

Director of Services Report to the Quality Committee

2024-2025 Year End

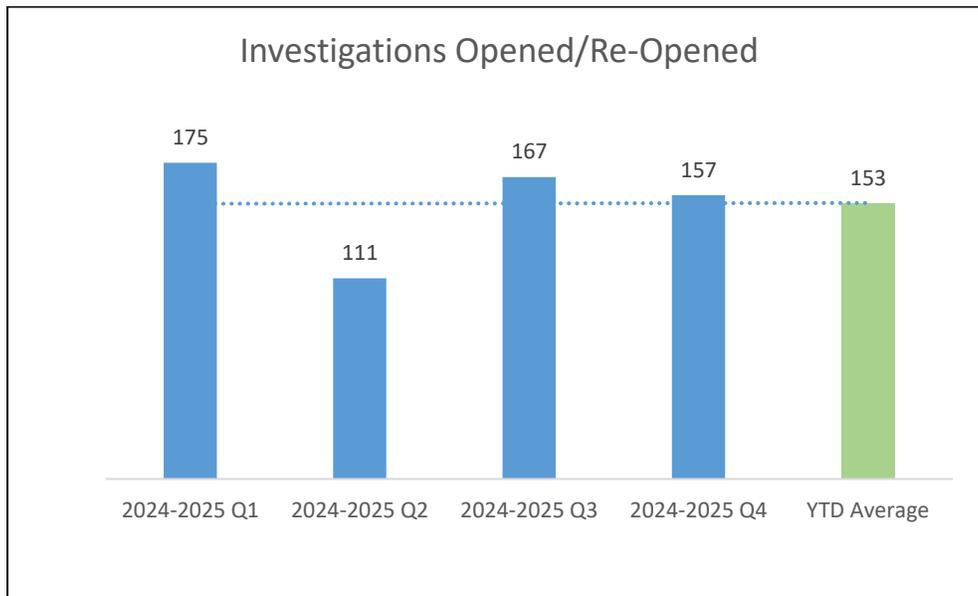
Service Volumes

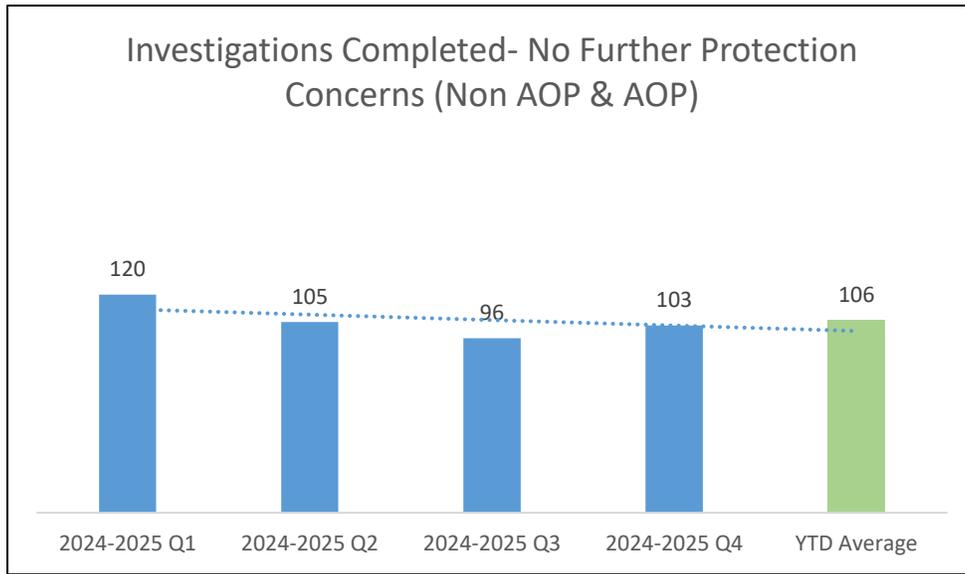
The Ministry has implemented Standards Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP) reporting requirements across the sector. Societies are now required to submit SQIP data in March and September, replacing the previous schedule of February and September. A summary of the organization’s March SQIP will be presented at the June board meeting.

This report will present Q4 and 2024-2025 year-end service data, along with an analysis of five-year trends in key funding categories reported to the Ministry.

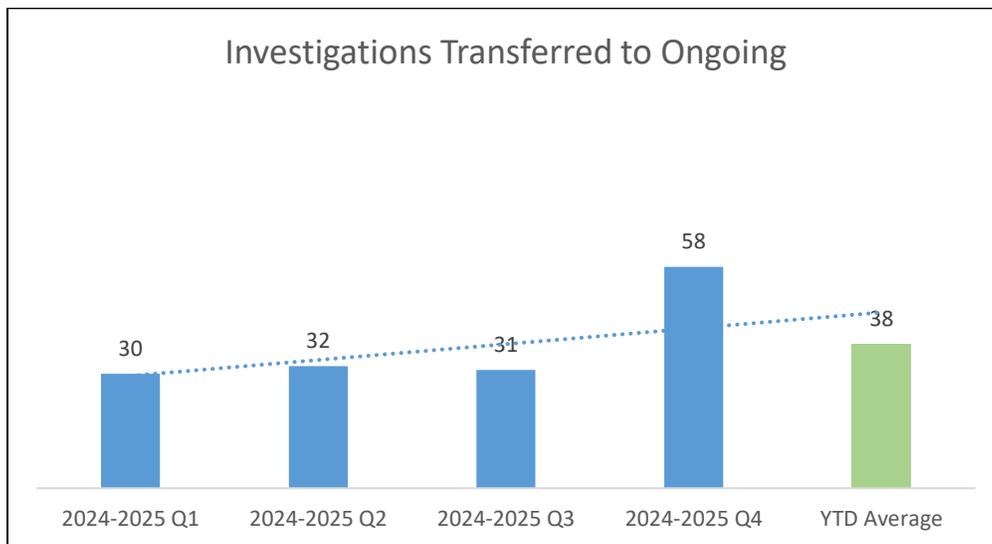
INTAKE/INVESTIGATIONS

Overall, year to date numbers have continued to gradually increase post-pandemic. Compared to the 2021-2022 YTD average of 120, we have seen a 28% increase in investigations opened/reopened.

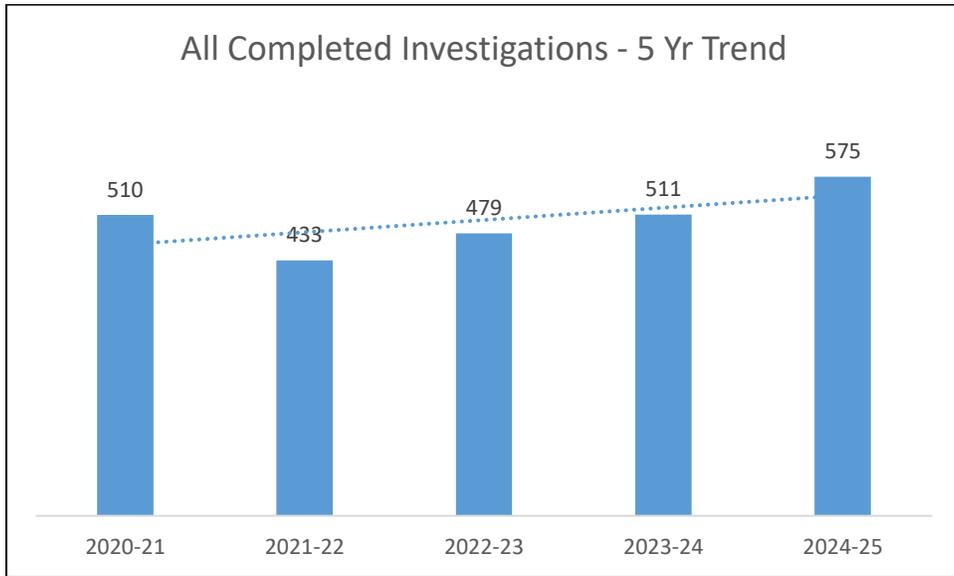




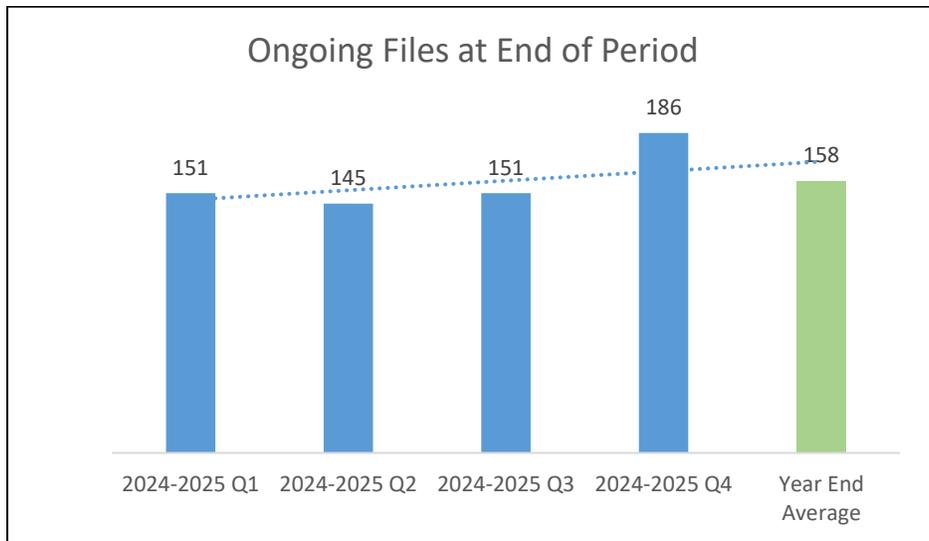
In Q4, 36% of completed investigations were transferred to ongoing services, marking a significant increase compared to previous quarters and the year-to-date average. The average year-end transfer rate stood at 26%, which is slightly higher than in past years but remains manageable. As we have discussed, child welfare agencies are taking on increasingly complicated cases as they support more children, youth and families presenting with complex needs.



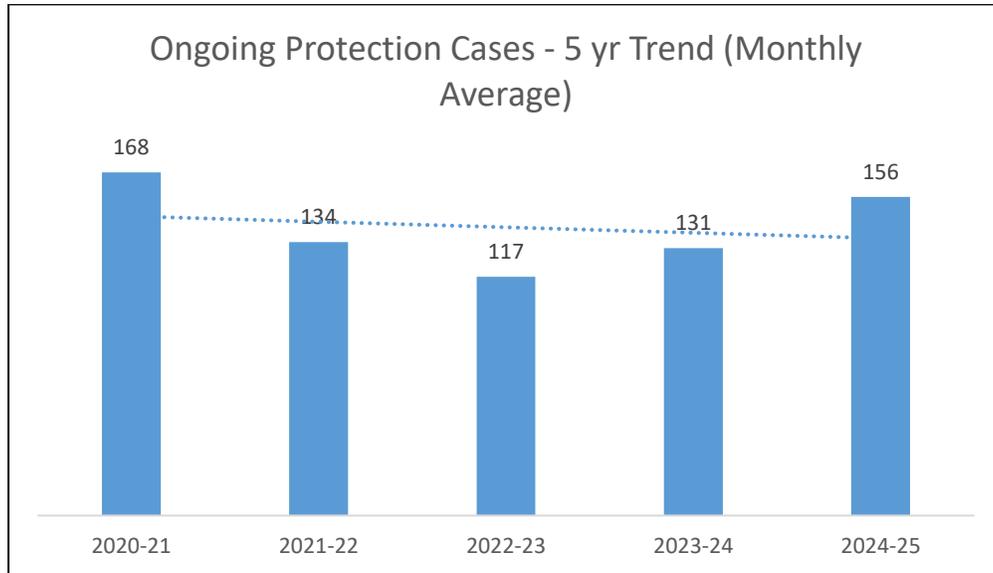
The total number of protection investigations completed (575) represents the combined sum of the two graphs above. Since 2022, there has been a steady increase in completed investigations following the impact of COVID-19. However, year-to-date figures still remain lower compared to pre-COVID years. In the 2019-2020 period, a total of 608 investigations were completed.



ONGOING FAMILY SERVICES

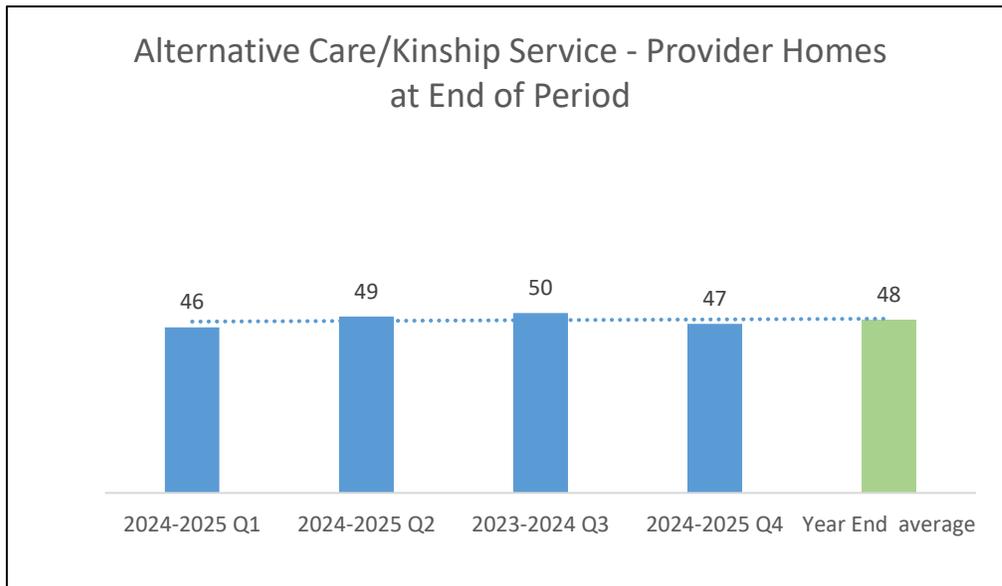


Following a steady decline in previous years, the average number of ongoing cases, has increased by 19% since last year. Similar to completed investigations, ongoing service files continue to remain lower than “non-covid years.” In the 2019-2020 period, the average number of ongoing cases was 210.

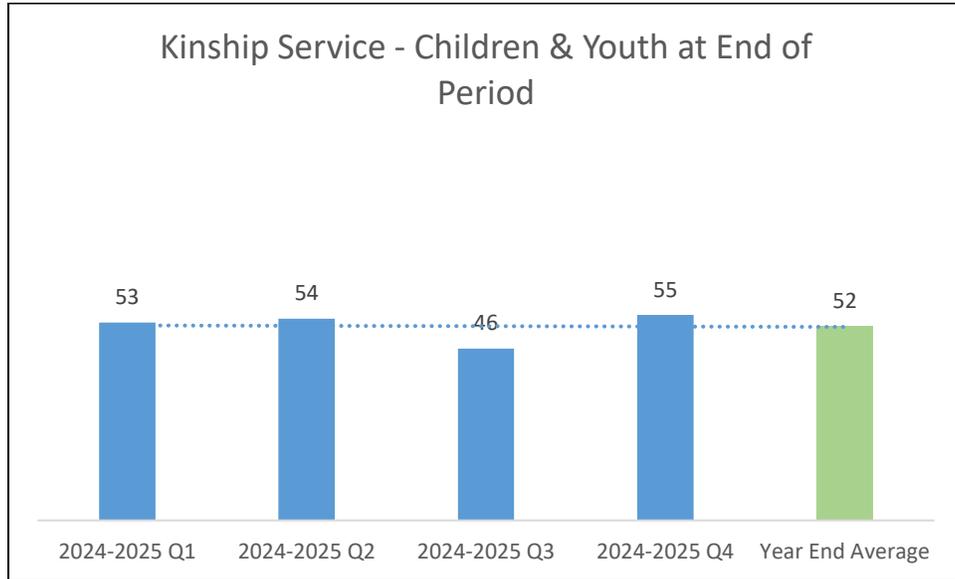


ALTERNATIVE CARE

Kinship Service is fluid with homes often opening and closing in relatively short time frames as children return to their primary caregiver(s) and/or find permanency with their kinship family.

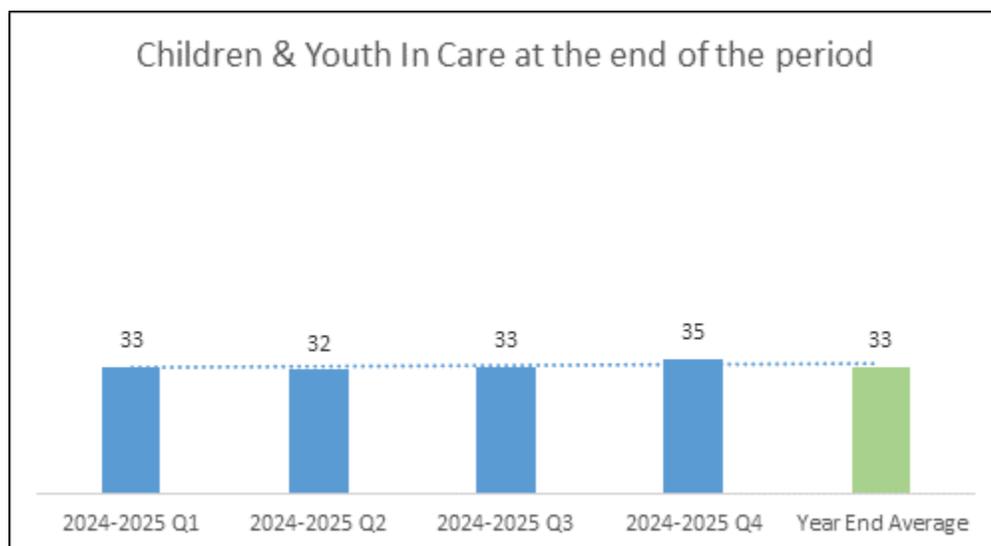


Keeping children out of care and residing with people they know rather than strangers when they are not able to remain in the family home, is the desired outcome and we continue to achieve this. Short-term kinship placements or permanency with kin is the preferred option when considering alternative care and is considerably higher than the number of children in care as noted below with 35 children in care at Q4 compared to 55 in kinship service.

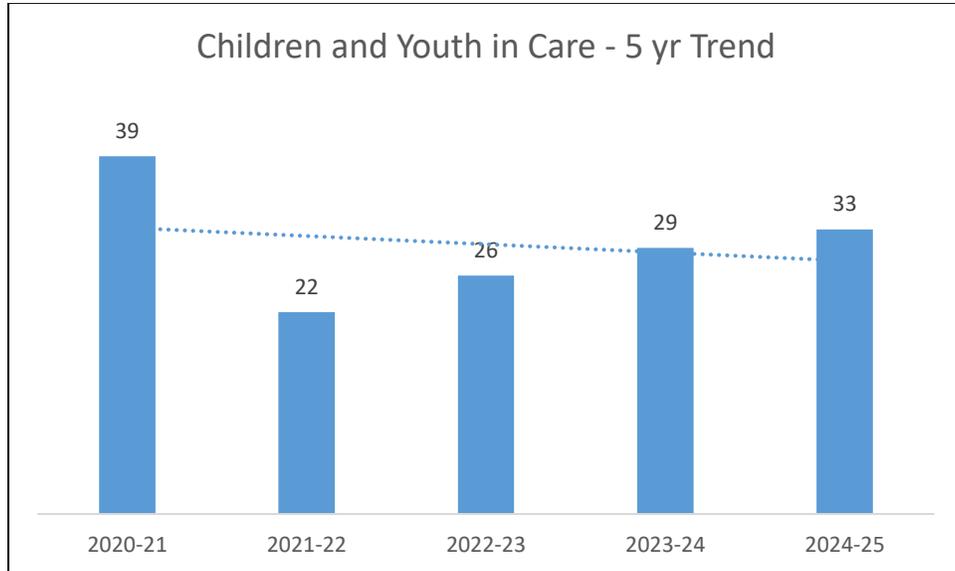


CHILDREN'S SERVICES

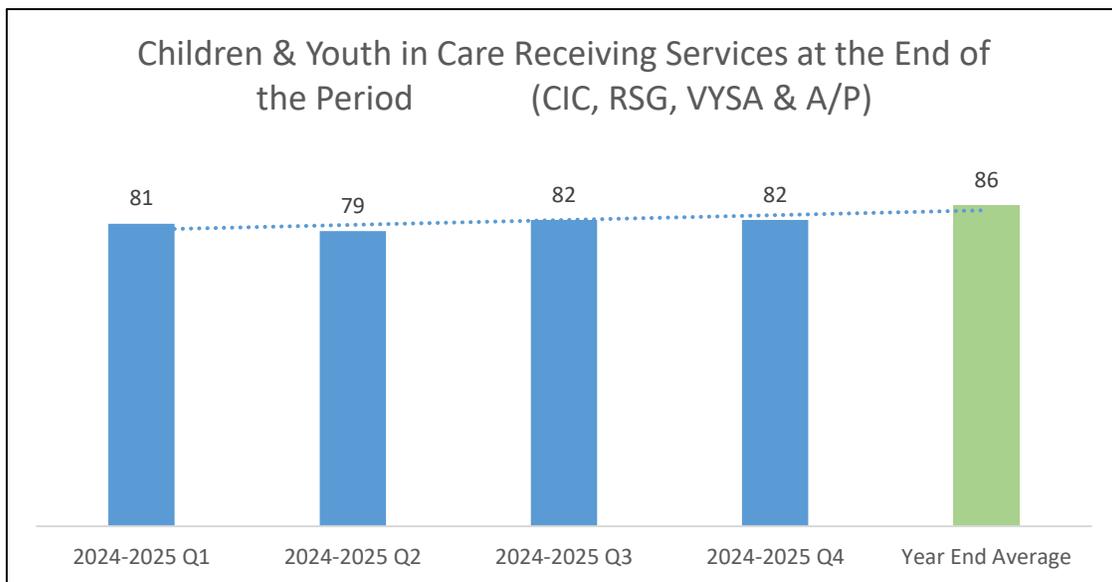
This chart focuses on children and youth who entered care before their 16th birthday and have not yet turned 18. From Q1 to Q4, the number of children and youth in care remained relatively stable.



Over the past five years, the year-end averages show a 15% decline in the number of children in care. However, at the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic (2022-2023), the year-end average stood at 26 children and youth in care. By the end of March 2025, this number had risen to 33, reflecting a 37.5% increase over the past three years.



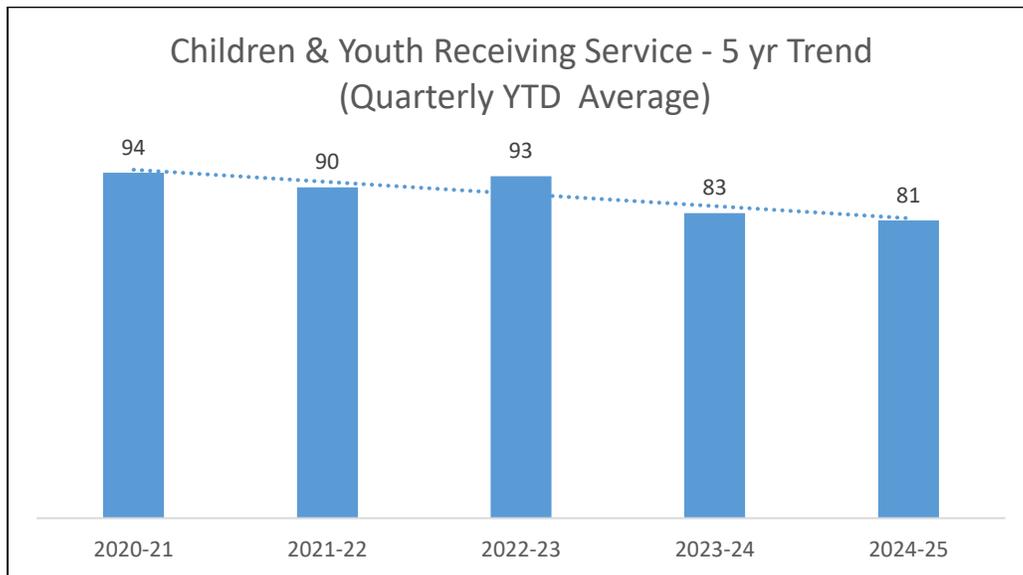
Total Children and Youth in Care is the sum of Children in Care noted below (0-18 years), Ready, Set Go (18+), Voluntary Youth Services (16-17 under Voluntary Service), and Adoption Probation. While the RSG, VYSA and A/P children and youth are not “officially” in the care of the Society, they are receiving services and are reported to the Ministry as Children in Care.



Breakdown of Children & Youth Receiving Service by Type

The number of children and youth receiving service is impacted by adoptions being finalized, youth transitioning out of care at 18 and exiting service at 23.

Type	2024-2025 Q1	2024-2025 Q2	2024-2025 Q3	2024-2025 Q4	YTD Average
CIC	33	32	33	35	33
RSG	39	40	42	40	40
A/P	4	4	4	2	4
VYSA	3	3	3	5	3
Total	79	79	82	82	81



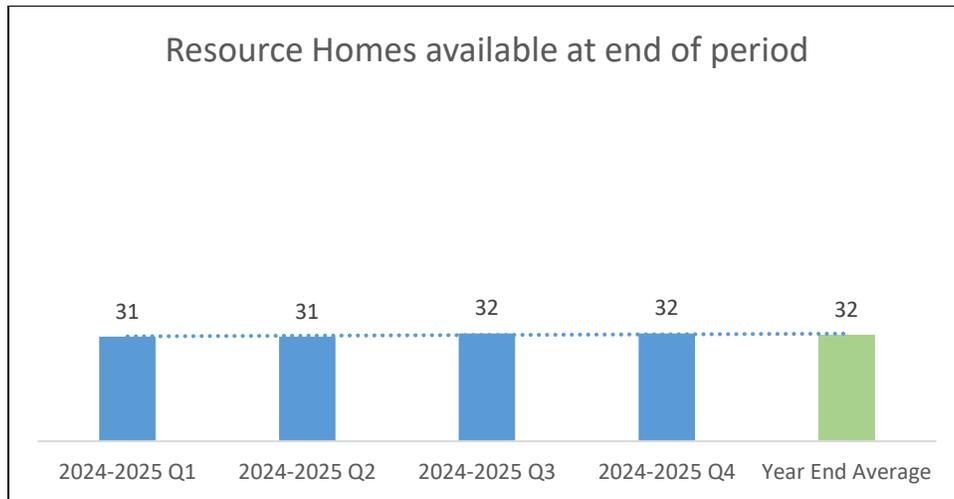
The chart below illustrates the five-year volume trend for youth receiving services through Ready, Set, Go (RSG). 44 youth are anticipated to exit service by 2028-2029.

RSG 21 + for 2024-2029					
Brought over 20 RSG 21+ as of April 1 2025	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
21+	10	4	6	2	1
22+	11	10	4	6	7
23+ (To be closed)	9	11	10	4	10
Total	30	25	20	12	18

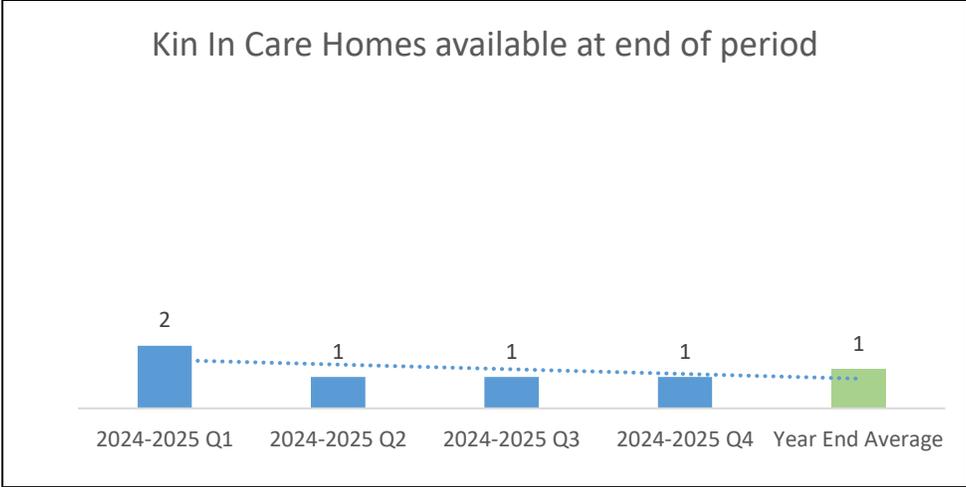
RSG 21 + Receiving Service	
2021-2022	13
2022-2023	10
2023-2024	10
2024-2025	18

ALTERNATIVE CARE

The number of available Alternative Permanency Homes decreased minimally this year, representing a normal fluctuation and consistent with our intentional use of Kinship Service arrangements. We continue to recruit fostering permanency homes, with a focus on recruiting homes that are able to meet complex, acute emotional and developmental needs of the youth in care, as well as provide cultural and racial matches and supports.



Whereas Kinship Service (out of care) is the preferred and least intrusive option, Kinship Care is available for some children/youth depending on needs – typically for clinical reasons where the family/child requires a greater level of support than that available through Kin Service. Kin in Care homes have remained relatively stable over the current fiscal year. The one open home, which services two children placed on Adoption Probation, will in all probability be finalized in this fiscal year.



Legal

Breakdown of Legal Cases 2023-2024	
Q1	
2023 April	36
2023 May	39
2023 June	37
Q2	
2023 July	38
2023 August	39
2023 September	42
Q3	
2023 October	42
2023 November	44
2023 December	48
Q4	
2024 January	52
2024 February	49
2024 March	47

Breakdown of Legal Cases 2024-2025	
Q1	
2024 April	46
2024 May	47
2024 June	48
Q2	
2024 July	48
2024 August	49
2024 September	53
Q3	
2024 October	56
2024 November	53
2024 December	53
Q4	
2025 January	53
2025 February	56
2025 March	63

- Since 2023-2024, we have experienced a 75% increase in the number of legal cases.
- Despite this, staff continue to make significant efforts to utilize voluntary service agreements and temporary care agreements to mitigate safety concerns.

- As time has passed, we are starting to see the impact the pandemic has had on children, youth and their families - particularly with respect to mental health, resources, addiction and domestic violence.
- There is greater awareness and reporting of issues that require legal intervention, such as child protection and domestic violence cases.
- The severity of concerns remains evident and continues to escalate. The lack of access to timely community resources and supports remains a significant concern.
- Economic challenges, such as the cost-of-living crisis and housing instability, have increased family stress, leading to more situations that require legal resolution.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR LINK)

ADR link connects families involved in child protection matters with Children’s Aid Societies to Alternative Dispute Resolution practitioners in the South Region of Ontario. There are now five methods of Alternative Dispute Resolution available through ADR-link:

1. Child protection mediation;
2. Original Dispute Resolution/Indigenous Approaches;
3. Family Group Conferencing;
4. the 4th Option/Other; and
5. Youth Led Transition Planning

While the first 4 options involve a decision making process for resolving disputes between a Children’s Aid Society and family or child who is or may be in need of protection the 5th option, Youth Led Transition Planning, is geared to creating a plan and lifelong connections for “Ready Set Go” youth. This fairly new initiative also involves a referral to the office of the Ontario Children’s Lawyer. The best hope for this program is that the youth will have independent representation as they progress towards adult life.

The 4th option is a unique method of ADR to be utilized in circumstances where one of the other prescribed methods is not available or where another method is deemed more suitable. There are specific criteria for 4th option or “other” referrals.

	Apr 1, 2021 – Mar 31, 2022	Apr.1, 2022- Mar 31, 2023	Apr. 1, 2023- Mar.31, 2024	Apr 1, 2024- Mar 31, 2025
Child Protection Mediation (CPM)	23	24	15	17
Family Group Decision (FGC)	7	8	3	2

Original Dispute Resolution (FNIM)	3	4	6	5
4 th Option/Other Referrals	2	1	1	2
Youth Led Transition Planning			2	2
TOTAL	35	37	27	28

Formal Service Complaints April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025

All children’s aid societies are responsible to address complaints relating to a service sought or received by the society in accordance with the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017). Information regarding the complaint review procedure is made available to the public and any person upon request.

Complainants have the option to pursue complaint resolution through an internal informal or formal process. Formal processes include the Child and Family Services Review Board, the Internal Complaint Review Panel and the Human Rights Tribunal.

The **Child and Family Services Review Board** is an oversight body with the authority to assess the appropriateness of Society decisions, within specified areas and can overrule such decisions through a hearing process. While the hearing do not occur in a court, similar legal procedures occur. The decisions of the child and family services review board are consider binding.

The **Internal Complaint Review Panel** consists of a small number of people who have not been directly involved in a case or situation who are convened locally to hear a complaint and work towards resolution/restoration. Panel members are chosen by the Executive Director from FACS staff, and must include one member of the senior management team and one person not employed by FACS, often a Board member.

The **Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario** resolves claims of discrimination and harassment brought under the human rights code.

Ontario Ombudsman’s Office: The Ombudsman resolves and investigates complaints about any matter concerning children and youth receiving services from Ontario children's aid societies, foster homes, group homes, secure treatment facilities and youth justice facilities.

Formal Service Complaints April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025

Formal Process	Number	Status
Human Rights Tribunal	1	Dismissed
Child and Family Services Review Board (CFSRB)	7	3 dismissed 1 responded to and closed 1 settlement agreement, file closed

		2 pending
Internal Complaint Review Panel Request	3	2 resolved 1 declined and forwarded to CFSRB

Next Report:

Q1/Q2 Service Data

Extended Society Care and Foster Care Licensing Reviews

September SQIP (Standards Quality Improvement Plan)