



Niijaansinaanik

Child and Family Services

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT





Niijaansinaanik

Child and Family Services

Niijaansinaanik means
“Our children”
in Anishinaabemowin

About Us

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services is a culture-based organization responsive to the holistic needs of all children, youth, and families. We provide services that reflect values, beliefs, and principles rooted within the Anishinabek culture. We believe that the care of children and youth is the responsibility of an entire community. While working in the present, we acknowledge history and its impact on our people in relation to outside influences and strive to build a strong, healthy future for all children, youth, families, and communities. We are committed to providing culturally centered protection, prevention, advocacy, care, and cultural services for all children, youth, and families. Our fundamental values emphasize maintaining strong culture and language values that teach us how to live Mino Bimaadiziwin - *The Good Life*.

We operate around a culture-based Service Model framed around caring for our children and youth and based on Mino Bimaadiziwin - *The Good Life*, diversity, our elders, the clan system and accountabilities, culturally restorative practices, and the seven Grandfather Teachings.

We provide culturally congruent child, youth and family well-being for Indigenous children, youth and families in the districts of Nipissing, Parry Sound and the Greater City of Sudbury.

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services are members of the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS).

WHO WE SERVE:





Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services began activities as a pre-designated Child Well-Being Agency in 2016. In November 2018, Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services was incorporated as a non-profit organization. On April 1, 2021, we achieved our designation as an Indigenous Child-Well Being Agency. This designation was historic, as it is a necessary step in reclaiming jurisdiction over child well-being services to the First Nations we serve, and by resolution of the Council of Chiefs to support servicing of all Indigenous children, youth, and families in the districts of Nipissing, Parry Sound and the Greater City of Sudbury.

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Head Elder

Tony Tyson
Wahnapiatae First Nation



Grace Contin,
Henvey Inlet First Nation

Veronica Dokis
Dokis First Nation



Audrey Tabobondung
Wasauksing First Nation

Leslie Noganosh
Magnetawan
First Nation



Message from the Executive Director

Joanne Koehler, BSW, MSW

Welcome to the Nijjaansinaanik Child and Family Services Annual General Meeting. This is a momentous occasion where we come together to reflect on the past year's accomplishments and challenges in our mission to safeguard the well-being of children and families. This year has been marked by both heartwarming achievements and some varying struggles as we continue our unwavering commitment to the First Nations we serve.

As we enter our third year as a designated protection/prevention agency, we are realizing that the impact of the pandemic played a significant impact on community connection and the effect it had on us to truly connect with communities. Community engagement plays a crucial role in connecting Nijjaansinaanik to the community members to be able to hear their feedback on service delivery. The limitations imposed by the pandemic have interrupted an important part of the interaction and evaluation of service delivery. As we move forward a main priority is to ensure community engagement occurs at all levels within your communities.



One of our most significant accomplishments within the last year came on December 20, 2022, with correspondence received from Linda Chihab, former Assistant Deputy Minister of Child Welfare and Protection of Children, Community and Social Services, formally releasing Nijjaansinaanik Child and Family Services from the designation process. It was noted the decision was based on Nijjaansinaanik having demonstrated a high service standard and the post-designation 'Capacity Assessment Review' would not be required.

We have secured a strong partnership with Indigenous Services Canada whereby we have continued to secure funding for two full-time Jordan's Principle Coordinators, funding to support our Prevention Services and year two of the Orange Standard Project.

We will continue to collaborate with children, youth, and families to provide culturally sensitive and relevant services that can have a positive and lasting impact on the community as a whole. Some areas we are hoping to include to help us achieve this goal is inclusive planning, cultural competency training, clear communication, participatory approaches, and culturally relevant programming. Together we can achieve great things!

**MAAMWI GDOO-
NCHIIKWAANAANIG
ENCHIYANG**

**WORKING TOGETHER
FOR OUR FAMILIES**



Strategic Plan



The Strategic Plan outlines priorities, opportunities, areas of sustainability, goals and how to ensure culture in all levels of service. A copy is available upon request.

The Agency is currently in Phase 2 of the areas and priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan, including:

- Jurisdiction - Development of Children and Youth Bill of Rights
- Leadership - Governance and Development of Project Management Framework Human Resources Capacity - Recruitment and Retention
- Policy and Forum
- Community Partnerships, Capacity and Training
- Orange Standard



Orange Standard



In September 2022, Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services began the journey of establishing a new standardized approach to providing Indigenous Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being services through the development of the Orange Standard Service Delivery Model.

The Orange Standard has a strong leadership team and working group working on key priorities with a focus on Community Engagement. During the Phase 1 – Transfer stage, we completed many of the Orange Standard goals, including establishing Working Groups, media launch, leadership team and board standards mapping session, standards reviewed with community leadership, Orange Standard logo, name, and anishinaabemowin translation, Resolution brought to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) for support, and established a community starting point engagement session with four of the communities.

On April 3, 2023, the Orange Standard Resolution was supported at the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa ON, by Chief Gerry Duquette of Dokis First Nation. This was supported by consensus with no opposition from Chiefs across Canada.

In April 2023, Executive Director Joanne Koehler presented the Orange Standard at the National Indian Child Welfare Association conference in Reno, Nevada. It was well-received with further invitation to present to First Nations in Alberta and British Columbia.



Perry McLeod Shabogesic,
Niijaansinaanik Cultural Manager

Orange Standard
Planning Session



Cultural Services

Cultural Services works with each department in the Agency and responds to requests for services for children, youth, and families. Seasonally, by moon or observed days of cultural significance, staff will organize events, programs, teachings, and activities. Cultural Services continues to provide input and assistance for the Indigenous Authorized Worker (IAW) training and the Heart and Spirit Pre-Service Training for new caregivers. Cultural Services works closely with the Elders Advisory Circle for guidance, input, programming, and event planning.

This year events, teachings, ceremonies, and activities included:

EVENTS

- March Break Activities
- Binoojiiyag Gbeshwin Children's Overnight Summer Camps
- Mooz Akinonmaaget Maa Aki Moose Hunt and Teachings
- Dance/Drum Socials
- Deywaygun Drum socials (with knowledge keepers Wahta Mohawks)
- Round Dance
- Committee for Elders Gathering
- Monthly Men's Group
- Children and Youth in Care Day
- Family Circles
- Sacred Fires (as required)
- Community Pow Wow / Mini Pow Wow

TEACHINGS

- Seasonal: Sweet Water, Birch Bark, Black Spruce, Sweet Grass
- Regalia
- Long Hair
- Fishing / Hunting / Gathering Rights and Responsibilities
- Fasting
- Medicine Walks and Four Medicines
- Monthly Cultural Connections - Alternative Caregiver Newsletter
- Creation Stories
- Medicine Wheel

CEREMONIES

- Naming
- Staff and youth assisted in raising the teepee at Arbour House in North Bay, ON
- Introduction to smudging, water, strawberries/berries, clans, and Seven Grandfather Teachings

ACTIVITIES / PROGRAMMING

- Hand Drum Making
- Baseball
- Craft nights
- Nishnaabemwin Bingo and Language activities
- Regalia making / Ribbon Skirts /Shirts
- Community Drum Social
- Tikinagan Making
- Bundles
- Medicine Walks
- Traditional Parenting
- Bundle Making
- Drumming Group
- Medicine Garden (Wasauksing)





March break activities were organized at the Gathering Place in Wasauksing First Nation, Ramsey Lake Sudbury, and Nature's Harmony in Mattawa, ON. Cultural Services worked closely with Alternative Care, CIC, and Prevention for 3 days of camping fun, including fishing, walks, swimming, crafts, games, and storytelling.

The Binoojiiyag Gbeshwin Children's Camps took place on July 7-9, 2023, and August 11-13, 2023, at Spirit Point Wilderness in Trout Creek, ON. 60 children and youth ages 7-15 enjoyed a weekend at camp building connections, having fun, learning about culture, and enjoying rest and relaxation. Camps were organized together with Alternative Care and Kinship Care.

The Second annual Mooz Akinonmaaget Maa Aki Moose Hunt started in June 2022, as a collaborative

event with Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services, Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services, Kina Gbehzgomi Child and Family Services, Children's Aid Society, Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Youth from each organization work with a Sudbury police officer and an agency mentor throughout the summer and into the fall, to learn about traditional hunting values, the Seven Grandfather Teachings and participate in training and activities, including hunting education, firearms safety, and teachings related to the hunt.

This year we offered Gitzee Kendaasowin – an Anishinaabe Traditional parenting program, showing how culture and Anishinaabe foundational teachings are helping families and communities heal from historical disruptions. Sharing the Creation Story, four medicines, four directions, Stages of Development, teachings of the shaker and the drum plus introductions to ceremonies such as smudging, water, strawberries/berries, clans, and Seven Grandfather teachings, the program shows how these teachings can enrich lives and help parents, children, youth, and families live mino-bimaadiziwin (the Good Life). The workshops are facilitated by Cultural Services and the Elders Advisory Circle.

“ Cultural Services works with each department in the Agency and responds to requests for cultural assistance for children, youth, and families. ”

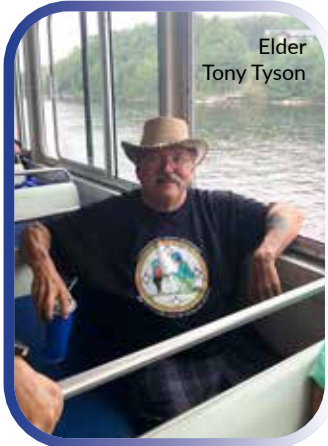
Dave Rice, Cultural Helper
Niijaansinaanik Pow-Wow
Dokis First Nation 2022

Elders Gathering

The Elders Gathering was held by Niijaansinaanik from July 25 to July 27, 2023, at the Henvey Inlet First Nation Traditional Grounds. The theme identified by the Elders Circle and Cultural Services was: Gdashmimaanaan Gnijaansinaanig Jijaagwaan "Feeding Our Children's Spirits". Speakers included:

- Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada;
- Isadore Day, CEO of Bimaadzwini;
- Clarence White Sr., Abinooji Anishnaabe Family Service, Culture Coordinator;
- Dr. Kathy Absolon, Director of Centre for Indigegogy;
- Hector Copegog, Chimnising Beausoleil First Nation; and
- Simone Desmoulin, Social Services Director, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg.

The Agency's Elders Advisory Circle and a panel of five youth also shared. The event had more than 120 people in attendance, with most guests being Indigenous Seniors/Elders from the First Nations Niijaansinaanik serves, as well as 30 First Nations across Ontario. One speaker was from Athabasca Chipewyan Prairie First Nation Alberta and another from Gitxsan First Nation Territory, British Columbia.



Elder Tony Tyson



Dr. Cindy Blackstock & Joanne Koehler



Prevention Services



Okaakonan Mino-Awaawinan Planning for Wellness

Over the past year, Niijaansinaanik’s prevention team, in collaboration with member communities, continued to support children, youth and families across our jurisdiction. It is the vision that prevention services will reduce, if not one day eliminate the need for protection services.

Prevention Services has assisted families in many ways, including:

- Food security, through providing grocery cards, assisting with budgeting, meal planning and preparation, as well have provided family with a vegetable gardening kit
- Home maintenance by assisting with de-cluttering and organizing homes, assisting families with cleaning routines
- Assisting and advocating for housing applications, day care applications, referrals to community programs and centers
- Assisting in developing support systems

The Prevention Services team held a three day Women’s Retreat in February, “Building Our Bundle” at the Fern Resort. The Women’s retreat activities included cultural activities, and ceremonies. The



outcome of the retreat was the development of their own support system, and three families are on their way to closing their protection and prevention files. All participants left with their own bundles, and ribbon skirts they sewed themselves.

The Prevention Services team has taken part in a number of community events such as:

- Community Engagement – Building Community Relationships
- Parry Sound Santa Claus Parade
- Shawanaga First Nation Santa Claus Parade
- Dokis First Nation Santa Claus Parade
- Stay Safe course and the Babysitting course at the Shawanaga First Nation Healing Centre
- Babysitting Course in Henvey Inlet First Nation
- Autism Awareness Program with Magnetawan First Nation
- Belt Making Workshop with Dokis First Nation



Prevention Services department supports two main strategic priorities, specifically the Child and Family Prevention Services and Service Excellence. Over the past year Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services Resource Manager and the Prevention team took part in community meetings to achieve community collaboration, support and enhance existing prevention services in Communities and Mapping Community Resources. These activities will continue to the next year.

Protection Services

Niijaansinaanik Children and Family Services Protection Services continue to provide services to the regions of North Bay, Parry Sound and to members of our six First Nations that reside within the parameters of the Greater City of Sudbury. There are five protection workers, one case aide, and our recently hired James Bay Liaison Worker in the North Bay region. Four protection workers are in the Parry Sound region, and three are in the City of Greater Sudbury.

Niijaansinaanik and its protection teams remain inspired to deliver services in a culturally sensitive manner as per the Seven Grandfather teachings of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth.

Regular band reviews and consultations remain necessary to capture collaborative strength-based planning of families we service. Historically, our First Nation brothers and sisters that struggle would otherwise endure the most intrusive measures; however, we can take pride in our collective and wholistic approaches, such as, children with their parents with support and services in place, withdrawing court applications and entering into

Customary Care Agreements or Alternative Dispute Resolution requests.

Niijaansinaanik staff are in tune with social issues affecting families by immersing themselves in collaborative community committees to address issues such as human trafficking. Commitment and perseverance are a catalyst within the child protection field. Child protection front-line workers endure psychological and spiritual impacts. Positive influences such as collaboration with First Nation partners, peer support, supervision with leadership, and self-care contribute to employee retention. Our team follows the guiding principles of our seven grandfathers' teachings.

Family Support Services/ Doodemag Enji Maawnjidjik

Where Families Gather

The Support Services area includes the Access Program (Family Visiting Services) and Volunteer Services. The Access Workers provide services that support ongoing family relationships through meaningful, therapeutic visits with children/youth and their parents. Focus was on maintaining family visits and ensuring the family visits are safe, nurturing and culturally appropriate. This involved organizing activities for family visits based on their preference for land-based community locations, trips to beaches, movies, and attractions. Many of the family visits occurred in community at pow-wows, ceremonies, community parks and beaches. 536 Family visits occurred through the Family Visiting services throughout the past year. Families requested their Family Visits to be outdoors on the land when weather is suitable to provide a holistic healing experience for families. Outdoor visits can be held at one of our community Arbours, or any space preferable to the family.





Arbour at Wasauksing First Nation

Staff and members of Wasauksing First Nation, gathered at the new Administration and Gathering Centre on November 4, 2022, to celebrate former Chief Flora Tabobondung (baa) and her vision for Indigenous child well-being. A plaque with a tribute to former Chief Flora Tabobondung (baa) was installed in her honour at one of the Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services arbours in Wasauksing First Nation. Replicas of the plaques were also presented to Flora's daughter, Joyce Tabobondung, and to the current Chief, Warren Tabobondung.



Chief Flora Tabobondung

January 6, 1921 - September 10, 2006

In the early 1990's, the Chiefs of the Hwy. 69 corridor began planning meetings to address the negative events occurring with their children who were involved with the Provincial Child Welfare System. It was agreed that the process of developing their own Native Child and Family Services under the name Gaaoh Naah Nig (Those we Love). Former Chief Flora Tabobondung often shared her vision of her swimming in this huge lake and the water was crystal clear; when she looked back there were many children swimming behind her and the water was very dark. She related this vision to the work that was being done for the children. The project was cut short when the province terminated the funding. In 2019, the Chiefs resurrected the project and on April 1, 2021, the Agency now known as Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services (Our Children) was designated by the Province of Ontario.

This vision was taken to artist Deb Jackson of Wasauksing First Nation by Flora Tabobondung's daughter, Joyce Tabobondung, who created the current logo of Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services.



Wasauksing First Nation Chief Warren Tabobondung & Joyce Tabobondung



Volunteer & Alternative Care Celebration - October 2022

Volunteer Services

The Volunteer Services Coordinator works primarily to coordinate the Volunteer Driver Program. This program provides transportation for children, youth, and parents. The number of volunteer drivers increased this year by four, totalling twelve volunteer drivers. These twelve volunteer drivers provide transportation to ensure families stay connected for family visits, and appointments. Transport requests have increased over 300% over the past year.

The Volunteer Services Coordinator in conjunction with the Alternative Care department organized the first annual Volunteer Appreciation event, hosted at Wasauksing First Nation on October 13, 2022. The purpose of the event was to honour the contributions of the Volunteers and the Alternative Caregivers. 95 caregivers and volunteers were honoured at the ceremony and event.



1,076 transports provided



189,782 km driven



2,582 hours of driving

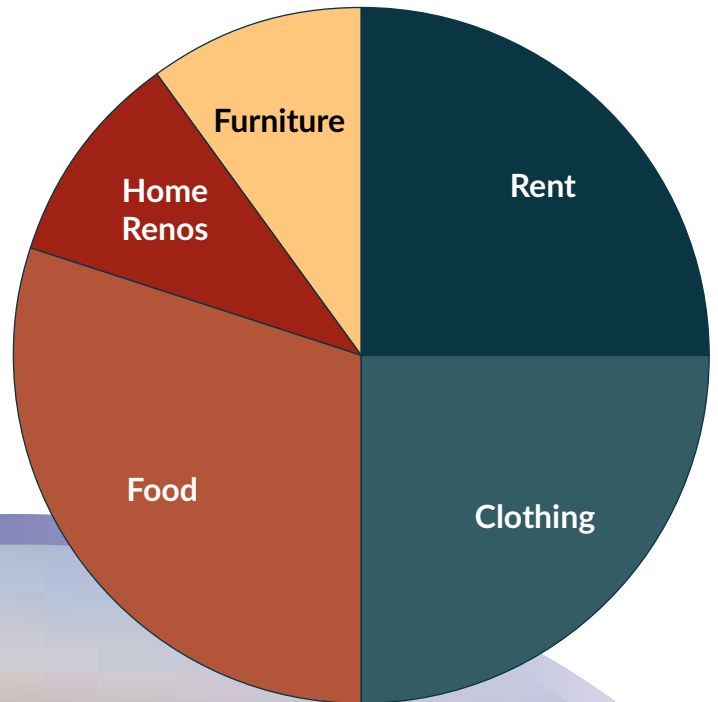
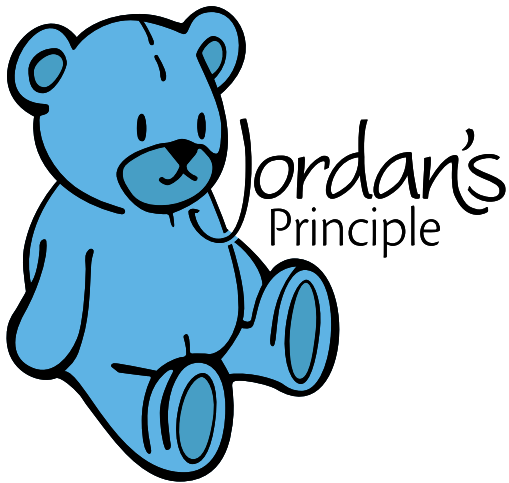
Jordan's Principle

The Jordan's Principle Coordinator focused on capacity building, working with parents to identify their children's needs, writing Jordan's Principle applications and helping families to obtain the approved items. The Jordan's Principle Coordinator held community outreach information sessions at First Nation communities and delivered presentations to educate community members and staff about how Jordan's Principle works, what is covered and how to apply.

The requests for Jordan's Principle applications has increased significantly thus the hiring of an additional Jordan's Principle Coordinator was necessary.



Top Items Approved in 22-23



Quality Assurance and Measuring Impact

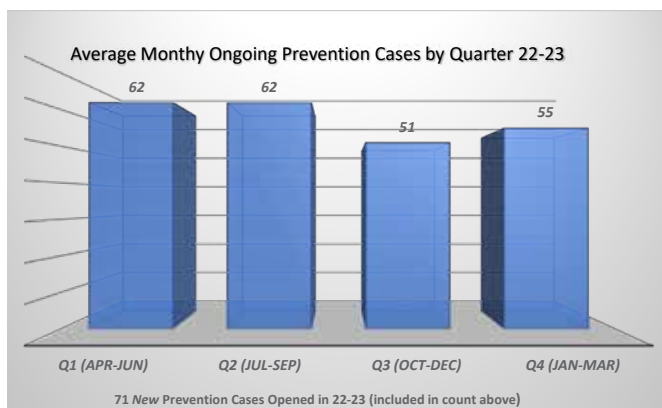
The Quality Assurance (QA) Department provides provisions to our agency's operational teams in support of tracking our service excellence in accordance with standards and regulations that govern the child well-being life cycles. QA generates reports from various databases for statistical analysis to support deployment of informed decisions associated with our programs and services.

The sector is shifting from a compliance monitoring focus to a quality assurance lens that concentrates on improving outcomes and indicators connected to well-being. The delivery of advanced data quality elements will improve the accuracy of client information and case practices that enhance reliable data outputs. The QA team offers CPIN support for troubleshooting functionality issues which further supports improved data integrity. The combination of accurate data input/outputs

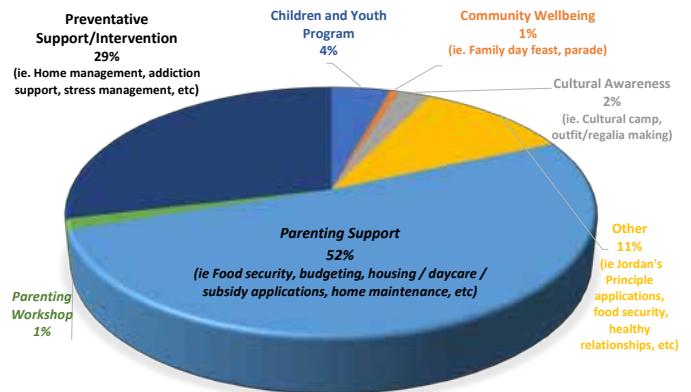
and continued communication of quality requirements will fundamentally produce better outcomes for our children and families.

During the progression of our standard reporting, we produced dashboards that support a visual reporting mechanism that simplifies the evaluation of our agency performance with key compliance elements related to the overall Quality Improvement Process (QIP). Within these dashboards, the colour coding classifications represent our target achievements from a quarterly trending perspective. We continue to develop and transform our reporting mechanisms to support operations and provide evidence-based data reflecting our service quality. Our agency strives towards producing reliable and consistent data outputs that adhere to OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) Principles to sustain privacy governance.

Prevention Services 2022-23



Distribution of Programs and Activities by Program Type



Legal

Over the year 2022, our legal services team has provided high quality legal services to the Agency. A small team with one in-house lawyer, legal clerk, team assistant and disclosure worker, the emphasis is on resolving matters outside of court through ongoing prevention services, referrals to culturally informed Advanced Dispute Resolution (ADR), and safety

planning engagement. When legal proceedings are required under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, the collaborative effort involving internal consultations and consultations with First Nation, Inuit and/or Métis stakeholders continues to ensure that best possible outcomes for children, youth and families are reflected during the court process.

Children's Services

The Children's Services Team has grown over this past year. It is now comprised of eight Children Service Workers, an Educational Liaison, a Case Aide as well as two Team Assistants. The increase is in part due to the focus on Customary Care, as well as an increase in Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) and Continued Care Support Youth (CCSY) for youth in need of assistance.

Upon entering Alternative Care, children and youth are immediately assigned a Children Services Worker. The role of the Children's Services Worker is to ensure that while the child or youth is living away from their family that all their physical, emotional, cultural and academic needs are met at an optimal level. The Children's Services Team has also been working diligently on ensuring all the children we service are registered with their perspective communities.

These services are not only offered to children and youth in Alternative Care but also to older youth from age 16-23 years of age who are living independently. These services are offered through the VYSA and CCSY (Ready Set Go) Program in which a youth contracts with the agency to receive these services and supports. The services offered to these older youth are advocacy, assistance with post-secondary,

budgeting, life skills as well as the above-stated duties of ensuring the youth's holistic needs are met.

The list of services a Children's Service Worker provides to our children and youth is vast and broad however always truly specific to the child's needs in collaboration with their perspective community and Band Representative. We have completed an integral role in collaboration with Band Representatives in reunifying several children with their families. Of course, this very important work would not be achieved without the collaboration of the Band Representatives and communities we service as well as all other programs within Niijaansinaanik which intersect with the Children's Services Unit. We have reconnected children to their communities, families, and culture.



Over this past year, the Children's Services staff have been involved in several events with our children and youth including Child in Care Day and Cultural Camp. We have celebrated graduations, assisted in preparing youth for post-secondary, as well as securing employment. The child is always at the center of all planning and decision-making and will always have a dedicated Children's Service Worker to be their voice or to stand by their side to ensure their voice is heard.



Alternative Care

The Alternative Care department provides support to alternative caregivers by assigning each caregiver with their own Alternative Care Worker. The Worker will meet monthly with the caregivers to review updates, concerns, and assist with expenses. The Alternative Care Department has had positive impacts by assisting communities with providing safe and supportive environments to the children of each community. We are building capacity in the member Nations.

The Alternative Care department is required to meet and follow provincial regulations pertaining to the approval of the alternative care homes and processes that are required when a placement of a child is required. The alternative care homes are required to meet provincial standards, including:



Training offered included:

- Spirit Pre-Service Training – 22 participants completed the training
- Non-Violence Crisis Intervention Training – 59 participants completed the training
- Car Seat Safety Training – 17 participants completed the training
- Lifebook Workshop – 6 provider homes have completed the workshop
- Place of Safety Home Studies Completed – 13
- Foster and Kinship Care Home Studies Completed – 7
- Alternative Care Inquires – 16
- Approved Alternative Care Homes – 35 (March 31, 2022)



Events AC has participated in, or facilitated include:

- Children’s Christmas party
- Volunteer Appreciation/Alternative Care Recognition Dinner
- Community Engagement sessions for alternative care providers. (North Bay & Parry Sound)
- Heart & Spirit
- Life Book
- Standard First Aid and CPR
- Trauma Informed Care
- Quality Standard Framework
- Community Events (Trainer Recruiter)

The Alternative Care Department aligns the Seven Grandfather Teachings and understands the importance of culture within the services provided to Alternative Care providers, working closely with the Cultural Department, and ensuring providers and service recipients are aware of the services and programs available. A caregiver newsletter is distributed each month outlining the upcoming services and activities for children, youth, and families.

Trainer/Recruiter

The Trainer/Recruiter assists caregivers with various training required to remain compliant with Ministry standards. This worker also uses various strategies for the recruitment of prospective caregivers. The Trainer/Recruiter attends community events, as well as local and jurisdictionally appropriate events to complete outreach. The Alternative care department is working on improving its recruitment strategies and will complete a mail out to members of the First Nation communities we serve. In addition to attending events, the Trainer/Recruiter networks with the First Nation Band Representatives.

The Supervisor of Training oversees training provided to staff and Alternative Caregivers, including, but not limited to:

- Indigenous Authorized Worker (IAW) for all new protection staff
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) offered to Alternative Care Providers and all frontline staff
- First Aid & CPR Training offered to all staff and Alternative Care Providers
- Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) for all staff
- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) mandatory and other training for all new staff members
- Quality of Standards Framework (QSF) updates/training
- High Risk Infants/Safe Sleep/Child Development Training
- Child Fatality Training
- Serious Occurrence Report (SOR) Training
- Car Seat Training
- Revision and creation of training materials for Agency

IAW has a significant impact on the communities we serve, ensuring that new workers are fully prepared with the knowledge of Indigenous history, political issues, traditional teachings, and concepts as well as being trained in the entire protection process from intake to ongoing service delivery. With this training we are ensuring that all protection staff are fully equipped, prior to beginning their work within our communities.

NVCI training is important for staff and Alternative Care Parents and staff, as they are offered alternative solutions for managing complex behaviours, through verbal intervention, helping to avoid the escalation of situations with service recipients.

- 12 Protection Staff Members have been successfully authorized with Indigenous Authorized Worker Training. The other protection staff members were previously Authorized with OACAS.
- 64 Alternative Care Parents and staff members have been trained in NVCI to date.



Customary Care

Customary Care is built upon the inherent practice of First Nation People of, “it takes a community to raise a child”. These agreements are created without the court process deadlines but rather annualized signatures that prompt the agency and the First Nation to review the progress of the child and the biological parent(s).

To enter into a Customary Care Agreement invalidates the need for court and/or mandated timelines of how long a child can be placed outside of a parent’s care. It further allows for interim support to be offered to the children and caregivers while in effect. Customary Care has evolved to now supporting three full-time

workers. Together the team works interdepartmentally to ensure any agreement developed, or being developed, creates a foundation of service, support, and review all in the best interest of the well-being of the child/youth, and family.

In 2022, we have seen Customary Care as the preferred and most practiced approach representing children residing outside of their parents’ care. The department continues to grow and evolve the program as best suited for the families and communities we serve. We believe Customary Care is and should be one of the truest experiences of working together.

Kinship Care

There are currently two Kin service workers at Niijaansinaanik. The Kin service workers facilitate the home assessment and provide ongoing support for Kinship Service families across the jurisdiction. Contrary to child in-care or customary care services, the department serves a dual role and supports both the provider as well as the children and/or youth placed in the home.

Agency financial supports to kin caregivers are restricted to a specific annual funding amount, however the department supports families to access the child tax benefit, temporary care allowance, subsidized daycare as well as Jordan’s

Principle Funding, if eligible. Workers in the kinship service department assist with searching and connecting children to family and assist with developing plans to navigate the time they are placed within their home.

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services has seen a steady increase in kinship services placements in 2022. The department in collaboration with our First Nation community partners support the families we serve. The team works together in development of a positive support network for the child and family and assists to maintain the connections of the children to the parents and community.



Family Finding

Family Finding (Family Search) is a program and commitment from the Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services to build a “familial and/or community network” to assist our families in need. Each families’ needs vary from family to family, some need help reconnecting, some need a familiar face, some may need assistance to temporarily care for a child while a parent seeks help. A Family Search Worker will assist and work with parents and First Nations to build upon their family tree and attempt to find connections to assist families in building their supports. A worker will help facilitate those phone calls that so many parents struggle in making, as a first step of finding help.

Since the programs inception in 2022 we have seen successful outcomes:

- 11 child(ren) placed with family as opposed to alternative care
- 10 familial connections who extend support to the youth and or families who were else otherwise not connected
- Five connections of extended family to children in care, including finding success in locating birth parents whose whereabouts were previously unknown



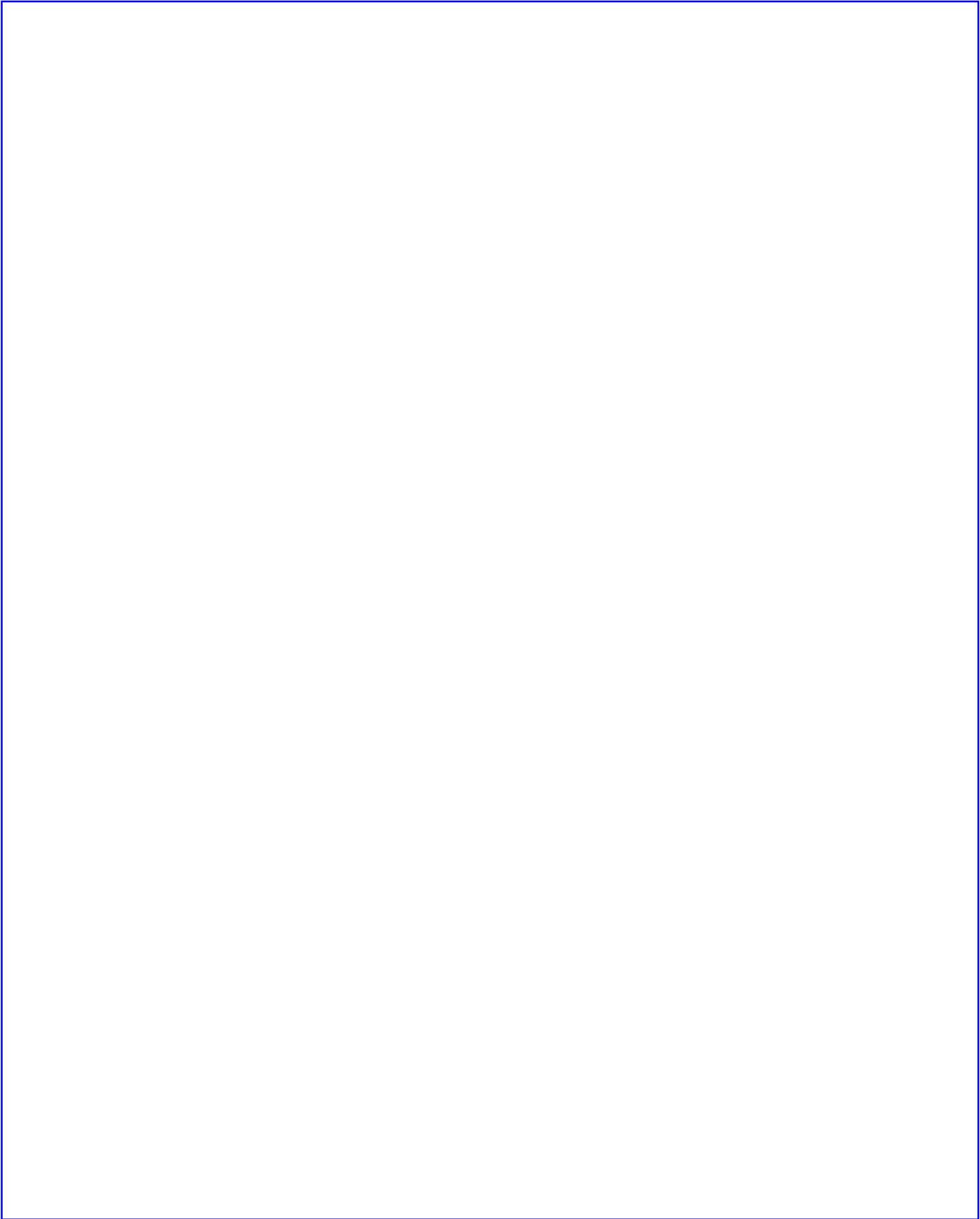
To date, Niijaansinaanik has one person attending to the family search needs of the Agency. Their work with families, combined with internal training for frontline staff will ensure for more successful outcomes for our children, parents and communities.





Niijaansinaanik

Child and Family Services





Niijaansinaanik
Child and Family Services

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