

Director of Services Report to the Quality Committee

2025-2026 Year End

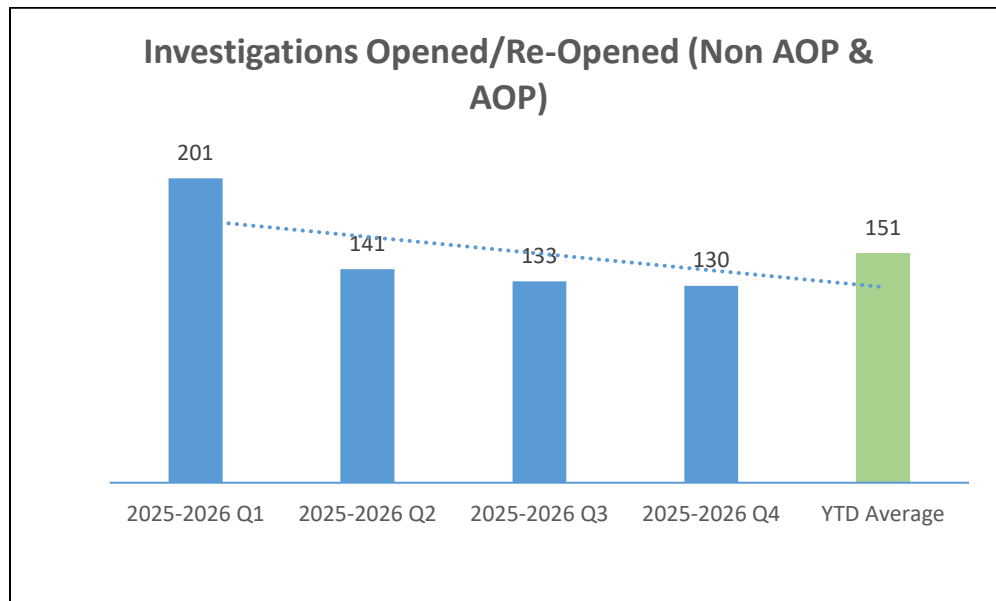
Service Volumes

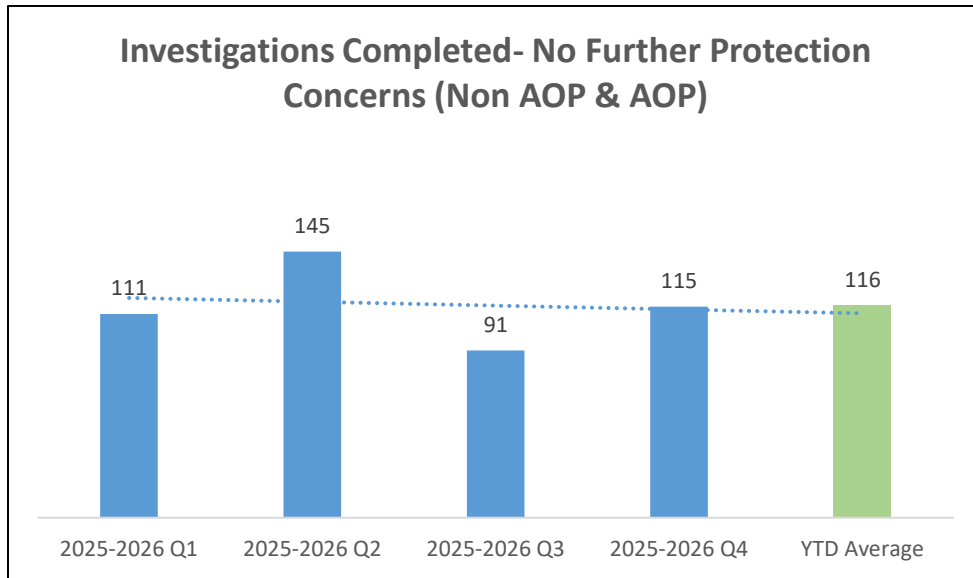
This report will present Q4 and 2025–2026 year-end service data, along with an analysis of five-year trends across key funding categories reported to the Ministry. It also includes a service spotlight focused on targeted foster caregiver recruitment.

A summary of the organization’s February Standards Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP) is scheduled for presentation at the June board meeting.

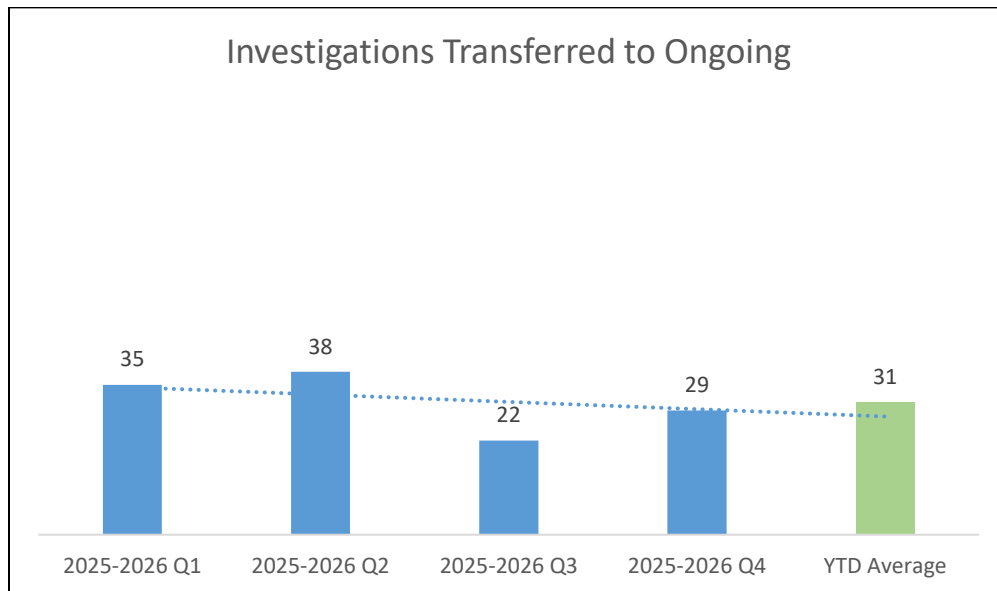
INTAKE/INVESTIGATIONS

Overall, year-to-date numbers have continued to rise gradually in the post-pandemic period, leveling off in 2025–2026. Compared to the 2021–2022 YTD average of 120, investigations opened or reopened have increased by 25%. YTD averages from last year to this year show only a slight decline of 1%. From Q1 to Q4, however, there was a notable 35% decrease in investigations opened and reopened.

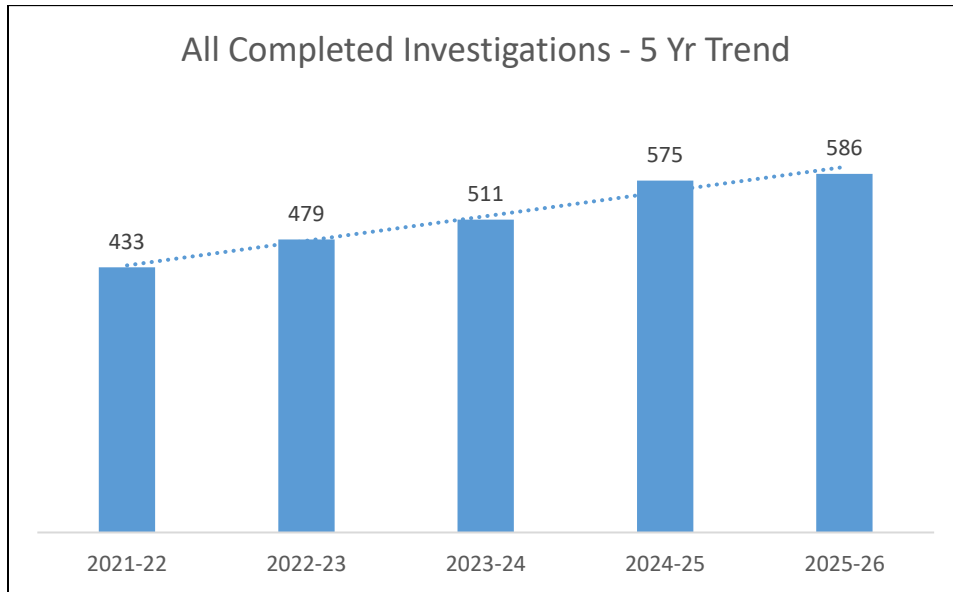




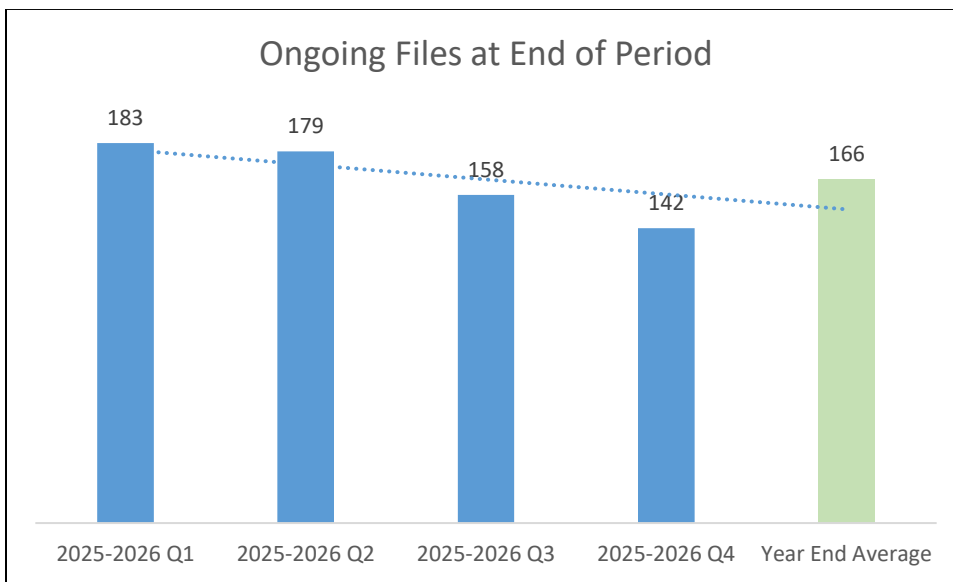
In Q4, 20% of completed investigations were transferred to ongoing services, a rate that remained relatively consistent with previous quarters and aligned with the year-to-date average. The year-end transfer rate averaged 21%, marking a notable decrease compared to last year’s 26%.



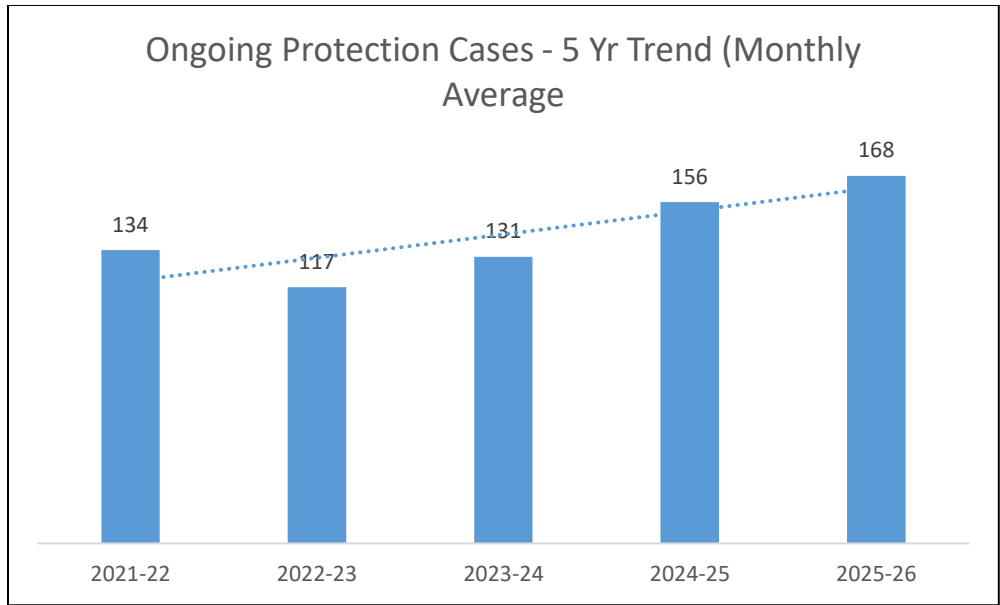
The total number of protection investigations completed (586) reflects the combined totals from the two graphs above. Since 2022, completed investigations have risen steadily, indicating a gradual recovery from the operational and reporting disruptions associated with COVID-19. Despite this upward trajectory, year-to-date volumes remain below pre-pandemic levels. In 2019–2020, 608 investigations were completed.



ONGOING FAMILY SERVICES

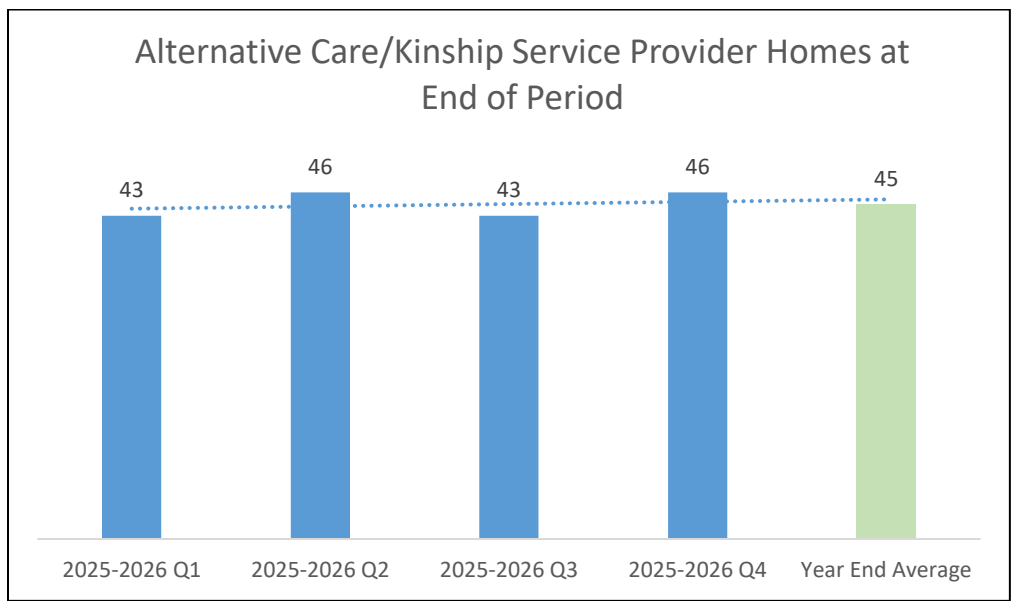


Following several years of steady decline, the average number of ongoing cases has increased by 7% since last year, though the rate of growth remains slower than in earlier periods. Consistent with trends observed in completed investigations, ongoing service volumes continue to fall below pre-pandemic levels. In 2019–2020, the average number of ongoing cases was 210.



ALTERNATIVE CARE

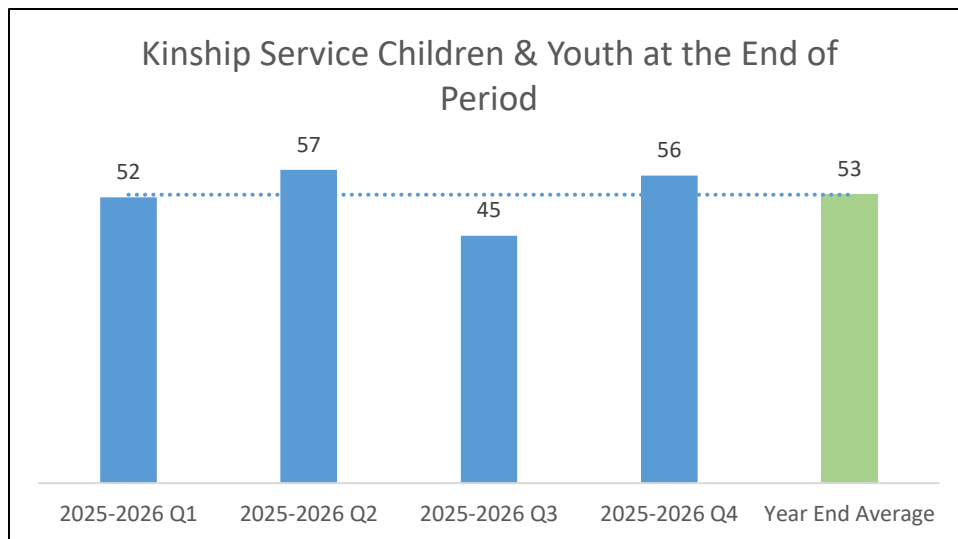
Kinship Service remains fluid, with homes frequently opening and closing over short periods as children return to their primary caregivers or achieve permanency within their kinship networks. Year-end averages show only a modest change from last year—48 compared to 45—indicating relative stability in overall Kinship Service activity.



Keeping children out of care and supporting them to reside with people they know—rather than with unfamiliar caregivers remains a core objective. Short-term kinship placements and permanency with kin continue to be the preferred alternatives when children cannot remain safely in their family home.

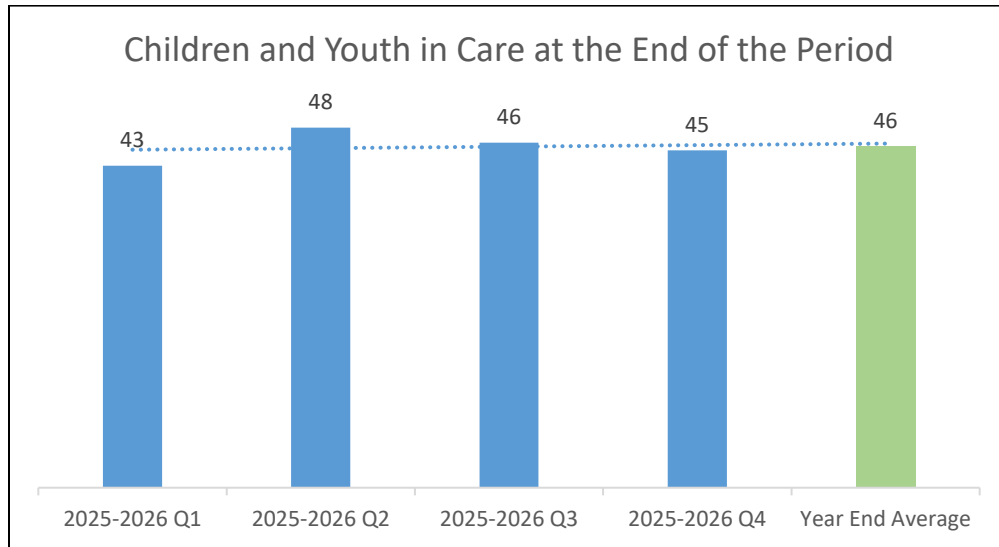
However, the gap between the number of children in Kinship Service and those in formal care has narrowed compared to previous years. At Q4, 45 children were in care and 56 were in Kinship Service, relative to last year’s 35 children in care and 55 in Kinship Service.

While kinship remains the preferred placement option, a range of pressures is affecting both the availability and sustainability of kinship arrangements. Caregiver capacity, financial strain, and the increasing complexity of children’s needs are all contributing factors influencing whether kinship placements can be maintained. These pressures collectively shape placement decisions and may help explain the narrowing gap between kinship service numbers and children in formal care.

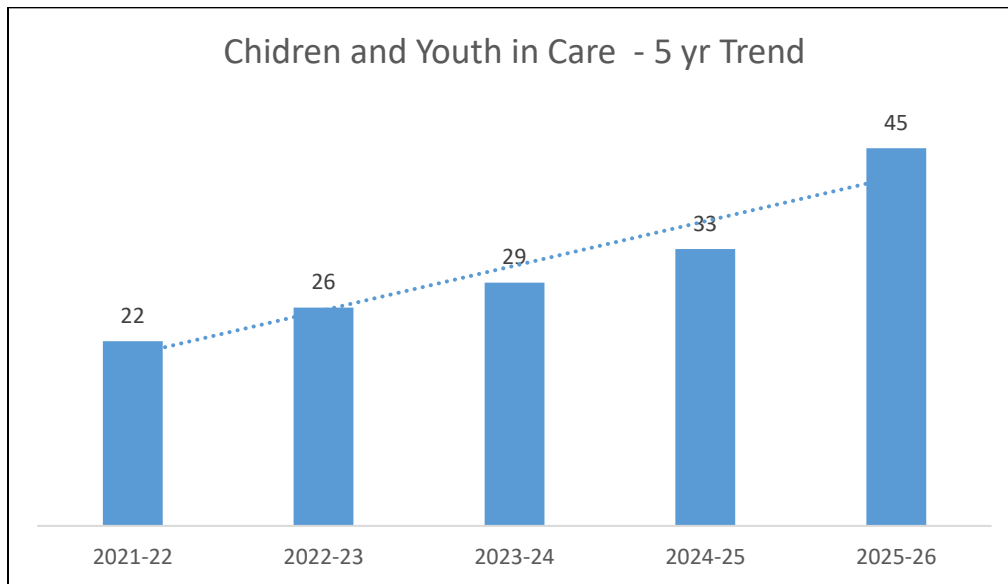


CHILDREN’S SERVICES

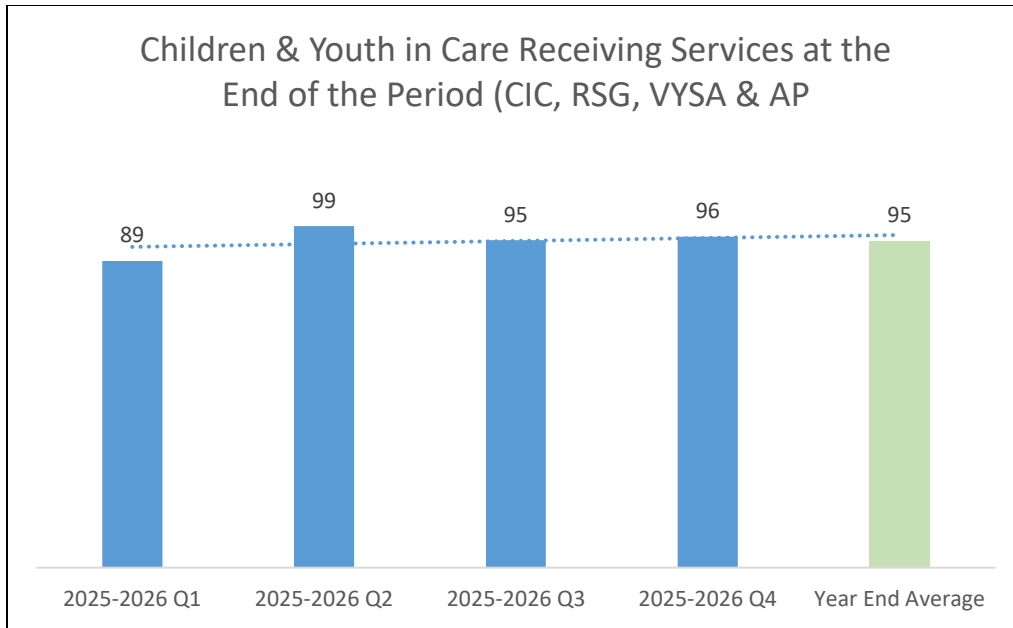
This chart focuses on children and youth who entered care before their 16th birthday and have not yet turned 18. From Q1 to Q4, the number of children and youth in care remained relatively stable.



Over the past five years, year-end averages show a 104% increase in the number of children in care, marking a notable shift after a prolonged period of steady decline.



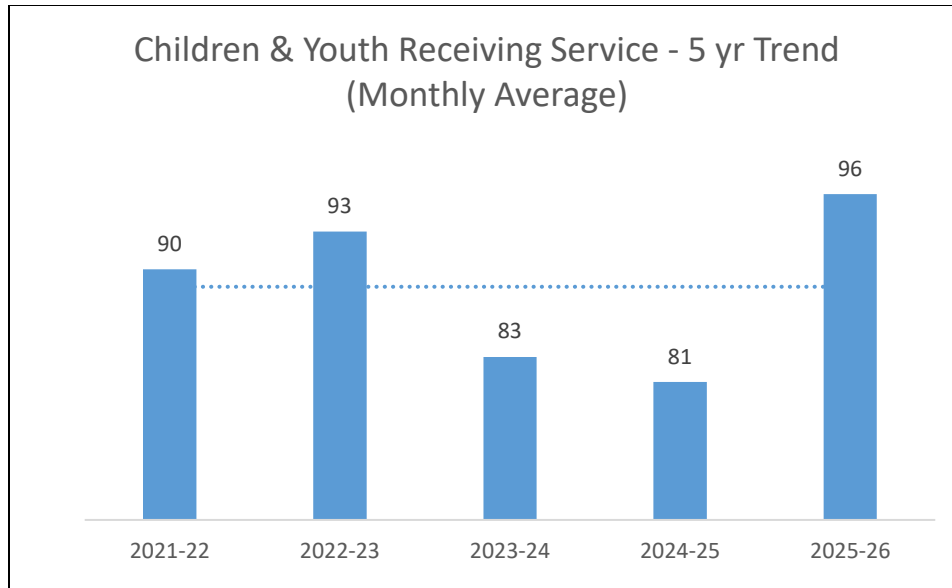
Total Children and Youth in Care represents the combined count of all service categories reported as “in care” to the Ministry. This includes Children in Care (0–18 years), Ready, Set, Go (18+), Voluntary Youth Services (youth 16–17 receiving voluntary supports), and Adoption Probation. Although youth in RSG, VYS, and Adoption Probation are not “officially” in the Society’s care, they continue to receive ongoing services and are therefore included in the Ministry’s reporting as part of the overall Children and Youth in Care population.



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	2025-2026 Q1	2025-2026 Q2	2025-2026 Q3	2025-2026 Q4	YTD Average
CIC	43	48	46	45	45
RSG	38	39	38	41	39
A/P	2	3	2	3	3
VYSA	7	9	11	7	9
Total	90	99	97	96	96

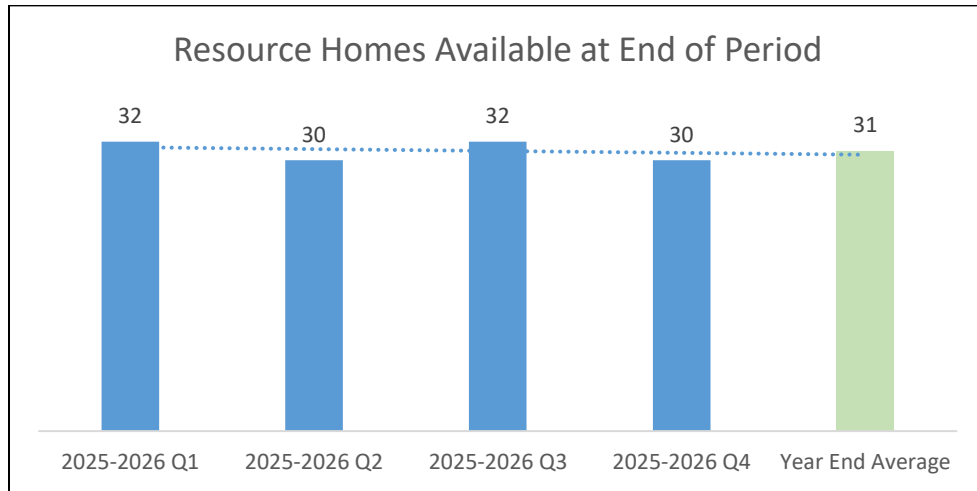


The chart below illustrates the five-year volume trend for youth receiving services through Ready, Set, Go (RSG). 37 youth are anticipated to exit service by 2029-2030.

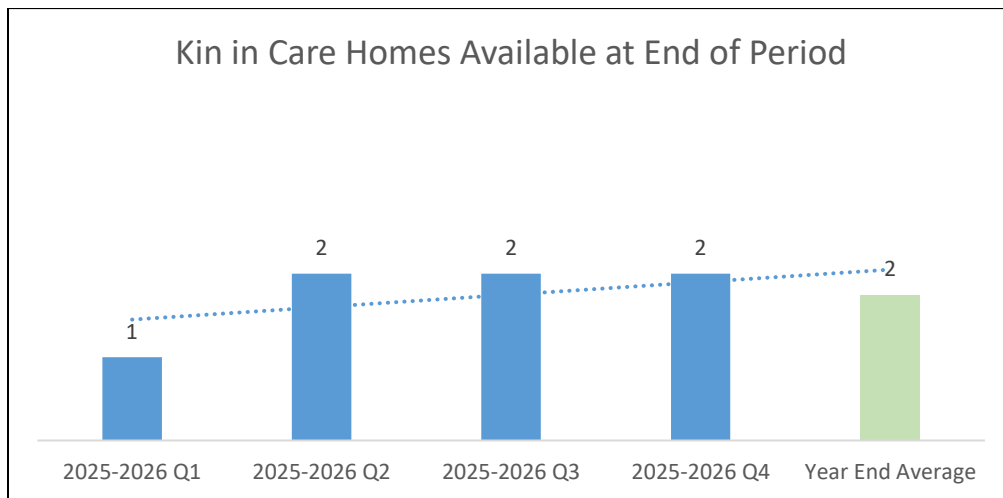
RSG 21 + for 2025-2030					
Brought over 20 RSG 21+ as of April 1 2026	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
21+	4	7	5	12	4
22+	10	4	7	5	12
23+ (To be closed)	11	10	4	7	5
Total	25	21	16	24	21
RSG 21 + Receiving Service					
2022-2023		10			
2023-2024		10			
2024-2025		18			
2025-2026		14			

ALTERNATIVE CARE

The number of available Alternative Permanency Homes decreased minimally this year. 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 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

Breakdown of Legal Cases 2024-2025	
Q1	
2025 April	59
2025 May	60
2025 June	61
Q2	
2025 July	63
2025 August	64
2025 September	62
Q3	
2025 October	63
2025 November	59
2025 December	60
Q4	
2026 January	59
2026 February	61
2026 March	61

Since 2023–2024, the number of legal cases has risen significantly, reversing the downward trend observed in earlier years. Over the past year, however, this growth has levelled off, indicating that legal activity may be stabilizing after a period of rapid escalation. Staff continue to make substantial efforts to mitigate safety concerns through the use of voluntary service agreements, temporary care agreements, and alternative dispute resolution processes. These approaches support families in resolving issues without immediate court involvement

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 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	Apr 1, 2025 – Mar 31, 2026
Child Protection Mediation (CPM)	23	24	15	17	24
Family Group Decision (FGC)	7	8	3	2	4
Original Dispute Resolution (FNIM)	3	4	6	5	1
4 th Option/Other Referrals	2	1	1	2	0
Youth Led Transition Planning			2	2	9
TOTAL	35	37	27	28	38

Formal Service Complaints April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

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, 2025-March 31, 2026

Formal Process	Number	Status
Human Rights Tribunal	0	
Child and Family Services Review Board (CFSRB)	4	Closed
Internal Complaint Review Panel Request	4	Closed

Service Spotlight: Targeted Foster Care Recruitment

Targeted recruitment for children in care uses carefully controlled media outreach to find a suitable caregiver for a specific child or youth when local placement options have been exhausted. Participating agencies share limited, non-identifying details about the child—such as their age, interests, strengths, and the type of support they need—to help potential caregivers understand who they would be caring for without compromising the child’s privacy or dignity.

This type of recruitment has been used when:

- A child or youth has **complex needs** or requires specialized caregiving.
- A child or youth has **strong community or cultural ties** that limit placement options.
- A child or youth has been waiting a long time for a stable home and **local foster homes are unavailable**.

This approach is distinct from general foster recruitment because it centers on one child’s story, strengths, and needs.

Despite significant effort, we have two children in care who have not been placed locally, prompting the need to consider targeted media recruitment both within our community and in another jurisdiction where a sibling resides. The goal is to eliminate long-term group care placements, maintain cultural, community, and sibling connections, and reduce future instability associated with multiple placement moves.

Next Report:

- Q1/Q2 Service Data
- Extended Society Care and Foster Care Licensing Reviews
- September SQIP (Standards Quality Improvement Plan)