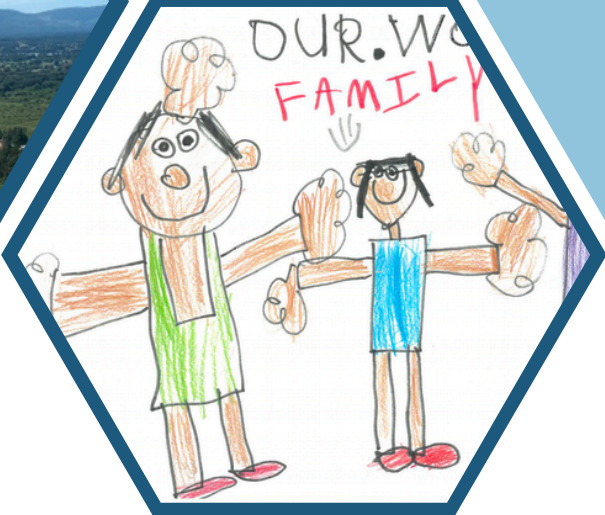
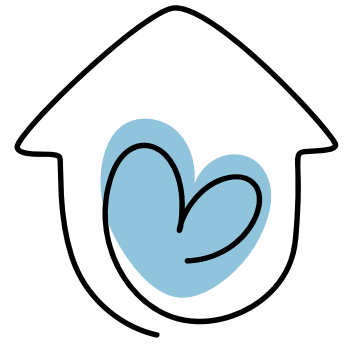


Children and Youth in Care FRAMEWORK

Updated 2025



Acknowledgement



Cowichan Valley School District recognizes and gives thanks that we work, live, and learn on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the lands of the Cowichan, Penelakut, Halalt, Lyackson, Stz'uminus, Malahat, and Ts'uubaa-asatx peoples. May we walk gently on the ceded and unceded territories of their lands as we work together to lift up all of the Xe'xe' smun'eem.



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Community Agencies



Children and Youth who live in care may have some vulnerabilities related to the situations that have caused them to come into the care of the Ministry of Children and Families or an Indigenous Authority. Cowichan Valley School District has identified Children and Youth In care (CYIC) as priority learners. Our schools will identify, track and prioritize the needs of the Children and youth who are in care.

Children and youth in Cowichan schools may be in the care of one of the following three Ministry or Indigenous Authorities:

KW'UMUT LELUM

Kw'umut Lelum is an Indigenous agency rooted in Coast Salish snuw'uy'ulh that provides culturally-driven family support, caregiving services and community programs and services to nine First Nations on Vancouver Island, British Columbia (Halalt, Lyackson, Málexeł, Penelakut, Qualicum, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Stz'uminus, and Ts'uubaa-asatx).

STSI'ELH STUHW TU SMUN'EEM

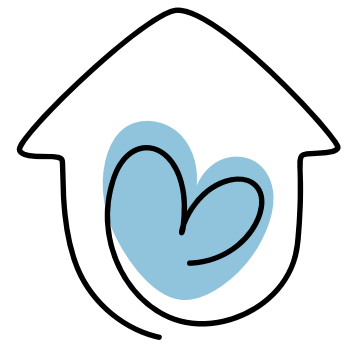
(Formerly Lalum'utul' Smun'eem) Stsi'elh Stuhw tu Smun'eem, Honouring our Sacred Families and Children Agency, came into effect on August 1, 2024. Stsi'elh Stuhw tu Smun'eem supports all Quw'utsun citizens, and will focus on the precious gifts of children, families, elders and community while respecting tradition.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (MCFD)

The Ministry of Children and Family Development's primary focus is to support all children and youth in British Columbia to live in safe, healthy and nurturing homes and be strongly connected to their communities and culture.



Priority Learners



Children and Youth in Care

Children and youth in care are recognized as priority learners due to the unique challenges they face, including frequent transitions, trauma, and disrupted educational experiences. As priority learners, they require targeted support, stability, and inclusive environments that acknowledge their lived experiences. By prioritizing their needs, educators and caregivers can help ensure these young people have equitable access to opportunities, empowering them to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.



Indigenous Learners

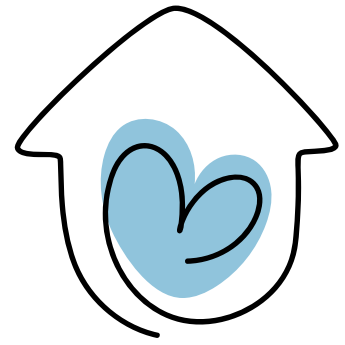
Indigenous students are recognized as priority learners in acknowledgment of the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, systemic inequities, and intergenerational trauma. Prioritizing Indigenous learners means creating culturally responsive, inclusive, and strength-based educational environments that honour their identities, languages, and ways of knowing. By centering Indigenous voices and supporting their success, education systems can help foster equity, reconciliation, and meaningful outcomes for Indigenous children and youth.



Learners with Diverse Abilities and Disabilities

Learners with diverse abilities and disabilities are recognized as priority learners because they may face barriers to full participation and achievement in education. Supporting these learners involves providing inclusive, accessible, and individualized learning environments that honour their strengths, needs, and potential. By prioritizing equity and removing systemic obstacles, educators can help ensure that all students—regardless of ability—have the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Intersectionality

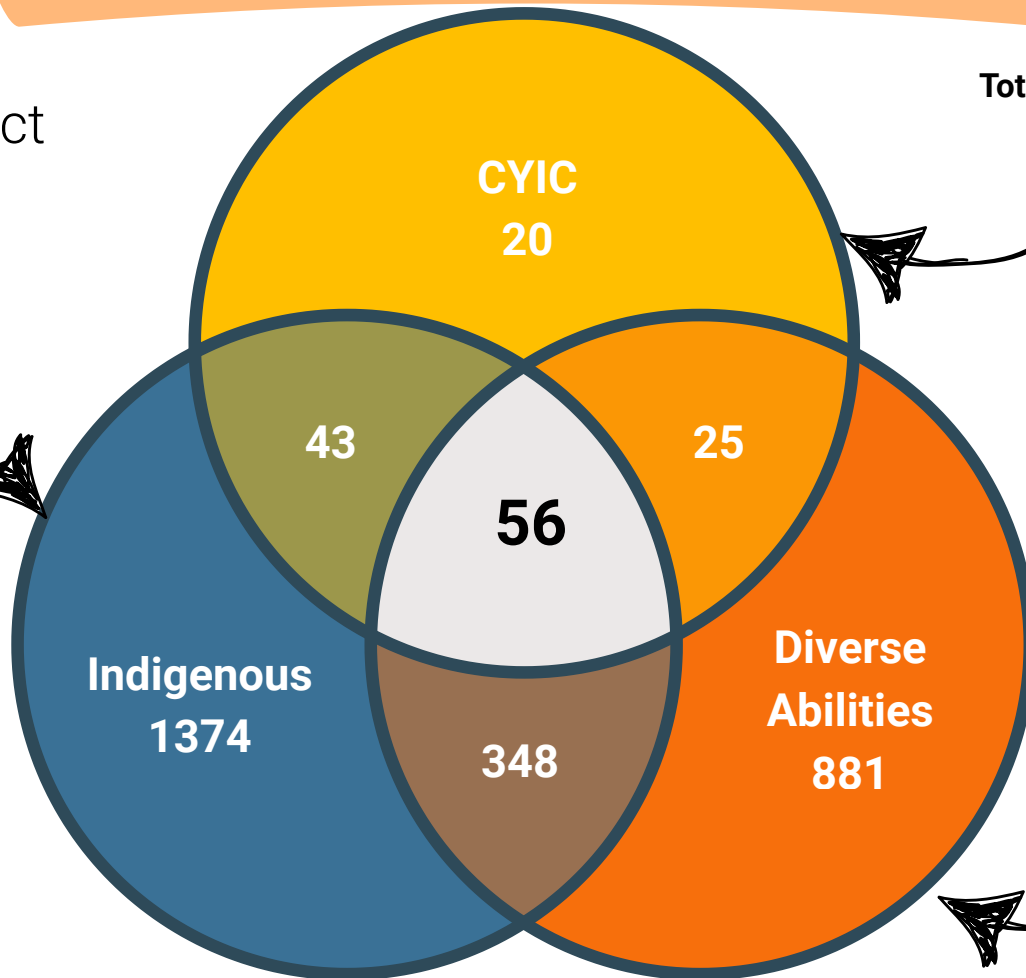


SD79 Priority Learners

Total District
3220

Total CYIC:
145

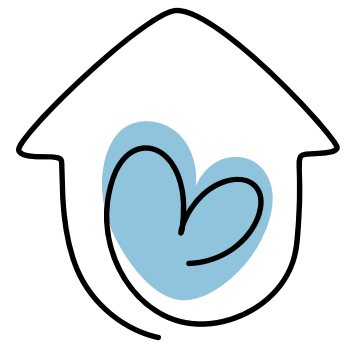
Total
Indigenous
students:
1821



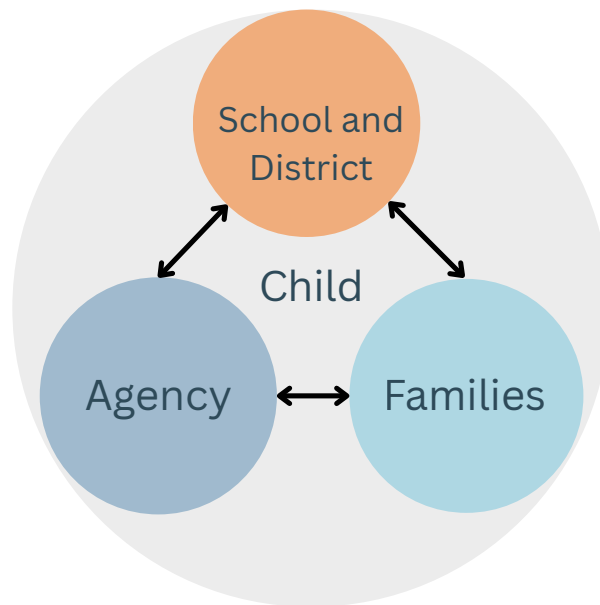
Total students
with diverse
abilities: 1310

January 2026

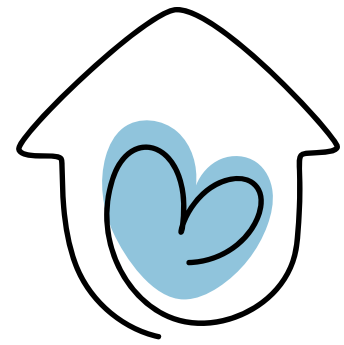
Protective Factors



Protective factors play a vital role in promoting the well-being and resilience of children and youth in care. These factors include stable and nurturing relationships with caring adults, such as foster parents, mentors, and supportive educators, who provide a sense of belonging and emotional security. Consistent access to education, mental health services, and culturally responsive supports are essential, so that children and youth in care may thrive. Opportunities for meaningful participation in decisions affecting their lives, along with the development of life skills and self-advocacy, empower young people to build confidence and a sense of control over their future. Together, these protective factors form a strong foundation that helps buffer the effects of trauma and encourages positive development.



Priority Transitions



Transitions are critical times in the lives of all children, especially children and youth in care. Whether due to a change in living arrangements or the natural progression from elementary to secondary school, these shifts require thoughtful planning and strong support.

When a child or youth is changing homes, we will make every effort to maintain school continuity—if that is the preference of the youth and their care team.

Critical transitions also occur as learners move from elementary school to high school. Planning for these transitions should begin as early as possible, ideally in the winter or early spring, to allow time for relationship-building, orientation, and individualized programming.

Below is a suggested timeline to help guide your planning and ensure a smooth, supportive process.

March – Initiating the Transition

- Identify priority learners from feeder schools
- Contact teams at feeder schools to begin planning process
- Connect with learners during registration visits
- Engage in activities to build rapport with staff at the next school
- Inform current circle of care about transition plan



April – Building Relationships

- Hold initial meeting with each learner and their support team
- Request to attend year-end Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings
- Schedule personalized school tours



May – Deepening Engagement

- Organize group tours for incoming learners
- Conduct empathy interviews
- Identify preferred teachers and peers

June – Finalizing Connections

- Introduce learners to teachers and Educational Assistants (EAs), if they are known at this time



August – Preparing for Day One

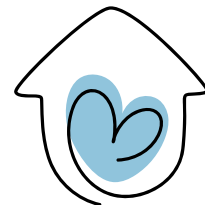
- Host initial meetings for new registrations
- Confirm priority class placement in MyEd

Circle of Care



The Circle of Care is a comprehensive support system designed to nurture learner success through the collaborative efforts of a dedicated, multi-disciplinary team. For each child or youth in care, the school will identify up to four staff with whom the student has a positive relationship. These staff will act as mentors who work closely with the student, each bringing unique strengths and perspectives to address academic, social, and emotional needs. Guiding this team is a lead mentor, who not only coordinates the efforts of the group but also serves as the primary point of contact between the school and the school district, ensuring alignment with district goals and access to necessary resources. Together, this Circle of Care wraps around the learner, creating a strong, supportive network that fosters growth, resilience, and achievement.





Monthly Calendar

September - P'uq'ulenuhw

The Time When The Leaves Turn Colour

- School Based Team (SBT) to review Circle of Care for each student and make necessary adjustments
- Mentor meets with student(s) and develop a schedule with student to meet regularly (informal and formally);
 - Discuss opportunities to join clubs, sports, leadership groups
 - Support connections with peers
 - Review class placements
 - Ensure they are comfortable with riding the bus (when to get on/off, times, use of a bus pass, rules with bus pass, *have* their bus pass)
- School Events:
 - Terry Fox Run, Orange Shirt Day (September 30), Tour de Rock, Cops for Cancer, Welcome Back family events

Elementary:

- Support students as they await placement into new classes
- Sports to consider:
 - Cross country, field hockey, and soccer

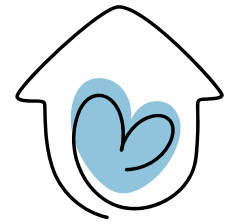
Secondary:

- Secondary review of timetable, facilitate class changes, if needed
- Fall Sports: Registration usually happens in late summer, around August to early September.
- Sports to consider:
 - Cross country, field hockey, football, soccer, and volleyball
- Support Work Experience (WEX) and Youth Work in Trades credit for students who are working
- Loran Scholarship application link: <https://loranscholar.ca/>
- CMOLIK Scholarship application link: <https://thecmolikfoundation.com/>



Monthly Calendar

October - Hwisulenuhw



The time when leaves are shaken from the trees

October is Foster Family Month in British Columbia

- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- IEP meetings (ensure Indigenous Education (INED) Team members are invited to support students and guardians)
- Meet the Teacher/Open House - Invite Foster Parents/Social Workers
- Complete Indicators of Success (Red/Yellow/Green) data collection process
- Complete Fall Learning Inventory Assessments
- Complete Student Life Plans

- School Events:
 - Thanksgiving, Halloween activities, Open House/Meet the Teacher

Elementary:

- Sports to consider:
 - Boy's Soccer, Field Hockey, Cross Country
- Foundation Skills Assessments (FSA) to be completed in Grade 4 and 7

Secondary:

- Federation of BC Youth In Care Network Dream Fund October Application (check deadline at start of month): <https://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund>
- Sports to consider:
 - Boy's Soccer



Monthly Calendar

November - Tth'al'xwumutsun



The time when the ground is glistening from frost or ice

November is The Month of Adoption and Permanency Awareness in British Columbia

- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- School Events:
 - Remembrance Day ceremony, Indigenous Veterans Day, Louis Riel Day

Elementary:

- Make sure caregivers and social workers are invited to Winter concert
- Learning Updates go home – confirm who needs copies

Secondary:

- Graduation Assessments for Grade 10 and 12 - establish a plan for completion for each individual
- Winter Sports: Registration often takes place in late fall, around November
- Sports to consider:
 - Basketball, wrestling, skiing
- Start to review the scholarships and bursaries available for youth in care in British Columbia - [Financial Support for Education and Resources](#). Mentors should meet with individual learners to go over available bursaries and scholarships outside of the school and district (school and district scholarships will come up later in the year)
- Grad photo sign up



Monthly Calendar

December - Shts'ulwe'sum

The time to put paddles away



- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- Winter Break - Be mindful of potential emotional stress CYIC may experience during school breaks, particularly if they are in unstable or unfamiliar environments
- Winter Dance or evening events - check on affordability and transportation to and from event
- Community information to families about holiday camps / events (must be approved by district prior to sending)

Elementary:

- Winter Concert - does the student need support with costume, attendance and/or tickets

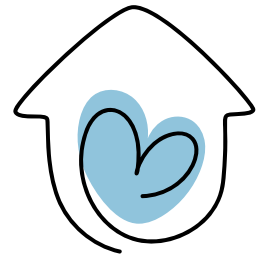
Secondary:

- Grad assessment check
- Support applications for post-secondary programs
- Support application for Provincial Tuition Waiver Program and the Learning for Future Grant
- Invite foster families and social workers to evening event (i.e. band concerts)
- Grad photo sign up



Monthly Calendar

January - Pune'q



The time for collecting geoducks

- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support
- CYIC Recognition Awards nominations open (<https://www.bcchildandyouthincareweek.com/awards.html>)
- School events:
 - Gravity Cars, Try-A-Trade

Elementary:

- Kindergarten Registration - monitor for incoming children in care
- Sports to consider:
 - Volleyball

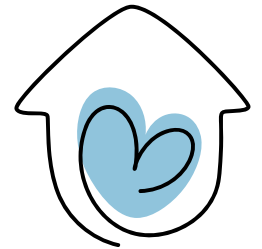
Secondary:

- Student course selection
- IEP progress report meetings (ensure INED team members are invited to support students and guardians)
- Support WEX and Youth Work in Trades credit for students who are working
- Community Living BC Updates for those students finishing school with an Evergreen certificate
- Cap and Gown measurements
- Scholarship Information Session - make sure the student is aware of any meetings, and support with a separate environment if necessary. Be aware of Scholarships and Bursaries specific to children and youth in care.



Monthly Calendar

February - Mim'ne'



The time of the “baby moon”, the short month

- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- Awareness of sensitivity around Family Day
- School Events:
 - Pink Shirt Day (anti-bullying), Valentine's Day, Black History Month, Coldest Night of the Year, French Immersion Carnival Activities
- Community Spring sports registration generally occurs in late winter to early spring, around February to March

Elementary:

- Kindergarten transitions for complex learners
- Symphony Education Concert
- Sports to consider:
 - Wrestling

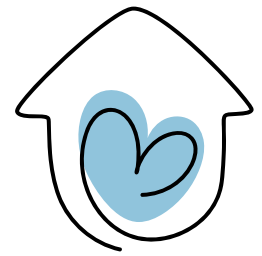
Secondary:

- Federation of BC Youth In Care Network Dream Fund February Application (Check Deadline at Start of Month): <https://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund>
- Student course selection
- Sports to consider:
 - Badminton, Golf, Rugby, Tennis



Monthly Calendar

March - Wulhxus



The time when the frogs start to sing

- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- Spring & Easter Break - Be mindful of potential emotional stress CYIC may experience during school breaks, particularly if they are in unstable or unfamiliar environments
- Community information to families about holiday camps / events (must be approved by district prior to sending)

Elementary:

- IEP progress report meetings (ensure INED team members are invited to support students and guardians)
- Learning Updates go home – confirm who needs copies
- Chess Tournament
- Plan for Kindergarten Intake meetings / Ready, Set, Learn

Secondary:

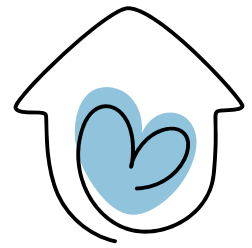
- When visiting feeder schools, connect directly with priority learners
- First/Second week: Identify priority learners coming from feeder schools
- Update Psychoeducational Assessments for Community Living BC (CLBC)
- Scholarship packages due
- Sports to Consider:
 - Wrestling, Track & Field



Monthly Calendar

April - Liimus

The time when the wild geese fly in V formation



- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- Earth Day activities

Transitions:

- Initial meeting with priority learner

Elementary:

- Sports to Consider:
 - Track and Field

Secondary:

- Facilitate school tours to support transitions
- Support WEX and Youth work in trades credit for students who are working



Monthly Calendar

May - Punhwe'num



The time when the blue camas blooms

- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- Conduct empathy interviews
- Awareness of sensitivity around Mother's Day
- Red Dress Day, Mental Health Awareness Month, Moose Hide Campaign
- IEP year end transition meetings and setting of draft goals and objectives for the next school year
- Ensure students have applied for next school year's bus pass
- Year End field trips – all 3 supporting agencies can sign permission forms
- School Trips - reminder that all field trips should have an affordability clause on the form, and ensure that no student is missing out

Transitions:

- Priority learners get priority class placement (can be set up in MyEd)
- Receiving school attends year-end IEP meetings
- Whole group tours

Elementary:

- Sports to Consider:
 - Track & Field, Girl's Soccer

Secondary:

- District Scholarship presentations
- Confirm graduation status for each individual
- Support students with graduation events (i.e. getting enough tickets, getting outfits, permission forms, and important dates)
- Sports to Consider:
 - Track & Field



Monthly Calendar

June - Yu-qw'iqw'ulus

Summer Weather is Coming



- Monthly SBT review - If students are not experiencing success, what is the plan for support? This includes ongoing attendance monitoring and support.
- BC Child & Youth In Care Week
- Awareness of sensitivity around Father's Day
- Monthly SBT review
- IEP review and draft for upcoming school year
- Priority placement & schedules for priority learners
- Meeting to introduce teachers/support staff that may be working with the student the following year
- Community information to families about Summer camps/events (must be approved by district prior to sending)
- Summer Break - Be mindful of potential emotional stress CYIC may experience during school breaks
- School Events:
 - Pride Month, National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Summary of Student Learning – confirm who gets copies

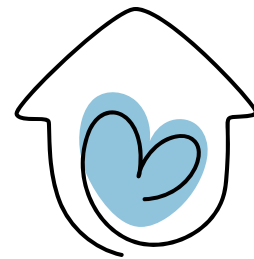
Elementary:

- Continue to support participation in year-end events

Secondary:

- Graduation assessments
- Graduation ceremonies and celebrations
- Federation of BC Youth In Care Network Dream Fund June Application (check deadline at start of month)
 - <https://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund>





Monthly Calendar

July - Yu-qw'iqw'ulus

The hottest time of the year

August - Tum'qw'i'lus

The time when the mosquitoes are out

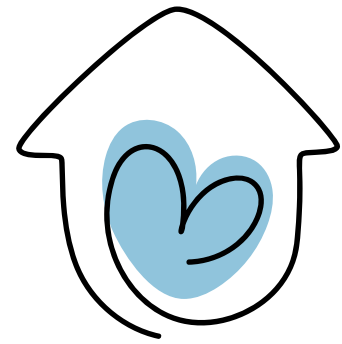
- Ensure priority learner preferential placement (course selection, teacher requests, peer requests, balanced timetable)
- Back to school costs (i.e. backpack, lunch kit, gym strip, new clothes)

Transitions:

- Invite CYIC families to school for a tour



Financial Support for Education



Provincial Tuition Waiver Program

The Provincial Tuition Waiver Program waives tuition and eligible fees for B.C. students who are current and former children or youth in care studying full-time or part-time, below the graduate level, at 26 BC public post-secondary institutions, and 13 approved union-based trades training providers.

Link: <https://studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships/provincial-tuition-waiver-program>

Learning for Future Grant

The Learning for Future Grant provides an annual grant of \$3,500 per program year (August 1 to July 31) to students who meet the eligibility criteria for the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program, to assist with additional education related costs that are not covered by the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (e.g. textbooks, computers, and supplies).

Link: <https://studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships/learning-future-grant>

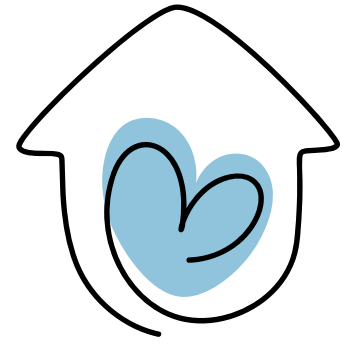
The Dream Fund

The Education Achievement Bursary under the Dream Fund provides up to \$1500 for tuition at a post-secondary school. Young people can use this bursary for all accredited schools, not just the usual designated post-secondary schools.

Link: <https://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund>



Priority Practices in Instruction and Assessment



1. Trauma-Informed Practice

- Understand the impact of trauma on learning and behavior
- Create safe, predictable, and supportive learning environments
- Use calming routines, consistent expectations, and emotional check-ins

2. Culturally Responsive and Strengths-Based Approaches

- Acknowledge students' identities, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences
- Build on students' strengths and resilience
- Avoid deficit-based thinking

3. Differentiated Instruction and Assessment

- Adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse learning needs
- Use flexible grouping, personalized learning goals, and assessments best suited to the individual
- Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles

4. Relationship-Centered Practice

- Build trusting relationships with students
- Ensure every student has a caring adult advocate
- Collaborate closely with caregivers, social workers, and other support professionals

5. Stability and Continuity in Learning

- Minimize disruption in school placements or programming
- Ensure smooth transitions between schools and grades
- Track and maintain academic records and IEPs across moves

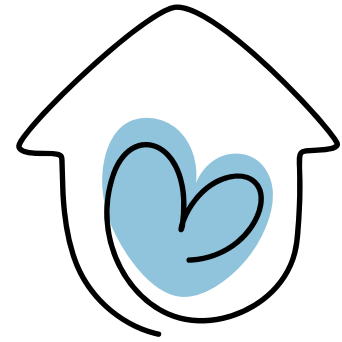
6. Student Voice and Agency

- Involve students in setting learning goals and self-assessment
- Respect students' perspectives and decisions
- Empower them through choices and opportunities

7. Data-Informed and Responsive Instruction

- Use data (including academic, behavioural, and emotional) to inform instruction
- Regularly monitor progress and adjust supports
- Collaborate in multi-disciplinary teams (i.e. Response To Intervention frameworks)

Resources



Agency Contact:

Kw'umut Lelum

<https://www.kwumut.org/>
250-591-0933 or Toll-free 1-800-613-1777

Stsi'elh Stuhw tu Smun'eem

<https://cowichantribes.com/member-services/children-and-families>
250-746-1002

Ministry of Children and Family Development

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/children-and-family-development>
250-715-2725 Duncan to reach a social worker
1-800-663-9122 for 24 hour reporting child abuse

Resources:

BC Child & Youth in Care Week

<https://www.bcchildandyouthincareweek.com/>

BC Government - If You're a Teen in Foster Care

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/youth-and-family-services/teens-in-foster-care>

Dream Fund:

<https://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund>

Aged Out:

<https://agedout.com>

VIU Youth Tuition Waiver Program Funding:

<https://services.viu.ca/financial-aid-awards/youth-care-tuition-waiver-program>

Federation of BC Youth in Care:

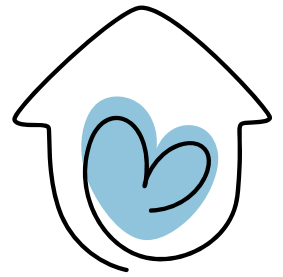
<https://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund>

Representative for Children and Youth:

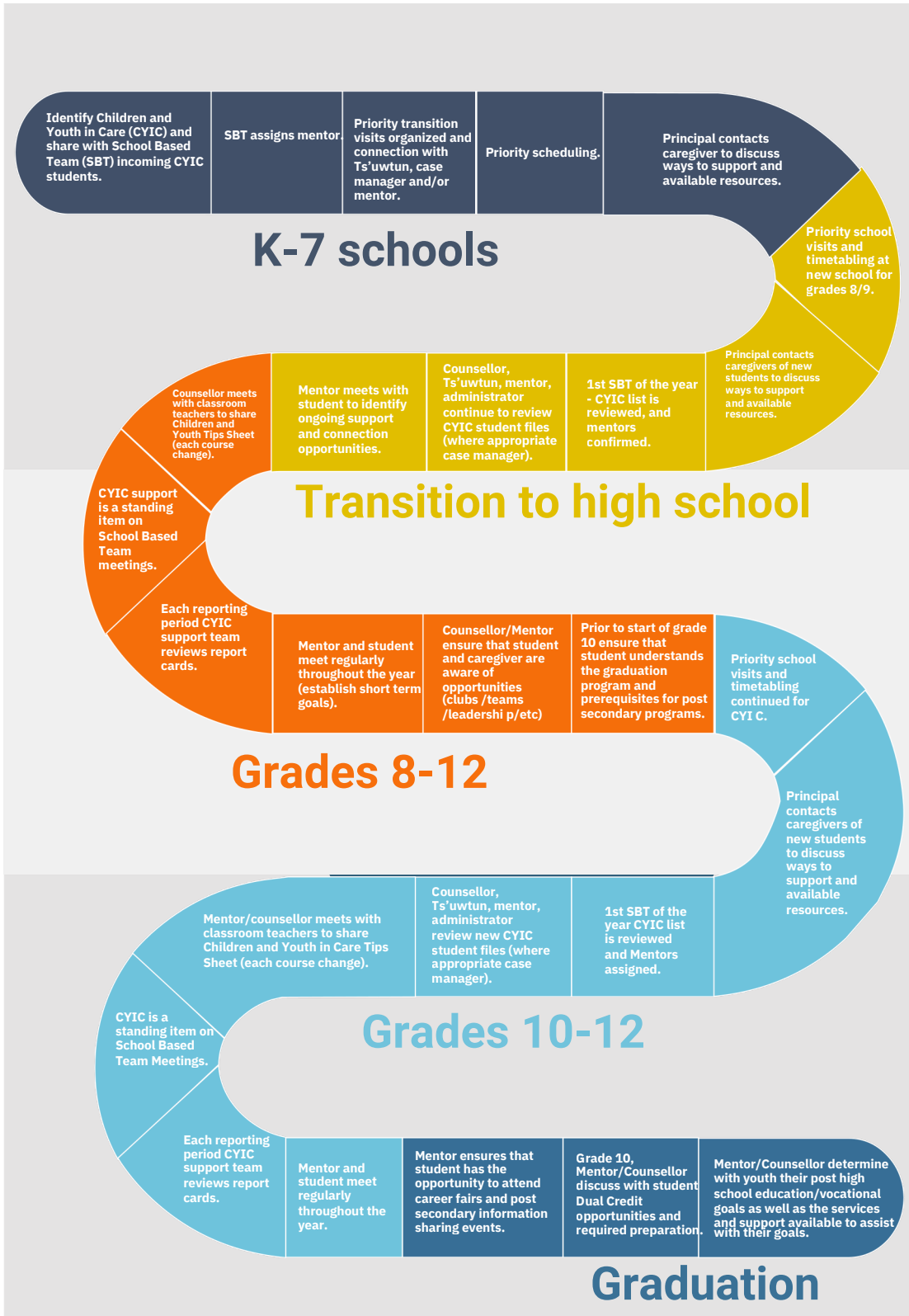
<https://rcybc.ca/about-us/>

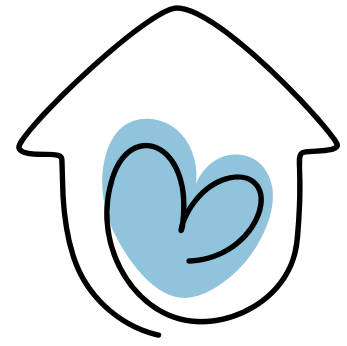


District Road Map



Children and Youth in Care: School Care Plan Framework





Conclusion

The CYIC Framework is a comprehensive, compassionate, and action-oriented guide designed to support educators in their critical role of uplifting and supporting CYIC. Through trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive approaches, and individualized supports, this framework recognizes the unique challenges CYIC face and provides practical strategies to foster stability, belonging, and academic success. At the heart of this work is the understanding that meaningful relationships, thoughtful planning, and consistent collaboration among educators, caregivers, and community partners are key to ensuring equitable outcomes. When schools commit to prioritizing CYIC, they not only strengthen the educational experiences of some of our most vulnerable learners but also contribute to a more inclusive and just school system for all.



Appendix A: Empathy Interview Sample Questions



Please select the questions that are applicable to your context and the student you are supporting.

1. General Feelings About Transition

- How are you feeling about moving to a new class/school?
- What are you most looking forward to? What are you most worried about?
- Can you tell me about a time when a school change went well or didn't go well for you?

2. Relationships and Support

- Are there any teachers or staff you already know or feel comfortable with?
- Do you prefer to have a male or female teacher? Why?
- Are there any students you'd feel better being in a class with?
- Is there someone you'd like to have your locker near or be in the same hallway with?
- Are there any adults in your life (family, caregivers, case workers) that help you feel supported at school?

3. Safety and Comfort

- What helps you feel safe and comfortable at school?
- Is there anything that makes school feel stressful or unsafe?
- What helps you calm down or feel better if you're having a tough day?

4. Academic and Social Preferences

- What helps you learn best in class?
- Are there subjects or classes you're excited or nervous about?
- What do you like doing during lunch, recess, or breaks? Are there people you like to spend that time with?

5. Interests and Extra Curricular

- What types of activities do you enjoy doing at school (clubs, sports)?
- What activities do you enjoy doing outside of school?
- Is there a club or activity you would like to see created?

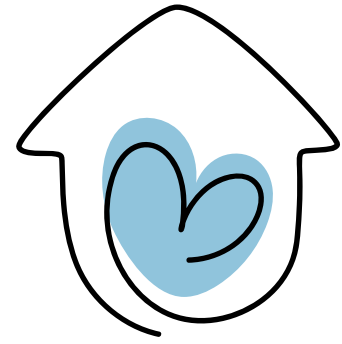
6. Transition-Specific Questions

- What would make moving into a new class or school easier for you?
- Is there anything that teachers or staff can do to help you settle in?
- Would it help to visit the new class/school before starting?
- Do you want someone to show you around on your first day?
- What worked well for you in your previous school/class?

7. Communication and Feedback

- Who would you feel comfortable talking to if you had a problem at school?
- How do you like to be asked for feedback or opinions? (Talking, writing, private check-ins, etc.)
- Is there anything else you wish your teachers or school knew about you?

Appendix B: Who to Contact



Foster Parent/Caregiver:

School personnel may have frequent contact with a CYIC's caregivers and are encouraged to discuss and share information as they would with any parent, including:

- Day to day activities that require a caregiver's response
- Signing for participation in school activities - low risk
- The immediate requirement of a caregiver (e.g. due to sudden illness)
- An injury or a traumatic event experienced by the child at school
- The education status of the child (Parent-Teacher Interviews)
- Progress reports

Social Worker/Child Welfare Worker:

School personnel may share with a social worker and the CYIC's caregiver any information that can be shared with a parent. When school personnel are aware that a child or youth in care, they may also contact the social worker in the following situations:

- There are concerns for the safety of a CYIC;
- When a CYIC is injured or experiences trauma;
- When a Violent Risk Threat Assessment (VRTA) has been completed;
- To share non-attendance or flawless attendance at school;
- To share progress reports on academic related accomplishments or needs;
- To share cultural teachings/considerations as shared by family and/or community including but not limited to Indigenous ways of knowing and being;
- When needs for additional supports outside of the school system are required (e.g. tutoring support);
- When joint educational planning meetings for a CYIC are taking place;
- When the school is considering a suspension or expulsion;
- When school is developing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a CYIC;
- When a behaviour support plan is required to be in place to support the CYIC's behavioural needs;
- When a CYIC is returning to school following an extended absence (medical, suspension, expulsion, drop out)
- To share extra-curricular accomplishments

From: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/guide-sharing-information-about-cyic.pdf>