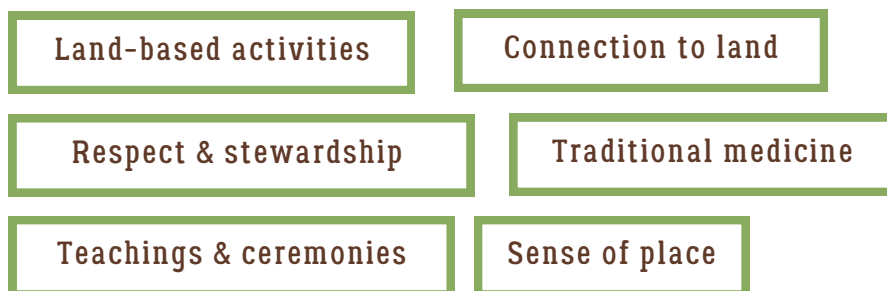


Connection to the Land



Connection to the land means cultivating relationships with the land, water, food sources, and the natural environment. For Indigenous communities, connection to the land and the opportunity to practice land-based activities are essential to identity. They also support living in a good way, which includes connecting with positive aspects of life and gratitude for the land. For children from immigrant, migrant, and refugee communities, connecting to the land builds a relationship and a sense of belonging to their new homeland. For all children and youth, connection to land is vital for well-being and builds awareness about environmental health, which in turn is necessary for life and well-being.

“Taking your shoes and socks off and reconnecting with the land. Feeling the land and the connection to mother earth – that’s healing.”

- Indigenous youth



Youth reflections on experiences at Miskanawah Moon Camp

Watch a video of youth from Miskanawah talking about their relationship with the land and how it impacts their well-being.

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators for the broader context in this domain include availability of resource areas for harvest, and availability and accessibility of programs or initiatives in the community to learn about and visit the land.

Connection to the Land

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & 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, 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 or 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. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers access or learn about community gardens, traditional medicines, and healthy food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations have policies and practices that demonstrate respect of land and living creatures.

Connection to the Land

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 feels 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.

Caring & Stable Relationships

Natural supports

Connection to community

Reciprocity

Healthy family dynamics

Stable & trusting relationships

Caring relationships describe supportive, meaningful, and reciprocal relationships between children and their natural supports like family members and teachers as well as formalized supports like caseworkers. Family composition, caregiving roles, and relationships with children are culturally-rooted and diverse across communities. Relationship stability is key for child and youth well-being. Children and youth need a consistent person who they can trust and on whom they can depend. Reciprocal relationships are ones where children also contribute. In this way they build healthy connections and self-esteem.

“Good well-being means there’s an Elder or an Auntie around.”

- Indigenous youth



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.

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators for the broader context in this domain include the extent to which community members actively come together for community functions, support and help each other, or whether community provides spaces for gatherings.

Caring & Stable Relationships

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & 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 community. For example, regularly attending events or building relationships with community members. • 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 and families report feeling less isolated and feeling welcomed. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are aware of and share information about community activities, events, or resources in a timely manner with children, youth, and caregivers. • Agencies have the ability to provide or refer to transportation those they serve to access community supports or 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.

Caring & Stable Relationships

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 looks to their parents and grandparents for guidance and wisdom. • Child or youth engages in play regularly with family members. • Child or youth feels that they are heard, loved, and supported by at least one caregiver. • Child or youth is engaged with family in practising their culture. • Child or youth feels personal talents are recognized. 	<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 fulfills responsibility, has parental self-efficacy. • Caregivers participate in activities as a family. • Caregivers express and illustrate love and emotional warmth towards child. For example, caregivers demonstrate nurturing as caregiving practices such as 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 encourage and facilitate regular visits with the child or 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. • 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.

Caring & Stable Relationships

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 environments are. For example, can identify pink and red flags within relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers readily respond to child's emotional needs and is 'in tune' with child's needs or comfort level. • 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 and with other caregivers. • Caregivers have access to holistic support and feel respected in their interactions with program staff. 	<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 strengthened before goal focused work needs to begin. • 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

Positive learning experience

Education access

Culturally safe learning

Flexible learning

Reflective learning

Experiential learning

Meaningful knowledge can include formal and informal education and learning opportunities that are culturally responsive and safe. It requires a flexible approach to knowledge development that accounts for a child's unique way of learning, their life circumstances, and their needs. It can include reflective learning where children can reflect on and learn from their actions. Meaningful knowledge includes the knowledge passed from family, role models, Elders, community teachings, ceremony and the land, and life skills. It supports identity formation, pride, sense of belonging, healing, and joy.

"Hands on learning resonates better with Indigenous people. Whereas instead of sitting there and listening for hours you don't really retain that information, right? Whereas if you go and do it you do the teachings when you come talk but you can talk about it from experience, right? You can be like yeah, we did this, we did this, and like it sticks in your mind more."

- Indigenous youth

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators for the broader context in this domain include:

- Community offers initiatives that encourage learning.
- Community has access to education and early learning opportunities for children.
- Community maintains the knowledge, values, and beliefs important to them.
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers are valued and able to pass on their knowledge.

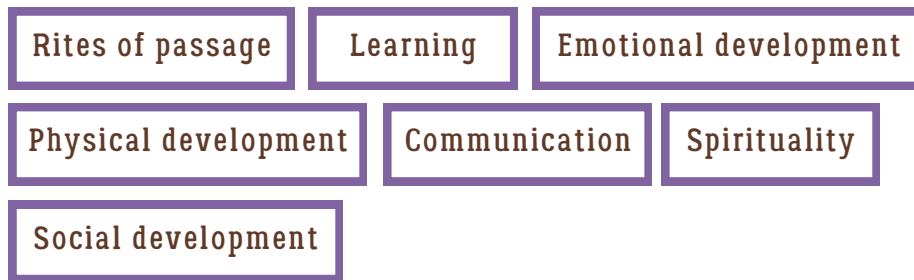
Meaningful Knowledge

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & 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 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. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers have awareness and understand how to navigate early childhood and school programs. • Caregivers have support in navigating early childhood and school programs. 	<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.
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 understand 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 that reflect both core trainings and specialized learnings as appropriate.
Children and youth access 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, etc., reflect trauma informed care needs.

Meaningful Knowledge

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
Children and youth develop 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 give 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 do laundry, budget, how to use public transit, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers support child or youth in learning by doing in age-appropriate ways. For example, showing them how to do laundry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency provides informal learning opportunities. For example, group learning, job shadowing. • Staff access coaching and mentorship support.

Healthy Development & Growth



Healthy development and growth encompass physical, emotional, cognitive, mental, and spiritual well-being at different ages and stages. For example, making friends, pursuing interests, getting enough sleep, learning, and regulating emotions. Children need to develop skills, play, explore interests and gifts, think critically, and be curious about the world. Healthy development is conceptualized in multiple, culturally specific ways. Indigenous perspectives highlighted a balance of physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional realms. Child and youth development and growth is frequently marked by rites of passage that include teachings to support and prepare children and youth for roles or stages in life.

“If you have an Indigenous child, the ancestors are preparing that spirit for a human journey, then that spirit being sung into the world, and then the naming ceremony, the moss bag and the swing; then the walking out ceremony. I mean, all the ceremonies that are associated with those stages, that's going to guarantee you an amazing child.”

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

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators for the broader context in this domain include:

- The extent to which community celebrates rites of passages.
- Availability and accessibility of recreation spaces and recreational and educational programming.

Healthy Development & Growth

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & 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 or 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.

Healthy Development & Growth

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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. • Child or youth's level of understanding of safe sex practices and sexual health. 	<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 CFSA. • 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. • Caregivers have the tools to have open, honest, and respectful conversations with youth about sexual health. 	<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.
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 input 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.

Healthy Development & Growth

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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, 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. • Youth is transitioned to adulthood with required supports and services. 	<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.

Sense of Identity & Autonomy

Agency

Resiliency

Autonomy

Mastery

Joy

Belonging

Purpose

Hope

Identity describes a sense of self as well as how a person is perceived by others. It is multifaceted and fluid. Identity emerges and is dynamically shaped in relationship to others, the land, and community. Autonomy describes the ability to make choices toward self-determination and self-directed action. For children and youth, a strong identity and autonomy are reflected in confidence, belonging, and a sense of purpose. Pursuing interests and activities that bring joy can build identity among children and youth.

“We asked [the youth], hey, we’ve got \$35,000, what do you guys want to do with this? Do you want a foosball table? Tell us what you want. And they said, We want a conference, and we want these keynote speakers to come and talk to us about matters that are important to us. That’s an example of youth moving towards wellness, right? Their voice, their requests, and their leadership, those are all indicators of how some of our youth are choosing to move towards wellness.”

- Kirby Redwood, Knowledge Keeper and practitioner



Listen to Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias speak about fostering a sense of identity within children and youth.

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators for the broader context in this domain include:

- Community offers group activities for children, youth, and caregivers.
- Community members maintain connections to meaningful locations, and strongly connect with who they are in positive ways.
- Community ceremonies and cultural events are open to participation.
- Community develops and enacts their own healing, development, and restoration programs.

Sense of Identity & Autonomy

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & 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. For example, caregivers have 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 is apparent. For example, child or youth feels they can succeed, 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 holds responsibility for both failures and successes 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.

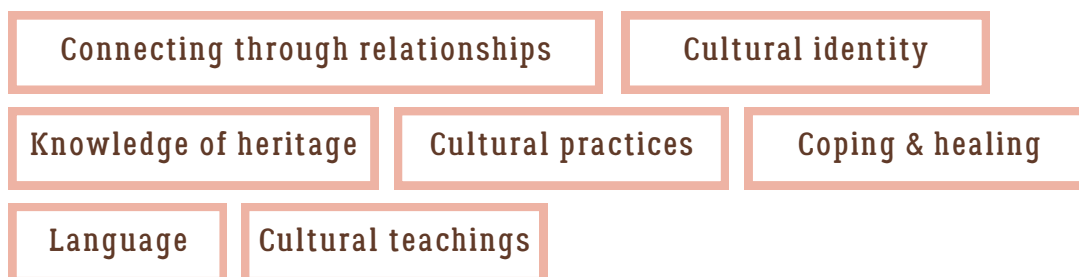
Sense of Identity & Autonomy

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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. For example, 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, is 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 different cultures at school and at home. 	<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.
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.

Sense of Identity & Autonomy

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 or working towards something. For example, child or youth volunteers. 	<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 for post high school funding and training opportunities. • 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



Cultural connection describes a positive relationship to cultural identity. It includes access to cultural resources and community such as language, ceremonies, teachings, and relations. Supporting well-being in newcomer and immigrant children and youth includes fostering healthy bi-cultural identities and intercultural competency. A culturally safe environment is characterized by humility, curiosity, respect, and the recognition that children may have different relationships and experiences of their culture.

“One of my little granddaughters said to me, kokum we can wear our skirts. And I said, Yes, you can. And I could see the pride in her. And she chose to wear her skirt the other day, to Pink Shirt Day, which was yesterday. And she told everyone, that this was why she was wearing that skirt, because she was proud of who she was. And she actually used the word. And that to me is wellness, not just now but through the generations, we start to see change, because of the pride that we have a right to. And because we're becoming more connected to who we are. We don't have to hide it.”

- Métis, Cree Elder Kerrie Moore MSW RSW

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators include the extent to which:

- Community passes down knowledge from generation to generation.
- Community recognizes multi-cultural history. For example, through cultural awareness events that explore multiple cultures.
- Community honours its history of their land and ancestors.
- Community has speakers of traditional languages including rate of language speakers or frequency of language spoken.

Cultural Connection

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
Children and youth connect 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. • 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"> • 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. • 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.

Cultural Connection

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 community(ies) their ancestors originate from. • Child or youth participates in events or activities that will help them understand their background better. 	<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 examples, what 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. • 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 (IAC), equity and diversity committee.
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 understand 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, etc. • 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.

Cultural Connection

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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, or 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 we 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 Wow, smudging, pipe ceremonies, sweat lodge ceremonies, and Inuit or Métis ceremonies.
Children and youth connect 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. • Child or youth is learning their traditional 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 or social interactions.

Cultural Connection

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
Children and youth receive 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 & Safe Environments

Basic needs

Accessibility to services

Safety

Culturally safe environment

Stability & trust

Physical health

Respect & dignity

Supportive and safe environments describe children's social and physical circumstances. They include and go beyond basic needs to provide equitable access to material goods, activities, services, and education. Safe environments include protective factors such as well-resourced and skilled caregivers, service providers, and social supports. They are underpinned by principles of equity, respect, recognition, and empowerment. Accessible, universally available, and culturally responsive services, supports, and care providers are key to supportive and safe environments.



Listen to Elder Beverly Keeshig-Soonias speak about the role supportive environments play in connecting historical culture with present day youth.

Context

Agencies work with children and families in diverse contexts, including urban, rural, Indigenous communities, under-served areas, and larger centres. Assessing well-being includes understanding this context and what is available. Example indicators include the extent to which:

- Community has homes that are safe and secure.
- Housing is affordable.
- Community has access to comprehensive and funded programs and services.
- Community has organizations that collaborate and connect for improved and comprehensive service delivery.
- Community offers and controls health services and social services.

Supportive & Safe Environments

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & 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, rent or mortgage, utilities or bills, groceries, childcare, medical expenses, household and personal hygiene, transportation. 	<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. • 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, a 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. • Caregivers seek appropriate help and advice if experiencing difficulties managing child. • 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 (brokers) for social inclusion. • 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. • Programs or services are flexible and 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 and 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.

Supportive & Safe Environments

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 emotionally safe. For example, minimal stress, conflict, hostility within family. • 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. 	<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 increasing protective factors, anticipating danger, appropriately supervises child or youth. • 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 change risky or harmful behaviours. For example, substance misuse, family violence, or gambling. • Caregivers respect and provide boundaries and a controlled environment. 	<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 bring items from home, onboarding includes welcome kits, or program provides cultural foods. • Programs or 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.
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 honour grief and respond compassionately to cycles of trauma.

Supportive & Safe Environments

Children & Youth	Caregivers	Agencies & Staff
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 receive care for their physical health		
<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 report feelings of empowerment and resilience. • Caregivers have a job or role that they and other community members' respect. • Caregivers model mutual appreciation, respect, cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization designs and delivers programs and services to fit the kids, instead of the kids fitting the service.