further enriches this program by offering specialized modules that prepare staff for handling complex cases and leadership roles. For instance, staff receive Forensic Interviewing training to develop legally sound and effective techniques for gathering evidence, and Advanced Case Management training, which focuses on sophisticated assessment, planning, and intervention strategies. Other examples include Crisis Intervention and De-escalation training, which equips staff with techniques to manage high-stress situations, and Enhancing Cultural Safety in Practice, which ensures that staff can integrate cultural identities and practices into their service delivery. These advanced training opportunities are essential for staff who are ready to take on more challenging responsibilities and leadership roles within the organization.

Reflective practice and clinical supervision are also integral components of the training and development process. Regular clinical supervision sessions allow staff to reflect on their experiences, discuss challenges, and improve their skills in a supportive environment. Encouraging innovation through grants and an innovation lab further fosters a culture of continuous improvement and creativity, enabling staff to develop new solutions to complex problems.

The integration of technology such as digital tools and platforms can play a significant role in enhancing service delivery and training accessibility. These tools ensure that staff have the necessary resources to work efficiently and effectively, regardless of their location.

**Continuous Feedback and Evaluation** Training is also closely linked with recruitment and retention strategies, ensuring that new hires receive timely and comprehensive training aligned with their onboarding. This approach not only helps in managing the capacity needed for training but also supports retention by providing continuous professional development opportunities and addressing staff needs for career growth and advancement.

The training framework is tailored to various target groups within the Child and Family Services system, ensuring relevance and effectiveness across all roles. By implementing these strategies, the department can maintain high-quality service delivery and support staff development in a manner that is both culturally competent and responsive to the unique challenges of delivering services in Nunavut.

## **Strategic Recruitment and Retention**

Recruitment and retention of qualified staff are critical to the success of Child and Family Services in Nunavut, given the unique challenges of delivering services across the territory's diverse and remote communities. A strategic approach to attracting, maintaining, and appointing a skilled workforce is essential for ensuring consistent, high-quality care for children and families.

The importance of recruitment and retention cannot be overstated, as high turnover rates can severely disrupt services and negatively impact client well-being. A focused strategy is required not only to fill vacancies but also to build a stable and committed workforce capable of delivering the best possible care.

One key strategy is targeted recruitment, which emphasizes attracting individuals who are passionate about child protection and equipped to work in the challenging environment of Nunavut. Efforts to recruit local candidates are prioritized through partnerships with community organizations, local job centers, and educational institutions such as Nunavut Arctic College. Collaboration with the college's Social Service program ensures that training and curricula are aligned with the specific needs of Child and Family Services in Nunavut. Additionally, mentorship programs offer critical support for new hires, helping them integrate into the workplace and build long-term careers in the community.

National-level recruitment also plays a role, seeking out candidates from across Canada who are willing to relocate. Comprehensive relocation packages and ongoing support make the transition to Nunavut as smooth as possible for these individuals.

Retention is even more critical than recruitment, as it directly addresses the leading challenge of high staff turnover. Long-term employees provide consistency and reliability, developing deeper expertise and stronger relationships with the communities they serve. Strategies to retain staff include offering competitive compensation, creating a supportive work environment, and providing continuous professional development opportunities. Flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and clear career pathways further enhance job satisfaction and encourage staff to remain with the organization.

Mentorship programs are established, where experienced staff guide and support new hires, helping them adjust to their roles and fostering a sense of community within the organization. Regular recognition and reward programs are also implemented to boost morale and motivation, celebrating staff achievements and contributions.

The framework also emphasizes the importance of effective use of technology in recruitment and retention efforts. Digital platforms and online application systems streamline the hiring process, making it easier to reach a broader audience and providing timely feedback to applicants. Ultimately, a well-structured approach to recruitment, retention, and appointment is essential for maintaining a skilled and dedicated workforce in Nunavut's Child and Family Services. This approach ensures that services are delivered with the highest standards of quality, cultural relevance, and effectiveness, meeting the needs of children, families, and communities across the territory.

### **Risk Management**

Effective risk management is a critical component of ensuring that Child and Family Services in Nunavut can provide safe, effective, and continuously improving services. The risk management approach addresses various potential risk areas and outlines strategies for mitigating these risks, ensuring the framework operates smoothly and meets the needs of the community.

Key risk areas identified include service delivery challenges such as non-compliance with standards, inadequate training, and poor resource allocation, all of which can lead to inconsistent service quality. Mitigation strategies for these risks include conducting regular audits, implementing continuous training programs, and engaging in strategic resource planning to ensure quality service provision.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL RELIENCE

Risk management is the cornerstone of resilience, enabling us to foresee challenges, safeguard our mission, and foster ongoing growth and improvement

Cultural knowledge and integration are also crucial. The framework recognizes the risks associated with failing to incorporate Inuit knowledge and practices into service delivery, which could result in culturally inappropriate services. Strategies to address this include integrating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) principles into all standards and practices, providing comprehensive cultural competence training for staff, and engaging community elders in service planning and delivery.

Stakeholder engagement is emphasized as a vital aspect of the risk management process. Poor communication and inadequate stakeholder involvement can undermine the success of the QA framework. Mitigation strategies include establishing clear communication channels, holding regular stakeholder meetings, and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes.

Data management poses another significant risk, where inaccurate or incomplete data can lead to poor decision-making and ineffective service delivery. To mitigate these risks, the framework proposes implementing robust data management systems, conducting regular data audits, and ensuring compliance with data security regulations.

High staff turnover is identified as a risk that can disrupt service continuity and quality. To address this, the framework advocates for comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies, providing resources to manage workload and stress, and implementing mentorship and career development programs.

Resource constraints, including limited financial and human resources, are also highlighted as a risk that can impact the delivery of quality services. Strategic budget planning, advocating for increased funding, and efficient resource use are proposed as mitigation strategies.

The framework also considers the risks associated with changes in political leadership, which can create uncertainty and require strategic adjustments. Developing flexible plans, engaging proactively with new leadership, and maintaining comprehensive project documentation are recommended to ensure continuity and alignment with policy changes.

Finally, maintaining public trust and accountability is identified as essential. The framework highlights the importance of transparent communication, proactive response to public concerns, and close collaboration with the Representative for Children and Youth Office (RCYO) to address these risks effectively.

By addressing these potential risks and implementing the outlined mitigation strategies, the risk management framework ensures that Child and Family Services in Nunavut can operate effectively and continue to improve, providing high-quality, culturally sensitive services to the community.

# Appendix E: Change Management Framework

This section provides a summary of the comprehensive Change Management Framework and outlines the key elements and strategies designed to guide the implementation of the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan.

# 6.8 Purpose

The Change Management Framework is designed to improve the delivery of child and family services in Nunavut, ensuring these services are culturally relevant and aligned with the needs of Nunavummiut. The framework focuses on enhancing internal processes, strengthening organizational capacity, and incorporating Inuit societal values, particularly Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, into all aspects of service delivery. A core priority is ensuring that changes are implemented with accountability, through regular monitoring and evaluation, to achieve meaningful, long-term improvements.

Retention of staff is identified as essential for maintaining service continuity and quality. The framework aims to create a supportive and rewarding work environment that addresses the professional and personal needs of staff, thereby reducing turnover and enhancing job satisfaction.

The development of this framework was driven by significant challenges identified in the 2023 Auditor General's Report on Child and Family Services, which highlighted critical gaps in service delivery, staffing, training, and infrastructure within the Department of Family Services. In response to these challenges, the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan was developed to transform the child welfare system in Nunavut and better support children, youth, and families.

# 6.9 Approach

The framework is guided by Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, a well-established method for managing significant organizational changes. This approach ensures that transformation is achieved through clear steps, including setting a vision, removing obstacles, and embedding new practices into the organization's culture. The model emphasizes leadership, collaboration, and the need for sustained engagement to ensure successful outcomes.

# 6.10 Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders

Engagement with communities and other key stakeholders is a critical aspect of the framework. The plan emphasizes the importance of respecting Inuit rights and involving community members, organizations, and other partners in the decision-making process. Public engagement strategies include regular consultations, culturally relevant communications, and opportunities for feedback to ensure that services reflect the needs and values of the communities they serve.

# 6.11 Vision and Goals

The Change Management Framework supports the Ilagiitsiarniq Plan's vision to create a child and family welfare system that is sustainable, culturally relevant, and effective. Key goals include:

- Improving Organizational Efficiency: Streamlining operations and enhancing the capabilities of staff to better serve the community.
- Child and Family Support: Ensuring timely and culturally appropriate support for children and families across Nunavut.
- Cultural Relevance: Integrating Inuit societal values and cultural practices throughout all services and programs.
- Collaboration: Building strong partnerships with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to create a coordinated approach to service delivery.

# 6.12 Strategic Implementation and Communication

The framework follows a structured approach based on Kotter's model, emphasizing clear objectives, actions, and deliverables. The Communication Plan fosters transparency and collaboration by using newsletters, town hall meetings, and feedback mechanisms to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. Regular updates on progress and challenges are provided to build trust and support.

# 6.13 Training and Capacity Building

The framework includes comprehensive training programs to ensure staff are equipped with the skills necessary for implementing changes. Training is designed to enhance organizational performance, integrate Inuit societal values, and support continuous improvement. A training needs assessment is conducted to identify skill gaps, and programs are offered through a mix of in-person workshops, online modules, and mentorship programs.

# **6.14 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

The framework includes a commitment to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the changes being implemented are effective and sustainable. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will track progress, while regular reporting will ensure transparency. This approach supports continuous improvement, allowing for adjustments to be made as needed to meet the evolving needs of Nunavut's communities. Finally, the fully developed Monitoring and Evaluation plan will emphasize the importance of long-term monitoring to track the sustainability and impact of changes over time. This includes embedding successful practices into the organization's standard operating procedures and continuously building the capacity of staff and stakeholders to support sustained improvements.

# 6.15 Risk Management

The framework also includes proactive measures to identify and address potential risks to the success of the initiatives. By regularly reviewing progress and maintaining open communication with stakeholders, the Department can address challenges promptly and ensure smooth implementation.

# 6.16 Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

The Change Management Framework provides a structured and culturally sensitive approach to transforming child and family services in Nunavut. By aligning services with Inuit values, engaging communities, and ensuring transparency and accountability, the framework supports lasting, positive change for the well-being of Nunavut's families and communities.

# 6.17 Integration of Change Management and Quality Management Frameworks

The integration of the Change Management Framework with the Quality Management Framework is crucial for the successful transformation of Child and Family Services in Nunavut. These frameworks, while distinct in their focus, work together to ensure comprehensive and sustainable improvements in service delivery and organizational effectiveness.

The Change Management Framework is designed to guide the Division of Family Wellness through the necessary transitions to implement the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan. It provides a structured approach to managing changes, ensuring that they are executed smoothly and effectively. This framework emphasizes stakeholder engagement, addressing resistance to change, and ensuring that changes are sustainable by embedding them into the organizational culture and practices.

#### SEAMLESS INTEGRATION

Successful organizations achieve greater efficiency, impactful outcomes, and lasting resilience by seamlessly integrating efforts to address complex challenges.

On the other hand, the Quality Management Framework focuses on maintaining high standards of service delivery by establishing clear performance metrics, promoting continuous improvement, ensuring compliance and accountability, and managing risks associated with service delivery. This framework supports the ongoing evaluation and refinement of services, ensuring they remain responsive to the community's needs and challenges.

The integration of these frameworks ensures that changes are not only implemented effectively but also meet the highest standards of quality. This synergy is achieved through collaborative planning and execution, where the objectives of the Change Management Framework are aligned with the quality standards of the Quality Management Framework. The integration of these frameworks supports the continuous cycle of evaluation, refinement, and optimization of changes based on performance assessments and stakeholder feedback.



