



A Principle-Based, Culturally-Rooted Framework for Assessing Child and Youth Well-Being:

Measuring Impact Across the Child and Family Service Continuum



Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

ALIGN Association of Community Services (ALIGN) asked us at PolicyWise for Children & Families (PolicyWise) to develop a framework and toolkit to support child and family service providers in Alberta to measure their impact on child well-being. This work builds on a [model of child well-being](#) we previously co-developed.

The framework and toolkit will support AGENCIES to...

- Assess well-being outcomes and agency practices in a culturally responsive way.
- Assess child and youth well-being in the context of children’s relationships with caregivers and agency staff that support them.
- Centre assessment and evaluation on growth and strengths.
- Understand their progress in supporting well-being from year to year.

The framework and toolkit will support ALIGN and THE SECTOR to...

- Create a provincial story of agency impact on well-being.
- Foster community, relationship, and reflection across agencies.
- Build consistency in defining, assessing, and showcasing agency impact on child well-being.
- Collect, track, and share aggregate data to improve practice and decision-making.

Our Journey of Learning

To conduct this work, we prioritized engagement with Indigenous practitioners and Elders, diverse agencies, and youth and caregivers with lived experience accessing services. In addition, we reviewed academic and practice-based literature to understand principles of culturally responsive measurement, and indicators and assessments that align with the previously created well-being model. Key activities were:

Understanding Principles of Measurement

We reviewed literature on measuring well-being and engaged a range of experts, including youth and caregivers with lived experience, frontline staff, and Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Using a reflective, iterative approach to analysis, we developed a framework of measurement principles and workshopped it with 80 ALIGN member agencies.

Identifying Indicators of Well-Being

During the above process, we extracted 900 well-being related indicators from 19 sources. Our list included indicators related to children and youth but also caregivers, staff, agencies, and communities. We synthesized the indicators, collapsing similar ones together and removing those out of scope. We hosted

engagement activities to contextualize indicators according to how child and family service agencies use and value them in practice.

**Compiling
Assessments of
Well-Being**

We explored what measures and tools ALIGN members currently use to assess their impact on child, youth, and family well-being, and collected well-being assessments in the literature review. These assessments were filtered by their relevancy to the well-being domains, accessibility for agencies, and alignment with measurement principles.

**Designing a Process
to Share Agency
Impact and Create a
Provincial Story**

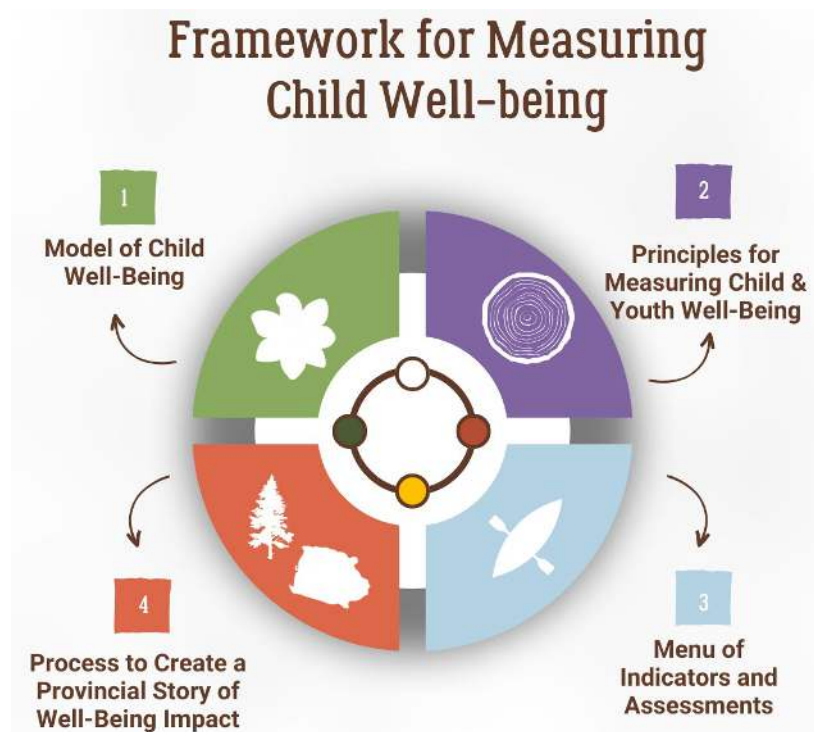
We engaged with Elders and Knowledge Keepers to explore what a collective process could look like to gather agency-level experiences into a provincial story of impact. This provided us with guiding stories to design an agency self-assessment process for each well-being domain as well as a provincial summary of sector impact.

**Understanding
Implementation
Considerations**

We engaged ALIGN member agency staff to review a draft measurement framework and supporting toolkit, and to understand what would be needed to support using them in practice.

A Framework for Measuring Well-Being in Child and Family Services

The measurement framework has four components:



1: Model of Child Well-Being

The model of child well-being defines and understand child and youth well-being based on the perspectives and values of culturally diverse communities. It consists of seven domains of child and youth well-being: caring and stable relationships, supportive and safe environments, sense of identity and autonomy, cultural connection, healthy development and growth, connection to the land, and meaningful knowledge. These domains are underpinned by four foundational principles: multidimensional and interconnected, ecological and relational, equitable access and social structure, and strengths-based and trauma-informed. For the full description of the model see [Defining Child Well-Being Across the Continuum of Children’s Services](#).

2: Principles for Measuring Child and Youth Well-Being

Creating individualized indicators means partnering with youth, family, and caregivers to understand context and develop indicators meaningful to them. It means building trust relationships, asking questions for deep understanding, and taking a non-judgemental approach to diverse perspectives.

Committing to action and accountability includes situating well-being assessment within relationships between agency staff and youth, families, communities, as well as funders. It means cultivating trust and hope by sharing back assessments and making decisions together about further actions and supports.

Recognizing staff capacity and well-being means supporting staff wellness and capacity to nurture trusting relationships with youth and families in assessments. It also includes situating organizational values and leadership within evaluation to understand alignment with families’ and communities’ goals for well-being, and centering relationships as a goal of practice.

Understanding change as ongoing and dynamic means assessing child and youth well-being over time to recognize impact and sustainable changes. It includes recognizing that both youth and staff capacity for change is dynamic and that what is “good enough” vs. optimal well-being needs careful consideration for each individual. It is important to celebrate progress, small changes, and the ability to adapt.

Leading with curiosity and recognizing strengths means using a trauma-informed approach that suspends judgement, reflects on individual gifts and growth, and provides courage and safety to share openly. It is rooted in the idea that “what you focus on expands.”

Committing to decolonizing practices means reflecting and recognizing where dominant culture and power relationships impact how we gather and interpret feedback. It means respecting Indigenous sovereignty over how well-being is defined, lived, and measured according to teachings.

Centering interconnectedness and relationships means considering how relationships and connectedness shape identity and reality to understand impact and change in well-being. This includes focusing well-being assessment on the interconnectedness of roles, knowledge, and agency of caregivers, extended family, ancestors, natural environment, and community.

3: Menu of Indicators and Assessments

The menu includes 423 indicators, organized by the seven domains of well-being. For each domain, agencies can choose from example indicators for child and youth outcomes, caregiver outcomes, and agency and staff efforts as well as outcomes. We complemented indicators from the literature by generating indicators based on lived experience shared with us by youth and caregivers as well as agencies serving children and families from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs. To build on the excellent work agencies are already doing, we included 18 commonly used assessment tools that align with the domains and principles.

4: Process to Create a Provincial Story of Well-Being Impact

This process brings diverse ways of evaluating and validating impact on child well-being together to showcase the work done by agencies and assess how the overall child welfare sector is progressing as a whole. We learned from Elders and Indigenous practitioners about how stories help us learn from one another. We heard about the winter count that brings past and present together through story and focuses on thriving through difficulty. We learned about lobstersticks as wayfinding markers as a context setter for agencies to talk about where they are at in supporting well-being. Grounded in these guiding stories, we developed a process to creating an overview of child well-being and sector impact that allows agencies to build on what they are already doing, incorporate components of the framework at their own pace, and still contribute to a provincial story.

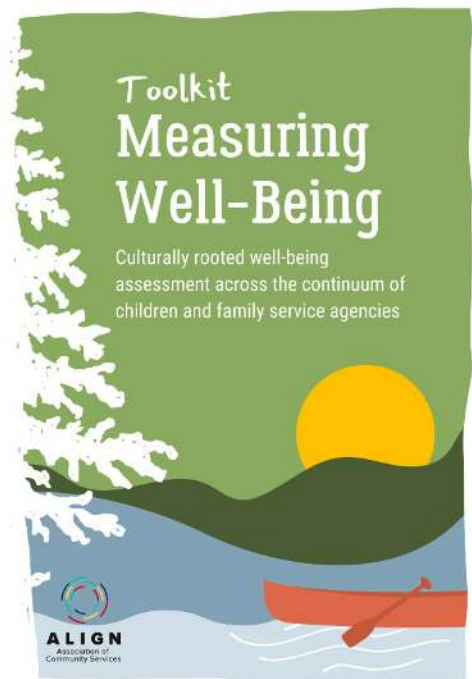
The process consists of two parts: wayfinding with lobstersticks for each well-being domain that includes story telling and self-rating, and the winter count as a collective oral process.

Measurement Toolkit

We designed a practice-focused toolkit to support agency staff and leadership to implement the well-being framework and share the impact of their work. It provides implementation guidance on:

- Understanding the model of child well-being
- Applying well-being measurement principles
- Using outcomes, indicators, and assessment tools aligning with the well-being model
- Adopting a process for sharing impacts and contributing to a provincial overview of sector impact
- Using resources to support agency capacity

The toolkit accounts for contextual factors, is reflective of diverse ways of being and knowing, and grounded in Indigenous perspectives as parallel approaches to validating



practice. We designed the toolkit so that agencies can incorporate and adapt components at their own pace, as their capacity allows and as they become relevant and helpful to their practice.

Implementation Considerations

We identified five core processes that will support implementation of the framework:

Transform the toolkit into an online tool and pilot it. To enhance user friendliness, we propose transforming the PDF toolkit created for this project into an online tool. All information would be accessible and navigable online with the ability to enter data and access a provincial level dashboard with annual aggregate data stories. To test and fine tune the toolkit, we suggest piloting it with a small group of agencies who can apply and adapt it to their context and needs.

Establish shared understanding of the purpose and value of the framework and toolkit.

Current perspectives on the toolkit's value varied. Some agency staff noted that it supports consistency in defining well-being, supports their work with Indigenous families, and provides opportunity to better share agency impact externally. Others shared concerns about duplication of existing frameworks and adding to reporting requirements. Having trusted and relatable individuals in the sector share how this toolkit is unique and adds value will support building a shared understanding among agency staff, funders, and others.

Create implementation supports to build connections and relationships. At an agency level, a community of practice would provide staff with peer support and opportunity to build an informal network of practitioners also using the toolkit. Supports could help agencies build stronger processes for involving children, youth, and families in providing feedback on outcomes and impact. As well, the process designed to create a provincial story of impact could involve youth and families, as well as board directors and funders, so they can hear stories of impact directly. Across agencies, the community of practice would support connections between agencies serving diverse populations and allow for sharing opportunities to deepen cultural understanding.

Support alignment of current evaluation and reporting practices with adoption of toolkit. The toolkit was designed so agencies could adopt some or all of the measurement components depending on their capacity. Implementation support could involve training on how to use the toolkit, including using the community of practice to help design and test a training approach. As well, there is opportunity to design an online platform for entering and sharing back data by agency and across the sector to support agencies' goals for showcasing their work and impact.

Capture and track progress. Once agencies start using the toolkit, it will be important to track what is working and where additional or different supports are needed. Again, the community of practice can be a platform for sharing successes and challenges, strategies, processes, and insights to continually improve the toolkit, support ongoing implementation, and increase consistency. An online tool as described above will support tracking and give information about how many agencies participated, how many domains they entered data for, as well as what the stories of impact and the self-rating reveal about progress.

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Introduction

How Do We Measure Child Well-Being?

“The way the sun comes up in the morning sheds light on so much knowledge for us every day. And so, the way a question is asked will shed knowledge on what is part of our world. Then we don't have to talk about deficits or strengths because once the sun knows, we'll know which ones are making us feel courageous, or giving us the courage to be kind and to share, to be humble and not afraid of truth, and we'll take responsibility for our truth.”

– Elder during virtual gathering

Asking the right questions and together with children, families, and staff identifying the signs that well-being is supported is a powerful way to learn about what works well, identify areas for improvement, and make decisions about program development and funding allocation.

Agencies across Alberta provide valuable services and programs to support well-being for children, youth, and families. Agencies want to show the impact of their work in ways that reflect what is meaningful to the families they serve. While some have the capacity to do research, evaluation, and publish their impact, many are small and need all their staff running programs, with little time for additional evaluation work. Agencies already collect and report data in ways determined by funders and accreditation bodies. The required reporting metrics may not capture the full extent of the positive impact of agencies' work on culturally diverse children and families¹ and are not able to capture complex relationships between variables². Additionally, this current system lacks the capability to aggregate impact across different programs and agencies within the province, to track progress over time, or to share data back to agencies. This limits knowledge about child and youth well-being across the continuum of services, and about what works and why across diverse programs and families.

In Alberta, funders increasingly accept stories in reporting and recognise that Indigenous research and knowledge sharing looks different from Western approaches. At the same time, there is a need to deepen the understanding of the worldviews and epistemologies that shape Indigenous wisdom seeking, and to respect those on their own, without translation into Western models and metrics.¹ Agencies working with other marginalized, ethnocultural communities echo this need and call for more meaningful, culturally-rooted, and de-colonized approaches to measuring well-being.³

Project Description

In response to these challenges, ALIGN is leading a 3-year study on how to define, put into practice, and measure well-being in services for children and families. The goal is to develop a framework for measuring child well-being that is culturally-rooted and provides a common language to aggregate data and collectively showcase the work of agencies across the province. ALIGN contracted us, PolicyWise for Children & Families (PolicyWise), to lead the research for this work. In Year 1 we developed a model of

child well-being,¹ that describes seven domains and four foundational principles. This report completes Year 2 of the project, in which we continued our relationships with the Advisory Committee, the group of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, the youth councils, and agencies, to co-develop:

1. **A principle-based framework for measuring child well-being** that centres Indigenous perspectives on supporting well-being, creates space for diverse ways of being and knowing, and respects oral methods of validating impact.
2. **A measurement toolkit** that supports agencies in implementing the framework and enables them to report consistently about their impact on well-being in each of the seven domains, and collectively create a provincial story of impact.

The framework has four components:

1. The model of child well-being created in Year 1 of the project.
2. A set of principles for measuring child and youth well-being.
3. A menu of indicators to assess child and youth outcomes, caregiver outcomes, and agency and staff effort, including references to accessible and commonly used assessment tools.
4. A process for child and family-serving agencies to share their well-being outcomes and impact and for ALIGN to collectively create a provincial, sector-level story of impact.

The toolkit is designed to support agencies to implement the framework at their own pace and according to their unique contexts and populations. Using the toolkit, agencies will be able to:

- Assess well-being outcomes and agency practice in a culturally responsive way.
- Assess child and youth well-being in the context of their relationships with caregivers and with the staff and agencies that support them.
- Centre assessment and evaluation on what is growing well-being.
- Foster community, relationship, and reflection across agencies.
- Build consistency in defining, assessing, and sharing agencies' impact on well-being of diverse children and youth.
- Support ALIGN to collect, track over time, and share back aggregate data to showcase agencies' work, inform decisions, and improve practice.

In this report, we summarize our research findings and how those shaped the development of the framework and toolkit.

How Do We Know that Wellness is Growing for Children and Youth?

We begin by connecting to the teachings we received from Elders and Knowledge Keepers to assist us in understanding and knowing that wellness is growing within our children, youth, families, and our

¹ For the model of child well-being, see [Defining Well-Being Across the Continuum of Children's Services: Environmental Scan Report 2022](#)

communities. We will know that wellness is growing for our children and youth when we find ourselves listening, watching, and acknowledging the fact that we need to sometimes be the student, the learner. The understanding created here shaped our work in developing the framework and toolkit.

Western ways of measurements do not always capture true impact and certainly do not capture cultural impact. True impact lies within those we serve, it lies within their voices, within their stories, and it is up to us to create the ethical space for that to truth to be spoken. When we are able to do this in a culturally appropriate way, where those we serve feel safe, heard, and respected, wellness for our children and youth will emerge. We will know that wellness is growing when the euro-centric ideologies and western tools of measurement and evaluation take a back seat to our Indigenous Oral Truthing and Validation ceremonies. Our hope is the development of this framework and toolkit will be the stepping stones to that vision.

– Kirby Redwood, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner

Wellness is relational. Community well-being shapes child and youth well-being, and vice versa.

If our communities and our families within those communities are doing well, you know, that's the soil that our children will grow up in. And it just optimizes those conditions for them to grow up in wellness as well.

– Cheryl Whiskeyjack, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner

How do we know that the youth are moving towards wellness, if we're not? Or how do we know if the youth are moving towards wellness, if we're not listening and present with that conversation? It's relational, it's relationship with others, ourselves, mother earth, & Creator, it's Wahkohtowin,² and so we have to constantly remind ourselves and ground ourselves within our natural laws of Wahkohtowin, that that is a significant part of this process and this transition.

– Kirby Redwood, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner

It's important to come from a place of strength, rather than a perspective of deficit.

The way the sun comes up in the morning sheds light on so much knowledge for us every day. And so, the way a question is asked will shed knowledge on what is part of our world. Then we don't have to talk about deficits or strengths because once the sun knows, we'll know which ones are making us feel courageous, or giving us the courage to be kind and to share, to be humble and not afraid of truth, and we'll take responsibility for our truth.

– Elder during virtual gathering

² Cree and Métis principle. For more information see Miskanawah Annual Report: <https://miskanawah.ca/annual-report>

I think in a Western way of languaging things, we say, you know, we're moving towards wellness. But I think we need to challenge the assumption behind that, that you're moving away from badness and that, that languaging bothers me a lot, and that feels like we come from a place of deficit, as opposed to a place of strength.

– Ralph Bodor, individual with specialized knowledge around Indigenous approaches and considerations towards well-being

Wellness is revealed through people's language, in the stories they tell, the questions they ask and the words they use.

It's the story about the individual, and the environment, and the family, that you hear within all of that, that really determines where is that person, where's that person come from and where are they going now? And I would hope that every time I see them, the story changes. I don't say, tell me how well you are, between one and five. I say, tell me where you're at today. Tell me your story, right?

– Kerrie Moore, MSW RSW, Métis and Cree Elder

I'm always interested in their relationship, whether they use relationship words or just talking about things like they're dead. So, if the people asking the question say, 'well, I use the environment as a tool, a therapeutic tool,' that makes our Earth sound like she's dead. But if they ask about the individual or the family's relationship with Earth or those in the sky, then that sounds different than saying, 'I use it as a tool.' So, I listen to wording like that.

– Beverly Keeshig-Soonias, Elder

What I'm looking for in that story is the pride that the individual or the family are talking about, and they may not say I feel proud of who I am, but you can tell in the story and what they're telling you that they want to be where they're at, they want to be connected. And they're proud of being where they're at. And you can hear that in that story.

– Kerrie Moore, MSW RSW, Métis and Cree Elder

Project Approach

Our Values and Intentions

We live and work on the traditional and ancestral territory of many First Nations of Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8, and Treaty 10, and the Métis Nation of Alberta Regions 1 to 6 who have lived in and created well-being interconnected with the land, communities, and the teachings of ancestors for generations. This toolkit was developed on this land and reflects our (see Box 1 for who we are) journey of learning, sharing, and walking alongside in respect of Indigenous Nations' self-determination in creating and validating well-being. We are grateful for the wisdom shared with us and the guidance we received in this work.

Alberta is on a path to recognizing and valuing the leadership of the Indigenous Nations in providing child and family services. As the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* recognizes and affirms the inherent jurisdiction of Nations over children and family services, many Nations will enact their own laws and processes to bring children home. This work was done in hope of supporting agencies in their role in the transition of bringing children back to their Nation's care. It was important to us to conduct this work recognizing different Nations' self-determination in defining and measuring well-being. Métis and Cree Elder Kerrie Moore, MSW RSW, explained:

We want to create a circle that Indigenous people lead and welcome people in. You must have the Indigenous people leading it, even when they are talking to other diverse groups. Because the Indigenous people are the ones that know how to create wellbeing and balance with Mother Earth here in this territory. And it would be nice to know how other people create wellness and relationship with the territory they come from.

Box 1: Who are "We"?

In this report, "we" stands for a small team of researchers at PolicyWise who worked on the framework and toolkit. We are multi-generation settler women with a desire to live, learn, and work with authenticity in our relationships and with respect of Indigenous ways of being and the land we are visitors to. We have academic training in public health and cultural anthropology but draw in our work on the insights from personal experiences of ceremony, teachings, and the relationships we have with Indigenous individuals and organizations.

Guiding concept of Indigenous-led circle of diverse ways of creating well-being. ALIGN has a vision to bring diverse agencies together as one voice so that children, families, and communities can thrive. As we conducted this work in collaboration with ALIGN, with Elders, agencies, and youth, our intentions were to create ethical space, honour Indigenous ways of being, knowing and sharing stories, and to respect the diversity within our province.

The concept of an Indigenous-led circle that invites diverse groups with unique ways of creating and understanding well-being into a relationship of mutual respect and accountability gave us direction on bringing different perspectives

together to create the framework and toolkit. This was essential as we navigated diversity in Indigenous Nations and Métis perspectives on experiencing the impact of historical and ongoing oppression, as well as the multiple ethnocultural communities that experience marginalization and trauma within systems of social and child welfare.

We learned about Indigenous ways of creating and validating knowledge and the need for respecting those in their own right, as parallels (see Box 2 for what we mean by parallels) to Western or academic methods, rather than expecting a translation into Western metrics and formats. We applied this thinking to our analysis, to how we present findings in this report, and how we included visual and oral options for sharing and learning information.

Co-development as ethical space. We looked at the development of the framework and toolkit as an ethical space⁴ (see Box 3 for our understanding of ethical space) that centres relationships and interaction of different worldviews and ways of knowing in mutual respect, kindness, and understanding. This aligns with an intercultural approach^{5,6} (see Box 4 for what we mean by intercultural) that organizations serving immigrant and marginalized communities advocate for. For our work, this meant de-centering dominant Western frameworks of measuring well-being and seeking out to learn more about Indigenous ways of knowing and validating practice as well as emerging practices using intercultural understanding to better serve children and families from diverse ethnocultural communities.

Box 2: What are Parallels?

“[...] Two distinct ways of knowing and respecting and honoring both separately and equally in parallel, so that we can avoid cultural confusion, that we're not trying to kind of override any other, but just honoring those Indigenous practices and understandings as equally important and valued as western practices and knowledge.”

- Daisy Giroux (Siksoopooaki - Driftpile Woman), United Way of Calgary and Area

Box 3: What is Ethical Space?

Introduced by Dr. Willie Ermine, ethical space is about an interaction between thought worlds or worldviews. A space where the uniqueness of each lens is respected and the strengths of each are elevated. It acknowledges bias, injustice, and conflict but aims to center shared values such as respect, trust, humility, and responsibility.

Centering what grows well-being. An important value that resonated throughout our work was shifting our focus away from what is lacking in well-being to what is growing and nurturing well-being.⁷⁻⁹ This idea shaped all components of the work, from the well-being domains to principles for measurement, selection of indicators, and designing the process for agencies to share their findings and create a provincial story of impact.

Validating learnings with prayer and smudge. These values shaped our work and grew out of the many conversations opened with smudge and guided by Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We thank Elders Phillip Campiou, Beverly Keeshig-Soonias, Kerrie Moore, and Knowledge Keeper Frank Shannon who opened and closed our Advisory Committee Meetings, many of our engagement sessions with agencies, and gatherings with a story, a prayer, and sometimes a song. They reminded us again and again of the intention of this work, helped us think of well-being as something that grows, that is about the spirit and the gift of each child, and that is about community and all of us who are part of the child's life.

Box 4: What Does Intercultural Mean?

An understanding of the social positions, practices and power relations of sociocultural difference understood by individuals or groups within a society. It implies collaboration and a quest for mutual understanding between cultures.

We thank Knowledge Keepers and practitioners Cheryl Whiskeyjack and Kirby Redwood who shared their vast experience and kept the smudge going in all our meetings and conversations so that we all could work together in a good way for the benefit of the children and families served. We also thank Elders and Knowledge Keepers who have shared their insights and shaped this work: Dr. Leona Makokis, Dr. Ralph Bodor, Adrian Goulet, Sharon Goulet, and other who chose to not be named.

Finally, we thank Yvonne Chiu and Hannah Goa who have passionately contributed how diverse ethnocultural communities create well-being and what matters in assessing well-being for marginalized members of communities within the larger context of systems, history, and socio-political circumstances.

Our Journey of Learning

Centering relationships and learning, we followed an open-ended, iterative approach. We could not have imagined how the framework and toolkit would look like at the beginning of Year 2. While we used current research and practice-based literature as a starting point for our understanding, Year 2 was strongly guided by relationships, conversations, and the lived experience of our partners. Figure 3 outlines the different engagements that shaped our journey of Year 2. As our understanding within the space of different ontologies and epistemologies evolved,¹⁰ so did our methods, approaches, and decisions in developing the framework and toolkit. For example, we learned about the importance of oral processes in sharing knowledge and decided to co-produce videos that allow for Indigenous practitioners and youth as well as those serving youth from ethnocultural communities to share their experiences and thoughts through storytelling (see Box 5). The knowledge we gathered was validated

through protocol and contextualized iteratively through further conversations and feedback sessions. This meant staying flexible and shifting data collection and directions depending on what we learned, and going back to agencies, to the youth, to the Elders a second time to validate, fill gaps, and to contextualize with their expertise and lived experience.

All research and engagement activities aimed to answer five research questions:

1. What is important about how we measure child well-being? What are the principles that should guide measurement and evaluation?
2. How do we know that well-being is growing? What indicators align with the seven domains of child well-being?
3. What assessments and tools are available that align with both the domains of well-being and the principles for measurement.
4. How would a process for sharing back and aggregating findings look like to create a provincial overview of child well-being and sector impact?
5. What will it take for agencies to put the measurement framework into practice and implement the toolkit?

The findings to these questions shaped the three components of the framework that were the focus on Year 2. Table 1 outlines the data sources for each of these research questions. We briefly describe our approach to answering each question below. See Appendix A for full details on our methods.

Table 1. Data sources for each research question

Project Phase	Research and Practice Literature Review and Interviews	Engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Advisory Committee	Youth and Family Engagement	Agency Staff Engagement (Surveys, Member Meetings, Co-Creation Session)
Understanding principles of measurement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identifying indicators of well-being	✓	✓		✓	✓
Compiling assessments of well-being	✓		✓		✓
Designing a process for agencies to share their impact and collectively create a provincial story	✓	✓			✓
Understanding implementation considerations	✓	✓	✓		✓

Understanding Principles for Measurement

Data collection. To understand what is important about how we measure well-being, we wanted to hear from a wide range of experts including youth and caregivers with lived experience, frontline staff, and Elders and Knowledge Keepers. See Appendix A for a full description of engagement and participants. We gathered perspectives on principles for assessing well-being in interviews with thought leaders in child welfare across the country, focus groups with youth and families, and gatherings with Elders and Knowledge Keepers from different Nations in Alberta. To reach a broader range of

"How are you going to better the system if you're not asking those who grew up in the system? "

- Youth commenting on importance of involving young people in evaluation

agencies, we conducted a survey with ALIGN member agencies to learn what they consider principles in their approach to measurement. See Appendix B for survey results.

We also reviewed academic and practice-based literature including systematic reviews, measurement frameworks, and strategic policy documents to identify underlying principles currently used or recommended for child welfare evaluation practice. See Appendix E for a full list of included documents. Mindful to de-centre the dominance of Western academic frameworks, we intentionally sought out literature by Indigenous scholars and Indigenous-led agencies. Additionally, we searched for literature describing intercultural approaches to measuring well-being and evaluating program impact with culturally diverse communities.

Analysis. Our analysis began with reading through transcripts and documents and highlighted any mentions of fundamental assumptions about the How, the Why, the What, and the with Who of evaluation. That resulted in 255 references. We reviewed these and coded each one for their topic, importance to our framework and any patterns. We analyzed the data sources separately to preserve any unique findings and nuances for the voices of youth, agencies and practitioners, Indigenous practitioners and Elders, and researchers.

Our team held multiple reflective sessions where we collectively made sense of the patterns in the data and explored common principles and unique nuances in meaning from the different data sources. Using the Indigenous-led circle as a guiding metaphor, we placed our purpose of measuring the seven well-being domains in the centre of a circle and considered different voices as distinct but not separate from each other to allow for creativity without merging in our common intention to meaningfully assess well-being. We workshopped this emerging framework of principles with 80 ALIGN members at the Member Meeting in April 2023. This allowed us to understand how the principles resonated for agency practice and what unique meanings and nuances are important in different agency contexts.

Identifying Indicators of Well-Being

Indicator sources. We extracted any mention of measures, metrics, indicators, or outcomes in relation to dimensions or realms of well-being from the literature, and engagement and interview transcripts. See Appendix E for a full list of literature reviewed. This resulted in an initial set of 900 indicators from 19 sources. We then sorted indicators into the seven domains of well-being, and filtering out any indicators that were repeated, out of scope or not in alignment with our principles of assessment. Most excluded indicators were primarily ruled out because they presented narrow views of health and well-being or focused on deficits. The process of filtering indicators based on principles and the sorting of the remaining indicators into domains was done collectively as a team.

Once divided into domains, we began grouping indicators with similar themes or topics together into sub-categories that align with the domain aspects from the model of child well-being from Year 1. We also began organizing the indicators across the ecological levels, creating sets of indicators for children and youth, caregivers, staff and agencies, and community. We chose to expand the indicators beyond the child and youth indicators to align with our principles of centering interconnectedness and relationships and recognizing staff capacity and well-being, both of which acknowledges that well-being is shaped and changed by the people and systems around us.

Contextualizing indicators. The ALIGN member meeting was an opportunity to learn from agencies about the indicators across the domains of well-being they use and value in practice. We facilitated three activities (see Appendix A for more detail) to collect indicators for each domain and learn about how agencies measure these in their practice (see Figure 2). After the Member meeting we hosted further engagement sessions with youth and caregivers and agencies to fill gaps in the indicators across the seven domains and the four ecological levels. Specifically, we gathered input for indicators for the connection to land, identity and autonomy, and caring relationships domains and for staff and agency efforts.

Creating the menu of indicators Once data collection on indicators was completed, as a team we systematically synthesized them, collapsing similar indicators together, identifying repeating indicators across domains, and removing out of scope indicators. We rephrased all indicators to have person-centered language to create consistency and place emphasis on the individual. The consistent phrasing of the indicators as a qualitative description of a concrete marker or sign supports agencies in adapting them to their unique needs, such as evaluating program impact or requiring quantitative outcomes.

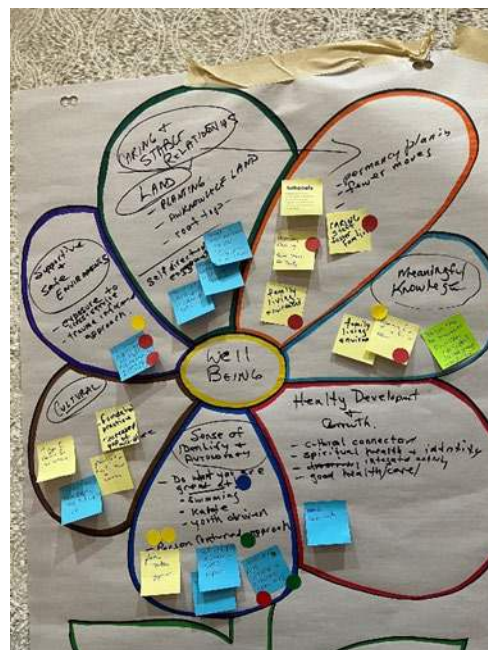


Figure 2. Agencies' suggestions for indicators and measures for each well-being domain

Compiling Assessments of Well-Being

We used the agency survey to understand what measures and tools ALIGN members currently use to assess their practice and impact on child, youth, and family well-being. See Appendix B for survey results and Appendix E for a list of literature reviewed. We also extracted well-being assessments from the literature review process and thought leader interviews. Assessments were filtered for their relevancy to the domains of well-being, accessibility for agencies, and alignment with assessment principles.

Designing a Process for Agencies to Share Their Impact and Collectively Create a Provincial Story

Our goals for designing a process to share back what agencies assess were to:

- Allow agencies to use what they are already doing and incorporate any component of the framework at their own pace and still be able to participate in creating a provincial overview of child well-being and sector impact
- Gather data for each well-being domain including stories
- Gather data for each well-being domain that can be aggregated in an automated way
- Facilitate the collective creation of a provincial story

It was important to us to create a space for stories of significant change or impact for each domain to capture important individual examples that may not represent outcomes across an agency. Further, stories can illustrate the complex interconnections between different aspects of service users' lives and agency efforts that a self-rating cannot capture.

We hosted a virtual gathering with five Elders and Knowledge Keepers as well as one individual session with an Elder to ask the question: What could a collective process to create a provincial story of impact on child well-being look like? These conversations provided us with the guiding stories to set the context of the self-assessment for each domain as well as a process to collectively create a provincial overview of sector impact.

Understanding Implementation Considerations

Practitioner feedback was key for helping us understand implementation considerations. We engaged ALIGN member agency staff in two virtual sessions to review the proposed components of the framework and toolkit, and to understand what they would need to use them in practice. This helped us identify what materials could be added and how to present information. We received invaluable guidance from the gathering participants on how to support agencies to share back their stories in order to create a provincial overview of sector impact, and to learn from one another.

Box 5: Co-producing videos with agencies and a funder to support understanding

To support implementation and emphasize oral processes to sharing knowledge, we co-produced videos with two agencies, Miskanawah and Multi-Cultural Health Brokers Co-operative, and one funder, United Way of Calgary and Area. The former exemplify how the domains of well-being and principles for measurement relate to the agencies' work and youth's experience of accessing the agencies' programs. The latter highlights a funder's journey to valuing oral practice in reporting and accountability.

See Appendix I for a list of videos.

Click [here to watch the videos](#).

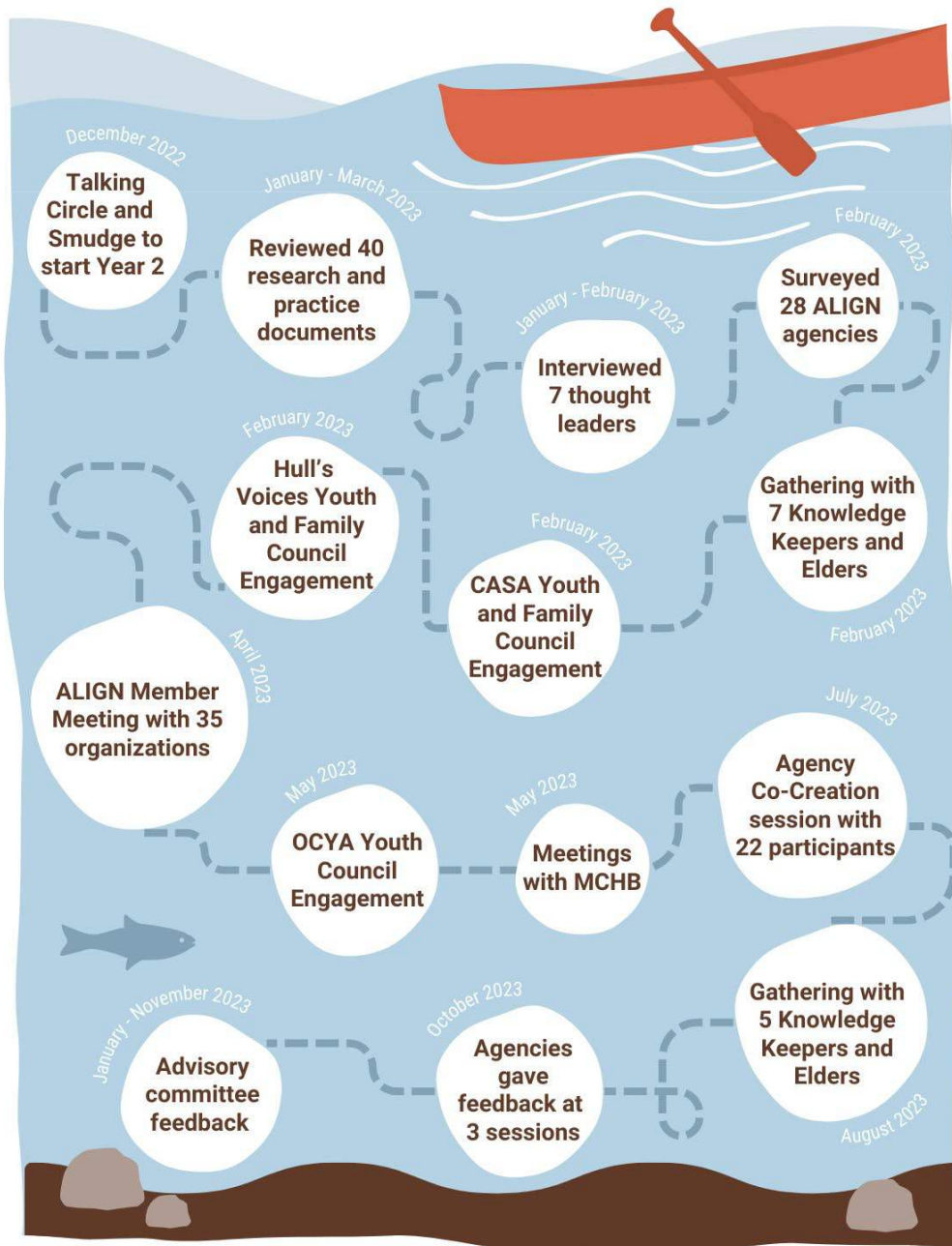


Figure 3. Our Journey of Learning through iterative engagement

Project Strengths and Limitations

This framework and toolkit are an important step towards changing how well-being is measured and respecting Indigenous ways of creating and validating wellness for children and families without requiring translation into Western metrics. The framework and toolkit will evolve and grow as agencies begin to use it, Nations begin to assume jurisdiction of welfare services, and we continue to learn how to assess and showcase impact across the province.

We realize that agencies are diverse in size and capacity and serve children and families from multiple cultural backgrounds and with varied and complex needs. We listened to understand those diverse contexts and heard clearly about how overstretched agencies already are. In our work to create something that every agency can find themselves in, utilize components at their own pace, and be true to the guiding values of this project, we realize this framework and toolkit is one of the many steps towards a goal and will need to evolve.

There are three main limitations of our research.

1. Agency staff and leadership engagement. We encountered challenges in ensuring ongoing engagement with a broad array of voices involved in child well-being in Alberta. We recognize agencies are overstretched and overburdened. We responded by pivoting our approach and changing engagement timelines, but participation from agencies might still have been overrepresenting those with higher capacity.

2. Our team's exposure to ceremony and teachings. We recognize our team's limited capacity to travel and participate in ceremony to deepen our relationships and cultural understanding. We learned about opening and closing of virtual meetings, and appropriate protocol. However, meeting in-person and visiting Elders and Knowledge Keepers was limited. In response, we created a working group at PolicyWise to reflect on and plan how we can better incorporate cultural learning, in-person experiences with ceremony and teachings, and relational accountability¹¹ (see Box 6 for a definition) from project inception, throughout the work, and beyond the end of a particular project.

3. Our use of language. We recognize how reality and meanings are intertwined with language and how the English language cannot appropriately translate Indigenous meanings. We heard from Indigenous Elders and practitioners from across Alberta and from different Nations and languages.

We chose not to use Indigenous words for different important concepts because of our limited capacity to do justice to the different languages in our region. We have added names of Elders to quotes so that

Box 6: Relational Accountability

Transmission and creation of knowledge is a sacred trust as that which is 'known' is carried on behalf of all those who have created the 'knowing'. Relational accountability lies at the core of this process. First, we create, form and commit to relationships – these relationships define who we are. It is to these relationships we are held accountable – we are part of our wisdom-seeking and everything we do must incorporate the principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility.

miyo Resource, 2019

the reader can learn about where the knowledge is coming from. In the indicators, we were careful to present concrete ceremonies or practices as examples, acknowledging the diversity of practices across different Nations. The language in this report is reflective of our learning and what we heard from people translating for us and for the diverse agencies who will use this framework and toolkit. We are aware that terms such as “de-colonization” or “resiliency” carry different meanings that not all agree upon. We added definitions to some of the terms to clarify what meaning we attached to them for this work.

A Framework for Measuring Child and Youth Well-Being

The framework for measuring child and youth well-being is the conceptual foundation for shifting measurement in child and family services to recognizing Indigenous ways of sharing and validating knowledge, to be culturally responsive to the diverse communities in Alberta, and towards greater consistency in measurement via a common language for defining and measuring well-being. The framework consists of the domains of child well-being³, the principles for measurement, the menu of indicators and assessments, and the process to create a provincial story of impact. The domains of well-being and principles for measurement were applied to select and generate the indicator menu, select relevant assessments, and co-design the process to create a provincial story of impact of the sector on child and youth well-being.

Principles for Measuring Child and Youth Well-Being

We identified seven principles (Figure 3) that resonated across literature and engagement with Indigenous Elders and practitioners, youth and caregivers, and diverse agencies. Our review underscored the underrepresentation of Indigenous-led knowledge and oral forms of sharing knowledge in the sector.¹² Research on intercultural understanding in child welfare and approaches to measurement is equally lacking. The research done with Indigenous communities strongly supported that there is no pan-Indigenous approach to defining and measuring well-being¹³ and that any indicators and approaches need to be driven by and grounded in each unique community’s context.^{8,12,14}

In the following we define each principle and describe some of nuances highlighted by different voices. Each principle is accompanied by a quote from a youth or caregiver describing examples for how the principle can be realized in practice.

³ The first component of the framework, the seven domains and four foundational principals of child and youth well-being, are detailed in the year 1 report [“Defining Well-Being Across the Continuum of Children’s Services Environmental Scan Report 2022”](#).



Figure 4. Principles for measuring child and youth well-being.

“I see the white in the north, red in the east, yellow is south and green in the west. Those are my teachings, that is the way we hang our cloth, our offerings, when we enter into the sweat lodge.”

- Kirby Redwood, Cree-Saulteaux Knowledge Keeper and practitioner

The bird’s eye view of a tree shows the seven interconnected principles for measuring the seven domains of child and youth well-being. The outer circle represents an Indigenous-led process inclusive of the following voices: Indigenous partners, youth and family, researchers, and community practitioners.

Creating individualized indicators means “doing with” – it involves partnering with youth, family, caregivers, community to understand context and develop indicators that are meaningful to them. It means building trust relationships, being curious, and asking questions for deep understanding. It entails a non-judgemental approach that recognizes and respects diverse perspectives^{15,16}.

Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers talked about how, in the Indigenous universe, teachings about what living well means are clear. These teachings are passed on by

Elders and by the land and require different indicators than for non-Indigenous children. Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias asked: “What does the land teach us about renewal and celebrations?”

Agencies felt strongly about the need for indicators that recognize unique context and the interconnectedness of the multiple realities and relationships that impact child and youth well-being. Practitioners stated that nourishing relationships between staff and families is the foundation for their understanding of the lived experience of children and youth.

These relationships and understanding then enable staff and families to identify individual indicators together. Agencies explained that this principle is realized when outcomes are articulated by children, youth, and families rather than determined and assessed by the practitioner. Youth can play an important role in shaping evaluation practice with the expertise they gain through lived experience. Involving service users in organizational committees, such as youth councils, can support design of policies, procedures, and services that are better tailored to individual needs.

“[As a social worker], you have to know your kid in order to know if they're having a good day or like, see their strengths or whatever. It's very personable. And you can't do that if you're not actively in your kid's life.”

– Youth, on staff building relationships

“I'm on the autism spectrum and if I were to have to speak in front of like a group of people about how a program was, I would probably not say anything. So, for some people, writing would be better, for some people, one on one interview might be better.”

– Caregiver, on considering individualized measurement approaches



Youth reflections on experiences at Miskanawah Moon Camp

Watch a video of youth from Miskanawah talk about building relationships with Elders and connecting with each other at Moon Camp.

[Watch Now](#)

Committing to action & accountability includes situating well-being assessment within the relationships between the agency and staff and youth, families, communities, as well as funders. It means to cultivate trust and hope by sharing back the assessment with full transparency and making decisions together about further actions, supports and services.^{8,17} This includes using findings for strategic planning to continually improve equitable and culturally safe services.

Youth and caregivers emphasized that it is vital for well-being assessment to be followed by action, and that decisions about these actions should be made together with service users. They suggested that decisions are made in collaboration with service users, with flexible participation opportunities. This creates space to explore cultural nuances and centre cultural appropriateness.

Indigenous practitioners and research literature emphasize the concept of relational accountability as the core of evaluation and assessment. Agencies thought of this principle as speaking to how they use evaluation findings for strategic planning within their organization. They linked it to the practice of appreciative inquiry and using evaluation to uncover the strengths and opportunities within their teams, organization, and community. Using evaluation in this way was an important aspect of agencies' efforts toward integration, inclusion, and diversity. For agency staff, accountability also sparked reflection on how change and success is recognized and acknowledged for children, youth, and families and for staff.

Recognizing staff capacity & well-being is a key aspect of measuring well-being. This means supporting staff wellness and capacity to nurture trusting relationships with youth and families in assessments. It also includes situating organizational values and leadership within evaluation to understand alignment with families' and communities' goals for well-being, and centering relationships as a goal of practice.¹

Youth emphasized how important it is for staff to be well, balanced, and supported by their organization, so they have the relational and emotional capacity to build strong relationships with service users. Agency staff recognized the need for an intentional shift within the sector and individual organizations to embrace staff wellness. Their suggestions to support this include creating a community of mutual support among staff. For agency staff this principle also meant to collectively reflect on the "why" of their work nurture a culture of self-reflection, learning and embracing growth.

"How about having someone outside of the family, support, someone impartial? Someone who would believe everyone, not just the children, but everyone. Just having that support, because adults struggle too, and sometimes can't give what a child needs. Like when it comes to listening, just being impartial."

– Caregiver, on having others involved in assessment

"Sometimes staff have a lot of stress. That can make it difficult to trust them. Trust is very important between staff and the individual seeking support or services."

– Youth, on the importance of supporting staff well-being as basis of building trusting relationships

Understanding change as ongoing and dynamic by assessing child and youth well-being at several points over time to recognize impact and sustainable changes. It means recognizing that both youth and staff capacity for change is dynamic and that “good enough” vs. optimal well-being need careful consideration for each individual person. It is important to celebrate progress, small changes, and the ability to adapt.¹⁶

This principle was emphasized by all voices we heard. Agency staff highlighted the need to carefully draw on multiple check-ins at different time points and multiple indicators to gain a fuller picture of a service user’s overall progress. This would avoid disqualifying a person from services or funding based on a one-time assessment and allow agencies to better tailor supports to changing individual needs.

Leading with curiosity & recognizing strengths by using a trauma-informed approach that suspends judgement, reflects on individual gifts and growth,¹⁶ and provides courage and safety to share openly^{9,13} It is rooted in the idea that “what you focus on expands”.

In realizing this principle, agencies and Indigenous Elders emphasized the importance of narrative and story to understand the true impact of practice. This includes being open-minded, grounded in respect, and asking questions to deeply understand what is going on for children, youth, and families. Practitioners working with immigrant and refugee communities highlighted that recognizing strengths in the families they serve means returning to their roots and drawing on cultural wealth, knowing their history to understand where trauma comes from, and searching for what gives life and energy to grow well-being.

Committing to decolonizing practices in measuring child and youth well-being means reflecting and recognizing where dominant culture and power relationships impact how we gather and interpret feedback.¹⁸ It means respecting Indigenous sovereignty^{13,15} over how well-being is defined, lived, and validated according to teachings.

“Your well-being takes like, a million hits before you even get into a service. Right. That initial assessment of wellbeing would be super important, super important. But you also have to keep checking, because it changes constantly, right? Like family dynamics change everything.”

– Caregiver

“I've only felt supported in my program, in the Indigenous program. All of our talking is done in circles. And everyone speaks whatever they want. I mean, it is guided by an Elder, Elders are important. And there's no judgment. No judgment at all. And I've never had any issue in that setting.”

– Youth, on safe and non-judgemental spaces

Agencies serving marginalized communities described decolonizing practice as connecting individual stories to larger stories of colonization and trauma,¹⁹ undoing internalized oppression, and rehumanizing measurement by centering relationships and stories. This process requires self-reflection, attentiveness to power dynamics, and cultural humility. For example, this could mean inviting youth and community feedback on the cultural safety of services and assessment approaches.

Elders pointed out that well-being relates to living in ceremony, and that “ceremonying” is an ongoing way of life. It is a lifelong practice to invite spirit into the work, the relationships, the evaluation, and recognizing what is in the best interest of the spirit of the child. This reminds us to take a critical look at language used in evaluation and learning about meanings in Indigenous languages and other cultures.

Agencies explained that this principle meant re-evaluating their purpose as an organization and centering their evaluation practice in this purpose. Agency staff recognized how decolonizing practices means emotional labour initiated by them as allies and informed by teachings from Elders. To do this, agencies hoped to work towards supporting leadership and staff to take part in ceremony, embracing culture as an ongoing practice and making meaning of what they learned guided by Elders.

Many participants emphasized the importance of creating ethical space. Creating ethical space for assessing well-being and program impact happens through kindness, suspending judgement, inviting safety, trust, and creativity to enable all to have the courage to share and take responsibility for their truth.

“I did appreciate the programs and agencies or staff that listened without judgment and believed what we were saying, unlike some hospitals that downplayed things. Just listening and trusting the families and the youth in what they’re saying was huge. And a big piece was the professionals who took the time to educate me, help me understand what I needed to so, what [my son] was dealing with.”

– Caregiver, on communication and respect



Youth reflections on experiences at Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

Watch a video youth from the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op speak about navigating between cultures and finding belonging with MCHB.

Centering interconnectedness & relationships means considering how relationships and connectedness shape identity and reality to understand impact and change in well-being. This includes focusing well-being assessment on the interconnectedness of roles, knowledge, and agency of caregivers, extended

family, ancestors, natural environment, and community^{20,21} with children and youth. “Each person is vital to the community and is part of an interconnected whole.”²⁰

Well-being and resilience lie in being interconnected with supportive relationships. The assessment of well-being needs to focus on how grounded and connected a child is with their families, communities, and activities. Rather than looking at individual outcomes, it is important to use a systems lens to look at the network of supports that children and families are connected with and assess whether this network meets the needs of the child and the caregivers.

From a youth and caregiver perspective, this principle means caregivers are trusted as knowledgeable about their child. Caregivers explained how important it is to them that relationship dynamics between them and their child are considered, and each have opportunity to share experiences and challenges in a private, non-judgemental space. This includes using and combining diverse approaches to assessment and sources of feedback to create a fuller picture of child and youth well-being.

Finally, centring interconnectedness also means considering all seven domains of well-being as interdependent. They build on each other to support the growth of a well-rounded person.

“Well-being, I personally don't think it can get asked enough. But it can't just be an ask. It has to be embedded, infused, it has to be part of, it can't just be I asked you a question and tick the box. Yeah, it doesn't. It's not genuine. It's not authentic. It has to be part of the programming and the family and moving forward.” - Caregiver, on considering caregiver and youth well-being throughout care

Menu of Indicators and Assessments

Indicators

The final menu of indicators includes 423 indicators, of which 165 are for children and youth outcomes, 118 for caregiver outcomes, and 140 for agency and staff efforts as well as outcomes. Table 2 outlines the numbers of included indicators for each domain and across ecological levels. For the full menu of indicators please see Appendix G.

We found the literature was lacking indicators that were responsive to Indigenous ways of being and to diverse ethnocultural families' realities. There was also a gap in indicators for how staff and agencies are supported and are intentional in their work. We filled those gaps with the input of the many agencies who participated in our engagement, of youth and caregivers, and Indigenous practitioners and Elders.

Agencies agreed that measuring staff and agency effort should be an integral part of measuring child and youth well-being. They contributed many indicators that they considered key markers of supporting the seven well-being domains. Many agencies felt more familiar with quantitative indicators but

expressed a desire to use more qualitative indicators and stories to learn about impact. Agencies also emphasized that they considered relational, culturally-rooted, trauma-informed, and human-rights approaches as important to holistically assessing well-being. See Appendix C for more detail on agencies' contributions to indicators during the Member Meeting.

Table 2. Number of Indicators by Domain and Population

Domain	Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff	Total
Connection to Land	18	10	13	41
Caring & Stable Relationships	22	20	21	63
Meaningful Knowledge	14	9	11	34
Healthy Development	32	18	13	63
Identity & Autonomy	24	22	27	73
Cultural Connection	35	13	27	75
Supportive & Safe Environments	20	26	28	74
Total	165	118	140	423

We organized the indicators by domain aspect and population so agencies can easily adapt it according to their programs, community, assessment process and priorities. See Figure 5 for an example outline of the indicator menu. We formulated each indicator as a qualitative statement to capture a point in time for individual children, youth, caregivers, or staff. They can be adapted for different assessment purposes, such as assessing program level impact, individual change, or gathering stories. See Appendix G for the full menu of indicators across the seven domains of well-being.



Miskanawah Elders and staff on understanding program impact on youth well-being

Watch a video of Elders and staff from Miskanawah talk about intentions and teachings that ground their programming and their way of learning about their impact on youth well-being.



Brokers reflections on an intercultural understanding of well-being

Watch a video of Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op staff speak about building confidence and adapting supports to shifting needs.

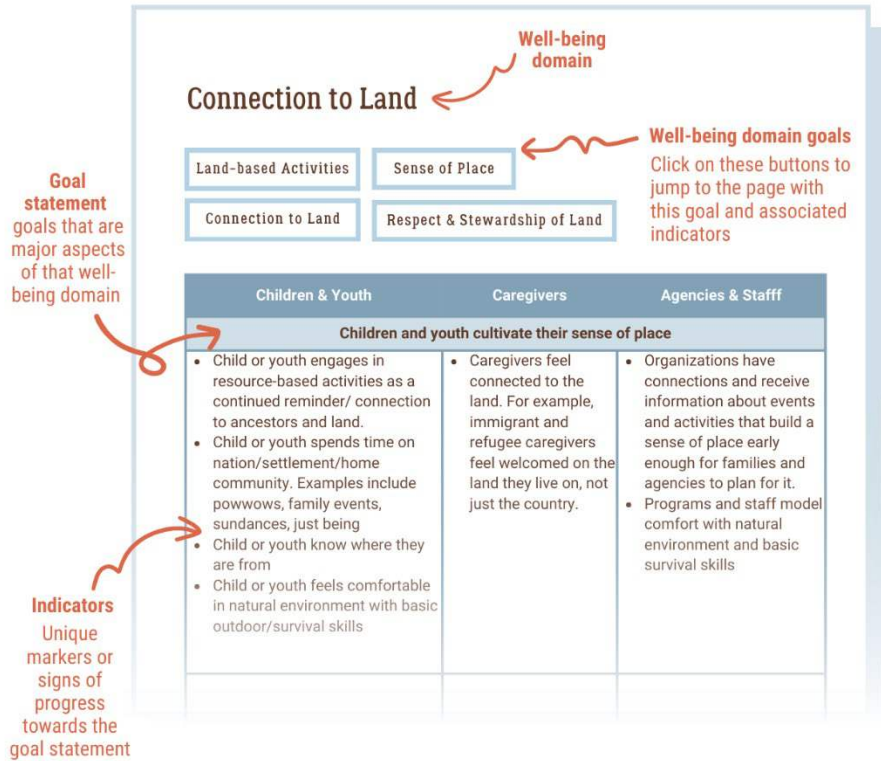


Figure 5. Explanation of the Menu of Indicators structure on page 25 of the toolkit.

Assessments

We collected over 35 assessments and tools from the literature review and agency survey (see Appendix B for survey results) and filtered them down to 19 based on their alignment with the domains of well-being and principles of assessment. Of the 18 included assessments and tools, most are to be implemented by a social worker or parent, with the primary goal of measuring a child or youth's state in relation of an aspect of well-being. Other assessments we included focus on the impact of interventions or caregiver's well-being and relationship with the child or youth. See Appendix F for a list of assessments and their relevance to the seven domains of well-being as well as descriptions of each of the tools.

Although none of the assessments spanned all seven domains of well-being, four assessments covered over five of the domains. The domain that had the most assessments available was Supportive and Safe Environments, while Connection to Land was the domain least captured by existing assessments.

For the complete table of assessments and tools and information on accessibility please see Appendix F.

Creating a Provincial Story of the Sector's Impact on Well-Being

The final component of the toolkit is a process that brings diverse ways of evaluating and validating impact on child well-being together to showcase the excellent work that is happening in agencies, assess how the child welfare sector as a whole is doing across the seven domains of well-being, and to track progress over time.

Always returning to our grounding concept of an Indigenous-led circle of diverse and self-determined voices, we asked a group of Elders and Knowledge Keepers: What could a collective process to create a provincial story of impact on child well-being look like?

Guiding Stories

We learned about the importance of collective oral processes, to bring people together, to connect the past and the present, and to be inclusive of everyone's gift of storytelling.

Oral processes are important. Stories help us learn from one another.

I think the value of story is just like can't be understated here. And if you get people in a circle, we all care. And we're all going to want to support each other to get to that place of wellness and share stories where we've had some success. Rally around people who are struggling. And the more I think about it, the bigger the circle, the better because there's just more opportunities to learn from one another.

— Cheryl Whiskeyjack, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner



Listen to Cheryl Whiskeyjack share about the importance of storytelling in learning about well-being.

I like this conversation about story. And that could be because it doesn't confine it to people who are real articulate in an English or our European academic sense. Because storying is such a gift from everyone.

— Beverly Keeshig-Soonias, Elder



Listen to Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias talking about the gift of storytelling and how everyone can be a part of oral processes.

For me, I think 100,000,000,000% involve youth. Because really, that's why we're all here, right? I don't think it could go forward without them.

— Knowledge Keeper and youth practitioner

And it's what I was taught that when the circle is formed, the spirit recognizes it, and comes forward. But the important part is that you can look in a circle in any direction, and you'll always have eye contact with someone. And then the most important part is that you can begin somewhere. But there's no end to keep, continue going around. And that's the beauty of circle, sharing, talking circle. And when it

comes to communicating, even though we leave the circle, we take with us what we heard. And that's the beauty of life. And that's how we're able to move forward in a good way.

— Elder Phillip Campiou, Cree Elder



Listen to Elder Elder Phillip Campiou speak about the importance of language, oral process, and sharing in circle.

The winter count: Stories to mark time, to bring the past and the present together.

I met with these young people at a high school in Calgary, [...] I told them about winter count. And I challenged them to make their own winter counts with their own symbols, using their graphic skills. So, I showed them some pictures, and how winter count can be in the circle. And I challenged them to do a winter count of their life, the last 13 moons of their life. And so, none of these kids are Indigenous, and neither was a professor. But they really liked that idea. And they were, by the time I left the classroom, they were really working on it. I don't think any of them would have been brave enough to write an autobiography or even a short story about the last 13 months, but they seemed really keen to have a chance to do something like a winter count with the computer. So, it just makes me think I owe it to these young people to go back to them. And ask them, you know, to share their winter count with their group. And that, I would hope, would contribute to their well-being.

— Beverly Keeshig-Sonias, Elder

Even in asking the question, what happened during the pandemic, you're acknowledging that something happened. And then the other part of it is, how did you get through that? What things did you do to survive to get through all of that. Going forward, there was huge fires, in the territories and B.C. and all around, how did you get through that? So, we're acknowledging what actually happened. And we're talking about, how we got through that and how we are where we are today. And I guess for me, the learning part of that is that story can continue on forever. People can look at that again and say, wow, this must have been a tough year. But the story part of it is that people got through it by doing this and this and this. I think that that really would hit home, as far as ALIGN or this wellness program goes, that there was an event, but we did get through it, and these are the resources, and this is the outcome.

— Frank Shannon, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner

I think you have to remind agencies. We were talking about interdependence as being a healthy way to be together and as something that leads to wellness. So, it's not just someone sitting there and telling young people they need to do that. It's demonstrating it by showing up. By making it two way.

— Beverly Keeshig-Soonias, Elder



Listen to Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias remind us about interdependence and well-being and what that means for how we show up in relationships.

Wayfinding with Lobsticks as a Context Setter to Talk About Us as a Sector.

Lobsticks are something that Indigenous people used a long time ago as a wayfinding tool. Our highway back in the day was the river, we get in the river and travel from here to there. If you picture a really big lodgepole pine with only the last seven feet of it having foliage on it and the rest of it would be a long trunk. So, think about this: you're on the river, you see a tree like that, you know, nature didn't make that tree, man made that tree. And the way that tree was made would tell the traveler this, or that, you know, this is where you are on the river. So, they serve that purpose [...]

Every lobstick had a cache. A stone cache is like a locker made out of stones. And if Frank was going down the river that day, and he had an abundance of pemmican, more than enough to get him to where he was going, he would put a bunch of that pemmican in that cache. And when Phillip was coming down the river like a month later, and he was dying of starvation, because all these things happened to him, he could look in that cache and hopefully find something that would serve him. And so, the cache would be a way of helping a fellow traveler with an abundance that you had of something. [...]

This story is a context setter for us to talk about us in this sector. What do we have an abundance of that we could share not with a fellow traveler, but a fellow colleague in this sector that they could learn from, or they could use in some way.

— Cheryl Whiskeyjack, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner



Listen to Cheryl Whiskeyjack share about lobsticks as wayfinding tools.

Process to Creating a Provincial Story

Guided by what the Elders and Knowledge Keepers shared, we developed a process to creating a provincial overview of sector impact and child well-being that:

- Allows agencies to build on what they are already doing and what is meaningful for the children and families they serve in measuring well-being and still participate in creating a provincial story,
- Respects oral practice in its own right, and
- Supports connection and relational accountability.

The process, visualized in Figure 6, consists of two parts:

1. Wayfinding with lobsticks for each well-being domain including:
 - a. Stories of significant change of impact

- b. Self-rating for child and youth outcomes, caregiver outcomes, and staff and agency effort
2. Winter count as a collective oral process to create a provincial overview of child well-being and sector impact.



Figure 6. Two parallel processes of self-assessment for each well-being domain prepared by individual agencies and one collective, oral process of creating a provincial story of impact of well-being within the sector.

Wayfinding with Lobsticks. When Indigenous folks were traveling, lobsticks were used for wayfinding and as a way to share excess resources. Lobsticks were trees marked clearly with cut branches to indicate where a traveler is, for example as a landmark at the top of a river. They would also have a

stone cache, in which people could leave what they had an abundance of for other travellers to find and use if they needed that help.

In our context, lobstersticks are used as a guiding story to help agencies reflect and talk about where they are at in supporting each well-being domain. This includes two parallel processes:

Sharing stories. Agencies will share the impact of their work in each well-being domain by leaving a story of abundance at each lobsterstick and describing what they need to fill their gaps. Agencies will be asked to:

1. Share a story of significant change or positive impact for each domain that reflects what has been going well, what they have an abundance of and could leave at the 'lobstick cache' for others.
2. Describe what they would like to find left in caches, meaning what they seek to learn or find as supports with regards to each domain.

Self-rating. The self-rating component is a reflective process that allows agencies to build on what they are already measuring, stepwise incorporate indicators from the toolkit as their capacity allows, and use context-informed and culturally-rooted approaches to gathering feedback, and still contributing their learnings to a common rating.

To allow ALIGN to rate and compare agencies' self-rating over time in a largely automated way, agencies will rate outcomes for children and youth, caregivers, and effort of staff and agencies in supporting each domain using a short scale (see Table 3 for rating options and examples). The scale is intentionally designed with flexibility and agency capacity in mind. Agencies are prompted to use the findings of their measurement and evaluation activities and reflect on what they can learn from those findings about each of the seven domains of child well-being. The process is inspired by The Common Framework²² (see Box 7) where high-level outcome concepts and measurement principles are agreed upon, and every organization feeds their unique, contextual indicators and measures into those common concepts.

Box 7: The Common Framework

The Common Framework will allow each organization to choose measures that are most meaningful to their work *and* allow their funders, collaborators and networks to aggregate those measures.

Guided by our principles for measurement, the scale is designed from a strengths-based perspective that starts with the gifts, strengths, and potential that all children, youth, and caregivers bring and progresses using a growth metaphor to concrete and observable changes in behaviour, relationships, and practising wellness to being able to give back and contribute to others around them and the community. Consistent with our ecological lens, agencies will be asked to rate outcomes for children and youth, outcomes for caregivers, and the efforts agencies and staff have put into enhancing their capacity to support each domain for the children and families they serve.

The rating options use a plant growth metaphor that can accommodate diverse meanings for every individual child or caregiver, and for every agency’s unique context. Table 3 provides examples for each rating option to guide reflection. The growth metaphor provides a clear progression and prompts agencies to think about the extent of attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, behaviours, actions, relationships that characterize each domain, as well as frequency and consistency of these positive outcomes or efforts. However, each rating option could mean many more outcomes from a wide range of experiences, actions, and observations that are unique for each program, each child or caregiver, and each cultural community.

Table 3. Self-rating scale for each well-being domain

For each well-being domain: Reflect on the findings of your assessments, evaluations, and validation across your agency’s programs and services. How would you rate outcomes and efforts in this domain?		
Outcomes		Efforts
Where are children and youth at in this domain?	Where are caregivers at in this domain?	Where is your agency and staff at with supporting this domain for children, youth, and caregivers?
Germinating	Germinating	Preparing the soil
<i>Germinating describes the seeds, gifts, strengths, and potential for well-being in each domain that all children and youth have even when in crisis. For example, children and youth are meeting others in a program, beginning to build a relationship, or recognizing a need.</i>	<i>Germinating describes the seeds, gifts, strengths, and potential for well-being in each domain that all caregivers have even when in crisis. For example, caregivers have just joined a program.</i>	<i>Preparing the soil could include agencies’ efforts of resourcing new supports, training, or partnerships. For example, obtaining funding for land-based programming, making connections with population-specific agencies, or fostering a shared understanding with the Board of Directors.</i>
Sprouting	Sprouting	Planting seeds
<i>Sprouting describes any experiences or observations of small shifts and growth. For example, children and youth are</i>	<i>Sprouting describes any experiences or observations of small shifts and growth. For example, caregivers know</i>	<i>Planting seeds describes agencies’ efforts in increasing awareness, knowledge, confidence in their staff, planning concrete action, or</i>

<i>willing to join an activity, or trust an adult with a conversation.</i>	<i>where to reach out for support, or participate in their Nation’s gatherings.</i>	<i>experimenting with new ideas. For example, forming a working group on gathering stories and feedback from youth, deepening Indigenous cultural understanding with staff, or growing relationships with other agencies around supporting this domain.</i>
Growing	Growing	Nurturing
<i>Growing describes diverse experiences and observations of deepening awareness and understanding, positive behaviors and relationships that occur more often and more consistently. For example, children and youth are comfortable participating in ceremony, or are comfortable reaching out for support and know what is available to them.</i>	<i>Growing describes diverse experiences and observations of deepening awareness and understanding, positive behaviors and relationships that occur more often and more consistently. For example, caregivers grow relationships with an Elder, access financial supports, or build trust with service providers.</i>	<i>Nurturing is about growing understanding, skills, and relationships more consistently and with greater scope. For example, expanding training and opportunities to more staff, piloting new supports in one program, getting feedback from service users and tweaking existing programs, or implementing supports for staff capacity and well-being.</i>
Fruiting	Fruiting	Harvesting
<i>Fruiting describes when children and youth experience positive change in well-being in either their mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical realm for the domain. For example, they have a trusting and stable relationship, they value and enjoy their cultural wealth, they initiate participating in physical activity or activities on the land.</i>	<i>Fruiting describes when caregivers experience positive change in well-being in either their mental, emotional, spiritual, or physical realm for the domain. For example, caregivers have positive interactions with their children, caregivers feel confident as transmitters of culture, or caregivers are more confident in their culturally appropriate emotional regulation strategies.</i>	<i>Harvesting describes when agencies and staff are using their enhanced capacity, understanding, and connections to deepen their practice in supporting each well-being domain for children, youth, and caregivers. For example, staff debriefing and supporting each other to consistently prioritize relationship building with service users, agencies integrating child or youth voices into program planning, agencies having processes in place to ensure diverse representation within their teams.</i>

Seeding	Seeding	Spreading seeds
<p><i>Seeding describes experiences and observations of positive impact in one area expanding to more areas of children and youth’s lives. It can also describe when children and youth have grown in their well-being such that they start having positive impact on others. For example, youth start to help at ceremonies, or volunteer and find ways to give back to community.</i></p>	<p><i>Seeding describes experiences and observations of positive impact in one area expanding to more areas of caregivers’ lives and their relationship with children and youth. It can also describe when caregivers have grown in their well-being such that they start having positive impact on others. For example, caregivers model practising cultural teachings in their daily life for children and youth, have a sense of purpose and model concerns for others, or nurture a growth mindset within their families.</i></p>	<p><i>Spreading seeds describes when agencies are expanding supports for a domain to other programs and integrating them more frequently and more consistently across the agency. For example, land-based activities being integral to each program, designing each service or program with input from relevant cultural communities, or having good staff retention and staff feeling well-supported.</i></p>

Winter count. The winter count is a practice memorializing the most significant event that happened in a given year, or 13 moons. It is used by many Nations across the North American prairies, including Siksika (Blackfoot) and Lakota (Sioux).²³ Symbols²⁴ representing this event are painted on a buffalo hide. This is a way to trace history, connect the past with the present day, and will be our process to create a collective provincial story of impact in the oral tradition of sharing knowledge.

During Fall, ALIGN may host agencies to participate in the winter count. An Elder will lead and guide agencies, youth, and funders through sharing in circle about the most important impact or change they



observed during the past year and how they got through the events of the year. Stories can be represented with simple symbols on a material representing a buffalo hide. Once everyone has shared their story, the Elder will summarize and validate the collective story of the agencies’ work and impact. This collective, in-person sharing circle will bring the two parallel paths of storytelling and self-rating that each agency submits for each domain together in one story that represents the sector’s impact over a year.

Agencies will come together in ceremony, create connection, nurture relational accountability, and learn from each other. Elders and Knowledge Keepers emphasized the importance of including youth and hearing directly from them. Also, inviting funders into this circle is an opportunity for them to hear the impact of their investment firsthand, and nurture relational accountability across everyone involved. Knowledge Keepers suggested that separate circles for youth may increase their comfort to speak up. One representative could then bring back a summary of stories into the main circle. Depending on numbers of attendees, there could be several separate circles for different groups at the same time with a share-back in the full circle.

ALIGN may record the creation of the winter count in a video that will serve as the provincial story of agencies' most significant impact recorded year after year.



Listen to Cheryl Whiskeyjack share how Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society holds their winter count.

Implementation Considerations

Toolkit to Support Implementation of the Framework

We designed a practice-focused toolkit (see Figure 7 for an image of the title page) to support agency staff and leadership with implementation of the well-being framework and share the impact of their work. It provides guidance on all components of the framework:

- Understanding the model of child well-being
- Applying the principles for measuring child and youth well-being
- Using a menu of outcomes, indicators, and assessment tools aligning with the well-being model

- Adopting a process for sharing impacts and contributing to a provincial overview of how the sector is supporting child and youth well-being
- Using resources to support agency capacity

Our hope is that this toolkit supports capacity building for agencies through providing indicators and tools, especially with regards to re-imagining evaluation that meaningfully captures impact for Indigenous and ethnocultural children, youth, and families.

We endeavoured to have the toolkit account for contextual factors, be reflective of diverse ways of being and knowing, and be grounded in Indigenous perspectives as parallel approaches to validating practice. See Appendix H for a summary of agency feedback on an early toolkit draft. We designed the toolkit so that agencies can incorporate and adapt components at their own pace, as their capacity allows and as they become relevant and helpful to their practice.

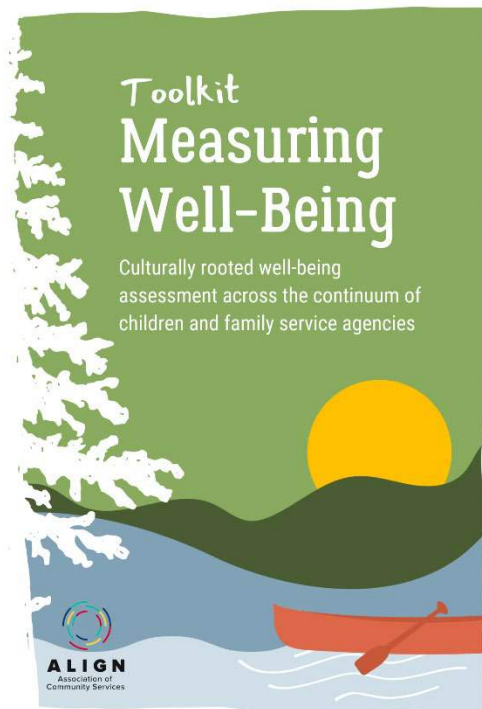


Figure 7: Title page of the toolkit

Year 3 Implementation Considerations

Collaborative development and design of a new way of working is a key determinant of successful implementation.²⁵ Our engagement aimed to capture what is meaningful and relevant for diverse agencies’ needs across the service continuum and across diverse populations, so that the toolkit builds on what they are already doing. Throughout the development of the framework and toolkit, we were intentional about understanding implementation considerations for agencies in diverse contexts. See Appendix F for a summary of agency feedback on the toolkit and implementation supports. We used what we learned to shape our decisions about the toolkit design to support accessibility and usability.

We found five core processes²⁶ that will support implementation of the framework:

- 1) Transform the PDF toolkit into an online tool and pilot it.
- 2) Establish shared understanding of the purpose and value of the framework and toolkit.
- 3) Create implementation supports to build connections and relationships.
- 4) Support alignment of current evaluation and reporting practices with adoption of toolkit.
- 5) Capture and track progress.

In the following, we describe what we heard from agencies along with suggestions on how to support each of the five processes.

Transform the PDF toolkit into an online tool and pilot it. Co-development of the toolkit ensured that domains, principles, indicators, and the process to share back individually and as a collective are aligned with the priorities and experiences of diverse agencies. To enhance user friendliness, we propose transforming the Pdf toolkit into an online tool. All information would be accessible and navigable online with ability to enter data and access a provincial level dashboard with annual aggregate data stories. To test and fine tune the toolkit, we suggest piloting it with a small group of agencies who can apply and adapt it to their context and needs. We can learn from those experiences and revise the toolkit to ensure it fulfills the intended purpose. This process will also allow us to develop any further tools and resources agencies might want to support implementation.

Establish shared understanding of the purpose and value of the framework and toolkit. Responses were as diverse as agencies. The majority of agency staff that attended our engagement recognized benefit or a value in the framework and toolkit. Many noted that it supports a common language, consistency in defining well-being and adds credibility for what agencies are already valuing. Others mentioned how useful they find having indicators available that can guide their work with Indigenous children and families, having specific indicators for a broad concept like well-being, and having indicators for staff well-being and agency culture and processes included. Finally, agencies saw the toolkit as supporting their desire to better share their impact externally and with contributors. However, some agencies shared concerns such as overlap and duplication with other frameworks available, reporting requirements from their funders, or the use of different databases.

Going forward it will be vital to communicate the value and purpose of the framework and toolkit clearly to establish a common understanding of what this toolkit does and how it is different from what already exists. See Appendix D for a comparison of this toolkit with other commonly used frameworks in Alberta. Ideally, this messaging would come from trusted and relatable individuals in the sector. For example, one strategy would be to invite Elders to speak in a video about what their hope is for this toolkit and to share stories that illustrate the meaning of domains and principles. Another option could be to invite a small number of agencies to share in a video or podcast their perspective on the purpose of using the toolkit.

Create implementation supports to build connections and relationships across all levels. Some agencies have processes in place that involve children, youth, and families giving feedback. Others identified this as a gap they would be interested in working on. Implementation supports could

This would be useful because ...

... our agency is already focusing on understanding well being and including Indigenous perspectives but need support in how to better incorporate these perspectives.

...our impact will be bigger when we are working from the same principles and indicators.

... we need to learn how to share the feedback with our contributors. We use feedback well to make internal changes, but don't communicate it well.

– Responses from agency frontline staff

include templates for observation or interview guides using the indicator menu, sample processes of generating stories through circles or visual methods such as photovoice, and sample messaging about the purpose and use of the information.



Listen to Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias speak about sharing stories weekly in an agency's regular work schedule.

We also heard about challenges to create a shared understanding with board members. Elders and Knowledge Keepers emphasized that the collective, oral process of the winter count would be an opportunity to include board directors, funders, and youth and families to hear stories of impact for themselves and see what the investment of their time and funding achieved.

Agencies want to incorporate culturally-rooted ways to practice and measure well-being, but have challenges building relationships with Elders and creating opportunities to be on the land, experience ceremony and teachings. Agencies asked for guidance on how to use protocol appropriately, such as what to wear and whether to remove glasses or jewelry when smudging. Indigenous practitioners and agency staff serving ethnocultural families agree that agencies need connection with communities, reciprocal relationships and first-hand experience. One idea from our Advisory Committee was to compile a list of Elders and Knowledge Keepers across Alberta from diverse Nations, that would be willing to connect with agencies, help guide their efforts, and help create opportunities for participation in cultural learning for staff and children and youth. In this context, another Elder reminded us of the importance of interconnectedness and interrelation for creating well-being. For agencies this means that relationships need mutual investment, it means showing up to community events and gatherings, and for staff and leadership to cultivate relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Decolonizing our work would also need a shift and refocus on actual ongoing family, children, youth, and community feedback around what has made a meaningful difference or could make a meaningful difference to their wellness. Too often we find this feedback missing or low participation in that feedback.

– Responses from agency frontline staff

Importantly, agencies would appreciate peer support and sharing training and resources. A key strategy for implementation is to support a community of practice that could start with a small group of agencies that are motivated to pilot the toolkit and can act as champions for change. Building on their own networks and partners within the sector, their example and experiences can serve to enroll others into an informal community of practitioners using this toolkit. Two of the agencies we partnered with expressed a desire to have a community of evaluators and would be willing to facilitate initial meetings. As the community grows, member agencies can establish their own structure for meetings and include sharing successes, challenges, resources, and insights.

Support alignment of current evaluation and reporting practices with adoption of toolkit. Many agencies shared that the toolkit reflects their own values and integrates well with their approach. Others described how the process of aligning and integrating the toolkit with their current report requirements would overwhelm their capacity. Capacity was by far the most frequently mentioned challenge. Agencies mentioned they would commit to using the toolkit if there was resources and choice.

The toolkit was designed so agencies could adopt some or all of the measurement components depending on their capacity and still participate in creating a provincial story of impact. It takes work to understand as a team what the toolkit is about, how it aligns with current practices for each agency, and to make decisions about what to focus efforts on. Some agencies proposed starting with two or three domains of well-being first, rather than all seven. Some suggested supports such as reminder emails that prompt agencies to collect stories for sharing the winter count. Many asked for training on how to use the toolkit, for example reflective guides on cultural safety or de-colonization.

Again, piloting the toolkit with a small group of champions will provide the tangible experiences and work arounds that will be helpful for others. Options include example processes of team reflective sessions on how the framework aligns with agencies' current approach, example stories of how agencies decided where to start, or examples for how they gather youth and families' stories. Importantly, an easy-to-use online platform to enter and share back data would lessen the burden on agencies. We suggest an online tool that mirrors the layout and visual elements of the toolkit and allows agencies to enter their stories under each lobstick and self-rate for each domain. An option for agencies to download their data would respond to agencies' need for support in showcasing their own work. Creating a dashboard with aggregate data across the sector and the seven domains would provide helpful insights in where the sector is at and allow agencies to search narrative entries by keyword to learn from other agencies' examples.

Capture and track progress. Once agencies start using the toolkit, it will be important to track what is working and where additional or different supports are needed. Again, the community of practice can be a platform for sharing successes and challenges, strategies, processes, and insights to continually improve the toolkit, support ongoing implementation, and increase consistency. An online tool as described above will support tracking and give information about how many agencies participated, how many domains they entered data for, as well as what the stories of impact and the self-rating reveal about progress.



United Way's Perspective on Oral Reporting as a Funder

Watch a video of United Way of Calgary and Area staff speak about embracing oral processes in reporting.

[Watch Now](#)

Concluding Thoughts

With the completion of Year 2 we arrive at a new starting point. We have been on a learning journey to understand how we can assess child and youth well-being for children and family service agencies in meaningful ways and share back what agencies learn across Alberta. Our goal was to co-create tools that support agencies in creating ethical space in their approaches to well-being assessment. Using the tools will support building trusting relationships between staff and service users, gathering feedback for culturally-rooted and individually tailored assessments, and fostering relational accountability across service users, staff, leadership, and funders. Through our engagement we learned about the importance of story and sharing in circle to grow a community of practice where agencies can learn from and support each other in mutual respect, kindness, and accountability. Looking ahead, our hope is that this framework and toolkit marks a beginning of such a community of practice where the tools we co-developed over the past year continue to evolve. A community where Indigenous oral validation is honoured and valued on its own, where agencies feel supported in making connections and deepening their Indigenous cultural understanding and their intercultural understanding to better serve the diverse children and families in Alberta.

Appendices

Appendix A: Project Methods and Contributors

You can find the Year 1 Final Report, titled "Defining Well-Being Across the Continuum of Children's Services. Environmental Scan Report 2022" at <https://alignab.ca/align-policy-wise-report-defining-well-being-across-the-continuum-of-childrens-services-environmental-scan-report-2022/>

Over the course of 3 years, ALIGN wants to:

Year 1: Define and describe well-being from early prevention to intervention.

Year 2: Describe ways to measure well-being.

Year 3: Engage the sector in implementing and assessing these measures.

This report concludes the work of Year 2 which focused on describing ways to measure well-being, developing a toolkit to support agencies in measuring well-being, as well as understanding considerations and additional supports agencies need to implement these measures. We greatly valued the input and insights shared with us by many different individuals and groups. We worked together to come up with a measurement approach focused on being useful and applicable for agencies to put into practice. In the following, we describe in more detail how we engaged and learned from different groups and data sources.

Research and Practice-Based Literature

The purpose of the literature review was to scan academic and practice-based literature for current practices for measuring child well-being in child and family service agencies, including frameworks, wellness tools, and Indigenous approaches, principles or models, and assessments. To do this, we searched open access documents from SAGE Publishing, Directory of Open Access Journals, Google, and Google Scholar. Our search terms included:

- Child or child welfare or child services or child protection or child intervention
- Well-being or wellness or healing
- Indigenous or First Nations or Métis or Inuit or intercultural or cross cultural
- Measure or tool or validate or assess or evaluate or outcome or change or indicator or transform or sense-making or meaning-making

The final selection of literature consisted of 108 documents, including systematic reviews, measurement frameworks, and strategic policy documents. We extracted information from this literature regarding the document purpose, definitions and aspects of child well-being, target population, and outcomes or measures.

Of those results we ranked 35 documents as having high importance based on their relevancy to child-welfare, recency, inclusion of reflections in practice, and featuring Indigenous or Intercultural

perspectives. We also added reports and literature that were recommended or shared with us throughout the engagement process. In total we completed a thematic analysis of 40 documents, coding any mentions of principle-level ways of evaluation from an Indigenous perspective, specific evaluation tools and implementation considerations, tools that encompass any of the well-being domains we've identified, and the ways cultural connections relate to well-being and how that shows up.

Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Alberta

We held one Talking Circle and two gatherings with a total of 10 Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We also had one-on-one interviews with Elders, thought leaders, and leading practitioners, some of whom also participated in the Talking Circles. Here is a list of participants and their Nations:

- **Frank Shannon**, Haida Nation, Old Massett Band
- **Elder Kerrie Moore**, Métis/Cree Elder, MSW RSW
- **Elder Beverly**, Pottawatomi
- **Elder Phillip**, Woodland Cree Elder originally from Driftpile Cree Nation
- **Kirby Redwood**, Kiseniw Asini Napesis - Cree-Saulteaux from Cowessess First Nation, Miskanawah
- **Cheryl Whiskeyjack**, Anishinaabe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Reserve on Manitoulin Island Ontario
- **Adrian Goulet**, Cree Name, "Wapi Mahihkan Napew", Blackfoot Name, "Chooup spoom na ta pii"
- **Sharon Goulet**, Red River Métis

Agency Staff, Leadership and Frontline in Alberta

Survey. We conducted a survey with staff of ALIGN member agencies to learn how they currently assess their practice and impact on child, youth, and family well-being. We wanted to understand what measures and tools they currently use, as well as how they consider principles in their approach to measurement. We did multiple rounds of internal review of the survey, and then shared the draft with Advisory Committee members who volunteered to help. The Advisory Committee members were asked to consider the layout and content and to share anything they felt was missing. We incorporated their feedback and sent a revised draft for final thoughts. Once finalized, we sent the survey by email to ALIGN's list of 131 contacts from 106 agencies and asked them to forward to the most relevant staff member, such as an evaluation team. For survey results, see Appendix B.

ALIGN Member Meeting. We had the opportunity to engage with agency staff at the ALIGN Member Meeting in April 2023. Our objectives were to:

1. Socialize the domains of well-being from Year 1,
2. Gain understanding and examples of indicators of well-being, and
3. Explore how the measurement principles align with agencies' work.

We facilitated three activities with the 80 attendees from 35 different organizations. The goal of Activity 1 was to socialize our model of well-being. We did this by giving each attendee a print-out of the flower visual of well-being domains (Figure 1) and asking them to individually reflect on how the domains and principles of the model are reflected in their practice. The goal of Activity 2 was to generate examples of indicators of well-being that are used or could be used in practice. We assigned each table group two domains to discuss subgoals and indicators. Once they had begun generating indicators, we also prompted them to consider connections between indicators as well as any important nuances, contextual factors or barriers that need to be taken into account when creating or collecting information for the indicators.

The goal of Activity 3 was to gather agency staff's feedback on how the principles we developed resonate with their work. We did this by assigning each table group one principle and having them choose a second one that challenged or inspired them. We then asked them to reflect as a table on



Figure 1. Example of completed Activity 2 generating examples of indicators of well-being for each domain.



Figure 2. Dot stickers indicating other table's notes that resonated with participants.

how these principles aligned with their work. We then displayed each group's papers with their sticky note thoughts from Activities 2 and 3 around the walls of the conference room, and attendees could walk around and read what other groups had discussed. We also gave each attendee dot stickers which they used to indicate when another table's note resonated with them (Figure 2).

Toolkit Feedback Sessions. Our aim for the co-creation sessions was to fill gaps in our understanding of agency perspectives, including what indicators are appropriate, how toolkit components can be used, and possible implementation barriers. Our research question was 'How do different parts of the toolkit align with agencies' needs and capacity?' We held one virtual co-creation session with agency staff, and one virtual feedback session on the toolkit draft with folks who had volunteered to do a more thorough review. We also dedicated an Advisory Committee meeting to toolkit feedback and solicited additional feedback from committee members by email.

Using a Mural virtual whiteboard, we engaged agency staff in three activities. For Activity 1, we wanted to understand how different parts of the toolkit align with agencies' needs and capacity. We asked participants to fill out prompting sticky notes and complete the sentence on each. Green sticky notes started with "This would be useful because..."; yellow notes with "To use this would require a shift in how we think, because..."; and red notes with "This will take lots of effort because..." to identify what aspects of the toolkit could be implemented as currently planned, and what needed adjusting or supporting to decrease the amount of effort for agencies to implement (Figure 3). For the second activity, we asked participants to fill in blank agency spaces of the indicator menu for domains which had the most gaps in these areas, which were: Caring & Stable Relationships, Healthy Development, Connection to Land, and Identity & Autonomy. We asked, "What indicators from frontline work, services, and organizations would show support for these well-being domains & aspects?" Participants then discussed and shared ideas for relevant indicators to help us understand how they would like to see well-being measured (Figure 4). For the third and final activity, our focus was on creating solutions

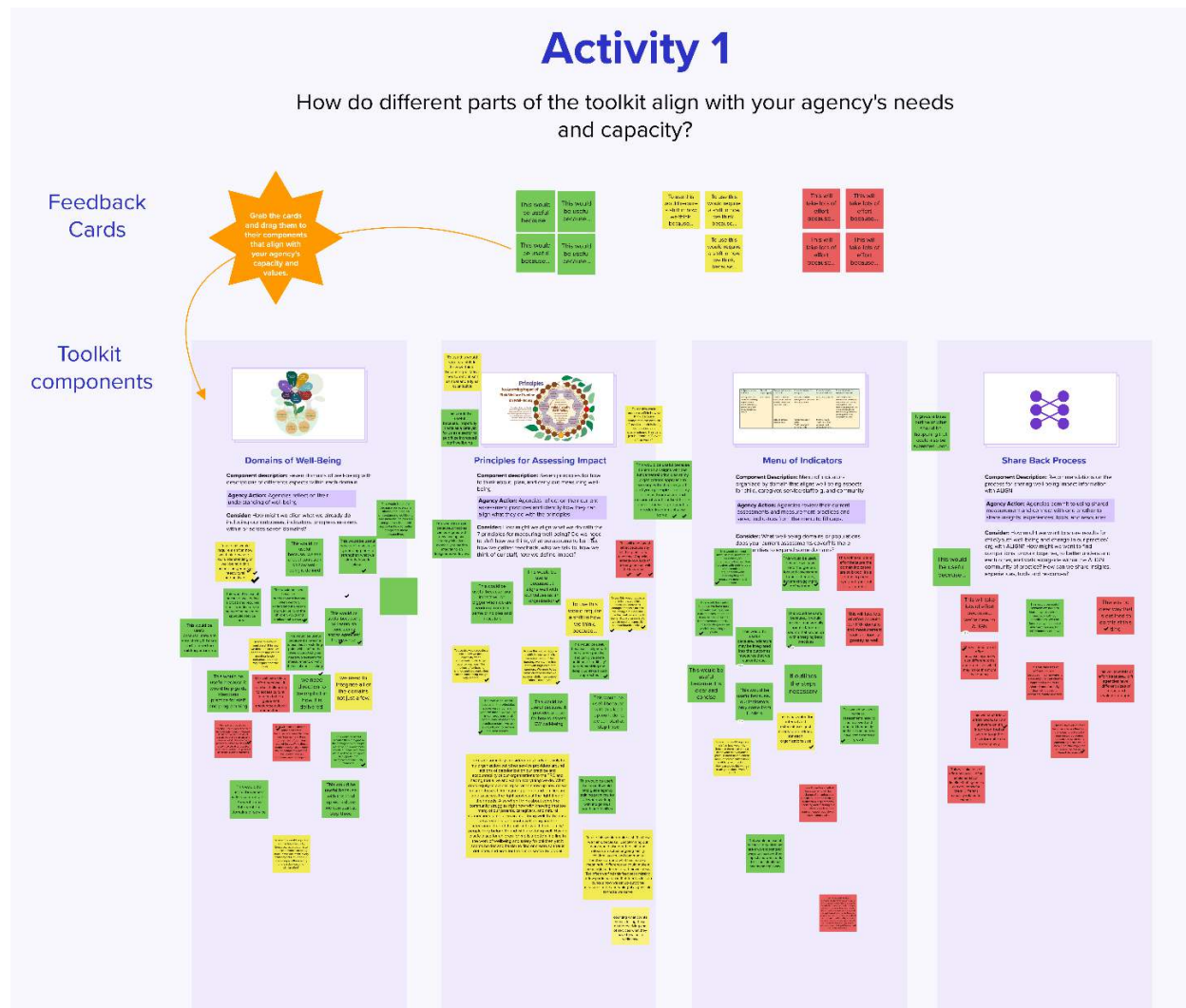


Figure 3. Virtual whiteboard filled out in Activity 1 to gather feedback on toolkit components.

and assessing implementation needs. We again had participants fill out prompting sticky notes, this time more focused on how components of the toolkit could be used and how any implementation challenges could be solved. We gave the following prompts: “This is how we could use it...”; “We would commit to doing this if...”; “This would require... to use it”; and “The toolkit could... [any ideas of how to solve the challenges]”.

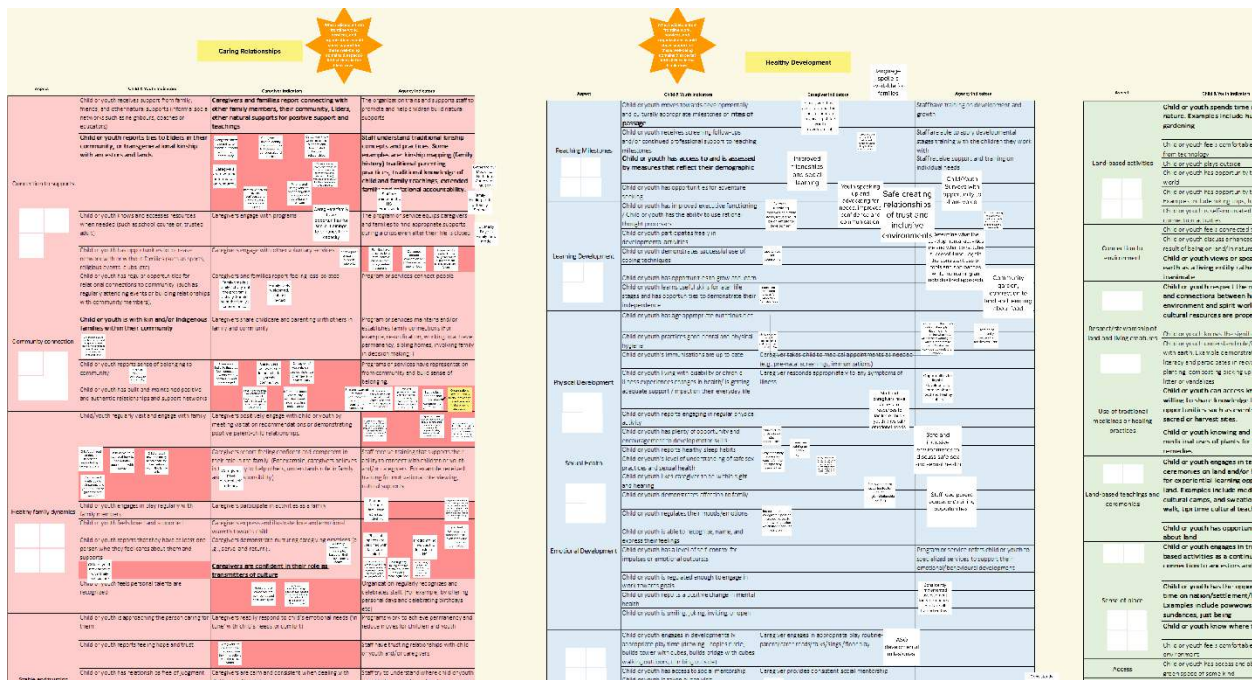


Figure 4. Virtual whiteboard from Activity 2 showing some of the domains that agencies added example indicators to.

Video production. We produced videos with two agencies, Miskanawah and Multi-Cultural Health Brokers Cooperative, to use as case examples demonstrating how the principles and domains for measurement relate to their work. We worked with the respective agencies to draft a question guide to prompt reflection. We produced a third video in collaboration with Miskanawah and United Way Calgary to capture a funder’s perspective on oral processes in reporting. We included the agencies’ feedback as part of the video editing process, and the participating Elders were able to review the videos before they were finalized. Youth participants each received a gift card honorarium. Elders received honoraria and were asked to participate using protocol such as tobacco. See Appendix I for a list of videos.

Thought Leaders Across Canada

To understand current priorities and approaches to understanding and measuring child and youth well-being in Canada, we conducted interviews with thought leaders in child welfare and well-being. We identified as thought leaders: 1) those who were authors on key literature or whose names appeared repeatedly in literature review; 2) those who our Advisory Committee recommended, and 3) in a snowball sampling method, others who were suggested by those we requested interviews with.

We conducted virtual interviews with seven thought leaders and leading practitioners. We asked them what is important for organizations to consider when measuring impact and changes in child and youth well-being. We also asked what approaches, tools, or frameworks guide their work, and what they have learned about working across different worldviews and contexts. We also added additional questions specific to each thought leader's background and expertise, such as integrating individual or family-level indicators with service provider and organizational-level indicators. We recorded and transcribed these interviews for analysis.

Youth and Families with Lived Experience in Alberta

We believe in the importance of lived experience and hearing the perspectives of those involved in using child and family services including child intervention and mental health services in Alberta. Building on our conversations around what well-being means to children, youth, and families, the overall focus of the Year 2 engagements was understanding how youth and caregivers think agencies should measure well-being, what the signs and markers for well-being are in the seven domains, and how youth and caregivers would like to be involved in well-being assessments.

We held three focus group discussions virtually with a total of 13 youth and caregivers. We met with each council separately to ensure that members felt comfortable sharing with those present and had the support of a council organizer/support staff should they need it. We used virtual whiteboards as well as Zoom chats and oral discussions to facilitate our discussions with the youth and caregivers.

We spoke with members of the following youth and family councils:

- CASA Mental Health Youth and Family Advisory Council
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta Youth Council
- Hull's Voices of Lived Experience Child, Youth and Family Advisory Council

the Indigenous-led circle as a guiding metaphor, we placed our purpose of measuring the seven well-being domains in the centre of a circle and considered different voices as distinct but not separate from each other to allow for creativity without merging in our common intention to meaningfully assess well-being (Figure 5.). We presented the framework with the domains from Phase 1 and the drafted principles to ALIGN members at their Member Meeting. This allowed us to understand how the principles resonated for agencies' practice and what unique meanings and nuances are important in different agencies' contexts.

Appendix B: Survey Results

Current Measurement Approaches

We sent the survey to 106 agencies and received responses from 28 agencies. Many survey respondents indicated that the domains and principles of well-being developed in Year 1 of the project align with their approach to service delivery and impact measurement. We found that accreditation often provides guidance of principles and goals but does not dictate specific measures. Some funding sources do constrain what measures agencies can use, either by dictating specific tools, or by requiring academic-validated measures.

Respondents reported a large assortment of measures used by their agencies, including 64 different standardized measures. The most commonly listed were the Ages & Stages Questionnaire®; Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale; Child and Youth Resiliency Measure; Protective Factors Survey; Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths; and Casey Life Skills. The majority of respondents listed multiple measures.

Multiple agencies reported using satisfaction surveys when families leave services or complete programs. Many respondents indicated that qualitative measures. For example, discussions from families, success stories, and talking circles were a key aspect of understanding impact. This aligns with what we have heard in our research and engagement. However, most respondents did not describe their methodologies for qualitative measures, possibly indicating a gap of shared, consistent approaches to gathering this data.

We also heard from multiple agencies that staff well-being has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that capacity for measuring impact to align with multiple reporting requirements is limited.

Appendix C: Member Meeting Domain Specific Contributions

Member Meeting Domain Specific Contributions

At the ALIGN Member Meeting the agency members provided a wide range of indicators for each of the domains. Below is a list of the patterns and general themes of the additions the members made to the indicator table by domain.

Connection to the Land: Agency staff repeatedly mentioned land-based activities and cultural teachings and ceremonies. They emphasized the importance of children and youth feeling a sense of place and having some level of access to land. Agency staff contributed all the staff indicators for connection to land, focusing on services' ability to facilitate connection to land with children.

Caring Relationships: Agency staff placed great emphasis on children's engagement with family and broader opportunities to build relationships as subgoals for caring relationships. Furthermore, the quality of children and youth's relationships were measured by their feelings of safety and lack of judgement. For services, agencies emphasized as importance goals the services' ability to facilitate relationships, staff's training on natural supports, and the availability of specific services geared to include families in decision making (Family group conference).

Meaningful Knowledge: Agencies emphasized the importance of environments that encourage learning, such as culturally safe and trauma-informed learning opportunities in and outside the school system. There was a strong emphasis on children's ability to plan, take responsibility, and reflect. Staff professional development, specifically ongoing training opportunities was considered an aspect of staff's meaningful knowledge.

Healthy Development and Growth: Agencies consistently placed an emphasis on reaching milestones as an indicator of healthy development, with special attention to unique situational indicators. Additionally, agencies contributed indicators relating to spiritual development for children. Members also considered staff training and client matching as indicators of service/staff development.

Sense of Identity & Autonomy: Agencies focused on the ways cultural connection contributes to identity formation in children and youth as well as the importance of children's self-confidence and 'doing what you're good at'. Agencies focused on ways to measure how programs support identity development and autonomy.

Cultural Connection: Agency staff focused on children's understanding of and connection to their heritage, indicators to measure staff's ability to recognize bias, make connections with Indigenous or ethnocultural communities and natural leaders, and including and celebrating cultural practices.

Supportive Environments: Agencies added indicators on how a safe environment supports cultural connection. They emphasized children and youths' ability to recognize and feel safe. Within safety, staff focused on the physical space of homes and programs and their repercussions on interactions or safety.

Appendix D: Alignment With Other Foundational Frameworks in Alberta

Table 2. Comparison of purpose and audience between the Measuring Well-Being Framework and Toolkit and other foundational frameworks in Alberta

Alignment	ALIGN Measuring Well-Being Framework and Toolkit	miyo Resource	Well-Being and Resiliency Framework	Family Resource Network Evaluation Framework
Purpose	Seek information to validate work	Seek information to validate work	Seek information to validate work	Seek information to validate work
Scope	Individual agencies and children and family serving sector in Alberta	Individual agencies	Individual agencies	Prevention and early intervention sector in Alberta funded under the FRN model
Perspective	Ethical space for Indigenous and Western parallels. Intercultural approach	Indigenous	Ethical space for Indigenous and Western parallels	Ethical space for Indigenous and Western parallels
Service Continuum	Prevention, early intervention, and Intervention	Prevention and early intervention	Prevention and early intervention	Prevention and early intervention
User	Agencies	Agencies	Agencies	Children and Family Services

Appendix E: Literature

Table 2. Literature Review Summary

Author	Title	Year
Adopt US Kids ²⁷	Moving Toward Cultural Competence: Key Considerations to Explore	N/A
Atlantic Council for International Cooperation ²⁸	Medicine Wheel Evaluation Framework	2019
BC Association of Aboriginal, Friendship Centres ²⁹	Indigenizing Outcomes Measurement: A Review of the Literature and Methodological Considerations	N/A
British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society ³⁰	Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Assessment: Issues and Insights in a Cultural Context	2013
Canadian Association of Social Workers ³¹	Understanding Social Work and Child Welfare: Canadian Survey and Interviews with Child Welfare Experts	2018
Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare ³²	W360: A Comprehensive Look at a Prevalent Child Welfare Issue	2015
Chandna K, Vine MM, Snelling SJ, Harris R, Smylie J, Manson H ³³	Principles, Approaches, and Methods for Evaluation in Indigenous Contexts: A Grey Literature Scoping Review	2019
Daniel BJ, Jean-Pierre J. ¹⁹	Re-Imagining Child and Youth Care Practice with African Canadian Youth	2020
Dirks LG. ³⁴	Indigenous Cultural Wellbeing Measures Literature Review. Southcentral Foundation	2016
Ettinger T. ³⁵	Indigenous cultural considerations during disclosures of child abuse	2022
Fox P, Crowshoe A. ¹⁴	Indigenous Health Indicators: A Participatory Approach to Co-Designing Indicators to Monitor and Measure First Nations Health.	2018
Geddes B. ⁸	Measuring Wellness: An Indicator Development Guide for First Nations	2015
Gollan S, Stacey K. ¹⁸	First Nations Cultural Safety Framework	2021
Government of Alberta ³⁶	Well-Being and Resiliency: A Framework for Supporting Safe and Healthy Children and Families	2019

Government of Alberta ³⁷	Well-Being and Resiliency: Evaluation Framework	2019
Government of Alberta ¹¹	Well-Being and Resiliency: The miyo Resource – kâ-nâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin	2019
Government of British Columbia ³⁸	Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework in British Columbia	2015
Government of Manitoba ³⁹	Transforming Child Welfare Legislation in Manitoba: Opportunities to Improve Outcomes for Children and Youth	2018
Greenfield BL, Hallgren KA, Venner KL, et al. ⁴⁰	Cultural adaptation, psychometric properties, and outcomes of the Native American Spirituality Scale	2015
Guthro E. ⁴¹	Measuring Indigenous Well-Being: What is Indigenous Services Missing	2021
Heggie K. ⁴²	Indigenous Wellness Indicators: Including Urban Indigenous Wellness Indicators in the Healthy City Strategy	2018
Hill G. ⁴³	A holistic aboriginal framework for individual healing	N/A
Hotîi ts'eeda, NWT Recreation and Parks Association ⁴⁴	Indigenous Land-Based Healing Programs in Canada: A Scoping Review	2019
Jenkins S, Robinson K, Davis R. ⁴⁵	Adapting the Medicine Wheel Model to Extend the Applicability of the Traditional Logic Model in Evaluation Research.	N/A
Kopp K, Bodor R, Quinn S, et al. ¹	kawiyahîtamik kesi wîcehtâsôk: (To Examine in Order to Support/Redirect)	2021
LaFrance J, Nichols R. ²¹	Reframing evaluation: Defining an Indigenous evaluation framework.	2008
Levasseur-Puhach S, Bonin L, Hunter S, Roos LE. ⁴⁶	Wellness Measures for Indigenous Children and Families: A Scoping Review of Best Practices and Contextual Considerations.	2020
McLeod S. ⁴⁷	Miskanawah Building Capacity for Cultural Evaluation and Measurement	2019
National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health ¹⁷	Indigenous Approaches to Program Evaluation	N/A

Northern Health ⁴⁸	Cultural Safety and System Change: An Assessment Tool	2020
Polansky L, Echo-Hawk A. ¹⁶	Building the Sacred: An Indigenous Evaluation Framework for Programs Serving Native Survivors of Violence	N/A
Snowshoe A, Crooks CV, Tremblay PF, Craig WM, Hinson RE. ⁷	Development of a Cultural Connectedness Scale for First Nations youth	2015
Teach for Canada. ¹⁵	Research and Evaluation Framework for Nonprofit Impact Reporting	2019
The National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health ⁴⁹	Considerations for Indigenous child and youth population mental health promotion in Canada	N/A
Thunderbird ⁵⁰	Native Wellness Assessment	2020
Ullrich JS. ²⁰	For the love of our children: an Indigenous connectedness framework	2019
Urban Indian Health Institute ⁵¹	Indigenous Evaluation. Urban Indian Health Institute	2018
Wathen CN, Schmitt B, MacGregor JCD. ⁵²	Measuring Trauma- (and Violence-) Informed Care: A Scoping Review.	2023
West Coast LEAF ¹³	Pathways in a Forest: Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-Based Child Welfare	2019

Appendix F: Assessments and Tools

Table 3. Alignment of Relevant Assessment and Tools with the Domains of Well-Being

Assessment or Tool	Connection to the land	Caring and stable relationships	Meaningful knowledge	Healthy development and growth	Sense of identity & autonomy	Cultural connection	Supportive and Safe Environments
Ages & Stages ⁵³							
Building the Sacred ¹⁶							
Child & Youth Resilience Measure and Adult Resilience Measure (CYRM/ARM) ⁵⁴							
Casey Life Skills ⁵⁵							
Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) ⁵⁶							
Cultural Connectedness Scale ⁷							
Eco-Maps ⁵⁷							
Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST) ⁵⁸							
The miyo resource kâ-nâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin ¹¹							
Native Wellness Assessment ⁵⁰							
Natural Supports Framework ⁵⁹							
Nurturing Skills Competency Scale ⁶⁰							
Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (Piccolo)* ⁶¹							
Parental Stress Scale ⁶²							
Protective Factors Survey Second Edition (PFS-2) ⁶³							
Signs of Safety ⁶⁴							

Positive Parenting Program Triple P ⁶⁵							
Well-Being Indicator Tool for Youth (WIT-Y) ⁶⁶							

Table 4. Description of Relevant Assessments and Tools

Assessment	Access	Description
Ages & Stages ⁵³	Onetime cost of \$295.	Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ®-3) is a developmental screening tool designed for use by early educators and health care professionals. It relies on parents as experts, is easy-to-use, family-friendly and creates the snapshot needed to catch delays and celebrate milestones.
Building the Sacred: An Indigenous Evaluation Framework for Programs Serving Native Survivors of Violence ¹⁶	Free and available online.	This framework illustrates four places from which Indigenous evaluation is already taking place in violence prevention, response, and healing programs that have not yet been formally recognized in a culturally-rooted evaluation framework.
Casey Life Skills (CLS) ⁵⁵	Free and accessible online.	CLS is a set of free tools that assess the independent skills youth need to achieve their long-term goals. It aims to guide youth toward developing healthy, productive lives.
Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) ⁵⁶	Free and accessible online	The CANS Comprehensive is a multi-purpose tool that gathers information on the needs and strengths to support decision making of children and youth aged 6-20, and parents and caregivers, including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes of services.
Child & Youth Resilience Measure and Adult Resilience Measure (CYRM/ARM) ⁵⁴	Free and accessible online	CYRM-R is a self-report measure of social-ecological resilience. Resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being and their capacity to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.
Cultural Connectedness Scale ⁷	Free and accessible online	The Cultural Connectedness Scale measures how integrated children and youth are with their First Nation, Métis, or Inuit culture. The scale has three dimensions identity, traditions, and spirituality.

Eco-Maps ⁵⁷	Free and accessible online	Eco-maps are a visual map of a family's connections to the external world. They provide a useful tool for assessment of family, social and community relationships and highlight the quality of these connections.
Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST) ⁵⁸	Free and accessible online	The FAST is a family version of CANS that is designed to maximize communication about the needs and strengths of families. The FAST includes ratings of the Family Together, each Caregiver, and all children and youth. Interventions in the family system can be directed at that system or to address the individual needs of family members or dyadic relationships within the family.
The miyo resource kâ-nâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin ¹¹	Free and accessible online.	The miyo resource discusses foundational beliefs and approaches of Indigenous peoples to promote well-being and resiliency and outlines an evaluative process that honours an Indigenous worldview. This resource supports provincial implementation of the Well-Being and Resiliency Framework by outlining an evaluative framework that recognizes culturally-based practice.
Native Wellness Assessment™ (NWA) ⁵⁰	Free and accessible online.	The NWA™ tool is the first of its kind to measure how cultural interventions affect a person's wellness from a whole person and strengths-based view. This tool is proving that culture is the key to restoring and maintaining wellness, which is something First Nations people have long known.
Natural Supports Framework ⁵⁹	Free and accessible online.	Framework structured as a workbook with reflection questions and case studies to help organizations/staff think about the implications of the natural supports for their practice. High emphasis on relationships and fostering resiliency.
Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS) ⁶⁰	Cost dependent of number of assessments.	The NSCS is a comprehensive criterion referenced measure designed to gather demographic data of the family, as well as knowledge and utilization of Nurturing Parenting practices.
Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO)* ⁶¹	Ontime cost of \$60 for assessment and guide.	PICCOLO is a checklist of observable developmentally supportive parenting behaviors in four domains: affection, responsiveness, encouragement, and teaching. It is a positive, practical, versatile, culturally sensitive, valid, and reliable tool for practitioners that shows what parents can do to support their children's development.

Parental Stress Scale ⁶²	Free and accessible online.	18-item questionnaire assessing parents' feelings about their parenting role, exploring both positive aspects, such as emotional benefits, personal development, and negative aspects of parenthood, like demands on resources, feelings of stress.
Protective Factors Survey Second Edition (PFS-2) ⁶³	Free and accessible online.	The PFS-2 is an evaluation tool for use with caregivers receiving child maltreatment prevention services. Questions on family functioning & nurturing (caring relationships) and concrete supports (safe & supportive environments).
Signs of Safety ⁶⁴	Free and available online.	A strengths-based, safety-organized approach to child protection case work. Revolves around a risk assessment and case planning format that integrates professional knowledge alongside local family and cultural knowledge and balances a rigorous exploration of danger/harm alongside indicators of strengths and safety.
Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) ⁶⁵	Free and available online.	The Triple P is a comprehensive system of parenting and family support for families with children. The program consists of five levels of intervention, which increases with intensity, and progressively narrows the reach at each increasing level.
Well-Being Indicator Tool for Youth (WIT-Y) ⁶⁶	Free and accessible online	The WIT-Y has been designed as an inventory for use as a 'conversation starter' with youth ages 15-21 about their overall well-being. It is a tool for youth's self-assessment, meaning youth decide what level of well-being they have within each domain, as well as ways in which they might want to increase their level of well-being.

Appendix G: Menu of Indicators

Connection to the Land

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth participate in land-based activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth spends time on the land or in nature. Examples include hunting, gathering, gardening, and playing. • Child or youth feels comfortable spending time away from technology. • Child or youth has the capacity to regularly visit green spaces of some kind. For example, child or youth is aware where to access green spaces and has the means to travel there alone or with support. • Child or youth is self-motivated to participate in land-based activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have connections and means to spend time on the land or in nature with child or youth. • Caregivers learn about the history of this land. • Caregivers feel well-equipped and confident travelling on the land. • Caregivers participate in travel on land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization connects staff, children, youth, and caregivers to the land. • Organization secures external resources to connect staff, children, youth, and caregivers to the land. • Organization practices connection to land in their programs. • Staff are offered learning opportunities on land, plants, animals, and waterways teachings. • Staff increase their understanding of land, plants, animals, and waterways teachings.
Children and youth build connection to their environment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth feels a positive connection to the environment. • Child or youth discusses enhanced relationships as a result of being on land and in nature. • Child or youth views or speaks about land or earth as a living entity rather than a tool or inanimate object. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers model a positive relationship to the environment for the child or youth they care for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand the importance and significance of land acknowledgments.
Children and youth show respect of, and stewardship for, land and living creatures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth respects connections between humans, environment, and spirit world. For example, ensures cultural resources are properly maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers access or learn about community gardens, traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations have policies and practices that demonstrate respect of land and living creatures.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth learns about food sources and cultural significance of food. • Child or youth understands their personal impact on the environment. For example, participates in recycling, watering, planting, composting, picking up trash, or doesn't litter or vandalize. 	<p>medicines, and healthy food.</p>	
Children and youth learn about and use traditional medicines or healing practices		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is connected to knowledge keepers willing to share knowledge. For example, through nurturing relationships to knowledge keepers, attending events or visiting sacred or harvest sites. • Child or youth builds their knowledge of medicinal uses of plants for everyday natural remedies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers access learning opportunities for traditional medicines, healing practices, or harvesting practices. • Caregivers increased their knowledge about traditional medicines, healing practices, or harvesting practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations provide physical space connecting to and learning about plant teachings. • Programs or services offer or connect to medicine picking activities and trainings on medicines and practices.
Children and youth are involved in land-based teachings and ceremonies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has the opportunity to participate in teachings and ceremonies on land. Examples include medicine picking, cultural camps, and sweat lodges, going for walks, or tipi time cultural teachings. • Child or youth participates in teachings and ceremonies on land. Examples include medicine picking, cultural camps, and sweat lodges, going for walks, or tipi time cultural teachings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers receive land-based teachings and ceremonies on the land such as Strawberry ceremony, Thunder ceremonies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are comfortable and knowledgeable in creating safe spaces for Indigenous youth. For example, staff feel comfortable smudging, or staff understand cultural practices for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and youth. • Organization provides a welcoming environment for Elders, knowledge keepers and Circle Keepers.
Children and youth cultivate their sense of place		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth engages in resource-based activities as a continued reminder and connection to ancestors and land. • Child or youth spends time in their Nation, settlement, or home community. Examples include powwows, family events, sun dances, or just being. • Child or youth knows where they are from. • Child or youth feels comfortable in natural environment with basic outdoor and survival skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers feel connected to the land. For example, immigrant and refugee caregivers feel welcomed on the land they live on, not just the country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations have connections and receive information about events and activities that build a sense of place early enough for families and agencies to plan for them. • Programs and staff model comfort with natural environment and basic survival skills
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Caring and Stable Relationships

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth establish and strengthen their connection to natural supports		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth receives support from kin, friends, and other natural supports. For example, informal social networks such as neighbours, coaches, or educators. • Child or youth reports ties to Elders in their community, or transgenerational kinship with ancestors and lands. • Child or youth has a support network with or without families. For example, sports, religious events, and clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers and families report connecting with other family members, their community, Elders, other natural supports for positive support and teachings. • Caregivers are able to build connections, including ties to Elders, with transgenerational kinship, or with culturally relevant supports. • Caregivers engage with long-term, holistic and cross-sectoral, family-centered supports. For example, peer support or parent support groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization trains and supports staff to promote and help children build natural supports. • Staff understand traditional kinship concepts and practices. For example, kinship mapping, traditional parenting practices, traditional knowledge of child and family teachings, extended family, and relational accountability. • Organization trains and supports staff to support child or youth and caregivers in increasing their network of natural supports.
Children and youth establish and strengthen their connection to community		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has regular opportunities for relational connections to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers and families report feeling less isolated and feeling welcomed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are aware of and share information about community activities, events, or resources in a timely manner with

<p>community. For example, regularly attending events or building relationships with community members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is with kin or Indigenous families within their community. • Child or youth reports sense of belonging to community. • Children and youth see their parents and caregivers as leaders and having something of value to offer. For example, cultural wealth, language, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers share childcare and parenting with others in family and community. • Caregivers indicate that they feel connected within their, or their child's, community, have the confidence to engage, and feel welcome. • Caregivers are able to speak their first language and to share their cultural wealth in "mainstream" spaces and systems. 	<p>children, youth, and caregivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies have the ability to provide or refer to transportation to those they serve to access community supports and activities. • Programs or services maintain or establish family connections. For example, re-unification, working to achieve permanency, sibling homes, family involved decision making. • Programs or services have representation from community and build sense of belonging. • Organization develops relationships with local cultural communities, to inform program development and support building natural, culturally relevant, connections. • Staff understand ceremony, for example in relation to grief and loss.
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Children and youth have healthy family dynamics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth regularly visits and engages with family. • Child or youth look to their parents and grandparents for guidance and wisdom. • Child or youth engages in play regularly with family members. • Child or youth feel that they are heard, loved, and supported by at least one caregiver. • Child or youth is engaged with family in practising their culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers positively engage with child or youth by meeting visitation recommendations or demonstrating positive parent-child relationships. • Caregivers report feeling confident and competent in their role in the family. For example, caregivers believe in their ability to help others, understands role in family and fulfils responsibility, has parental self-efficacy. • Caregivers participate in activities as a family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs encourage and facilitate regular visits with the child/youth family through including family in decision making, activities' and providing transportation to visits. • Staff receive training that supports their ability to connect with children or youth or caregivers. For example, training for motivational interviewing or natural supports. • Programs or services include families in recreation activities.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth feels personal talents are recognized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers express and illustrate love and emotional warmth towards child. For example, caregivers demonstrate nurturing as caregiving practices like serve-and-return. • Caregivers are confident in their role as transmitters of culture. • Caregivers’ goals are acknowledged and built upon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are set up to work for family schedules, not business hours, so parents don't have to compromise their jobs to attend during working hours. • Staff feel competent to support families even if they are not parents themselves. For example, organization designs physical spaces with families in mind; organization provides flexibility for staff and their efforts; or organizations allow sufficient time for meaningful relationship building. • Organization takes time to understand and reflect on how to decolonize work and organizational culture. • Organization regularly recognizes and celebrates staff. For example, by offering personal days, celebrating birthdays, shout-outs, and staff recognition.
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Children and youth have stable and trusting relationships

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is approaching the person caring for them. • Child or youth reports feeling hope and trust. • Child or youth has relationships free of judgment. • Child or youth is engaging positively with programs. • Child or youth is able to set boundaries, create safety plan for relationships, and advocate for themselves. • Child or youth understands what safe spaces, relationships and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers readily respond to child’s emotional needs, such as being ‘in tune’ with child’s needs or comfort. • Caregivers are consistent and predictable in their interactions with the child or youth. • Caregivers are calm and consistent when dealing with child or youth’s distress. • Caregivers understand or are trained in safe boundary setting and safety plans. • Caregivers understand how to build healthy relationships with the child or youth or co-parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs or services work to achieve permanency and reduce moves for children and youth. • Staff have trusting relationships with child or youth or caregivers. • Staff work closely with the caregivers to get to know a child, before trying to complete more personal face-to-faces. • Staff engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression work to have better skill set to support diverse children. • Agency allows for time for relationships to be built and
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environments are. For example, can identify pink and red flags within relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers have access to holistic support and feel respected in their interaction with child services staff. 	<p>strengthened before goal focused work needs to begin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization has built trust with child, youth and caregiver. The organization is able to walk alongside the child, youth, and caregiver. Staff are trained in trauma-informed practices and this is monitored and observed in practice.
Children and youth develop reciprocity in their relationships		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or youth volunteers in community or in program. Child or youths seeks out positive relationships with themselves, other people, Elders and ceremonies. Child or youth demonstrates respect for self, others, and environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers are able to model reciprocity in relationships, through demonstrating respect and concern for others or volunteering. Caregivers understand how to "share power" with their children as part of developmental relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are able to role model reciprocity with children or youth they support. Agency relationships with Indigenous and other diverse families are respectful and reciprocal. Feedback from Indigenous partners is integrated into services.

Meaningful Knowledge

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth have a positive learning experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or youth has a positive attitude toward learning. Child or youth expresses curiosity about learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers are engaged in the child's education and learning. Caregivers model and support curiosity for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff feel confident and independent about supporting children and youth in their learning. Agency's personnel policies for the program or service reflect prioritization of competent, knowledgeable staff. Agency's personnel policies specify core competencies, required education or training.
Children and youth access to formal education		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or youth has access to school education. Child, aged 0-5, participates in early childhood education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers have awareness and understand how to navigate early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have regular check-ins about education access and participation. Staff has enhanced training for navigating and supporting schooling.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth’s number of completed years of schooling. • Youth, aged 14-18, intends to pursue post-secondary education. • Child or youth achieves basic numeracy and literacy targets. 	<p>childhood and school programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have support in navigating early childhood and school programs. 	
Children and youth access culturally safe learning opportunities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth learns about cultural ways of knowing and doing integrated in broader learning opportunities. • Child or youth learns from Elders or knowledge keepers about cultural ways of knowing and being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers understands and respect value of culture, their own and others. • Caregivers have connections to Elders or language speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services are guided, designed and delivered by Indigenous youth, Elders, families, and community members. • Agency has professional development activities reflect both core trainings and specialized learnings as appropriate.
Children and youth accessing flexible learning support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth accesses trauma informed educators or specialized programs that meet their needs. • Child or youth experiences success in school with support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers are able to advocate for child or youth to access specialized programs that meet their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency’s policies, procedures, processes, supports, environment reflect trauma informed care needs.
Children and youth are supported in reflective learning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth learns through experience, success, and mistakes. • Child or youth has relationships with caregivers or staff where reflection and growth from experience, success, and mistakes is fostered and supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers gives space for storytelling and support reflection. • Caregiver models and supports reflection and learning from experience, success, and mistakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency has processes and time for ongoing learning and reflective discussion. • Agency has specified professional development policy for programs.
Children and youth access experiential learning opportunities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth participates in learning by doing in age-appropriate ways. For example, child or youth knows how to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers support child or youth in learning by doing in age-appropriate ways. For example, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency provides informal learning opportunities. For example, group learning, job shadowing. • Staff access coaching and mentorship support.

do laundry, budget, how to use public transit, among other things.	showing them how to do laundry.	
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Healthy Development and Growth

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth experience milestones and rites of passage		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth moves towards developmentally and culturally appropriate milestones or rites of passage. • Child or youth receives screening, follow-ups, or continued professional support to reaching milestones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers access coaching or education regarding child or youth development. • Caregivers will advocate for additional supports when they feel the child is behind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are trained in and use measures that reflect child and youth demographic and are culturally responsive. • Staff are able to apply developmental stages training with the children they work with. For example, can recognize and support individual needs.
Children and youth progress in their learning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth engages in developmentally appropriate play time. For example, drawing circle, building tower with cubes, building bridge with cubes, walking outdoors, climbing outside. • Child or youth participates freely in developmental activities. • Child or youth seeks adventure in age-appropriate ways to grow and learn. • Child or youth learns useful skills for later life stages and has opportunities to demonstrate their independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver engages with child in appropriate play routine and developmental activities. For example, caregiver reads, talks, sings, floor play with child or youth. • Caregivers participate in learning to support life skills. For example, budgeting or food preparation classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization has processes in place to foster safe, trusting relationships and inclusive environments. • Staff maintain consistent use of tools yet utilize an individualized approach when determining what developmental activities are appropriate and what constitutes successful use. For example, including child or youth in the plan development process, letting the child determine what they wish to start working

		on, using storyboards or picture symbols to collaborate with child or caregiver.
Children and youth grow in their emotional development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth likes caregiver to be within sight and hearing. • Child or youth demonstrates affection to family. • Child or youth regulates their moods and emotions. For example, has a level of self-control for impulses or emotional outbursts, can work towards goals. • Child or youth is able to recognize, name, and express their feelings. • Child or youth reports a positive change in mental health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers build relationship with child or youth with family engagement opportunities. • Caregivers access counselling or respite to remodel their own emotional regulation for the child or youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff lead parent education and training opportunities. • Program or service refers child or youth to specialized services to support their emotional and behavioral development. • Staff are trained to consistently implement trauma-informed assessment tools and approaches for child or youth emotional development.
Children and youth nurture their physical development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has age-appropriate nutritious diet. • Child or youth practices good dental and physical hygiene. • Child or youth's immunizations are up to date. • Child or youth living with disability or chronic illness experiences changes in health. For example, has changes in support or impact on their everyday life. • Child or youth reports engaging in regular physical activity. • Child or youth has structured and unstructured opportunities to play and to develop motor skills. • Child or youth reports healthy sleep habits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have opportunities for life skills development towards food and healthy habits. • Caregivers have ability and confidence to book medical appointments and have them direct bill Child and Family Services Authority. • Caregiver takes child to medical appointments as needed. For example, pre-natal screenings, immunizations. • Caregiver responds appropriately to any symptoms of illness, • Caregivers access resources to facilitate child or youth physical and emotional needs. • Caregiver training on sleep hygiene. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff access resources to facilitate child or youth physical needs. For example, community garden, programs on connection to land and learning about food, training on healthy habits and food. • Staff create safe and inclusive environments to discuss safe sex and sexual health.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth's level of understanding of safe sex practices and sexual health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have the tools to have open, honest, and respectful conversations with youth about sexual health. 	
Children and youth communicate confidently		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has confident communication skills. • Child or youth has vocabulary to ask and say what they want. • Child or youth self-advocates for needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers give appropriate stimulation, such as praise or encouragement. • Caregivers integrate child or youth voice into decisions and planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs or services integrate child or youth or caregiver input into planning.
Children and youth grow spiritually		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth engages in cultural or spiritual activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have knowledge of and access culturally specific child development or parenting programs and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training on cultural activities opportunities for cultural connection, connection to land, ceremony, and culture camp activities.
Children and youth grow and mature socially		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is smiling, joking, inviting, or open. • Child or youth is taken out to visit family, friends, shops, the local community, nursery, or playgroup. • Child or youth attends community events or gatherings. • Child or youth goes to an event with someone they know from community rather than with the social worker. • Child or youth is connected to social mentorship. • Child or youth is taking social cues and responding appropriately. • Child or youth effectively fulfills societal roles in school, home, community. • Child or youth has experienced rites of passage. • Child or youth made at least one new friend in the past year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have the means to take child or youth to events or gatherings. • Caregivers provide consistent social mentorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff provides social mentorship in a trauma-informed and culturally responsive way.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth is transitioned to adulthood with required supports and services. 		
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Sense of Identity and Autonomy

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth strengthen their sense of agency		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or youth holds positive beliefs about themselves, providing an internal guiding mechanism to steer and nurture people through challenges, and improving control over outcomes. Child or youth is eager to participate in group activities and interact with peers. Child or youth feels comfortable showing up as their authentic self to work, school, or other places. Child or youth feels comfortable expressing their wants and needs and will speak up for themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers hold positive beliefs about themselves and support child or youth's positive identity. Sense of cultural wealth to transmit. Caregivers support child or youth with opportunities to participate in group activities. Caregivers create safe space for child or youth to express wants and needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency's accessibility planning includes attitudinal barriers. Staff support child or youth with opportunities to participate in group activities. Staff create space for children and youth to bring their personal belongings from home to decorate their room. Staff create safe space for children and youth to express their wants and needs.
Children and youth have the resources to feel resilient during difficulties		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or youth's level of resilience apparent. For example, child or youth feels they can succeed. For example, child or youth is actively seeking to better their situation, feels able to self-advocate, is passionate, asks for help, or adapts to new environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers have supports in place, such as access to respite care, and feel they can cope and model resiliency. Caregivers provide space and opportunity for child to reflect and learn from challenges. Caregivers assist child or youth in identifying natural supports to help with advocacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are non-judgmental. Staff support reflection by sharing stories and modeling reflecting on mistakes and moving forward. Staff support children and youth in building connections that can be lifelong to support with all life areas.
Children and youth have a sense of autonomy		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has their voice heard and feels included in decisions that affect them. For example, understands and participates in evaluation process. • Child or youth has the confidence and ability to make decisions and changes for self. For example, participates in ceremony and hold responsibility for the failure and success from their decisions. • Child or youth has the ability to solve problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers involve child or youth in decisions that affect them. • Caregivers feel empowered to make decisions for themselves and their families and understand their responsibility for their decisions. • Caregivers have problem-solving skills and model them for child or youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff involve child or youth in decisions that affect them. "Doing with, instead of to." • Staff work with caregivers and community to understand how to support and nurture healthy sense of identity and autonomy and align with participant needs. • Organization provides support in developing problem-solving skills.
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Children and youth have a sense of mastery

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth embraces change and willingly tries new things or accepts challenges. • Child or youth exhibits competence in various areas such as cognitive, physical, social, and spiritual. Having self-control, striving to achieve personal goals, rather than superiority. "I may not be perfect at everything, but I will always try to get better". • Child or youth has capacity for self-regulation, self-comfort. For example, child or youth is able to manage impulsivity, are taught healthy ways of intellectualizing emotions, has some emotional regulation tools such as breathing techniques, 5-4-3-2-1 method, or journaling. • Child or youth is able to navigate different environments and cultural contexts and worldviews. For example, youth feeling comfortable navigating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers provide opportunities to build competence in many areas. • Caregivers nurture growth mindset. • Caregivers have emotional literacy. • Caregivers are learning and modelling developmentally and culturally appropriate emotional regulation tools. For example, caregiver attends social emotional learning workshops. • Caregivers have capacity to navigate between two or more worldviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff support a growth mindset. • Organization is willing to try new practices. Innovative practices are embedded to meet unique child or youth needs. • Organization provides workshops and training in developmental relationships and social emotional learning for staff and caregivers.
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different cultures at school and at home.		
Children and youth are involved in interests that bring joy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is engaged in activities that bring them joy, that they have an interest in, or that they are great at. For example, swimming or karate. • Child or youth demonstrates ambition. • Child or youth shares knowledge confidently with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers provide opportunities for child or youth to pursue activities that bring joy. • Caregivers are attentive to and nurture child's gift. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff support activities for fun without a problem-solving agenda. • Staff are attentive to and nurture child's gift. • Organizations provide opportunities for peer mentorship.
Children and youth cultivate a sense of belonging		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is able to strongly connect with who they are as a community, Tribe, or Nation in positive ways. For example, access to language or takes language classes. • Child or youth knows where they come from and what their identity is. They know their birth family, or know of them, and family history. • Child or youth is supported in understanding their roots, knowing, and owning the truth about their history. • Child or youth has sense of community, loving others, and being loved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers are connected with natural supports from their country of origin where their sense of identity is nurtured. • Caregivers bridge between two cultures to support healthy bi-cultural identity development in children and youth. • Caregivers provide opportunities to connect to child or youth's roots. • Caregivers are able to identify and draw upon cultural wealth. • Caregivers' confidence as transmitters of culture is restored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency and staff learn to create ethical space. For example, translate English nouns to Indigenous verbs. • Programs reflect the demographics of the larger population. • Staff and organization have aligned vision. • Agency prioritizes diverse representation of staff and board to support community. • Agency engages those with lived experience in cultural minority communities to co-design programs and supports. • Staff and services are able to foster positive intergenerational relationships within families. • Staff have the ability to foster positive bi-cultural identities.
Children and youth have a sense of purpose		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth sets goals and has aspirations. • Child or youth has a sense of purpose and direction for their life. • Child or youth feels connected to someone or something about a passion or a group that motivates them to keep trying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have a sense of purpose and model concern for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff support with a client-led service plan with realistic and achievable goals that will build confidence and self efficacy. Short- and long-term goals incorporated in service delivery. • Agency provides increased meetings with caseworkers

<p>or working towards something. For example, child or youth volunteers.</p>		<p>for post high school funding and training opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency supports and tracks activities to help youth feel connected and provide a sense of purpose, link them to community and multiple generations, gain confidence, and experience appreciation.
Children and youth have hope		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth sees a future for themselves. • Child or youth experiences a sense of happiness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have hopes and aspirations for self and their children. 	

Cultural Connection

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth are connected to their culture through relationships		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth views caregivers as having something of value to pass on. For example, language or culture. • Child or youth understands value of culture, their own and others. • Child or youth has connections to a traditional person, Elder or Clan Mother. Child or youth feels a strong attachment towards their community or Nation. • Child or youth feels a strong connection to their ancestors. • Child or youth has someone they are close with attend cultural ceremonies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers share traditional or cultural stories with child or youth. • Caregivers understand value of culture, their own and others. • Caregivers transmit cultural knowledge. For example, shares traditional teachings, values, and language with their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand and help share traditional parenting practices. For example, the moss bag, Naming Ceremony, Willow teachings, the swing, nurturing, attachment and Circle teachings of balance, harmony, and inclusiveness; relationships, roles, and responsibilities. • Staff are able to recognize and reflect own cultural lens during cultural encounters. • Staff have ongoing relationships with different Elders and knowledge keepers from different Nations and Tribes. • Agency collaborates with Indigenous families to create services that are specific to community needs. • Staff understand and incorporate Indigenous worldviews, culture, tradition, values, ceremony, and language. For example, finding creative or external resources for children to connect.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth listens carefully if a traditional person, Elder, or Clan Mother spoke to them about their culture. • Child or youth has talked to other people in order to learn more about their culture. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs or services are provided by delegated Indigenous agencies where possible.
Children and youth feel pride in their cultural or bi-cultural identity		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth feels pride in cultural or bi-cultural identity. For example, child or youth expresses pride through stories, activities, etc. • Child or youth feels sense of belonging with their culture. • Child or youth knows that being a part of their culture means they sometimes have a different way of looking at the world. • Child or youth knows their cultural or spirit name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers feel pride in cultural or bi-cultural identity. • Caregivers participate in Nation meetings and gatherings. • Caregivers feel confident in role as transmitter of culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization hires diverse staff and volunteers that reflect the population they serve. • Programs or services are designed for children and families to see themselves reflected. • Staff acknowledge their own biases related to culture. For example, they understand, and articulate underlying assumptions related to culture, legal context, and professional formation, fostering anti-racist and anti-oppressive organizational culture and practices.
Children and youth know about their heritage		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth understands heritage and can articulate it. • Child or youth feels connection to land. • Child or youth knows who parents, grandparents and great-grandparents are. • Child or youth knows which communities their ancestors originate from. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers share knowledge and stories of their ancestors and heritage with child or youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand and support the importance of connections to Indigenous families, communities and ancestors. For example, place Indigenous children in homes where at least one of the caregivers is Indigenous. • Staff understand the importance of our physical environment. For example, home means from an Indigenous worldview, tipi teachings, the physical state of my home, and housing. • Staff help process any impact of intergenerational trauma for the families they serve. For example, Elders, resources, and ceremonies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth participates in events or activities' that will help them understand their background better. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recognize the Indigenous perspective of community-based child rearing and understand the families' responsibilities to nurture the gifts children bring with them. • Organization has an advisory group to support understanding. For example, Indigenous Advisory Committee, equity and diversity committee.
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Children and youth are involved in cultural practices

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth practices culture in everyday life. For example, eats traditional food or is familiar with using tobacco, sage, sweetgrass, or cedar. • Child or youth participates in cultural ceremony or helps prepare for a cultural ceremony. For example, sweat lodge, Moon Ceremony, Sundance, Longhouse, Feast, or giveaway. • Child or youth has respect for themselves and their culture and understands their responsibilities to live a positive life. • Child or youth understands how to find positive cultural spaces, ceremonies and Elders and use these experiences to keep them safe. • Child or youth plans on attending a cultural ceremony in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers access culturally appropriate and knowledgeable resources such as Elders, speakers, or traditional people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization incorporates traditional approaches into workplace culture, programs, and services. For example, traditional conflict resolution, child-rearing, gender roles, among others. • Staff understand and support the ceremonies and teachings that enhance the human journey. For example, the Clan and Society Teachings and Age and Stage Teachings.
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Children and youth connect to culture for their coping and healing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth looks to their culture for help when overwhelmed with emotions or making decisions. For example, child or youth using stories and remembering lessons learned when feeling stuck. • Child or youth looks to their culture when feeling spiritually disconnected. • Child or youth uses traditional healers and medicines. • Child or youth accesses cultural supports. For example, ceremony when experiencing illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers look to their culture for guidance on emotions, decisions. • Caregivers use and share traditional medicines and practices with their child or youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services use culturally appropriate approaches that incorporate best available therapies to help individuals, groups and communities heal from emotional traumas such as grief, forgiveness, and addictions. For example, culturally appropriate programs to incorporate therapies that aren't based on prescription medication. • Staff understand and can rely on cultural teachings and practices to make choices if faced with a problem or feel troubled. For example, programs or services use some of the following to address family and parenting concerns: Sharing Circles, Teachings, Counselling through Elders, presenting protocol, such as cloth or tobacco, to an Elder in Ceremony. • Staff understand the impacts of inter-generational trauma on survivors of Residential Schools, individuals, families and communities and how it affects the families they serve. • Programs or services support personal health with cultural practices. For example, medicine picking, taking care of their body, Indigenous games. • Staff understand how participation in traditional ceremonies facilitates healing for the families we serve and can relate by being involved in traditional cultural social events and ceremonies. For example, pow-wows, smudging, pipe ceremonies, sweat lodge ceremonies, and Inuit or Métis ceremonies.
Children and youth are connected to their language		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has knowledge of cultural language. • Child or youth feels comfortable using their language. • Child or youth feels it is important to know their cultural language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have access to language lessons with cultural understandings. • Caregivers share their traditional language with child or youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs or services are able to make space for different culturally-rooted communication styles. • Staff understand the importance of Indigenous languages. For example, language classes, hearing or speaking with elders or cultural people who speak their language or through storytelling and social interactions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is learning their traditional language. 		
Children and youth received cultural teachings		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth knows protocols and songs. • Child or youth understands the true teachings of their culture, and the ceremonies they attend, and practices them in their cultural journey on a regular basis. • Child or youth understands Natural law and how to use these teachings in their personal life, in their community, and in ceremony. • Child or youth believes things like animals and rocks have a spirit like people. • Child or youth spends time trying to find out more about belonging to their culture such as its history, traditions, and customs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers remodel teachings of their culture to their child or youth. For example, attending ceremonies, regular cultural practices, knowing customs or songs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have been involved in traditional Indigenous teachings and ceremony led by an Indigenous mentor or teacher – or training. • Staff can connect with Indigenous teachings to assist the families they serve. For example: staff understand Turtle Lodge teachings or Willow Teachings.

Supportive and Safe Environments

Children and Youth	Caregivers	Agencies and Staff
Children and youth have access to basic needs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has access to basic needs. For example, housing security or has a safe place to stay, has sufficient food, has clean drinking water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have suitable housing and surrounding environment. • Caregivers are able to access financial support for or has livable income to pay for all or most necessities. For example, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program or services provide wrap around support to meet basic needs. For example, provides snacks or meals, supports housing.

	rent or mortgage, utilities or bills, groceries, childcare, medical expenses, household and personal hygiene, transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff connect caregivers with access to financial or other supports to cover necessities.
Children and youth access services, activities, education		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth receives appropriate medical or psycho-social screenings and interventions. • Child or youth has access to quality education. • Child or youth knows and accesses resources when needed. For example, school counselor, trusted adult, or peer support groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers request resources and have made connections to formal supports. For example, agencies, organizations, resource centres. • Caregiver seeks appropriate help and advice if experiencing difficulties managing child or youth. • Caregivers understand the mandate and role of formal systems, have reduced fear and mistrust, and are able to engage. • Caregivers build relationships of trust with service providers for social inclusion, such as brokers. • Caregivers engage with programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization collaborates and connects with other organizations for improved and comprehensive service delivery for children, youth, and caregivers. • Program or service is flexible and ability to adapt to shifting circumstances in communities. For example, ability to experiment, confidence to adapt, ability to learn. • Organization provides help and advice, and support connection to and building trust with services or resources for caregivers. • Organization builds trusting relationships with caregivers to increase support-seeking when needed. • Staff support understanding of cultural minorities families in their interactions with formal systems to build intercultural capacity. • Programs or services equip caregivers and families to find appropriate supports during a crisis even after their file is closed.
Children and youth are safe		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth feels environment is physically safe in home, care, school, and community. • Child or youth feels environment is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have taken appropriate home safety precautions. For example, safety gates, cupboard locks, medicine storage. • Caregivers provide child or youth feelings of safety by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are adequately trained in safety for the programs or services they run. • Programs or services foster a sense of belonging and safety. For example, broken items are replaced, children or youth can

<p>emotionally safe. For example, minimal stress, conflict, hostility within family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth understands how to identify risky or unsafe situations and who to go to for help. • Child or youth feels appreciated and supported within environment without frequent criticism or hostility. 	<p>increasing protective factors, anticipating danger, appropriately supervises child or youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have opportunities to rest and work towards a balanced lifestyle. • Caregivers use language and tone appropriately towards child or youth. For example, caregivers provide positive discipline without rejection. • Caregivers changes risky or harmful behaviours. For example, substance misuse, family violence, or gambling. • Caregivers respects and provides boundaries and a controlled environment. 	<p>bring items from home, onboarding includes welcome kits, or program provides cultural foods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services find lower incident rates. • Intercultural capacity improves accuracy of assessments of well-being vs. risk. • Organization supports child, youth, families to identify and get help with risky or harmful behaviours or situations. • Staff establishes child or youth's safety when file is closed.
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Children and youth are culturally safe in their environment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth feels culturally safe in service or care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers report feeling programs are culturally safe. • Caregivers feel program or service is respecting their healing journeys. • Caregivers report changes in their spiritual, physical, emotional, and social healing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services encourage newcomer and refugee families to access supports. • Staff take cultural safety training and regularly self reflect on their ability to recognize racism and white privilege and the ways they can address racism in their practice. • Staff self reflect on the ways their personal and professional values are consistent with and cultivate cultural safety. • Organization provides accessible safe spaces that are culturally attuned to support healing. • Staff honor grief and respond compassionately to cycles of trauma.
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Children and youth have stability and trust in their caregiver relationships

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth has continuity and stability in care, has opportunity to build stable relationships with caregivers. • Child or youth's number of moves in care. • Child or youth's cumulative days in care until reunification, permanently placed with kin, adopted, emancipated, or placed in a permanent foster home. • Child or youth talks about program as home or returns to program on their own. • Child or youth chooses to share information with caregiver, staff or other trusted adult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have positive interactions with child or youth including play, work, sharing, teaching. • Caregivers have the space to positively engage with each child and youth. • Caregivers create a good family routine creating structure, continuity, and stability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization is well resourced and has skilled service providers. • Organization places child or youth with kin or Indigenous families within their community. • Organization works for child or youth to be reunified, permanently placed with kin, adopted, emancipated, or placed in a permanent foster home as soon as safely possible. • Program or service aims to minimize number of out of home placements. • Program or services' rate of successful family reunification, that is, no re-entry into care. • Organization provides spaces that are age appropriate and encourage family interaction. • Staff are supported to remain in positions. For example, steps are taken to prevent burnout.
Children and youth's physical health is cared for		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth is supported in seeking care. For example, for attending medical appointments or taking medication as prescribed. • Child or youth is supported in practising good personal hygiene. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver seeks appropriate care for child or youth illness or accidental injuries. • Caregiver supports child or youth in practising good personal hygiene. For example, helping brush teeth, reminding to shower. 	
Children and youth experience equity, respect, recognition, dignity in their environment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or youth feels their environment reinforces equity, respect, and dignity. • Child or youth expresses joy and laughter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers allow child or youth to make choices where appropriate. • Caregivers reporting feelings of empowerment and resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization designs and delivers programs and services to fit the kids, instead of the kids fitting the service.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caregivers have a job or role that they and other community members' respect.• Caregivers model mutual appreciation, respect, cooperation.	
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Appendix H: Findings Summary from Toolkit Feedback Session with Agencies

	Suggested implementation support	Perceived value adds	Suggested supports to enhance understanding	Suggested supports to enhance relationships
Toolkit Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing and overwhelming frameworks: Highlighting how this toolkit works with similar frameworks, such as at the University of Calgary. • Standardizing data collection using a form, tool or database that can capture both the required information on outcomes and allow for reporting on program-specific outcomes. • Encouraging ongoing self-reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems outcomes and reporting can be enhanced by aligning them with existing internal quality assurance documents. These documents can guide the use of principles, cultural competency practices and data, which will inform future program or service delivery and funding criteria. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide shared professional development, training and lessons learned across partners.
Domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support resolving tensions with what funders prioritize for well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides agencies the foundation for understanding well-being • Provides a holistic understanding of well-being that helps identify gaps in service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to explain the parallels of Indigenous, Intercultural approach to well-being • Training 	

		<p>delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides Indigenous understanding and strengths-based definition of well-being 		
Principles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with agencies current practices and values • Can be used to guide training practices, assessments, and funding and strategic initiatives to better serve communities, especially Indigenous families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide resources and clear explanation on the decolonization principle for agencies at different readiness and size 	
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include specific assessments and tools • Develop professional development for staff on how to identify and adapt indicators • Acknowledge that collecting data accurately and completely takes time and demonstrate why this time is important to set aside. Incorporate record keeping into standard practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports agencies in expanding their assessments with emerging best practices and universal or trusted sources • Supports agencies to assess their impact in a meaningful way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how data reporting can be a reciprocal exchange of information to increase understanding, improve effectiveness and inform decisions • Ensure feedback loops are in place to help staff understand how data is used and what story it is telling. These are opportunities for learning and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support agencies in pulling this information from somewhere else, such as an agreement with a partner agency or in a response on another form. • Support agencies in aligning data collection with purpose to avoid taking valuable time or being invasive.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support agency leadership to streamline data collection process across programs/ and staff • Reduce indicators per domain or aspect so it is less overwhelming and confusing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear examples of indicators 	
Shareback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow agencies with different capacity to change and size flexible timelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports learning how to share and collaborate to improve service delivery 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate world café approach
Guides & Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a range of educational and training tools for staff that clearly presents outcomes, their rationale, and the associated data collection tool. • Make it easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps staff understanding • Feasible for staff to watch videos about alternative ways of evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific ideas on how to implement decolonization practices with tangible examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff to clearly communicate about the why and how of data collection to ensure families feel empowered • Support agencies in how to actively involve families in interpretation of data

Appendix I: List of co-produced videos

-  **Youth reflections on experiences at Miskanawah Moon Camp**
Watch a video of youth from Miskanawah talk about building relationships with Elders and connecting with each other at Moon Camp.
-  **Miskanawah Elders and staff on understanding program impact on youth well-being**
Watch a video of Elders and staff from Miskanawah talk about intentions and teachings that ground their programming and their way of learning about their impact on youth well-being.
-  **United Way's Perspective on Oral Reporting as a Funder**
Watch a video of United Way of Calgary and Area staff speak about embracing oral processes in reporting.
-  **Brokers reflections on an intercultural understanding of well-being**
Watch a video of Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op staff speak about building confidence and adapting supports to shifting needs.
-  **Youth reflections on experiences at Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative**
Watch a video youth from the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op speak about navigating between cultures and finding belonging with MCHB.

Figure 6. List of videos co-produced with Miskanawah, United Way of Calgary and Area, and the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op.

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