



**CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
OF NEW BRUNSWICK**



Annual Report 2024-2025

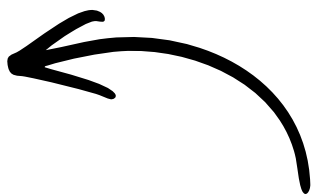


Photo by Brett Francis, Natoaganeg First Nation.

Our vision – Elmaptekemk

First Nations communities where all children, youth and families are healthy, safe and can reach their full potential; where each child and youth is heard and where their best interests are affirmed and protected.

Our mission - Telatu'emkewey

The Mi'gmaq Child and Family Services of New Brunswick Inc. is an incorporated not-for-profit organization that champions the fundamental rights of First Nations children, youth and their families and delivers services that result in better lives for vulnerable children, youth, their families and their communities.



Message from the CEO



Kwe',

As I share this message for our 2024–2025 Annual Report, I am filled with deep gratitude, pride, and reflection. This year marks my final year as Chief Executive Officer of Mi'gmaq Child & Family Services of New Brunswick and closing this chapter has given me the gift of looking back at the incredible growth, strength, and community leadership that has brought us to where we are today.

Serving our six Mi'kmaq communities has been one of the greatest honours of my life. Throughout my time with MCFSNB, I have witnessed our organization evolve into a place where culture leads, prevention guides our path, and the well-being of children, youth, and families remains at the heart of every decision. I have seen our staff step forward with compassion and determination, supporting families through difficult moments and celebrating their successes. I have seen our programs deepen their cultural foundations, expand their services, and create new opportunities for learning, healing, and connection.

This past year reflects the very best of who we are as an organization. Our Early Childhood Development Centres continue to build strong cultural identities in our youngest learners. Our youth programs offer safe, joyful spaces grounded in community values. Our Child in Care and Resource teams work tirelessly to ensure children remain surrounded by love, culture, and belonging. And across every community, our Cultural Coordinators help guide our work with teachings that honour our ancestors and build a stronger future for our children.



As I prepare to step aside, I am comforted and proud knowing that the next phase of MCFS' journey will be led by a strong and capable successor. Lucille Stewart has already begun shadowing in her new role, and it has been a privilege to support her transition. She carries with her a deep respect for our communities, a strong commitment to cultural values, and a vision that will serve our organization well. I know she will lead with heart, integrity, and strength.

To our communities, Elders, leadership, staff, families, and especially to the children and youth we serve—you have all shaped my time here in meaningful ways. Wela'lioq for your trust, your guidance, and your dedication to the well-being of Mi'kmaq families. I will carry these relationships and memories with me always.

As this chapter closes for me, I look forward with great hope. Our communities are strong. Our children are thriving. Our organization is ready for its next steps. And the foundation we have built together will continue to grow for generations to come.

Wela'lioq,
Samantha Paul
Chief Executive Officer



Year at a Glance

This year at MCFSNB was shaped by collaboration, cultural growth, and community connection. Across all six communities, Early Childhood Centres strengthened Mi'kmaq language and land-based learning, while after-school and youth programs delivered a full range of creative, recreational, and cultural activities that supported confidence, belonging, and wellness. Prevention and Child Protection teams deepened their relationships with families, focusing on strengths-based support and early intervention, and the Child in Care program continued its commitment to kinship, cultural continuity, and emotional well-being.

Behind the scenes, MCFSNB reinforced its foundation through policy development, national engagement, and ongoing cultural leadership. The Policy Team contributed to long-term reform at the national level, Cultural Coordinators provided teachings and ceremonies that shaped culturally safe programming, and administrative and communications teams worked to keep programs running smoothly and communities informed. Together, these initiatives reflect a year grounded in culture, guided by community, and strengthened by the dedication of staff across every program.



Where are we located?

Oinpegitjoig/Pabineau:

MCFS Office
1276 Pabineau Falls Rd, Pabineau
First Nation, NB, E2A 7M3
Tel: (506) 350-1055

Early Development Program
1280 Pabineau Falls Rd, Pabineau
First Nation, NB, E2A 7M3
Tel: (506) 547-1207

Natoaganeg/Eel Ground:

MCFS Office
50-A Church Rd, Eel Ground
First Nation, NB, E1V 4E6
Tel: (506) 773-1137

Early Development Program
55 Church Road, Eel Ground
First Nation, NB, E1V 4E6
Tel: (506) 627-4612

Metepenagiag/Red Bank:

MCFS Office
59 Indian Gardens Road, Red
Bank First Nation, NB, E9E 1A7
Tel: (506) 627-8902

Early Development Program
1924 Micmac Road, Red Bank
First Nation, NB, E9E 1B3
Tel: (506) 836-6165

L'nui Menikuk/Indian Island:

MCFS Office
54 Mi'kmaq Lane, Indian Island
First Nation, NB, E4W 0H9
Tel: (506) 523-8899

Early Development Program
62 Mi'kmaq Lane, Indian Island
First Nation, NB, E4W 0H9
Tel: (506) 523-1931

Tjipogtotjg/Buctouche:

MCFS Office
123 Reserve Road, Buctouche
First Nation, NB, E4S 4G3
Tel: (506) 743-2524

Early Development Program
123 Reserve Road, Buctouche
First Nation, NB, E4S 4G3
Tel: (506) 743-2524

Amlamgog/Fort Folly:

MCFS Office
38-B Bernard Trail, Dorchester,
NB, E4K 3V5
Tel: (506) 379-2250

Early Development Program
38-D Bernard Trail, Dorchester,
NB, E4K 3V5
Tel: (506) 379-2449

Community Snapshot – Oinpegitjoig

This year marked meaningful growth and strengthened community connection for Oinpegitjoig Child & Family Services. Families showed a renewed openness to accessing support, allowing the team to deepen its prevention-focused approach and build stronger relationships with community partners. With a belief that prevention is the foundation of healthy families and healthy communities, staff worked collaboratively to ensure that families felt supported before challenges escalated.



The addition of new team members enhanced service capacity across intake, investigations, and family support, while a Social Services practicum student contributed fresh energy and hands-on assistance. Through warm daily interactions and a welcoming office environment, families continued to feel safe, respected, and encouraged to reach out.



The Oinpegitjoig team remained dedicated to promoting well-being, cultural connection, and family strength through their day-to-day work. Administrative support played a key role in maintaining smooth operations and creating a positive first point of contact for families entering the building. Staff consistently rallied together to support families facing challenges, working from a strengths-based approach and centering the voices of caregivers and extended family networks.



The year's progress reflects the resilience of the community and the commitment of staff who show up with compassion, humility, and determination. As our team in Oinpegitjoig looks ahead, the foundation built this year continues to support a future where children grow surrounded by care, safety, and cultural belonging.



Community Snapshot – Natoaganeg

The Natoaganeg Early Childhood Development Centre continued its long tradition of providing culturally grounded, play-based learning for young children. This year, the centre focused on strengthening early literacy, numeracy, fine motor skills, and social-emotional development through hands-on activities rooted in Mi'kmaq values and the First Nations Atlantic curriculum. Children explored nature, engaged in sensory learning, participated in baking and art projects, practiced communication through speech-support activities, and experienced imaginative play that helped them learn cooperation, problem-solving, and creativity. Educators ensured that classrooms aligned with AQI standards, creating intentional, high-quality learning spaces that supported readiness for school and readiness for life.



Outdoor and land-based learning remained a vital part of the program, with children participating in nature walks, gardening projects, and seasonal activities that fostered connection to land and community. Moments captured throughout the year show children proudly discovering treasures on their walks, working together in their play spaces, and celebrating milestones with friends and families. Through steady support, warm relationships, and culturally meaningful lessons, the Natoaganeg ECDC continued to nurture confidence, identity, and early development in a safe, joyful, and inclusive environment.



Community Snapshot – Metepenagiag

The Metepenagiag Early Childhood Development Centre continued to shine this year through its deep commitment to Mi'kmaq language revitalization, cultural learning, and high-quality early childhood programming. Educators worked diligently to create a language-rich environment, developing homemade Mi'kmaq books, wall posters, talking posters, and interactive learning tools that helped children hear, repeat, and engage with language every day. The centre produced more than 31 new books this year, gradually introducing sentence-based texts to support early literacy. Families were also encouraged to speak Mi'kmaq during drop-off and pick-up, supported by large posters displaying greetings, manners, and common phrases. These efforts provided children with a strong cultural foundation while nurturing curiosity, independence, and joyful learning.





This year also featured meaningful cultural and community-based experiences that strengthened identity, connection, and early development. Children participated in teachings led by Metepenagiag's Cultural Coordinator, learning about smudging, land-based knowledge, and giving thanks to the sipu. They enjoyed hands-on learning through the Moe the Mouse program, gardening, recreational outings, and the annual preschool lemonade stand fundraiser. Monthly professional development days ensured classrooms met AQI standards and documentation remained strong, while NBCC students completed placements and practicums that supported learning and future workforce development. Together, these experiences created a nurturing, culturally grounded environment where young children thrived socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.



Community Snapshot – Lnu Menikuk

The Indian Island Early Learning Centre and After-School Program offered children a year filled with outdoor exploration, creative learning, and joyful play. Children enjoyed summer adventures such as beach outings, splash pad visits, picnics, and nature walks, where they collected natural treasures and learned about the world around them. Seasonal activities—like Easter sensory play, back-to-school movie day, and group play sessions—helped build confidence, social skills, and emotional development in warm, welcoming environments. Whether indoors or outdoors, children were consistently engaged in hands-on learning that nurtured curiosity, cooperation, and cultural connection.





Year-round programming ensured children remained active and supported through all seasons. Winter sliding, summer water play, shared meals, and time spent gardening gave children opportunities to develop physical skills, responsibility, and a deeper appreciation for the land. Educators fostered safe, inclusive spaces where friendships grew and children felt seen, valued, and supported.



With a balance of structured activities and free exploration, the Indian Island Early Learning and After-School Programs continue to provide meaningful experiences that strengthen well-being, community pride, and early learning foundations.

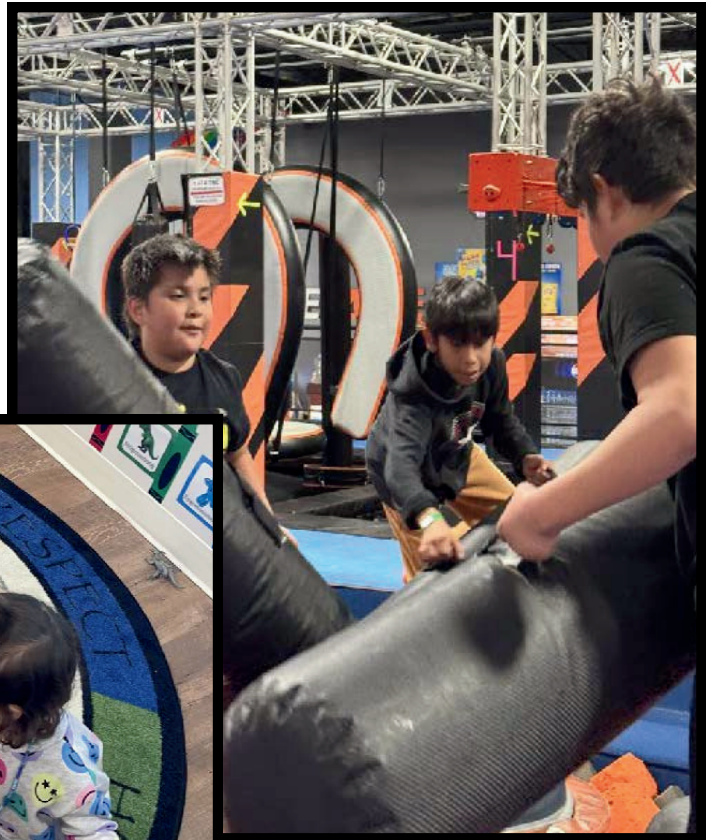


Community Snapshot – Tjipogtotjg

The Buctouche Early Learning Program provided children with a rich blend of creativity, cultural learning, and hands-on exploration throughout the year. Children engaged in a wide variety of activities—from dinosaur comparison lessons to literacy cloud crafts, sensory ghost painting, and caterpillar art—that supported early development, fine motor skills, and imaginative expression. Moments such as writing letters to the North Pole and participating in smudging and prayer offered opportunities for emotional grounding, cultural learning, and daily connection to Mi'kmaq values. These activities created a nurturing environment where children learned through play, curiosity, and cultural teachings.



The After-School Program continued to provide a vibrant space for older children to connect, play, and grow. Outings to the trampoline park, foam-sword “Iron Man” battles, Easter celebrations, Cultural Wellness Day, glow-in-the-dark dance parties, and winter sliding adventures kept children active and engaged. Through these experiences, children built friendships, developed confidence, and enjoyed safe, supportive spaces rooted in community. Together, these programs nurtured physical wellness, cultural identity, emotional resilience, and joyful memories for children and families in Tjipogtotjg.



Community Snapshot – Fort Folly

The Fort Folly Early Learning and After-School Programs offered children an exciting and meaningful year filled with hands-on experiences, cultural learning, and community connection. Children participated in engaging activities such as Zoo to You, where they interacted with animals up close, and Ducks Unlimited sessions that taught them about wetlands, conservation, and the importance of caring for the land. Seasonal highlights—such as March Break activities, Halloween Family Night, and a field trip to Fort Beauséjour—provided opportunities for exploration, fun, and learning beyond the classroom. These experiences strengthened curiosity, environmental awareness, and a sense of belonging within the community.





Summer programming was equally vibrant, offering a balance of outdoor play, cultural enrichment, and social connection. Children enjoyed a relaxing Spa Day, learned about marine life during a visit to the Marine Eco Center in Shediac, and stayed active with a Bowlarama trip and a community Bike Rodeo focused on safety and coordination. Winter sliding and seasonal activities ensured the fun continued year-round. Through these diverse experiences, Fort Folly children developed confidence, friendships, physical skills, and emotional well-being—all within a safe, supportive, and culturally grounded program that reflects the values of Amlamgog.



Program Snapshot – Mi'kmaq Cultural Programming

The Mi'kmaq Cultural Programming team continued to play a vital role this year in ensuring that culture, language, and traditional teachings remained at the heart of all MCFSNB services. Cultural Coordinators worked across all six communities, bringing teachings into Early Childhood Centres, after-school programs, youth sessions, community events, and staff trainings. Through smudging, language learning, land-based activities, sharing circles, and seasonal teachings, the team helped children, youth, families, and staff deepen their cultural grounding and strengthen their sense of identity and belonging.



Beyond facilitating cultural activities, the team supported the organization through internal learning opportunities that strengthened cultural safety and understanding for staff at every level. Their work ensured that programs across MCFSNB were guided by Mi'kmaq values and teachings, fostering a service environment rooted in respect, connection, and community strength. The Cultural Programming team continues to be a pillar of MCFSNB, helping build a future where Mi'kmaq culture, language, and identity are central to the well-being of our children and families.



Child & Youth Programs

The Child & Youth Programs across our six Mi'kmaq communities continued to offer safe, supportive spaces where children and youth could learn, play, and grow throughout the year. After-school programs for ages 5–12 provided daily opportunities for creativity, outdoor play, crafts, cultural teachings, and social connection, while the youth programs for ages 12–18 focused on life skills, leadership, wellness, and hands-on activities. The year was filled with memorable outings—water parks, trampoline parks, museums, farms, cultural events—and special celebrations that promoted joy, confidence, and belonging.



A key strength of the program remains the dedication and heart of the Child & Youth Care Workers who show up every day to meet children where they are, offering guidance, encouragement, and understanding. Their connection to community helps build trusting relationships with families and ensures each program reflects the needs and strengths of the children they serve. Family Nights became a meaningful addition this year, giving families a chance to share meals, participate in activities together, and strengthen relationships. Through consistent care, cultural grounding, and enriched programming, the Child & Youth Programs continue to support the holistic well-being of young people in all six communities.



Child in Care & Resource Programs

The Child in Care Program continued its dedicated work this year to ensure that Mi'kmaq children in permanent care remain safe, supported, and connected to culture, family, and community. The team focused on maintaining meaningful relationships with each child, supporting their emotional, educational, and cultural needs through regular visits, coordination of services, and individualized planning. Most children remained placed with kinship caregivers or Indigenous foster families, reflecting the program's ongoing commitment to keeping children rooted in their identity and surrounded by familiar supports whenever possible.

This year also emphasized expanding caregiver supports and strengthening culturally grounded placements. Staff worked closely with kinship and foster families to ensure they have the guidance and resources needed to provide stable, loving homes. The program's holistic approach recognizes the unique strengths and challenges of each family and ensures that every child receives care that honours Mi'kmaq teachings and community-based values. Through collaboration, compassion, and consistency, the Child in Care Program continues to build strong foundations for Mi'kmaq children to thrive today and into the future.



Family Support

Family Support services continued to focus on strengthening families through prevention, connection, and practical assistance. Family Support Workers worked closely with parents and caregivers to address challenges early, helping families navigate difficult moments while building on their existing strengths. Supports were tailored to each family's needs and often delivered in collaboration with other community programs, reinforcing a wrap-around approach rooted in trust and relationship-building.



Throughout the year, Family Support played a key role in helping families stay together and connected. By offering guidance, advocacy, and consistent presence, workers supported families in creating safe, stable home environments for children. This prevention-focused work reflects MCFSNB's commitment to supporting families before concerns escalate and ensuring that help is accessible, respectful, and grounded in community values.



Child Protection

Child Protection services remained focused on ensuring the safety and well-being of children while working respectfully with families and extended family networks. Child Protection Workers responded to intakes and investigations with care and professionalism, balancing safety responsibilities with a strengths-based approach that recognizes the importance of family, culture, and community. Wherever possible, efforts were made to engage families early and identify supports that could reduce the need for more intrusive interventions.

Collaboration remained central to this work. Child Protection teams worked alongside Prevention, Family Support, Cultural Coordinators, and community partners to ensure decisions were informed, coordinated, and culturally grounded. By prioritizing communication, transparency, and relationship-building, Child Protection services continued to support children's safety while striving to keep families connected and supported through challenging circumstances.



Policy and Law-making Team

The Policy and Law-Making Team at Mi'gmaq Child & Family Services of New Brunswick provides essential leadership in advancing Mi'kmaq rights, governance, and strategic direction across the organization. This year, the team continued developing policies and law-making initiatives grounded in Mi'kmaq values and community priorities. Their work ensures that programs across MCFSNB operate within strong, culturally informed frameworks that support prevention, family well-being, and the long-term vision of Mi'kmaq jurisdiction over child and family services.



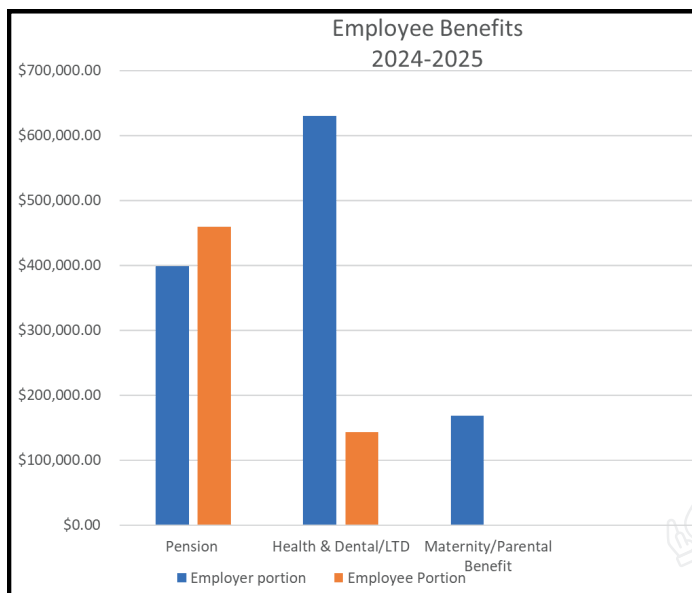
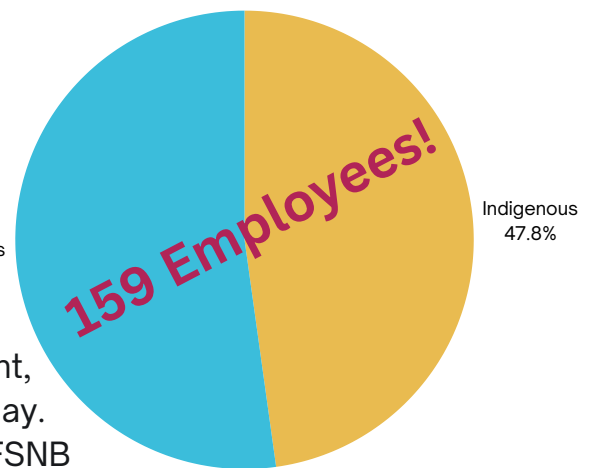
A major focus this year has been the team's continued involvement with the National Children's Chiefs Commission (NCCC), contributing to the Long-Term Reform of Child and Family Services across Canada. Through national dialogue and collaboration, the team helped shape reforms related to governance, funding, regional distinctions, and accountability, ensuring Mi'kmaq perspectives are reflected in systems that impact children and families nationwide. At the local level, the team continues to support organizational planning, policy renewal, and engagement with community leadership—work that strengthens MCFSNB's foundation and prepares the organization for future self-determined service delivery.



Human Resources

This year, MCFSNB continued to prioritize connection, care, and staff well-being. Team building events remained an important tradition, with generously donated items shared among our member communities. This act of giving reflects the values of sharing and community that guide our work and strengthen relationships across our organization and the communities we serve.

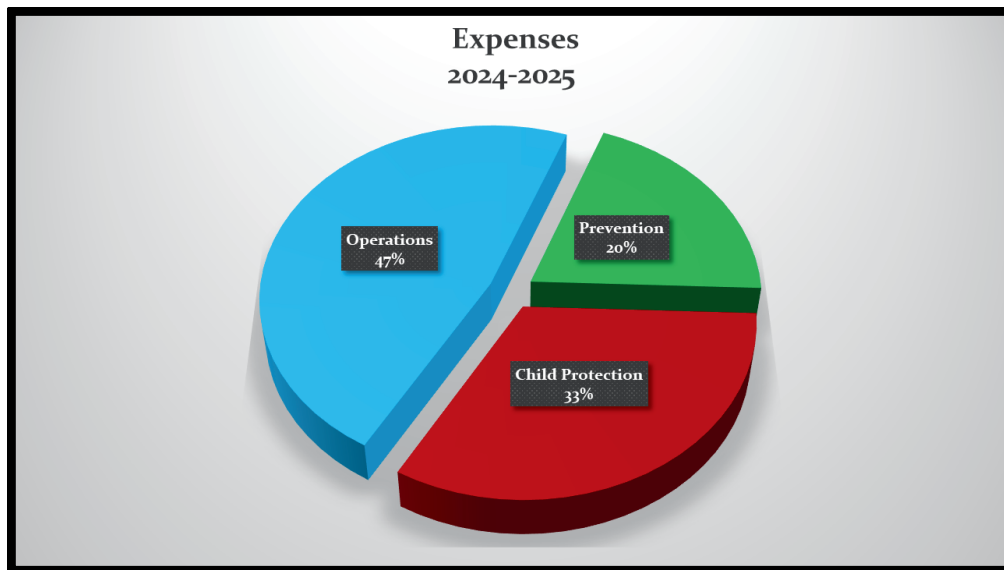
The Human Resources team remained active in recruitment efforts, attending career fairs across New Brunswick to attract new staff and build capacity within MCFSNB. At the same time, we continued to recognize and support our existing workforce through retention initiatives that acknowledge the dedication, commitment, and care staff bring to their roles every day. Together, these efforts help ensure MCFSNB remains a supportive workplace grounded in respect, stability, and community connection.



MCFS offers 80/20 health and dental benefits and up to 95% top up for maternity leave. We are very proud to offer the EAP through SAGE to all our employees and their immediate family members

Finance and Payroll

In 2024–2025, MCFSNB continued to prioritize responsible financial management while directing resources toward the people and programs that support children and families. Most expenditures supported staffing and payroll, reflecting the organization’s focus on consistent, community-based service delivery. Employee compensation includes shared pension contributions, employer-supported health and dental benefits, and maternity and parental leave top-ups that help promote staff stability and well-being. Overall, MCFSNB’s financial approach remains focused on sustainability, accountability, and ensuring resources are used where they have the greatest impact across all six communities.



Contact Us

Visit us on!



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