








Ontario Looking After Children 2022 Report

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introduction

In July 2020, Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) released *Ontario's Quality Standards Framework: A Resource Guide to Improve Quality of Care for Children and Young Persons in Licensed Residential Settings*, a document that describes best practices for providing high-quality care in view of positive futures for young people. This framework is a compliment to the guiding principals of the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) model, namely that good parenting leads to good outcomes. When substitute parenting (caregiving) is of high quality, young people are supported to develop and achieve goals, maintain connections with their communities and build healthy relationships, develop a strong sense of knowledge and pride in their unique identities, and foster resilience despite adversities they have experienced. Both the *Quality Standards Framework* and OnLAC seek to provide those caring for children and young people with a model for quality caregiving, and as such, they align well.

The selected information presented in this report is the product of the OnLAC project's 22nd year of provincial data collection and aggregation via the Assessment and Action Record (AAR). The University of Ottawa OnLAC team has endeavoured to present information, measures, and variables that, when used in conjunction with contextual knowledge and other information sources, can help Ontario children's aid societies (Societies) to evaluate the quality of care provided to young people in care in Ontario in line with Ontario's Quality Standards Framework. This report is intended for use in three main areas:

1. Regular outcome monitoring, by comparing young people's developmental progress to intended goals
2. Evaluating and promoting continuous quality improvement and relevance of services
3. Providing policy-makers with accurate, up-to-date knowledge of system wide outcomes, fulfilling an accountability function

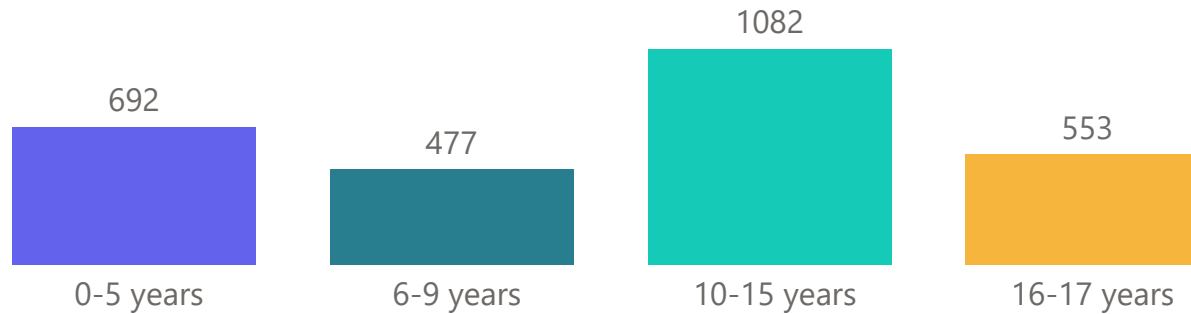
The basic findings presented in this report must be reviewed and interpreted carefully by readers. Our attempt to confer this information as simply as possible has meant that we have had to be selective in what items and measures are presented and how. Societies are encouraged to undertake their own analysis and explore stratifications that are meaningful to local contexts, goals, and knowledge needs. If users have questions or comments about the findings described, or need assistance in interpreting their Society's own data, please contact Meagan Miller, OnLAC Research Associate, at mmiller@uottawa.ca. There is also a section of selected "Further Reading" at the end of this report.

Since 2000, the OnLAC project has been a partnership between the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services (CRECS) at the University of Ottawa and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. We gratefully acknowledge the funding and support of OACAS and MCCSS. We also wish to thank the numerous child welfare workers, quality assurance staff, supervisors, managers, admin and executive personnel, caregivers, and especially, the young people in care who have contributed so much to the OnLAC project since the beginning.

background information

The background section of this report provides basic socio-demographic information about the young people in care in Ontario who completed and submitted a 2022 Assessment and Action Record to the provincial OnLAC project.

Total number of 2022 AARs submitted to the provincial OnLAC project by age group

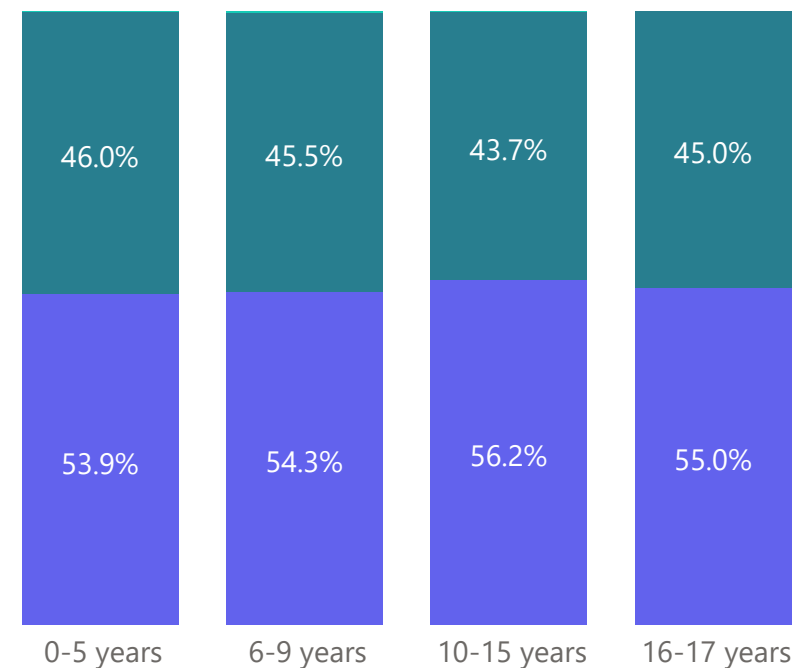


Mean and median age

	Mean	Median
0-5 years	2.6	2.0
6-9 years	7.5	8.0
10-15 years	12.9	13.0
16-17 years	16.5	16.0
Total	10.1	11.0

Biological sex

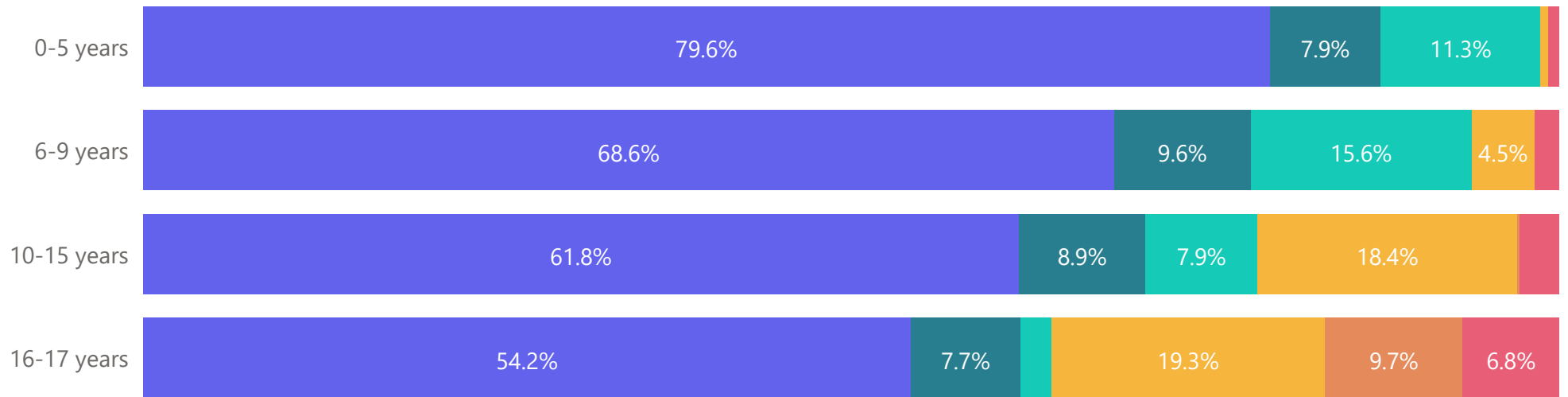
● Male ● Female ● Intersex



background information

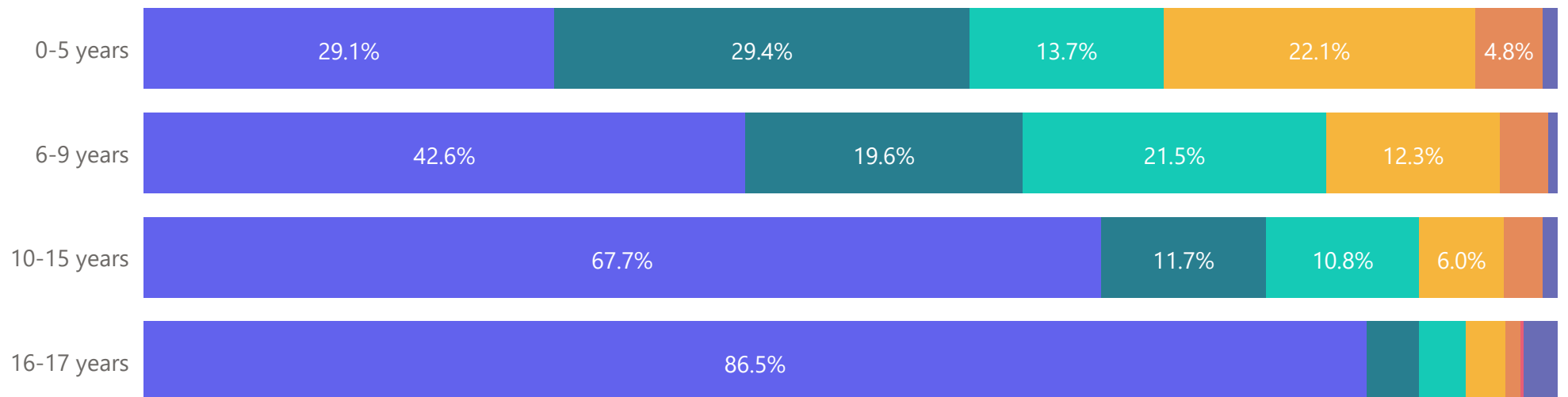
Placement type

● Foster home ● Kinship care ● Customary Care ● Group home ● Independent living ● Other placement type



Legal Status

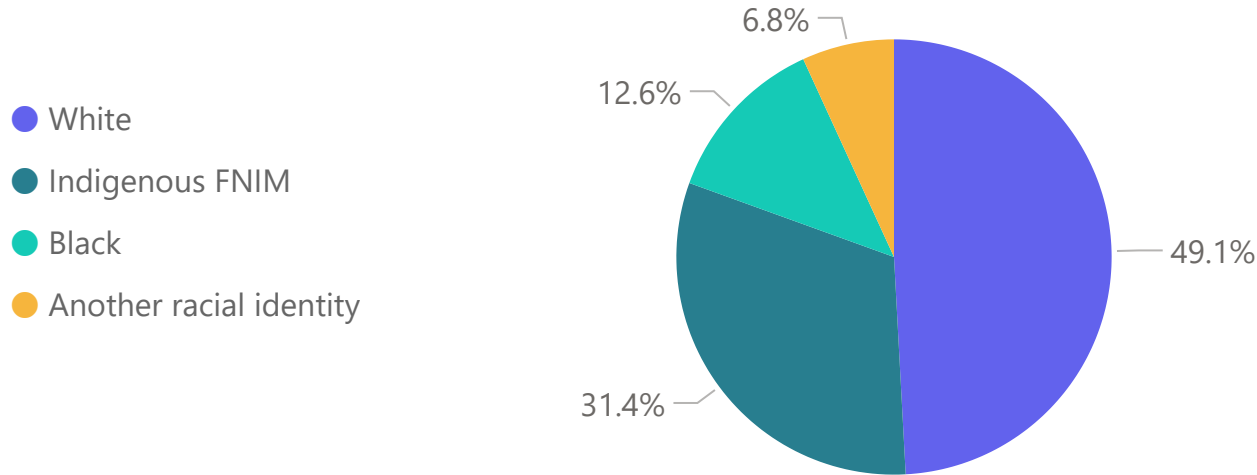
● Extended Society Care ● Interim Society Care ● Customary Care ● Interim care and custody ● Temporary care agreement ● VYSA ● Other legal status



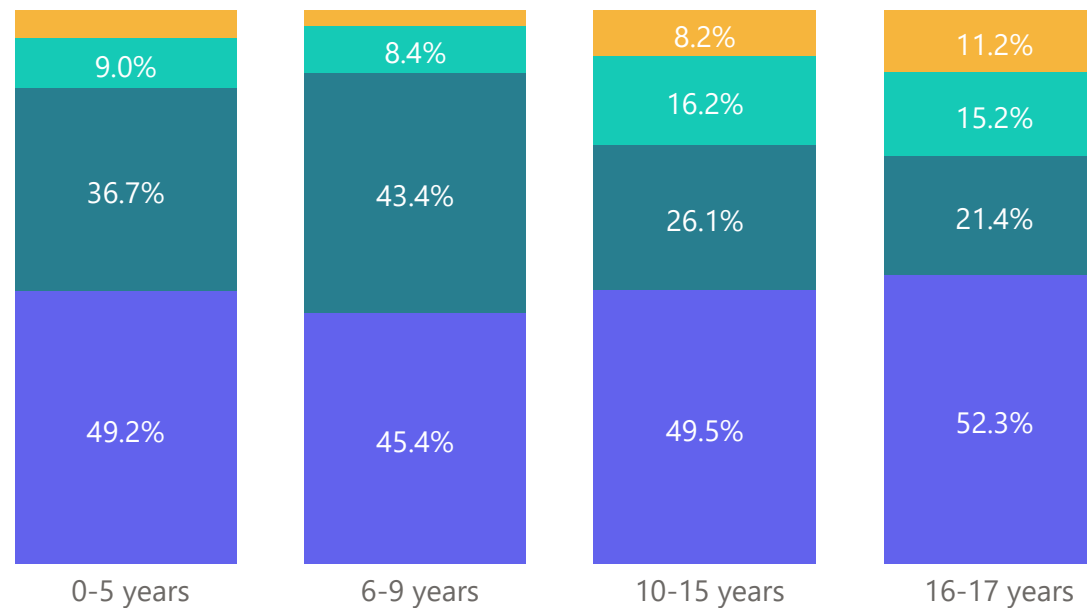
background information

Racial identity

This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old, and reported by young people 10 to 17 years old as part of the OnLAC Identity dimension.



Racial identity stratified by age group

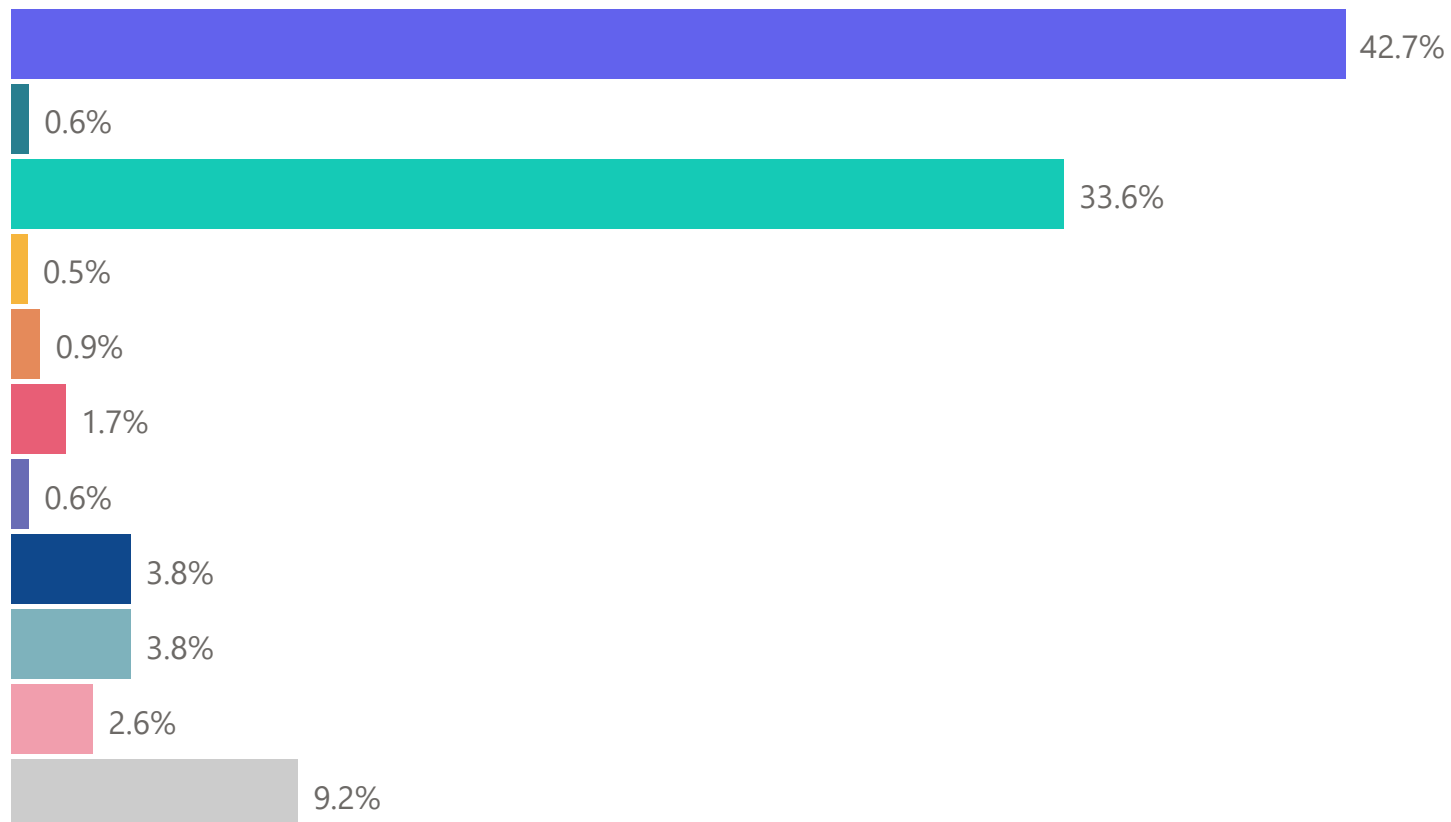


background information

Religious or spiritual affiliations

This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old, and reported by young people 10 to 17 years old as part of the OnLAC Identity dimension. A respondent could select all responses that apply to the young person.

- Hindu
- Sikh
- Muslim
- Traditional Indigenous Spirituality
- Do not know
- No religious or spiritual affiliation
- Buddhist
- Jewish
- Prefer not to answer
- Another religious or spiritual affiliation
- Christian



background information

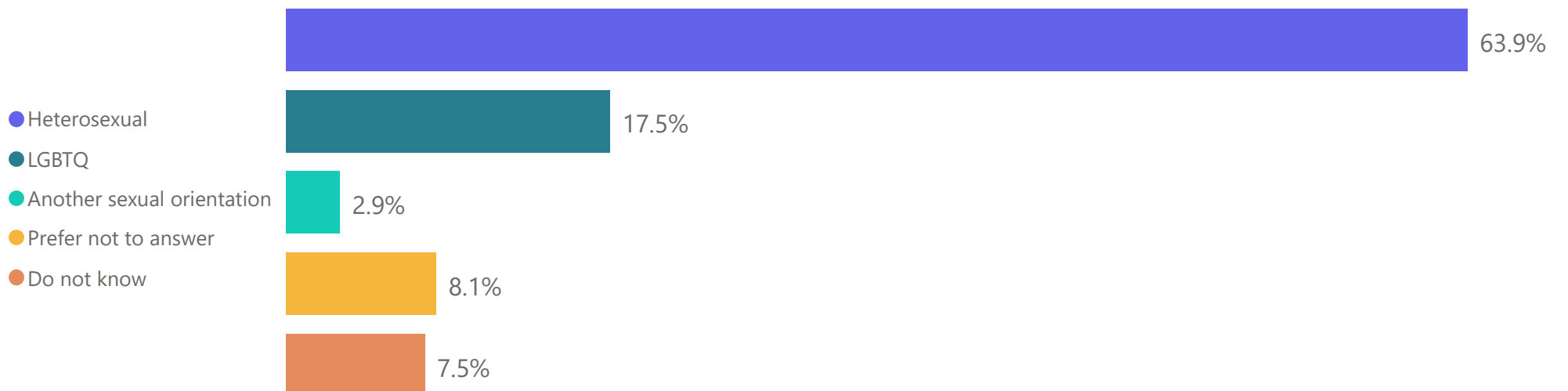
Gender identity

This item is reported by young people 13 to 17 years old as part of the OnLAC Identity dimension. A young person could select all responses that apply to them.



Sexual orientation

This item is reported by young people 13 to 17 years old as part of the OnLAC Identity dimension. A young person could select all responses that apply to them.



informed placement decisions

QUALITY STANDARD 1: INFORMED PLACEMENT DECISIONS Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons are placed in licensed residential settings based on an assessment of their needs and aligned to the placement's demonstrated capacity to meet those needs.

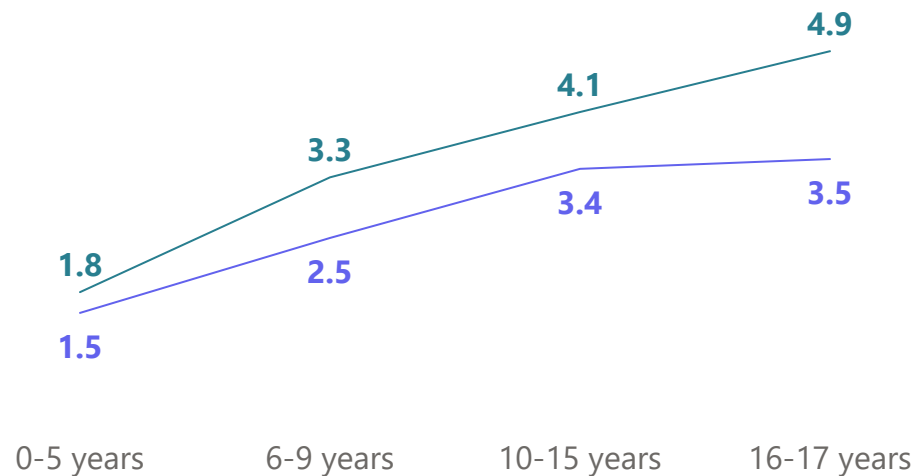
Percentage of young people in family-based placements

Here, "family-based placements" include foster homes, kinship, customary care, and adoption probation.

84.0%

Average number of caregivers since birth and average number of years in current placement

● Average number of caregivers since birth ● Average number of years in current placement



informed placement decisions

Language spoken in the placement is the language the young person first learned in childhood

79.6%

The ethnic or cultural background of at least one caregiver in the placement is the same or similar to that of the young person

80.5%

The young person has a close relationship with at least one caregiver

96.3%

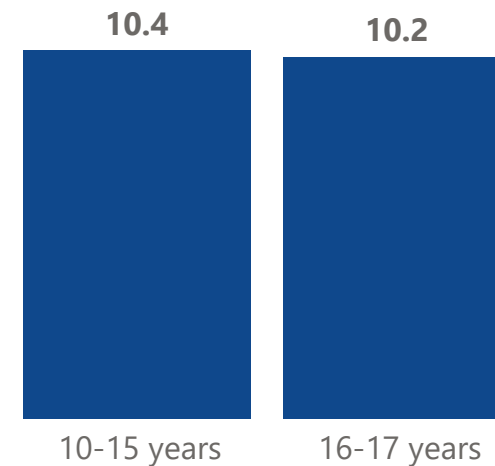
Continuity of care over the past 12 months

This item is reported by child welfare workers in the assessment of objectives in the Family & Social Relationships dimension of the AAR for all age groups. Carnochan and colleagues (2013) found that continuity of care is related to fewer school changes, lower stress, fewer mental health and academic concerns, and fewer attachment and behavioural difficulties.

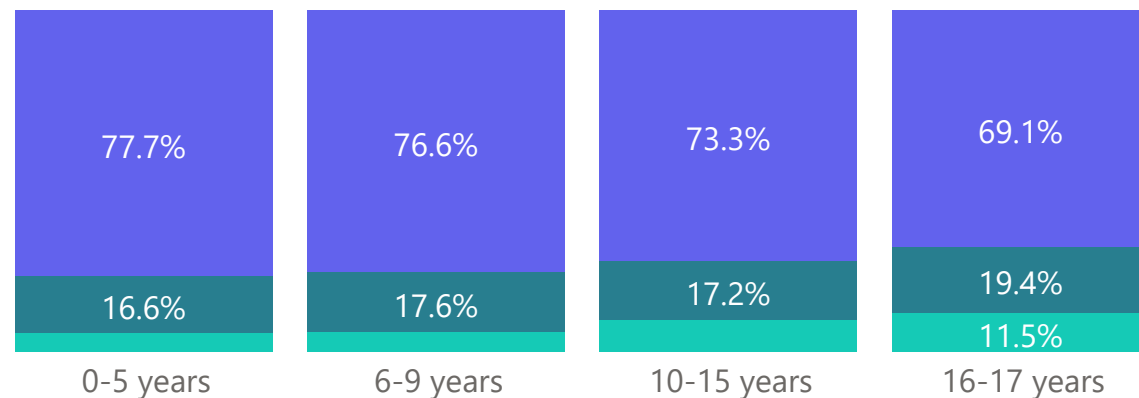
Here, "much" continuity refers to the percentage of young people who have not had a placement change in the last 12 months. "Some" refers to the percentage of young people who have experienced some disruption (i.e., one placement change), and "little or none" refers to those young people who have had serious disruptions in continuity of care (i.e., more than one placement change in the past 12 months).

Placement satisfaction

This six-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 12, is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old. A higher score indicated greater placement satisfaction. Placement satisfaction is correlated with various protective factors, including: the young person's perceived quality of relationship with caregiver, family-based placement, developmental assets, length of time the child welfare worker has worked with the young person, the young person's self-perceived general health, and placement stability.



● Little or none ● Some ● Much

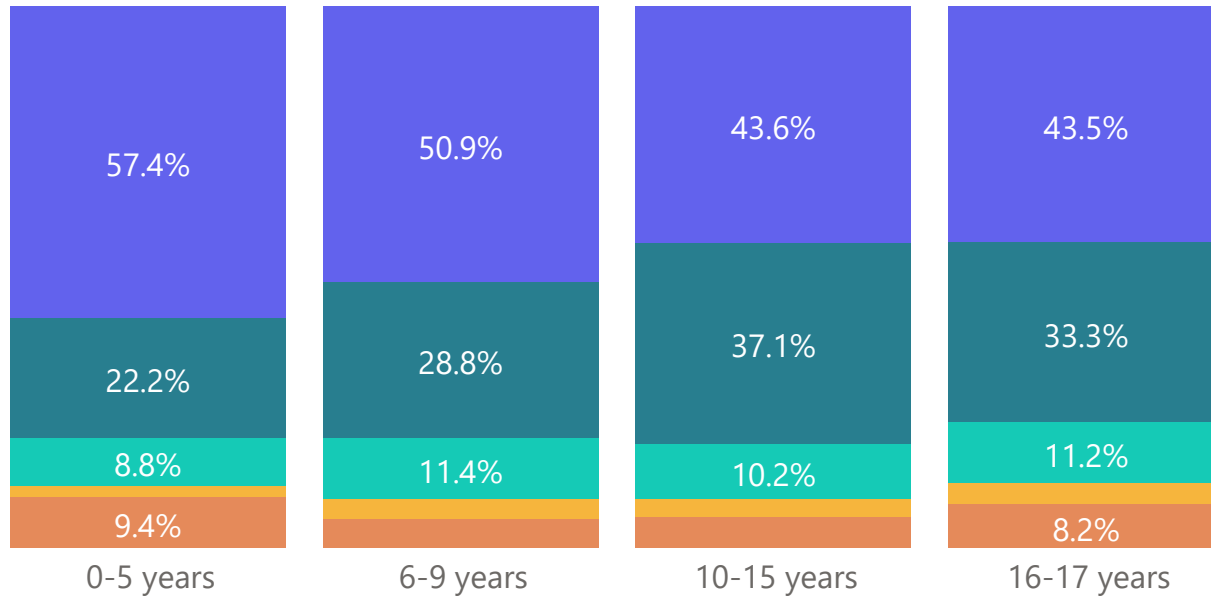


informed placement decisions

Frequency of contact

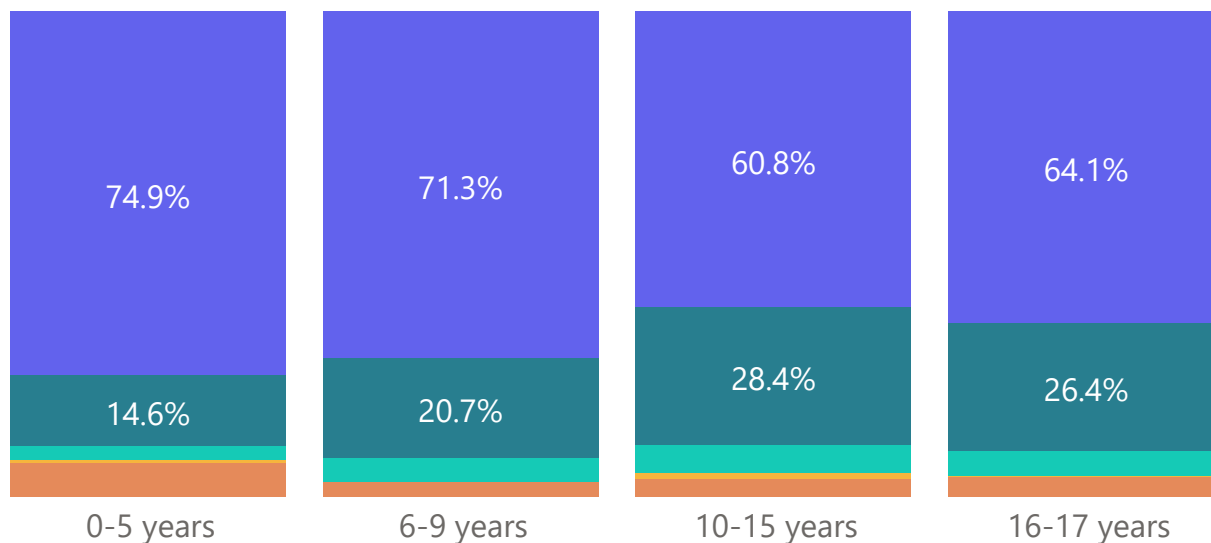
Family of origin (e.g., birth family or adoptive family, if adopted in infancy)

● At least once a week ● At least once a month ● At least once a year ● Less than once a year ● Never



Other significant caring adults

● At least once a week ● At least once a month ● At least once a year ● Less than once a year ● Never



Assistance with contact

These items are reported by the child welfare worker as part of the Background Information section of the AAR. These are subjective assessments about whether the young person is receiving all necessary assistance to remain in contact with important people in their life. When reviewing this information, it is imperative to consider the young people's own assessments. In this report, these items appear on page 18 as part of Quality Standard 4: Children & Young Persons' Voice.

Family of origin

98.5%

Significant caring adults

100.0%

Siblings who are not living in the same placement

93.4%

individualized care

QUALITY STANDARD 2: INDIVIDUALIZED CARE Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons receive individualized care while receiving residential services that helps meet their unique needs, recognize their strengths, encompasses all aspects of the lives and well-being, and promotes their social, cultural, community, and recreational engagement.

Young person has identified hopes for their future that have been documented in the AAR

Young people aged 10 to 15 years.

76.5%

Caregiver reports that they talk to the young person about their future

Young people aged 13 to 17 years.

95.0%

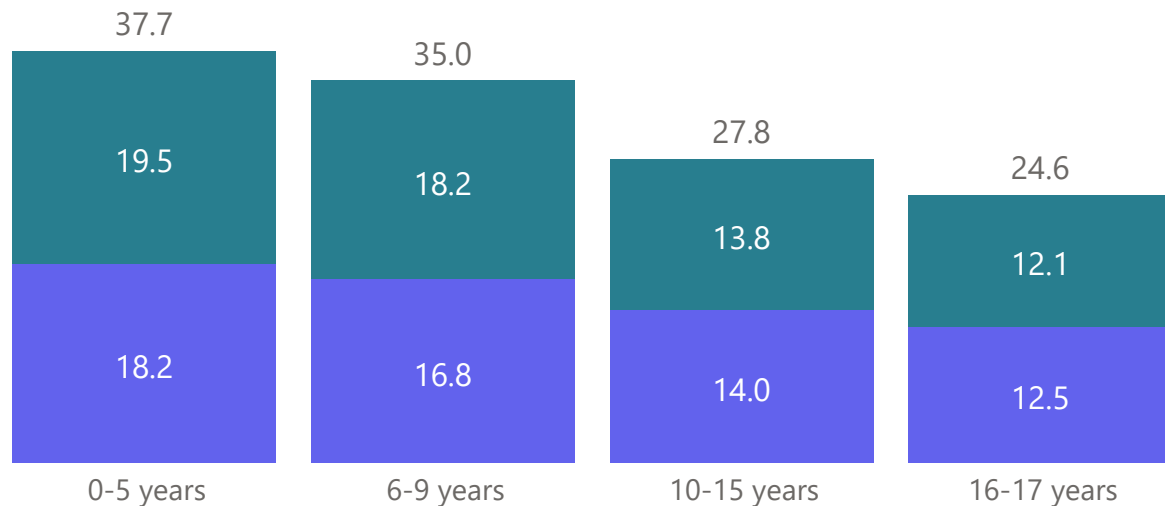
Developmental Assets

The Developmental Asset Profile is a 40-item index developed by the Search Institute and adapted for use in the AAR. The child welfare worker completes the Asset Profile at the end of the AAR conversation, and uses the information and knowledge gained through speaking with the young person, their caregiver(s), and other important adults in the young person's life to identify all of the assets the young person possesses.

External assets are the positive developmental experiences that families, schools, neighbourhoods, community, and other youth- and family-serving organizations provide to young people. These positive experiences are reinforced and supported by the broader efforts of society through government policy, health care providers, schools, civic foundations, and other community institutions. **Internal assets** are the set of positive commitments, skills and values that form a young person's "inner guidance system." Together, the internal and external assets work to promote the young person's development, a process that involves mutually influential and beneficial relationships between young people and their contexts.

Research from the Search Institute and OnLAC is clear: the more developmental assets a youth has, the better their outcomes in a variety of areas, including (but not limited to): higher prosocial behaviour, academic performance, including post-secondary enrollment, self-esteem, placement satisfaction, and positive mental health. More assets are also correlated with and lower behavioural difficulties, soft drug use, and placement and school instability,

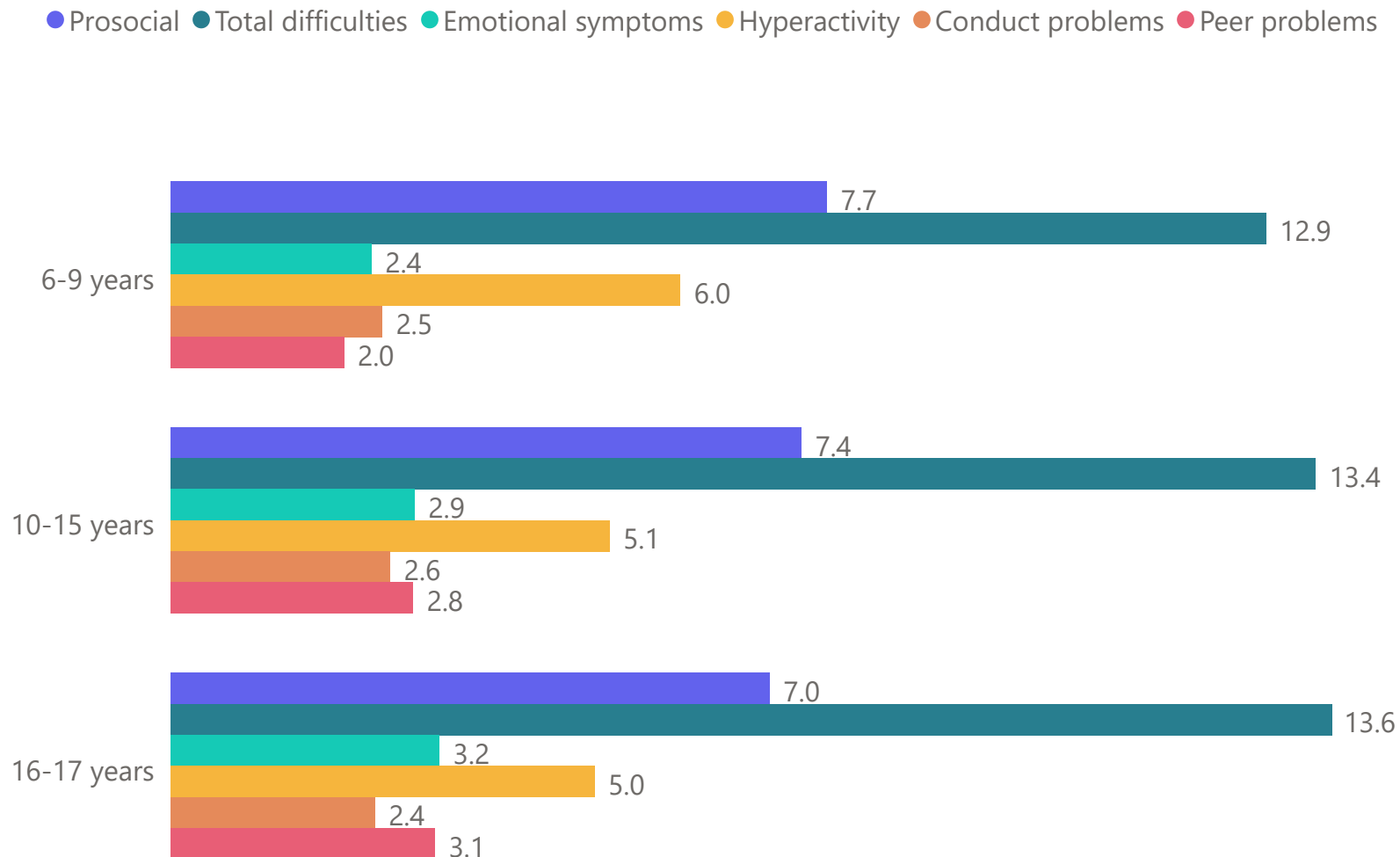
● External developmental assets ● Internal developmental assets



individualized care

Strengths and Difficulties

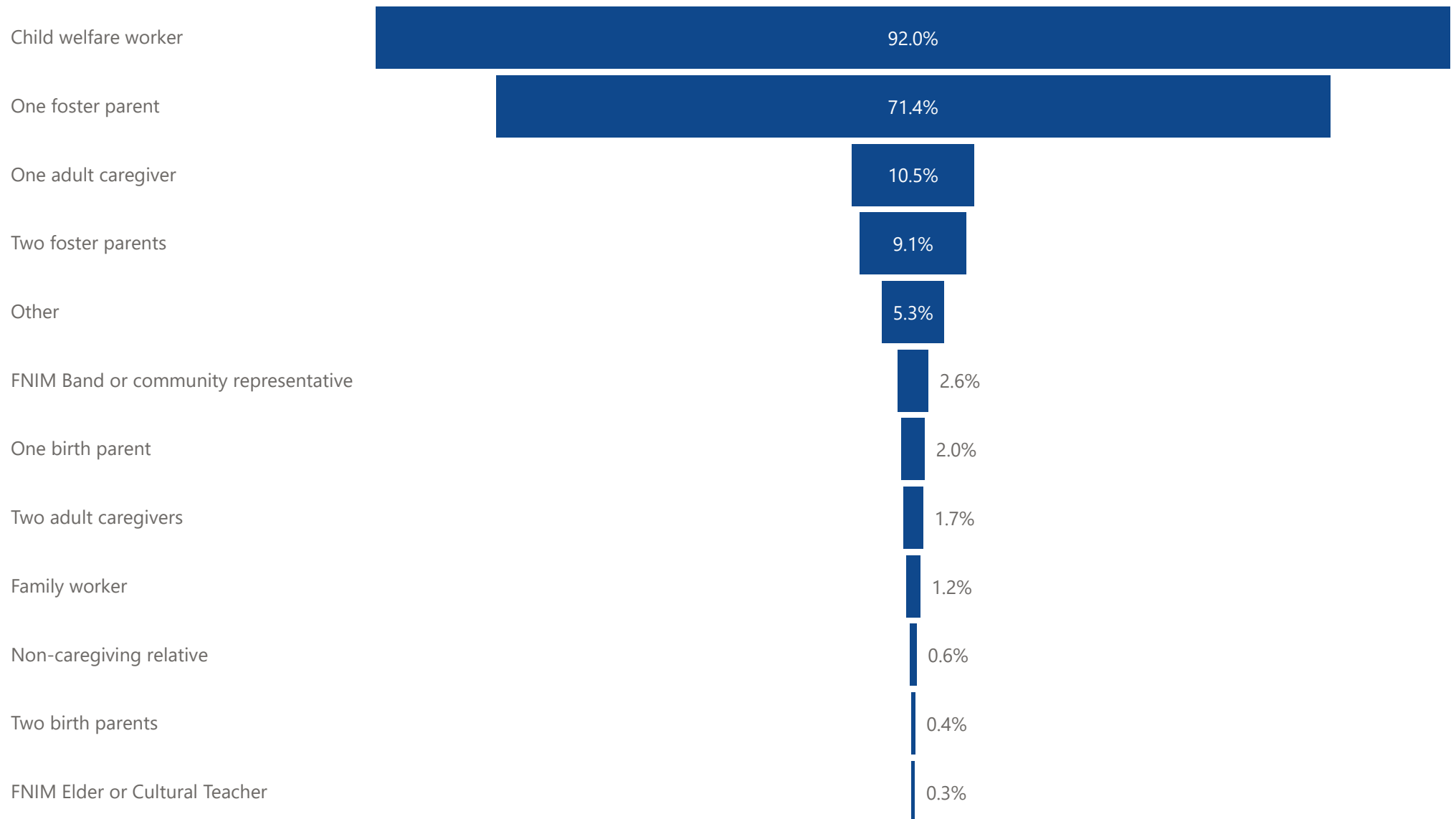
The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a 25-item questionnaire reported by caregivers for young people 5 to 17 years old. The SDQ consists of four 5-item scales that, together, form a 20-item Total Difficulties scale (possible range 0-40), which covers the young person's emotional symptoms, hyperactivity/inattention, conduct problems, and peer problems. The higher Total Difficulties score, the greater difficulties a young person is experiencing. The SDQ also includes a 5-item prosocial behaviour scale (possible range 0-10). The higher the Prosocial score, the greater the prosocial behaviour demonstrated by the young person. Quality Standard 2 emphasizes the need to recognize a youth's strengths and challenges and to develop individualized plans that consider these, and further identify actions and supports that will help the young person to achieve their goals.



individualized care

Caring adults: Who participated in the AAR conversation?

Ontario's Quality Standards Framework emphasizes collaborative participation in planning by the young person's worker, caregiver(s) (including adult allies identified by the young person), teacher(s), health care provider(s), FNIM community representatives, and other adult allies as evidence of high-quality care. This concept of partnership in planning is at the heart of OnLAC and the AAR conversation. The young person's voice is also essential. More information about this can be found on page 16 of Quality Standard 4: Children and Young Person's Voice.

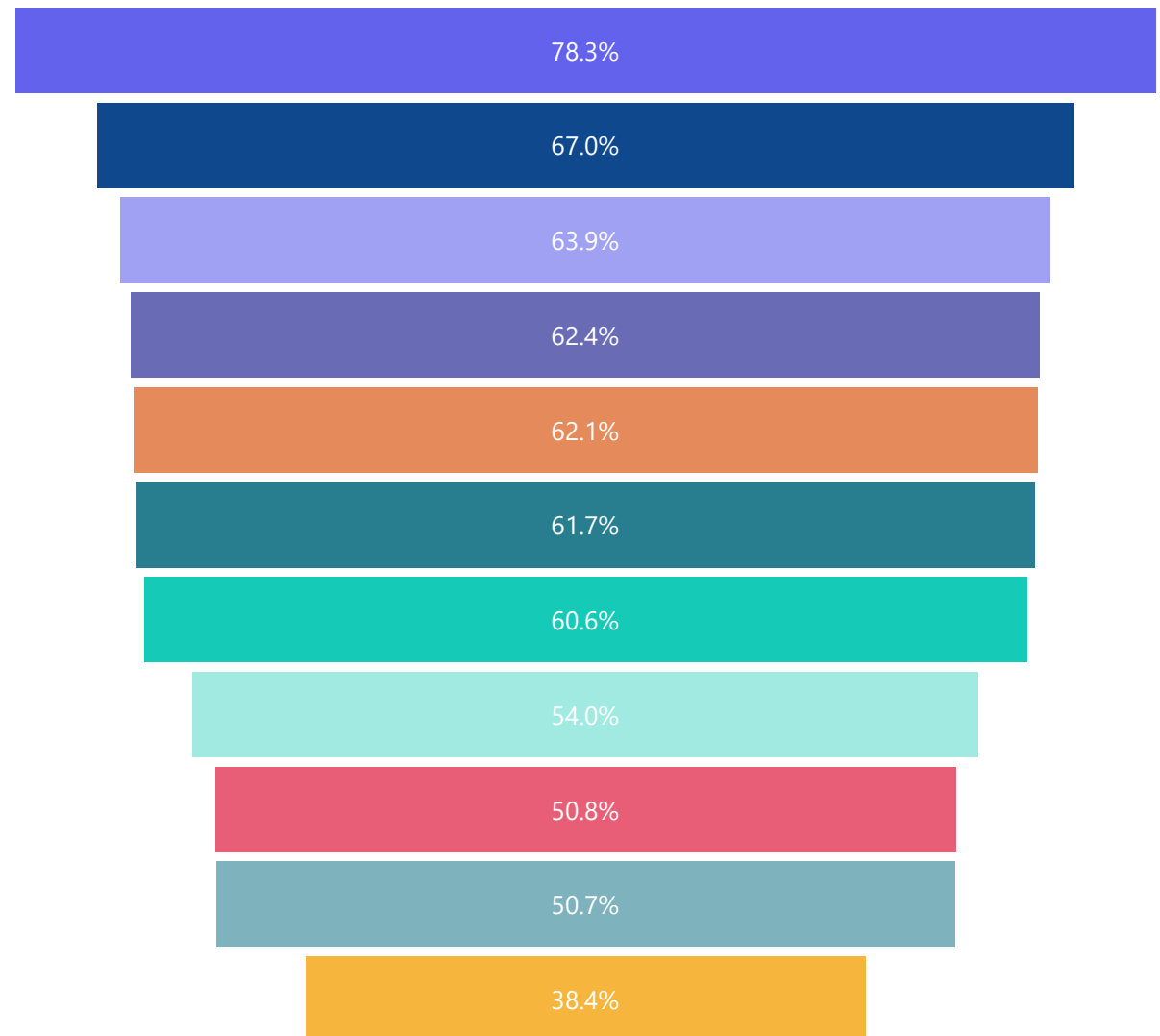


individualized care

Positive life experiences

The percentages below represent the young people, 10-15 years old, who reported having had each of these general positive life experiences in the past 12 months. A single positive life experience can redirect a young person towards positive development. Those caring for young people must pay close attention to these events in order to improve planning and promote positive development. All positive life experiences have the potential for impact, by exposing young people to new opportunities for positive growth, and building a chain of protective thinking (the ability to identify positive experiences, despite adversities experienced). During the AAR conversation, young people are also encouraged to identify experiences that have been the most meaningful to them over the past 12 months.

- I have caregivers who care about me
- I have had a say in things that affect my life
- I have had good contact with members of my family
- I have kept in touch with friends who live elsewhere
- I have made new friends at school or elsewhere
- I have been recognized for an achievement
- Overall, I have had a good experience at school
- I have had a comforting sense of routine in my life
- I have had a strong relationship with a supportive adult other than my caregiver
- I have enjoyed participating in a community activity
- I have gone on a fun trip or to camp



individualized care

Participation in activities in and out of school in the past 12 months

Young people 6 to 17 years old

Played sports or done physical activities

79.3%

Taken part in clubs, groups, or lessons

46.3%

Done a hobby or craft

76.2%

Young people 10 to 17 years old who have identified activities that they would like to take part in that have been documented in the AAR

65.3%

Young people 10 to 15 years old who report having special responsibilities or roles in their activities in or out of school

12.0%

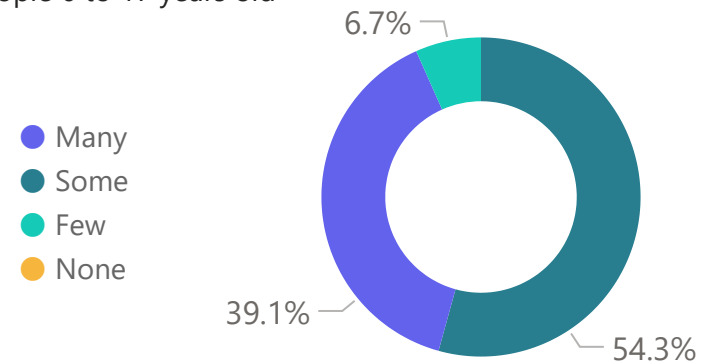
Young people 10 to 15 years old who report that they have all necessary support needed to attend school, activities, and cultural events

90.9%

The Quality Standards Framework emphasizes providing support to young people to participate in social, cultural, recreational, and community activities as evidence of quality care. Young people should be provided with opportunities and assistance to participate in activities according to their preferences.

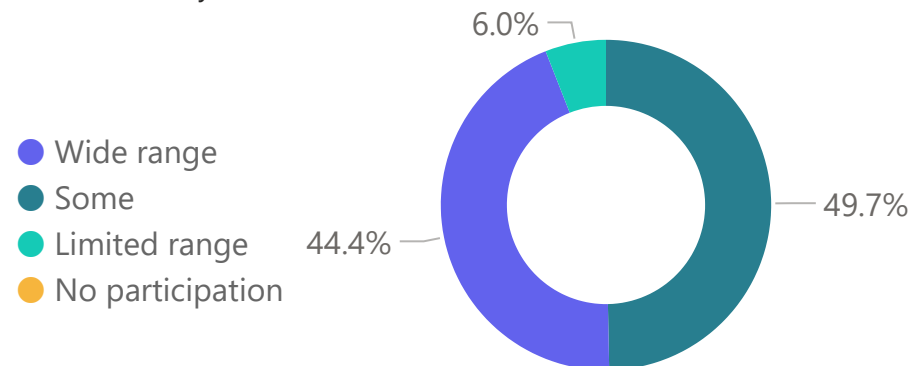
Worker reports that the young person is developing skills and interests

Young people 6 to 17 years old



Worker reports that the child is participating in a wide range of activities both in and out of school

Children 6 to 9 years old



children and young persons' rights and complaints

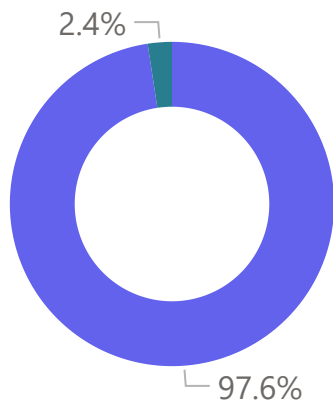
QUALITY STANDARD 3: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS' RIGHTS AND COMPLAINTS Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons are supported and empowered to understand, exercise and benefit from their rights, including raising concerns about their care and having these concerns responded to in a timely manner.

Preventative health measures, including immunizations, are taken

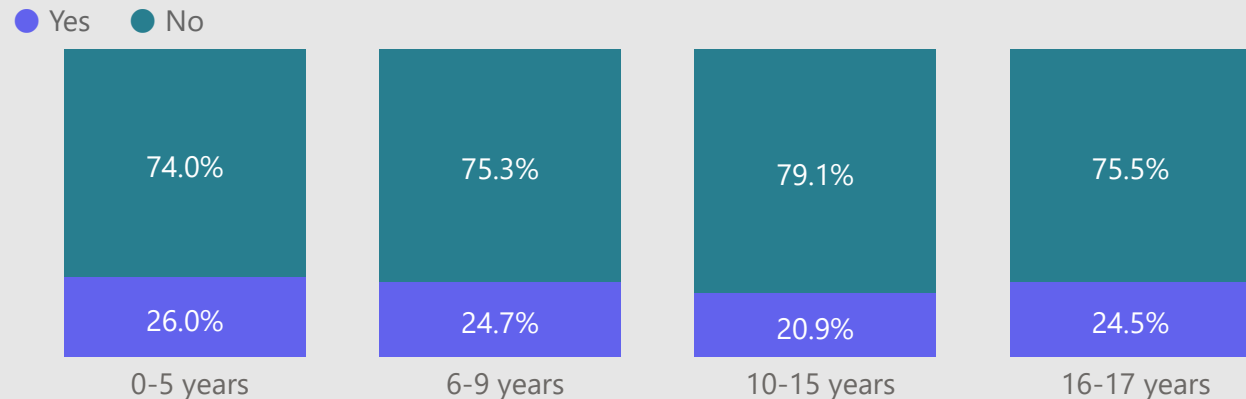
This item is reported by the worker as an objective of the Health dimension

- All
- Some
- None



Sharing the completed AAR - does the worker intend to share a copy of the completed AAR with the caregiver and/or young person 10 to 17 years old?

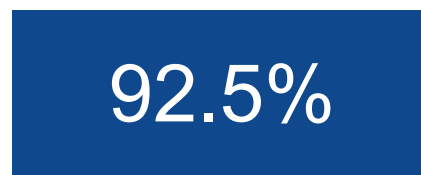
Sharing the completed AAR with the young person and their caregiver is OnLAC best practice. This allows all parties to the AAR conversation to be fully informed and engaged in the planning process and fulfills an ethical obligation to provide feedback after assessment.



If the worker reported that they intend to share a copy of the completed AAR to participants, who will receive a copy?

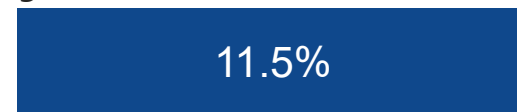


Percentage of young people whose immunizations are up to date

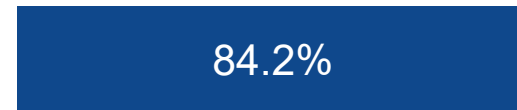


The two items below are reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old and reported by young people 10 to 15 years old.

Percentage of young people 0 to 15 years old who are following a special diet for reasons such as: health, weight-control, religion, culture, and/or other values/beliefs



Percentage of young people 0 to 15 years old who are receiving all necessary assistance to maintain a healthy diet, special or not

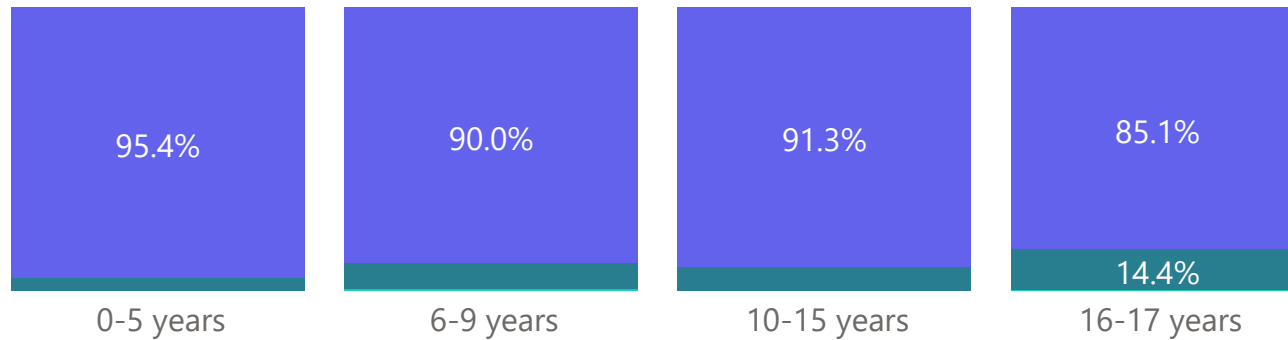


children and young persons' rights and complaints

Visits with health practitioners

● Less than a year ● More than a year ● Never

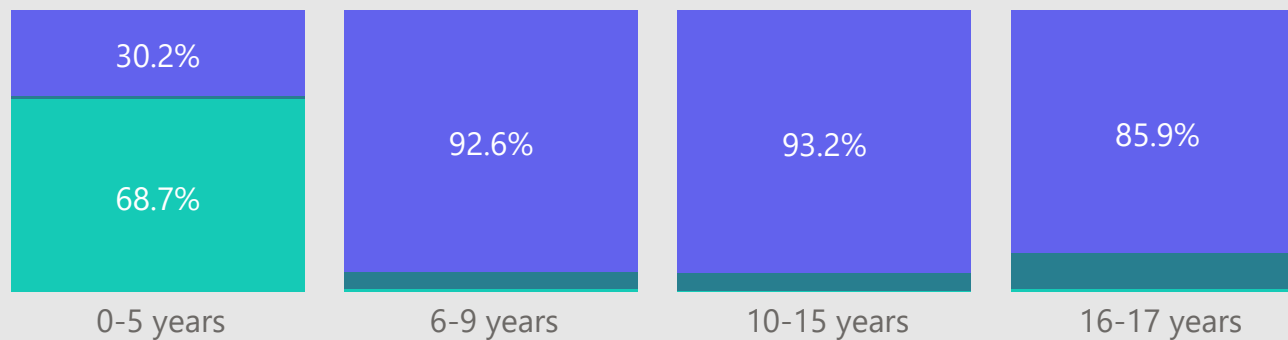
Young person's last medical exam



Were all recommendations followed?

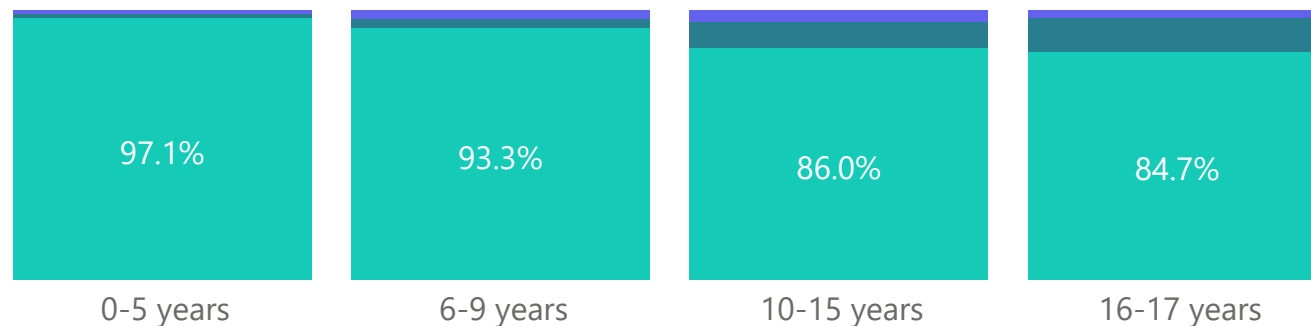
96.4%

Young person's last dental exam



94.7%

For Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit and Métis young people, last visit with a Traditional Healer, if applicable



66.1%

children and young persons' voice

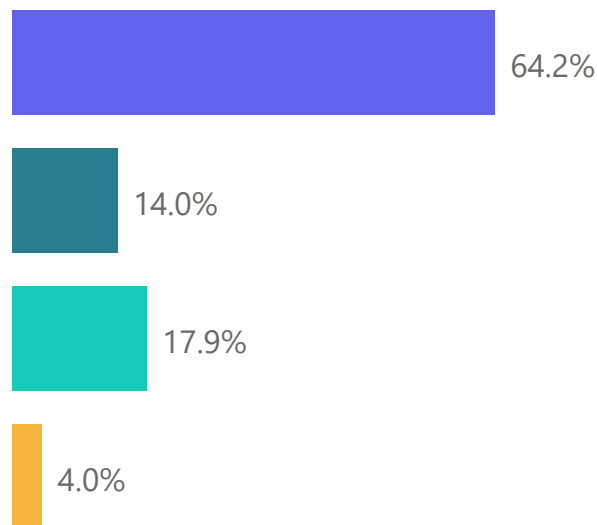
QUALITY STANDARD 4: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS' VOICE

Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons in residential care are continuously engaged to participate and have an active voice in the planning and decision-making that impacts their lives.

How was the AAR completed?

- In a face-to-face conversation conducted by the child welfare worker
- In a telephone conversation conducted by the child welfare worker
- Through self-administration by the caregiver and/or young person
- Other



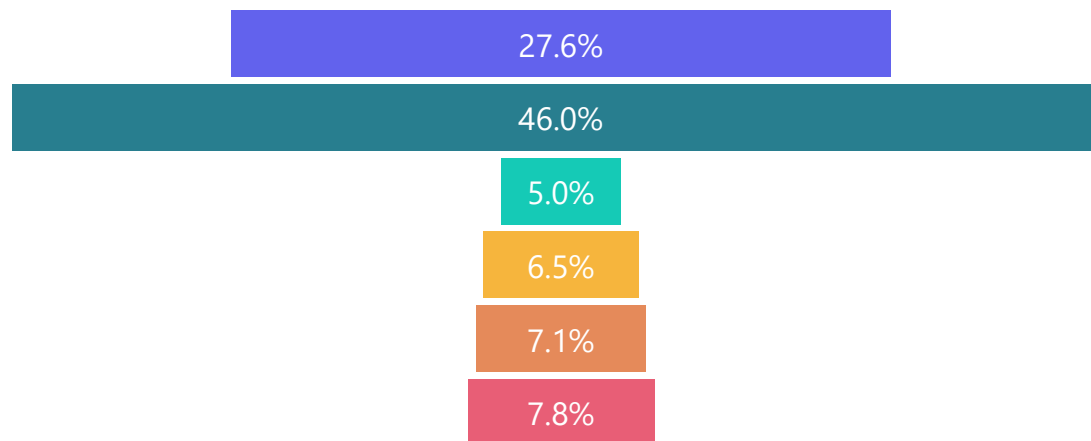
One of the guiding principles of OnLAC is that young people have a voice, and that it must be listened to. When completed according to best practice, the AAR process is a face-to-face, conversational interview, led by the child welfare worker, unless for some reason this is impossible. The caregiver who knows the young person best and the young person (if they are 10 years or older) answer questions and are invited to share strengths, challenges, develop goals, and identify the tasks and supports needed to achieve them. This process is an opportunity to reflect on the past year, and have an open and honest discussion in order to plan collaboratively and effectively, not just for the short-term, but for the young person's future and life goals.

While children younger than 10 are not asked questions directly in the AAR, this does not preclude their participation in the conversation, as their voice is equally important in the planning of their care.

Young person's participation in the AAR conversation

For young people 10 to 17 years old

- Participated in the entire AAR conversation
- Participated in only part of the AAR conversation - refusal
- Did not participate in the AAR conversation - refusal
- Participated in only part of the AAR conversation - capacity
- Did not participate in the AAR conversation - capacity



Average time in hours the young person participated in the AAR conversation

For young people 6 to 17 years old

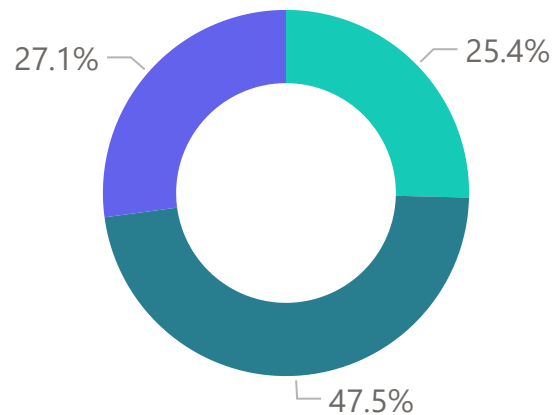


children and young persons' voice

Information about family of origin

This item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked if they would like more information about their family of origin.

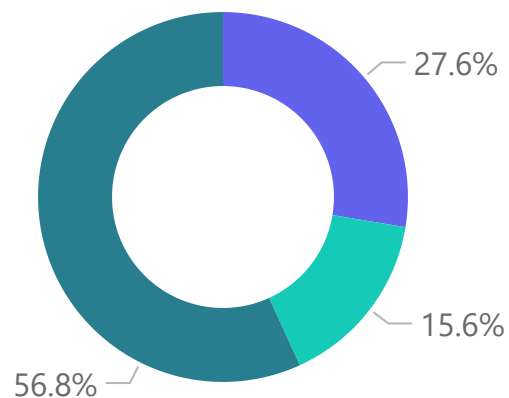
● Yes ● Uncertain ● No



Information about being in care

This item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked if they would like more information about why they are in care.

● Yes ● Uncertain ● No

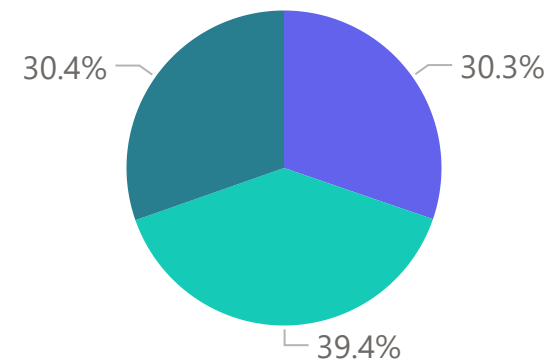


The Quality Standards Framework stresses the young person's role as an active and important contributor in planning and decision-making. OnLAC and the AAR conversation provide an opportunity for honest and open dialogue to provide young people with the information they need to participate in the decision-making that impacts their lives. Ensuring that questions are answered and information is shared in a developmentally-appropriate and trauma-informed manner helps young people to understand decisions made in the past and empowers them to have an active voice in the future.

Questions about care

This item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked if they would like assistance dealing with questions about their birth family, where they live and/or why they are in care.

● Yes ● No ● No assistance required



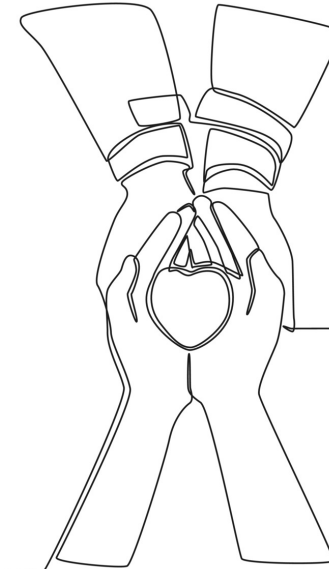
children and young persons' voice

Young people 10 to 17 years old who report that they have all necessary support needed to remain in contact with their family of origin, if applicable

96.4%

Young people 10 to 17 years old who report that they have all necessary support needed to remain in contact with siblings they are not living with, if applicable

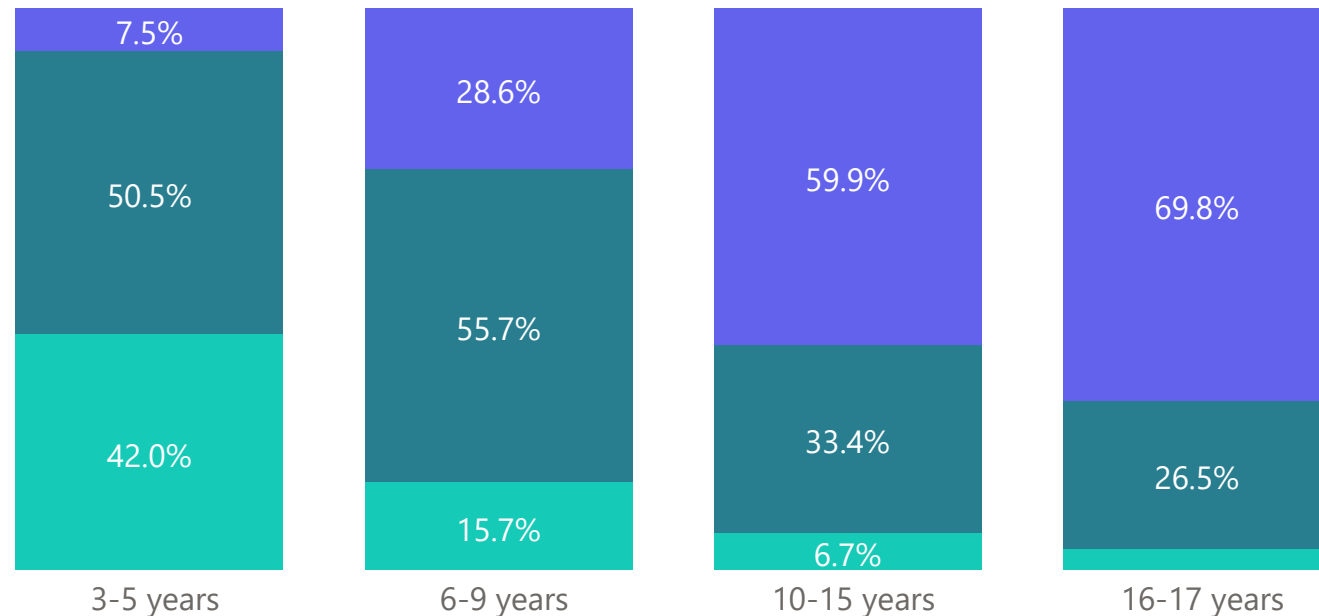
92.1%



Young person's understanding of their current situation

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 3 to 17 years old as an objective of the Identity dimension in the AAR.

- Clear understanding
- Some understanding
- Little or no understanding



safe, inclusive, and accessible environments

**QUALITY STANDARD 5:
SAFE, INCLUSIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE
ENVIRONMENTS**

Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons feel that the licensed residential setting where they reside is safe (culturally, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally), inclusive, and accessible.

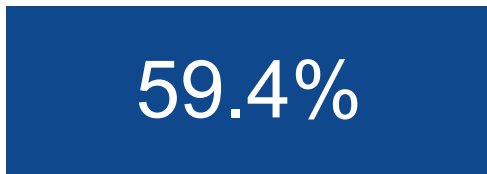
Percentage of young people identified as having a disability

This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 12 years old, and by young people 13 to 17 years old. Under the Health dimension in the AAR, this question asks whether the young person has any long-term conditions or health problems that limit their participation in school, play, sports, or other activities.



Percentage of young people who have all the special help or equipment needed for any long-term conditions or health problems, if applicable

This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 12 years old, and by young people 13 to 17 years old.



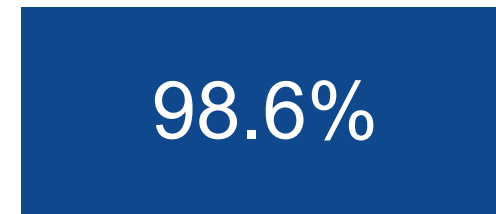
Percentage of young people who being provided all necessary attention, including support and monitoring of medication

This item is reported by child welfare workers as an objective of the Health dimension of the AAR.



Percentage of young people for whom all ongoing health conditions and disabilities are being dealt with

This item is reported by child welfare workers as an objective of the Health dimension of the AAR.



Percentage of young people who are receiving all the help and resources needed to treat identified health conditions, if applicable

This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 12 years old, and by young people 13 to 17 years old.



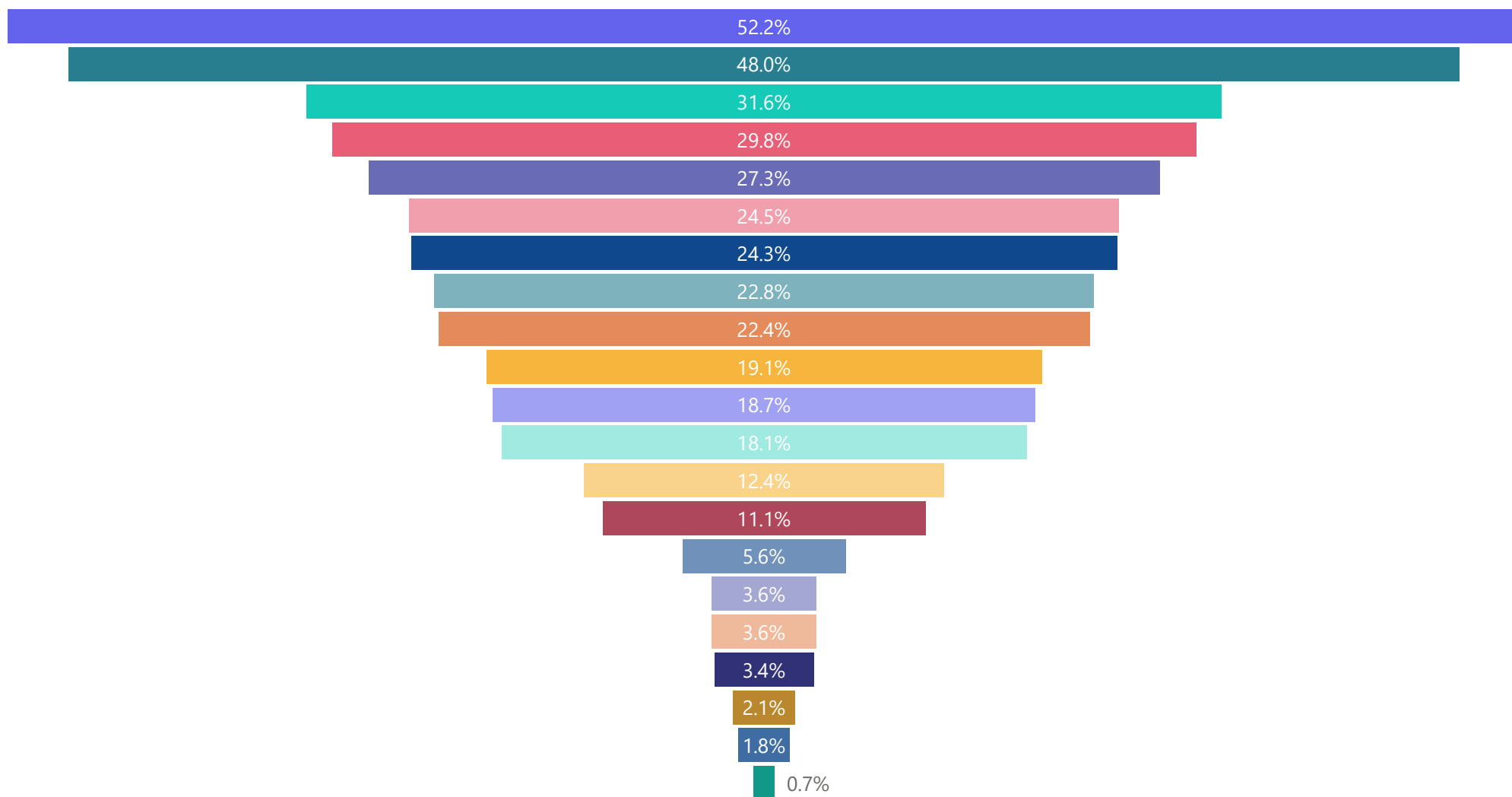
It is important to consider the perspectives of different participants in the AAR conversation when questions are similar in order to identify any discrepancies.

safe, inclusive, and accessible environments

Confidants - people to talk to

This item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old. Young people are asked if they have anyone to talk to, other than their close friends, and they could provide multiple responses. Year-to-year, young people in Ontario identify their foster mothers and child welfare workers as confidants most often.

- Foster mother
- Child welfare worker
- Foster father
- Teacher
- Sister
- Other
- Birth mother
- Grandparents
- Brother
- Foster sibling
- Friend of the the family or friend's parent
- Other relative
- Boyfriend or girlfriend
- Birth father
- Coach or leader
- Birth parent's partner
- Cultural Teacher
- Elder
- Sitter or baby sitter
- First Nation, Inuit or Métis community member
- Healer

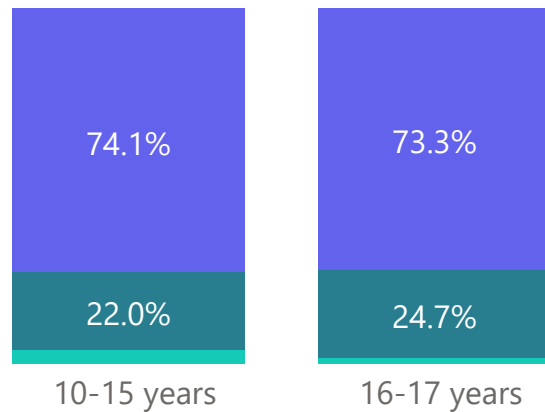


safe, inclusive, and accessible environments

Caregiver support of cultural activities

This item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old, when asked how well they feel their caregiver supports their cultural activities, practices, etc.

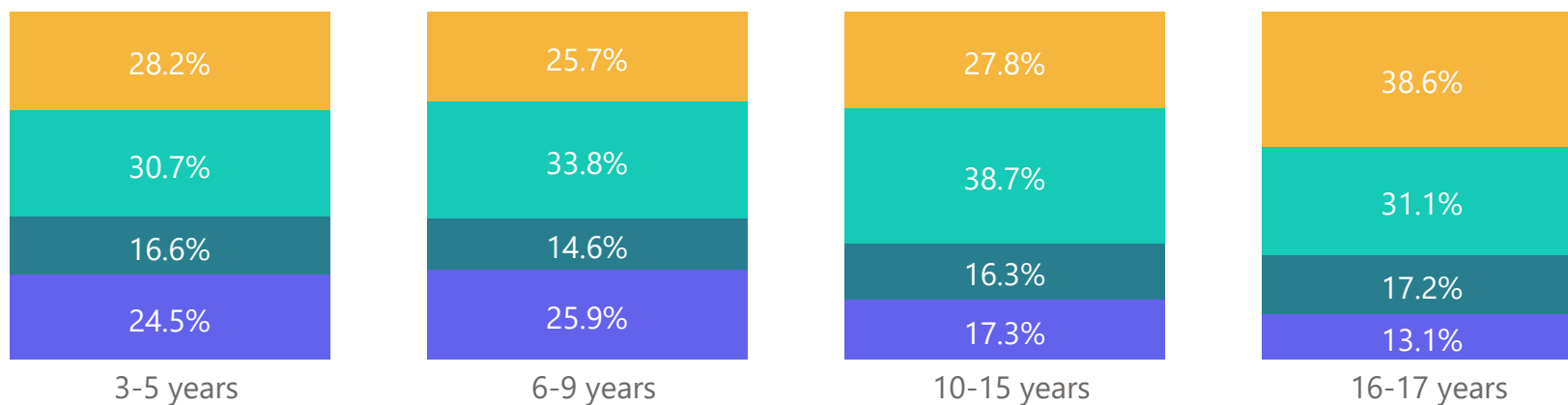
- A great deal
- Some
- Very little



Caregiver participation in cultural activities

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 3 to 17 years old, when asked how often they participate in activities that are culturally relevant to the young person.

- Every day
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- Rarely or never

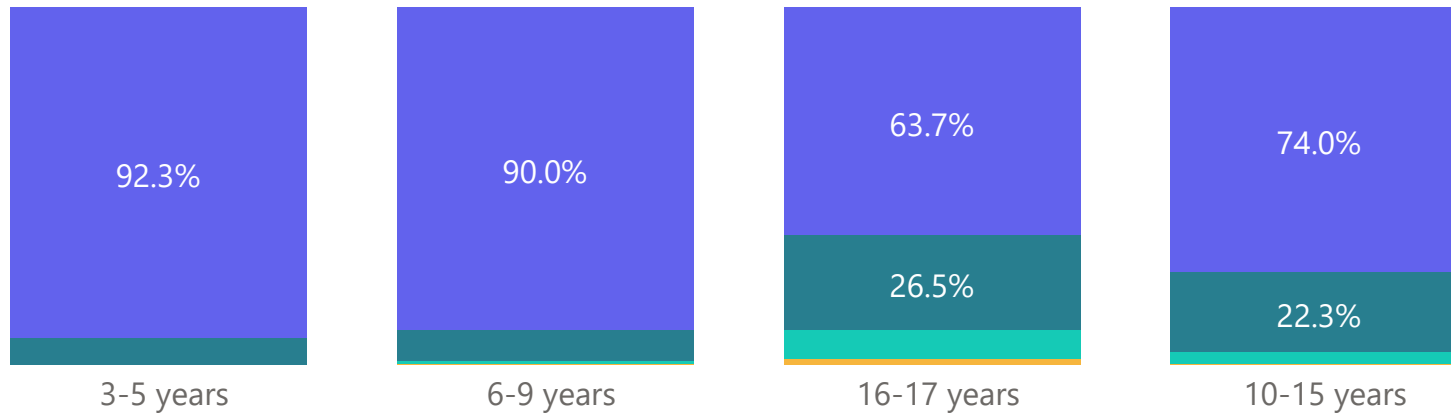


safe, inclusive, and accessible environments

Caregiver shared interests

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 3 to 17 years old, when asked how often they talk with the young person about things that interest them.

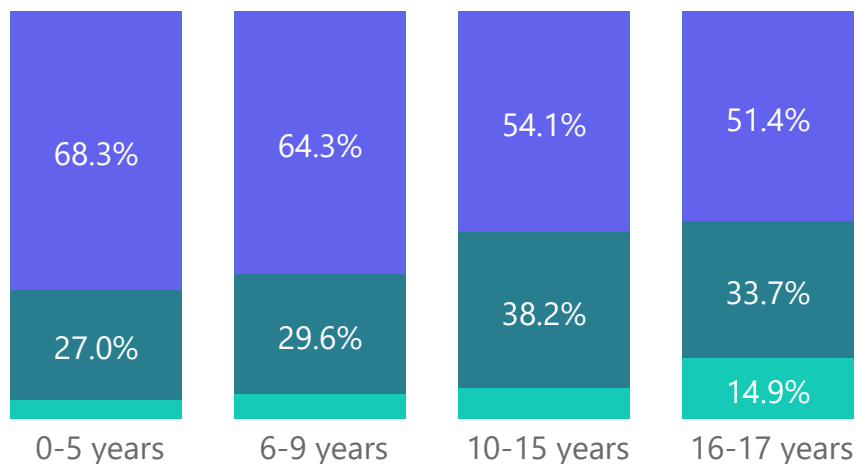
- Every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely or never



Effective treatment for behavioural or emotional difficulties

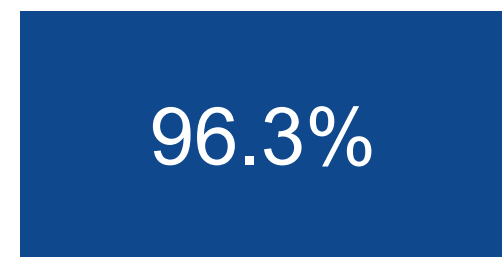
This item is reported by child welfare workers as an objective of the Emotional & Behavioural Development dimension of the AAR.

- Is receiving effective treatment
- Is receiving some treatment
- Is not receiving effective treatment



Young person has a close relationship with at least one caregiver

This item is reported by child welfare workers as an objective of the Family & Social Relationships dimension of the AAR.



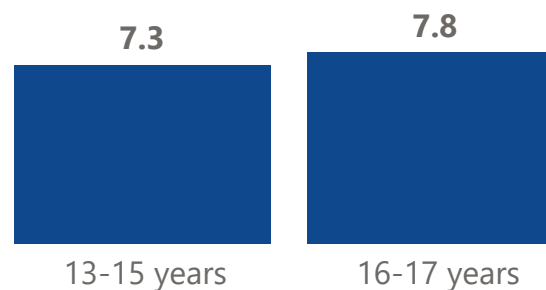
QUALITY STANDARD 6: IDENTITY

Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons in residential care are able and encouraged to identify the many dimensions of their identity, including their creed, spirituality, culture and language, and the care provided to them adheres to their identities.

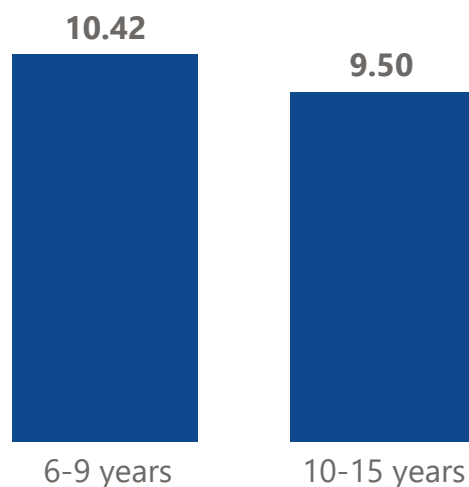
Approach coping

This four-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 12, is reported by young people 13 to 17 years old. with a higher score indicating a higher level of approach coping skills.



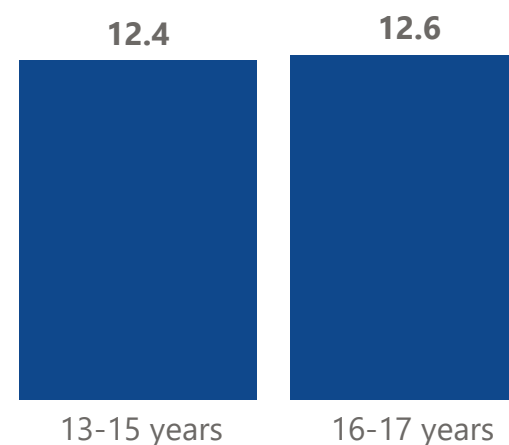
Self-Esteem

This six-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 12, is reported by caregivers for children 6-9 years old, and by young people 10 to 15 years old, with a higher score indicating greater self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to the positive or negative regard in which one holds oneself, either globally, in the sense of overall judgement, or specifically, in relations to one's identity. A young person with a positive view of self will be generally confident in new situations. They will take on challenges and expect to succeed.



Hope

This six-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 18, is reported by young people 13 to 17 years old, with a higher score indicating a greater level of hope. Hope is an overall perception that we will be able to overcome barriers to meet our goals. Young people who are hopeful can imagine. Furthermore, they embrace goals associated with success and envision ways to achieve the goals they set and show determination when barriers are encountered.



First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) cultural connections

While it is essential for those who are providing child welfare services in ethnically and culturally diverse communities to consider the unique traditions and heritage of all cultures, the Child, Youth and Family Services Act emphasizes the importance of paying particular attention to the provision of services to FNIM young people. These questions are asked of the caregiver for children 0 to 9 years old, and the young person 10 to 17 years old.

Percentage of young people who identify as Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis

27.5%

How often do young people who identify as Indigenous/FNIM engage in the following activities?

● Often ● Sometimes ● Rarely or never

Meet with people from their own FNIM community?



Participate in their own FNIM community events, activities, traditional meals, and ceremonies?



How often do young people learn about traditions, teachings, and/or customs?



Percentage of young people who have a personal connection with an Elder, Healer, and/or Cultural Teacher

31.0%

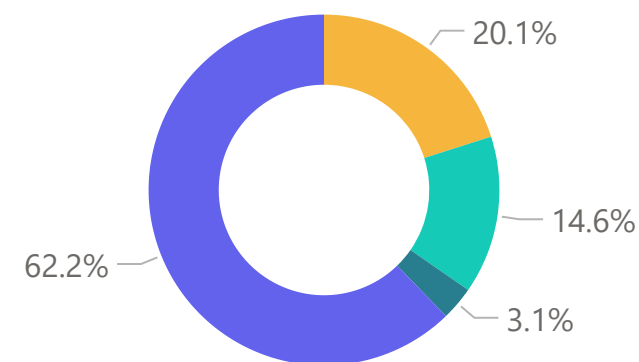
Young people who belong to a clan or who have clan affiliation

● Don't know ● Yes ● No



How often do young people have the opportunity to speak their own First Nation or Inuit language?

● Doesn't know their First Nation or Inuit language
● Often
● Sometimes
● Rarely or never



Percentage of young people who have a relationship to the land or landmarks in their community

27.1%

Percentage of young people who have a Spirit Name, if applicable

21.5%

Cultural connections

These items are reported by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked if they have enough opportunities to engage in these activities.

● No ● Yes

Meet with people from their own ethnic or cultural background



Participate in traditions, customs, ceremonies, or events related to their ethnic or cultural background



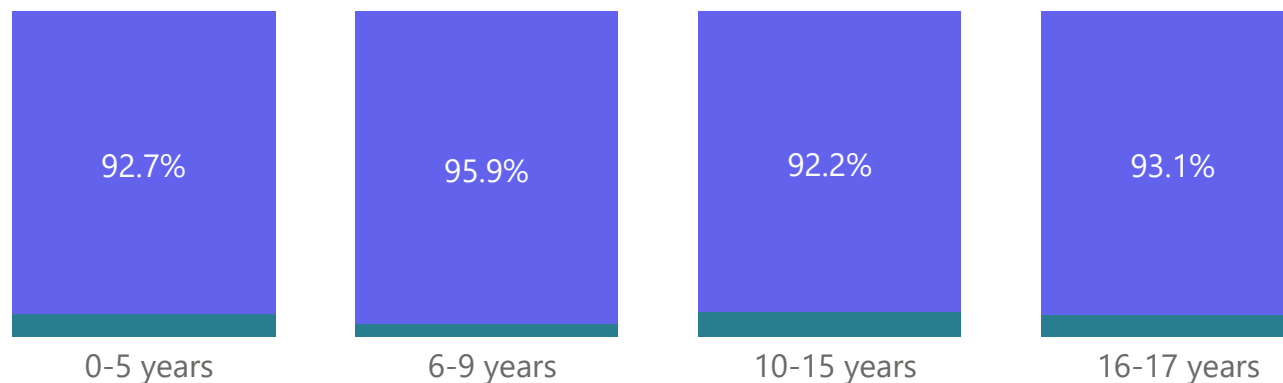
Learn about traditions, customs, ceremonies, or events related to their ethnic or cultural background



Religious or spiritual practice

This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old, and by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked, if applicable, they have enough opportunities to participate in their religion or spirituality, including traditions, services, festivals and holidays, prayers, clothing, diet, fasting, traditional sweat lodge, pow wow, drumming, etc.

● No ● Yes



The Quality Standards Framework emphasizes that all young people must have sufficient opportunities to learn about and participate in their culture, community, race, spirituality, language, and family traditions. Societies have an obligation to ensure access to meaningful opportunities for connection to community and access to resources that allow young people to build positive identities in supportive environments.

Language

This items is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old, and by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked if they have enough opportunities to speak their first language at home, at school, with friends, etc.

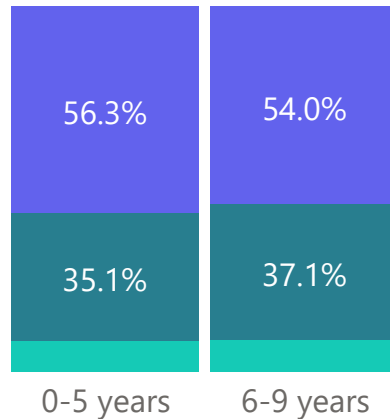
97.3%

Cultural contacts

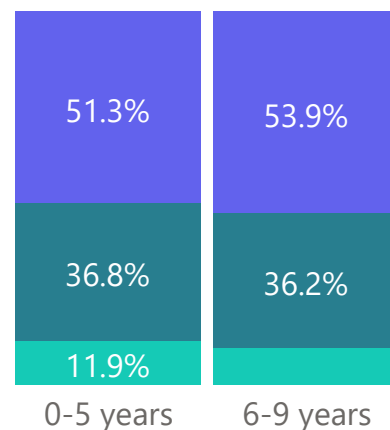
These items are reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old.

- Many contacts
- Some contacts
- Not applicable - no contacts

Does the child have positive contacts with adults from their ethnic or cultural background?



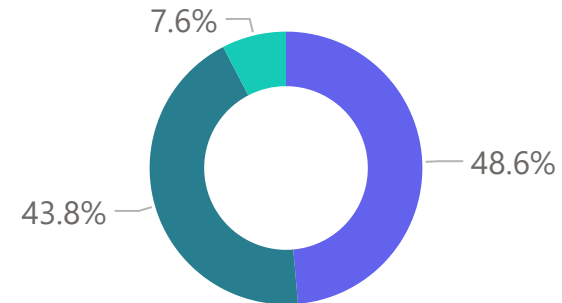
Does the child have positive contacts with children from their ethnic or cultural background?



Young person's knowledge of family of origin

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 3 to 17 years old as an objective of the Identity dimension of the AAR.

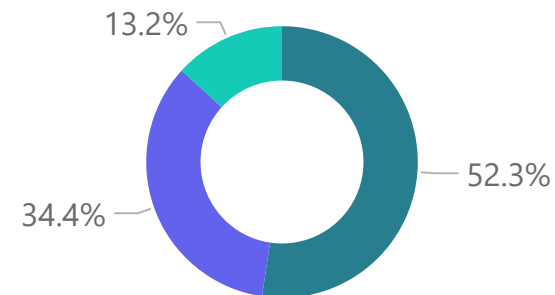
- Clear knowledge
- Some knowledge
- Little or no knowledge



Young person identifies with and is proud of their ethnic or cultural background

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 3 to 17 years old as an objective of the Identity dimension of the AAR.

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- To little or no extent



Percentage of children who have access to toys, pictures, books, music in their current placement that positively reflect the ethnic and cultural background

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 0 to 9 years old.

96.3%

Percentage of young people who have access to books that accurately reflect their culture, traditions, life experiences, etc.

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 0 to 15 years old.

94.2%

healthy relationships

QUALITY STANDARD 7: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Goal for Children and Young Persons

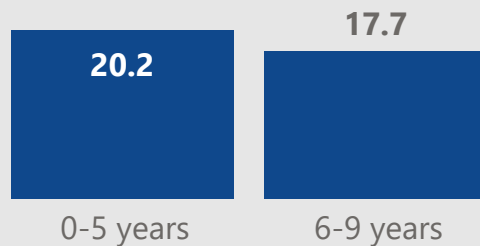
Children and young persons in residential care are supported to develop healthy relationships with others and themselves.

The philosophical underpinnings of the OnLAC model centre on the notion that good parenting - and in the case of young people in care, good *substitute* parenting - leads to good outcomes. By receiving quality care that is defined by affection, expectations, and appropriate boundaries, young people in care can flourish.

Parenting is not defined by a biological relationship between a young person and their caregiver. All caregivers engage in parenting when they support young people's interests and goals.

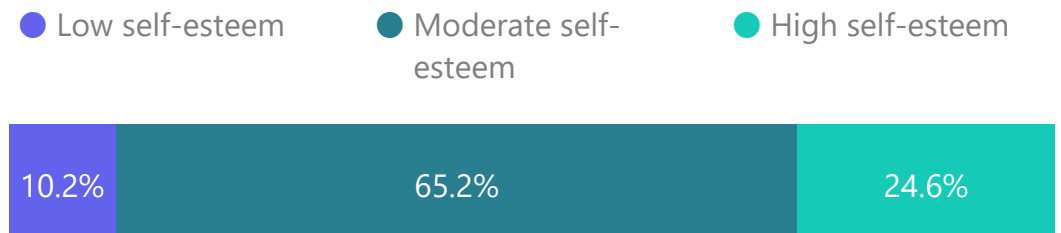
Positive parenting - children 6 to 9 years old

This six-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 24, is reported by caregivers of children 0 to 9 years old. A higher score indicates that caregivers engage in more positive parenting practices.



Child welfare worker's assessment of young person's self-esteem

This item is reported by the child welfare worker for young people 10 to 17 years old as an objective of the Identity dimension of the AAR.



Parenting practices - young people 10 to 17 years old

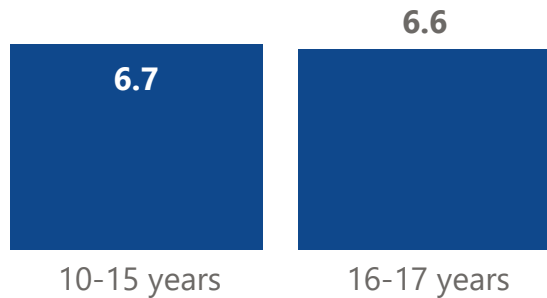
These three three-item measures, each with a possible range of 0 to 12, are reported by caregivers of young people 10 to 17 years old. A higher score indicates that caregivers engage in more of the practices measured by each scale.



healthy relationships

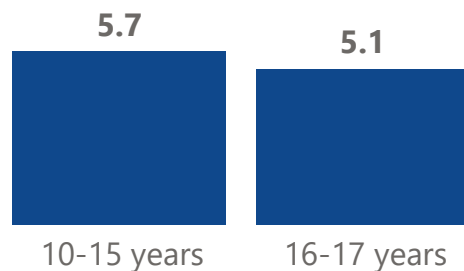
Relationship with primary caregiver

This four-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 8, is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old. A higher score indicates a greater perceived quality of relationship with their primary caregiver. Past OnLAC research has shown that a strong relationship with caregivers is predictive of resilient prosocial behaviour, resilient self-esteem, and correlated with higher hope and lower levels of aggressive behaviour, anxiety, and depression. Young people who reported higher quality relationships with their caregivers also identified those caregivers as being high in nurturance. Quality of caregiver relationship is typically the best predictor of placement satisfaction.



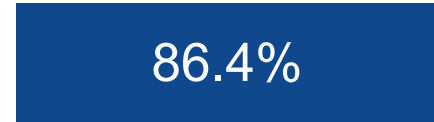
Relationship with family of origin

This four-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 8, is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old. A higher score indicates a greater perceived quality of relationship with their family member. This family member is chosen by the young person and may be identified to child welfare workers during the AAR conversation; however, the provincial OnLAC project does not collect this data. The items included in this measure are identical to those in the Relationship with Primary Caregiver measure above.



Contact with family of origin strengthens the young person's relationship with them, if applicable

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 10 to 17 years old as an objective of the Family and Social Relationships dimension of the AAR.



Percentage of young people who have had a stable relationship with at least one adult over the course of their life

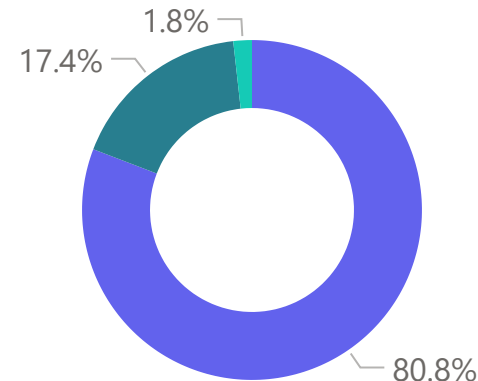
This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old as an objective of the Family and Social Relationships dimension of the AAR.



Person to call on in times of need

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 10 to 17 years old as an objective of the Family and Social Relationships dimension of the AAR with regard to supportive relationships the young person has.

- A good relationship with someone they can call on regularly
- A fairly good relationship with someone they can call on in times of crisis
- No support of this kind



healthy relationships

Percentage of young people who report that they have close friends

This item is reported by young people 10-17 years old.

88.1%

Percentage of young people are able to make friendships with others of the same age

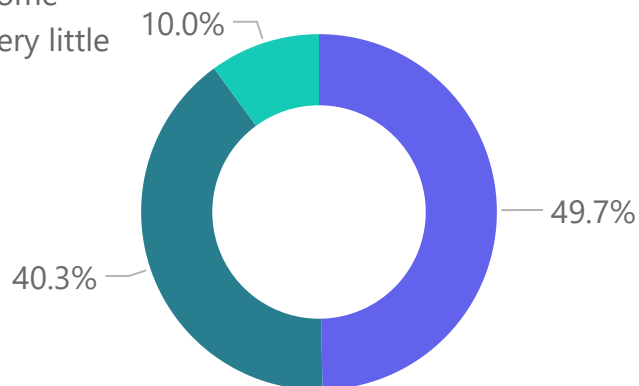
This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 10 to 17 years old as an objective of the Family and Social Relationships dimension of the AAR.

87.6%

Sense of belonging in culture/identity

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 10 to 17 years old as an objective of the Family and Social Relationships dimension of the AAR. Workers rate whether the young person has a strong sense of belonging in their culture/identity through their family and social relationships.

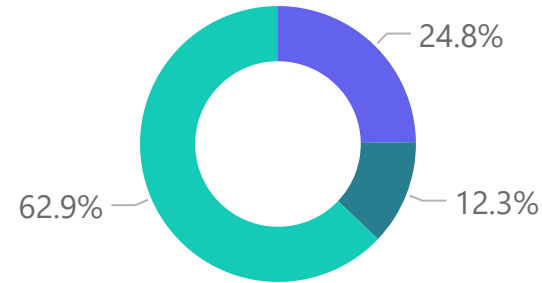
- A great deal
- Some
- Very little



More support

This item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old when asked if they would like more people they can count on for support when needed.

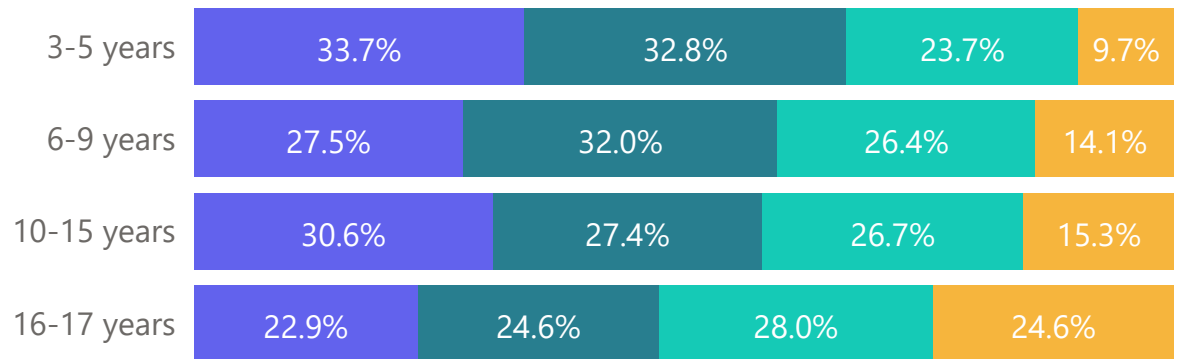
- Don't know
- Yes
- No



Time spent with friends outside of school

This item is reported by caregivers of young people 3 to 17 years old.

- Never
- One day a week
- Two to three days a week
- Four or more days a week



Percentage of young people who report that they have close friends

This item is reported by young people 10-17 years old.

88.1%

staff and caregivers

QUALITY STANDARD 8: STAFF AND CAREGIVERS

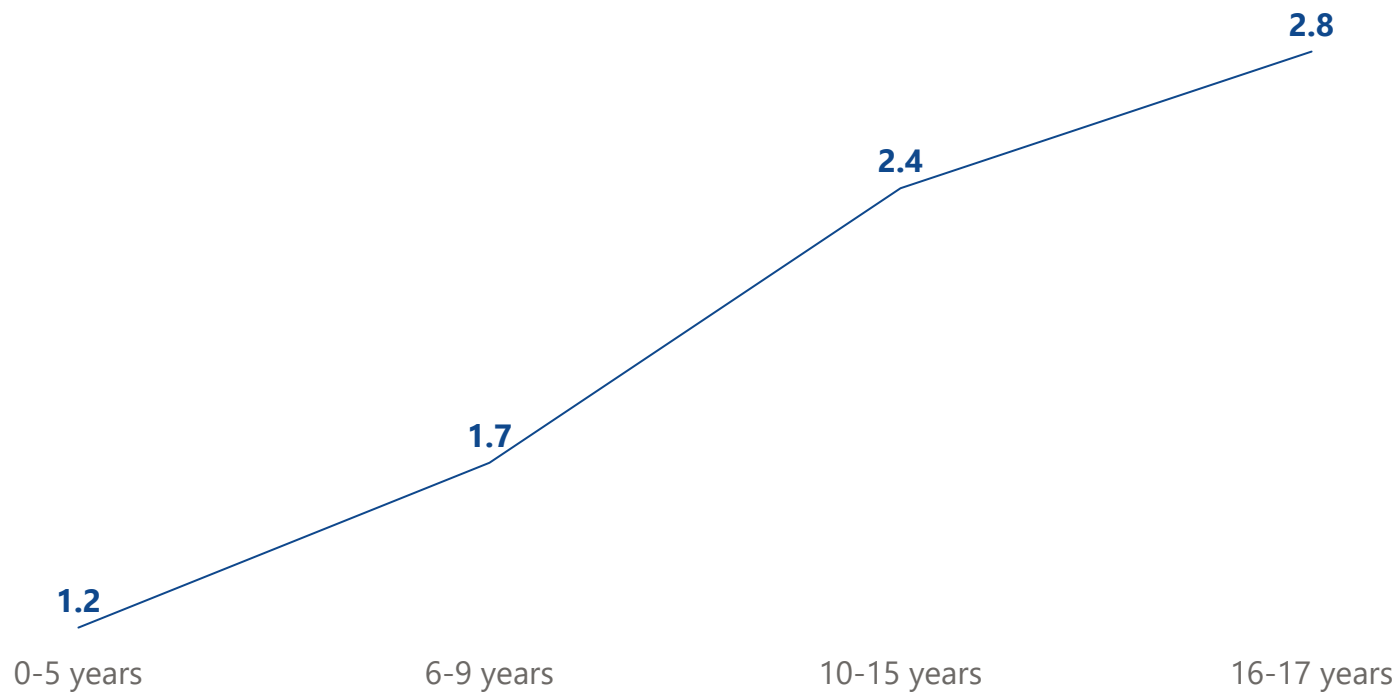
Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons are cared for by staff and caregivers who have appropriate educational qualifications, skills, training and experience to fully support them, meet their needs, help them thrive, and achieve positive outcomes.

Child welfare worker usually speaks to the young person in the young person's primary language

97.7%

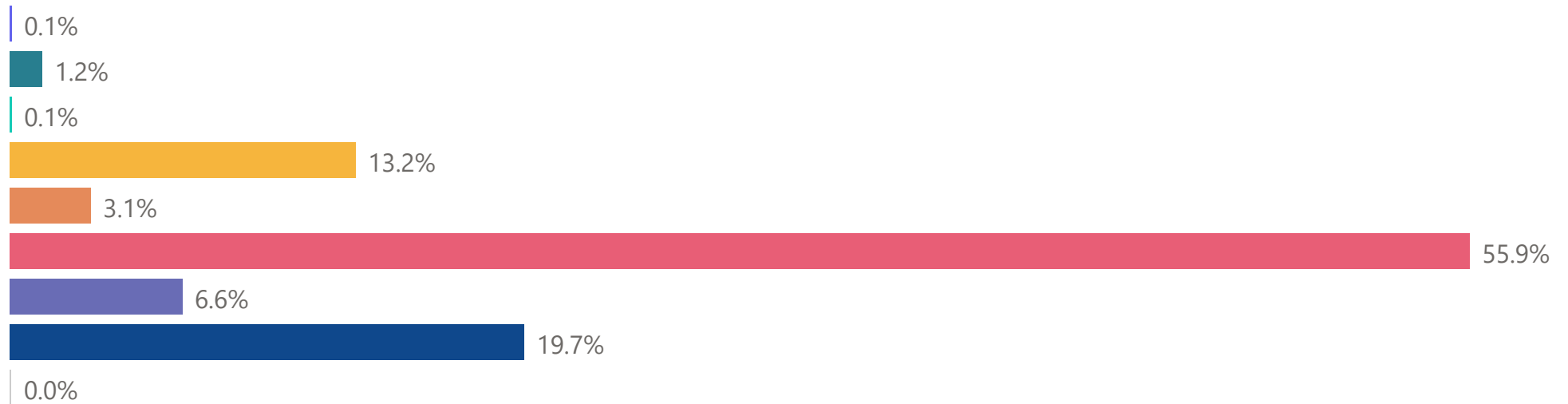
Average number of years worker has been with working with the young person, not including disruptions



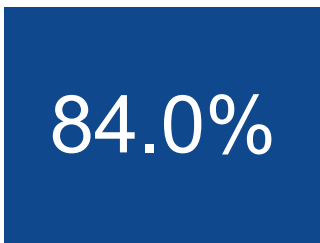
staff and caregivers

Child welfare worker's highest level of education attained

- Less than a high school diploma
- Trade school - Vocational school - Apprenticeship
- University certificate or diploma below bachelor level
- University certificate or diploma above bachelor level
- Doctoral degree
- High school diploma
- Non-university certificate or diploma from a community college
- Bachelor degree
- Master's degree

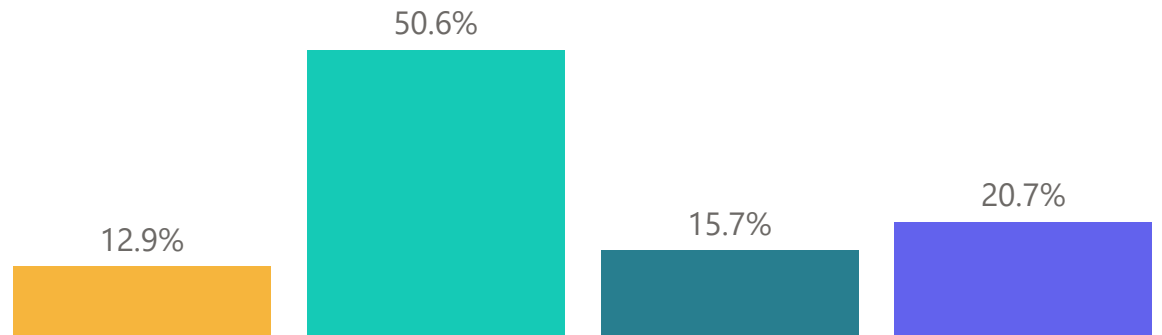


Percentage of AARs completed by child welfare workers who have received training in OnLAC



How often do child welfare workers discuss the information contained in the AAR with their supervisors (e.g. developing or reviewing the Plan of Care)?

- Very often
- Almost never
- Sometimes
- Not applicable - worker's first AAR



staff and caregivers

Percentage of AARs completed with caregivers who have received training in OnLAC

53.1%

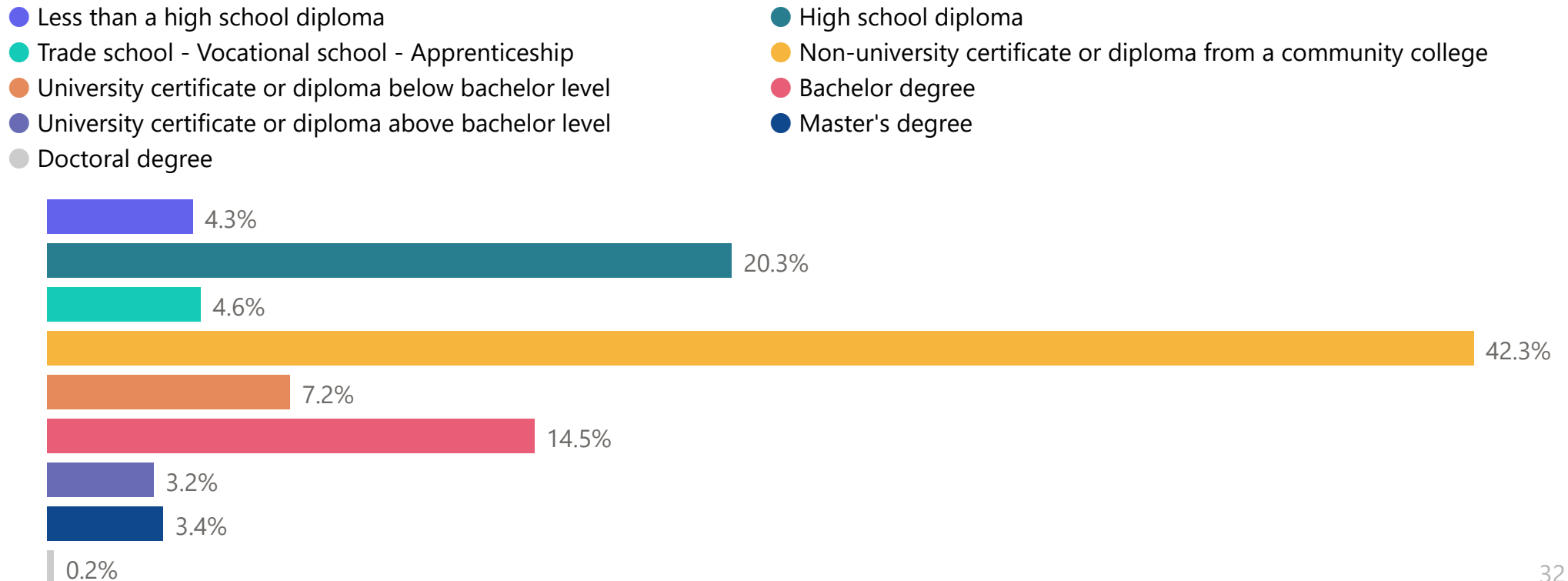
Average number of years foster caregivers have been providing foster care to children and young people (for foster placements only)

11.2

Other caregiver training programs that caregivers have completed



Child welfare worker's highest level of education attained



health and well-being

QUALITY STANDARD 9: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young persons live in an environment where their physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and mental health and well-being is promoted, and where they can access the appropriate services to meet their overall health needs.

As OnLAC is a child well-being model, measures throughout the AAR can inform our picture of young people's well-being. Many of these measures, including health items, have been presented in other sections of this report under different Quality Standards. It is suggested that readers consider how items presented throughout this report contribute to young people's health and well-being.

Positive mental health

This fourteen-item measure, with a possible range of 0 to 70, is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old, with a higher score indicating a greater level of positive mental health. The positive mental health scale encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Young people who are flourishing report greater self-esteem, hope, placement satisfaction, quality of relationship with their caregivers, and achieve greater educational success. Conversely, they show less behavioural difficulties and soft drug use, and experience less placement instability.

Percentage of young people 10 to 17 years old who report that they are receiving all the help and information they need with questions or concerns regarding:

Puberty

93.1%

Sexual health, STIs, and pregnancy

95.1%

Sexual orientation and gender identity

93.9%

Percentage of young people 10 to 17 years old who report that they are taking medication(s) (prescription or non-prescription)

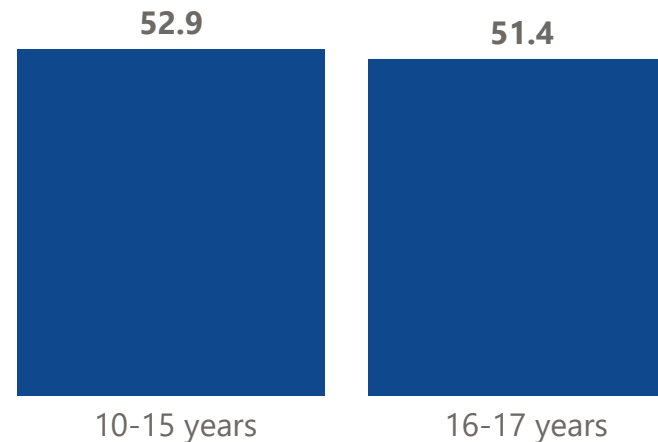
46.4%

Of those who report taking medication(s), the percentage who understand why they are taking them

96.2%

Of those who report taking medication(s), the percentage who understand the potential side effects of their medication(s)

86.7%



educational achievement

QUALITY STANDARD 10: EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Goal for Children and Young Persons

A child's or young person's right to receive an education under the Act is facilitated by the residential service provider, local school, and local school board. The education of children and young persons is actively promoted as valuable and considered an important part of their preparation for leaving residential care and moving into adulthood.

Type of school young person is attending

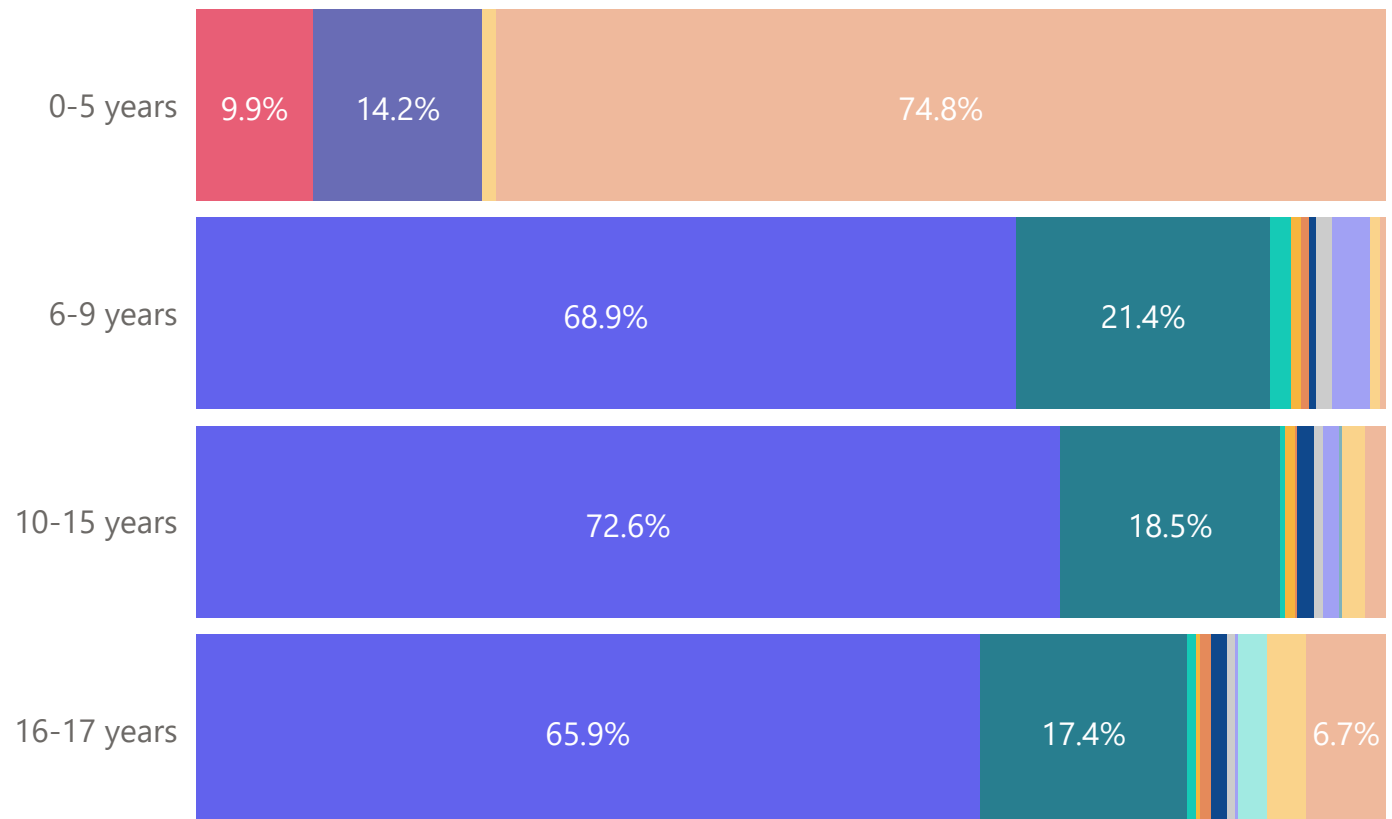
- Public school
- Private school
- Distance learning
- For-profit child care program
- FNIM school
- Federally-funded school (off-reserve)
- Other
- Catholic school (publicly funded)
- Taught at home
- Non-profit child care program
- Taught in an institution
- Federally-funded school (on-reserve)
- Post-secondary
- Not currently in school

Percentage of young people 6 to 17 years old who receive tutoring outside of school

22.5%

Percentage of young people who have a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) or a Canada Learning Bond

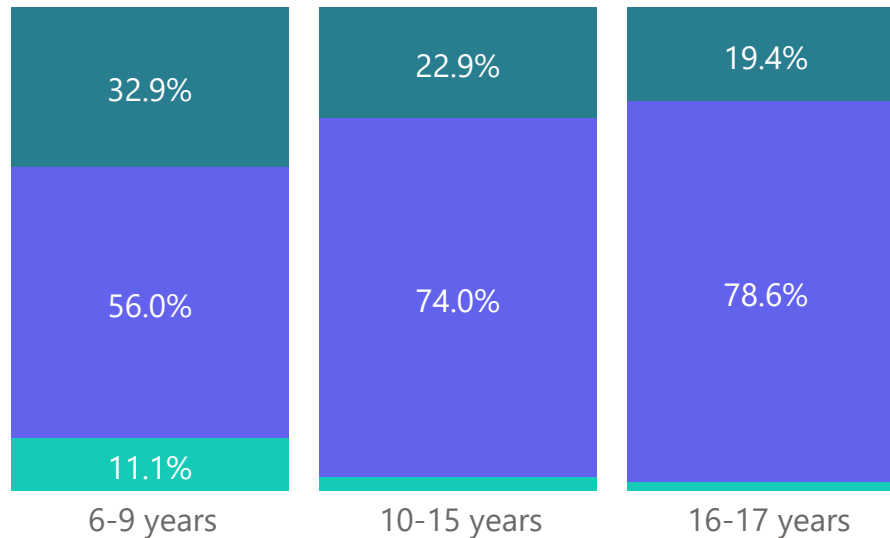
49.1%



educational achievement

If a learning-related difficulty is suspected, young people 6 to 17 have been assessed

- Young person is currently on a waiting list
- Yes
- No



Percentage of young people 6 to 17 years old who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

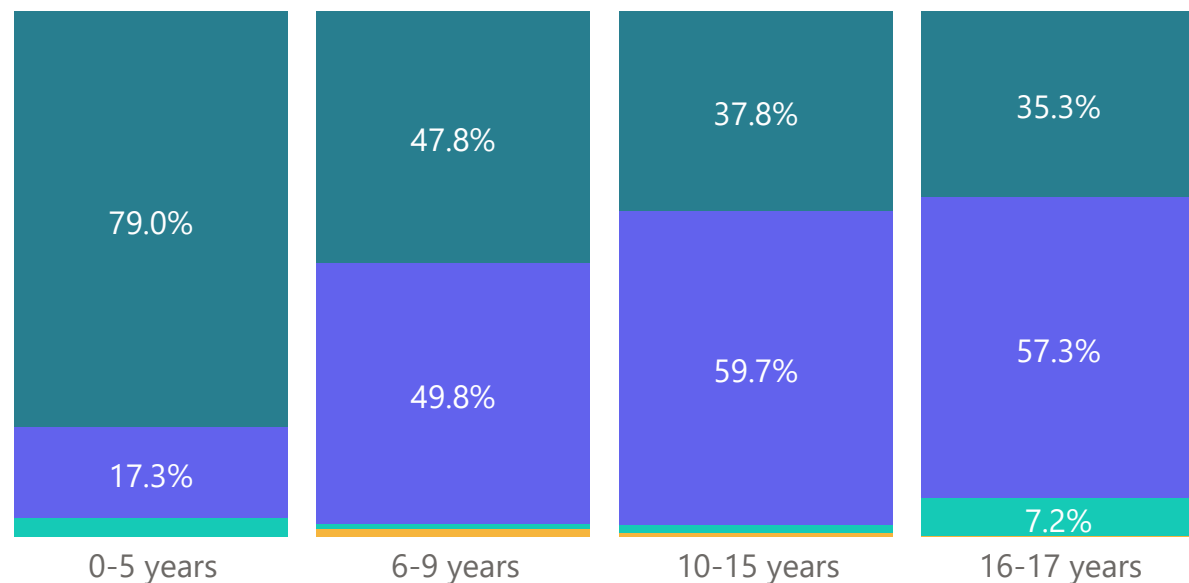
65.1%

Percentage of young people 6 to 17 years old who have an IEP and for whom the IEP is being successfully implemented (reported by the child welfare worker)

92.7%

Young people who receive special help or education in school or child care because of a physical, emotional, behavioural, or other concern that limits the kind or amount of activities they can take part in

- Young person is not in school
- Young person is currently on a waitlist
- Yes
- No

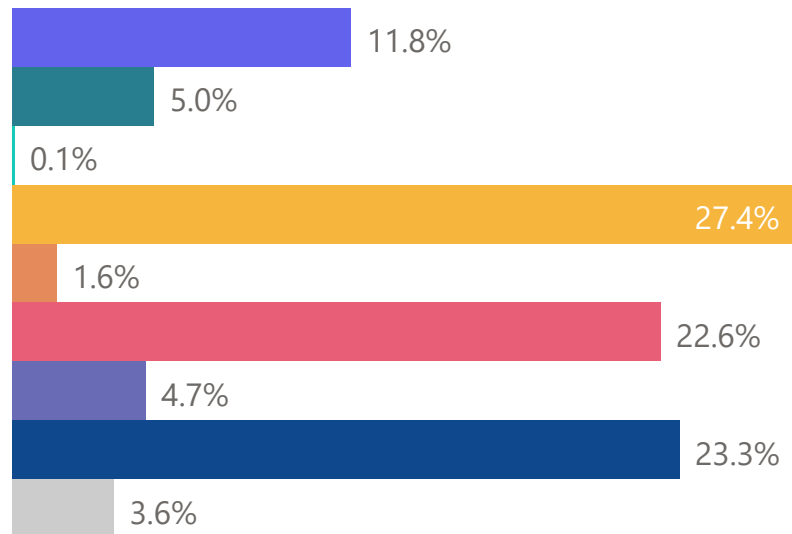


educational achievement

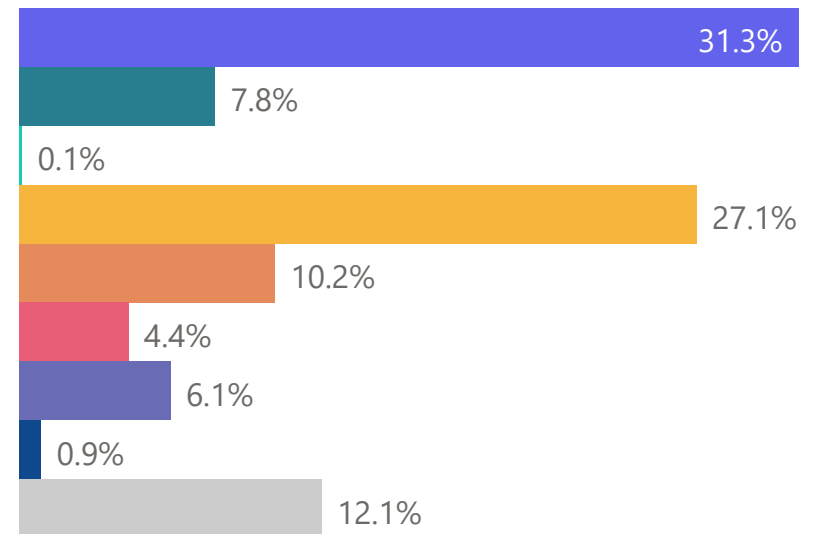
Educational aspirations - hopes for the young person's educational attainment

The young person item is reported by young people 10 to 17 years old and the caregiver item is reported by caregivers for children and young people 0 to 17 years old. A young person's self-expectations are often influenced by the expectations that others hold for them. Having high expectations for young people people's educational achievement allows them to develop mastery and competence in a supportive environment that promotes opportunities for learning, development, and the chance to reach their full potential. The Quality Standards Framework emphasizes the involvement and support from those caring for young people to help them develop a passion for education and aspirations for their future learning and work life.

How far do young people hope to go in school?



How far do caregivers hope the young person goes in school?



- Secondary or high school graduation
- CEGEP (Quebec)
- Private career college
- More than one university degree
- Other

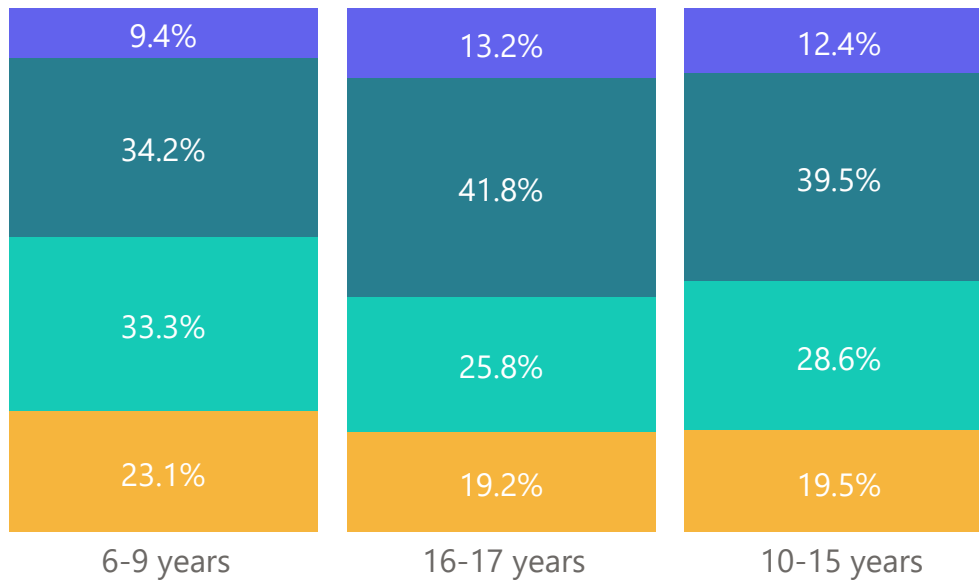
- Apprenticeship program
- College of Applied Arts and Technology
- A university degree
- Don't know

educational achievement

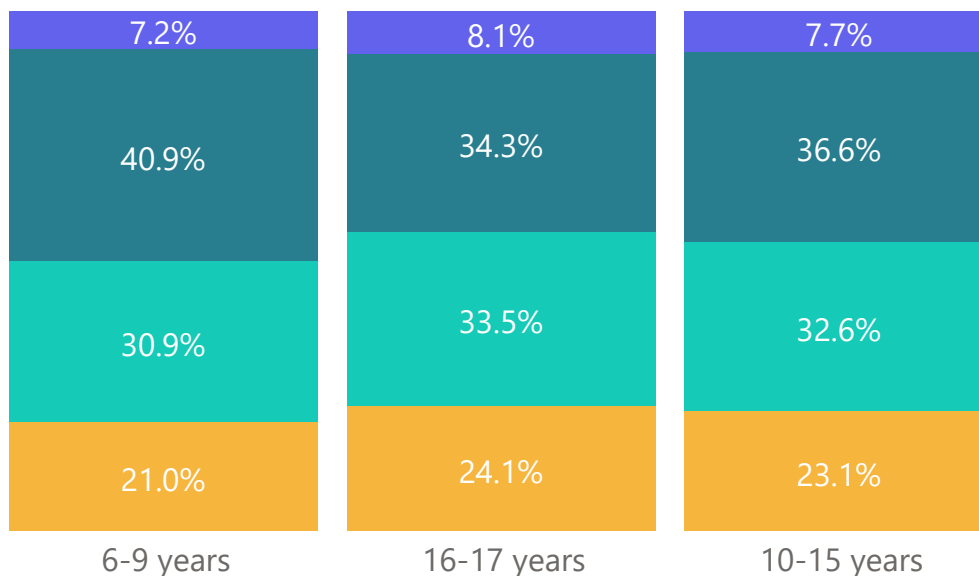
Educational achievement in reading and math

● Excellent ● Good ● Fair ● Poor

Reading



Math

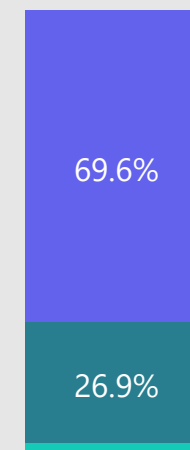


These Reading and Math achievement items are reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old. Here, excellent achievement means a young person is performing above grade level. Good achievement means a young person is performing at grade level. Fair achievement means a young person is in the grade which corresponds to their chronological age, but is performing below that grade level. Poor achievement means the young person is in a grade lower than that which corresponds to their chronological age, and that they are performing below the grade level that corresponds to their chronological age as well.

Promotion status

This item is reported by the caregiver for children and young people in elementary school.

● Progressing well toward promotion
 ● Progressing with difficulty toward promotion
 ● Promotion at risk



educational achievement

Educational success

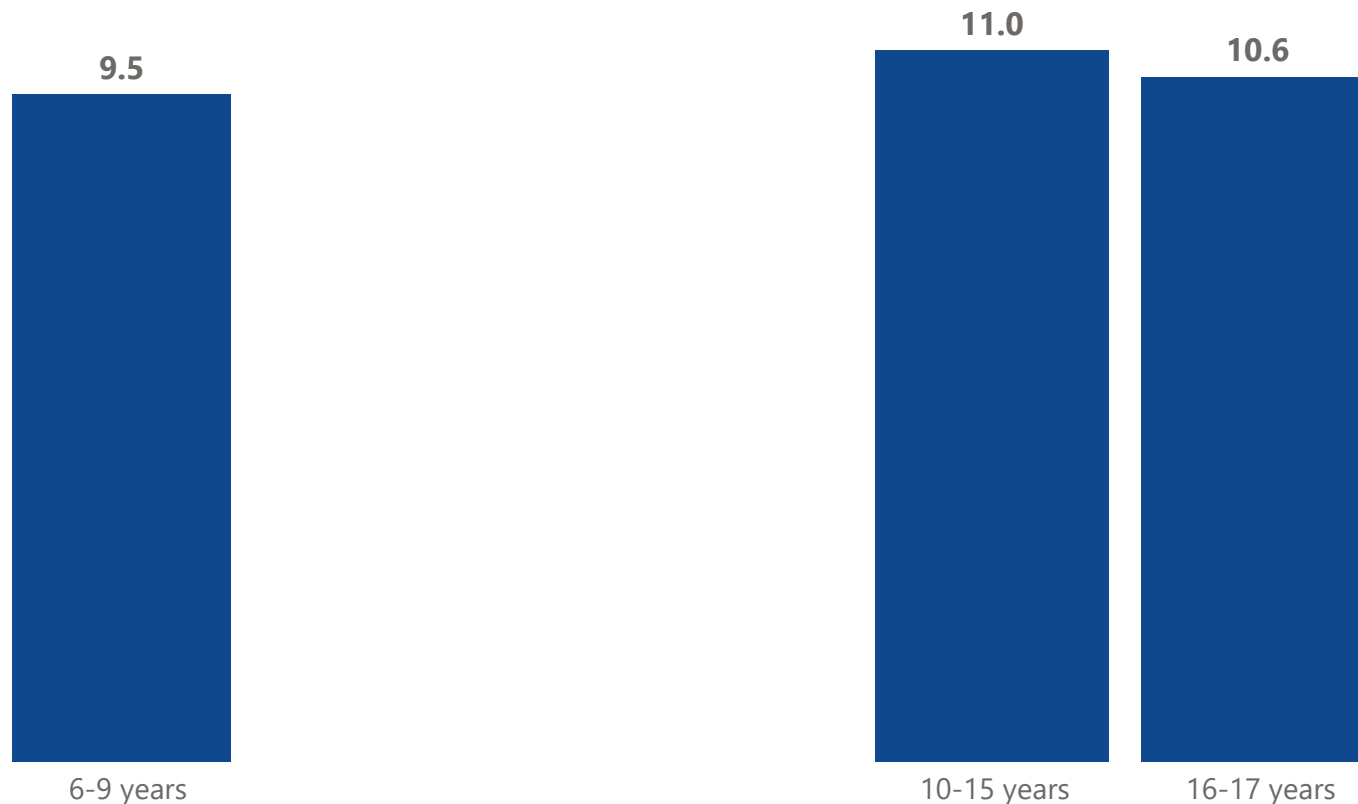
The Quality Standards Framework emphasizes education as an important influence on future life chances for young people in residential care. Those caring for young people have a responsibility to promote educational attainment by supporting young people to receive a quality education and realize their full educational potential.

Educational success - children 6 to 9 years old

This seven-item measure is a composite scale built from items reported by child welfare workers (four items) and caregivers (three items) for children 6 to 9 years old. The possible range of scores is 0 to 17, with a higher score indicating higher educational achievement. This items used in this measure invite respondents to consider what is known about the child's performance in school, based on their school work and report cards.

Educational success - young people 10 to 17 years old

This eight-item measure is a composite scale built from items reported by child welfare workers (four items) and caregivers (three items), and young people themselves, 10 to 17 years old. The possible range of scores is 0 to 19, with a higher score indicating higher educational achievement. This items used in this measure invite respondents to consider what is known about the young performance in school, based on their school work and report cards, and in the case of the young person, an assessment of their own academic performance.



educational achievement

Percentage of young people who have a satisfactory place at home to do homework

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 6 to 17 years old.

97.8%

Percentage of caregivers who provide support or help with homework

This item is reported by caregivers of young people 6 to 17 years old.

97.7%

Percentage of caregivers who have had involvement in the young person's school in the past year (volunteering, communication, attending school events)

This item is reported by caregivers of young people 6 to 17 years old.

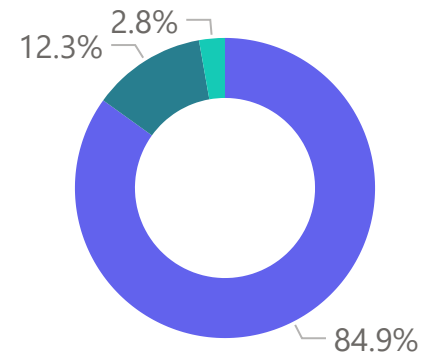
67.6%

School safety

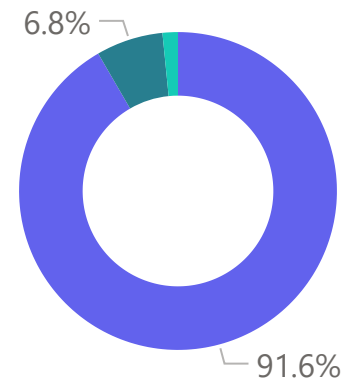
These items are reported by young people 10 to 17 years old.

- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely or never

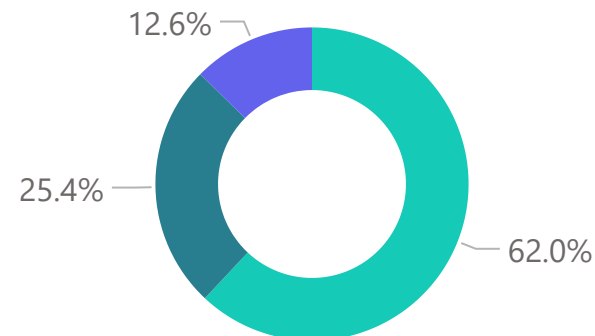
I feel safe at school



I feel safe on my way to and from school



I experience bullying at school or cyberbullying

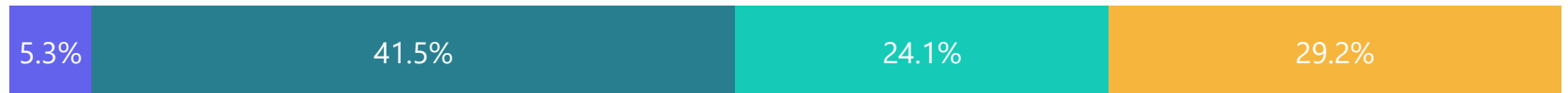


educational achievement

School Absences

Number of absences from school in the past 12 months

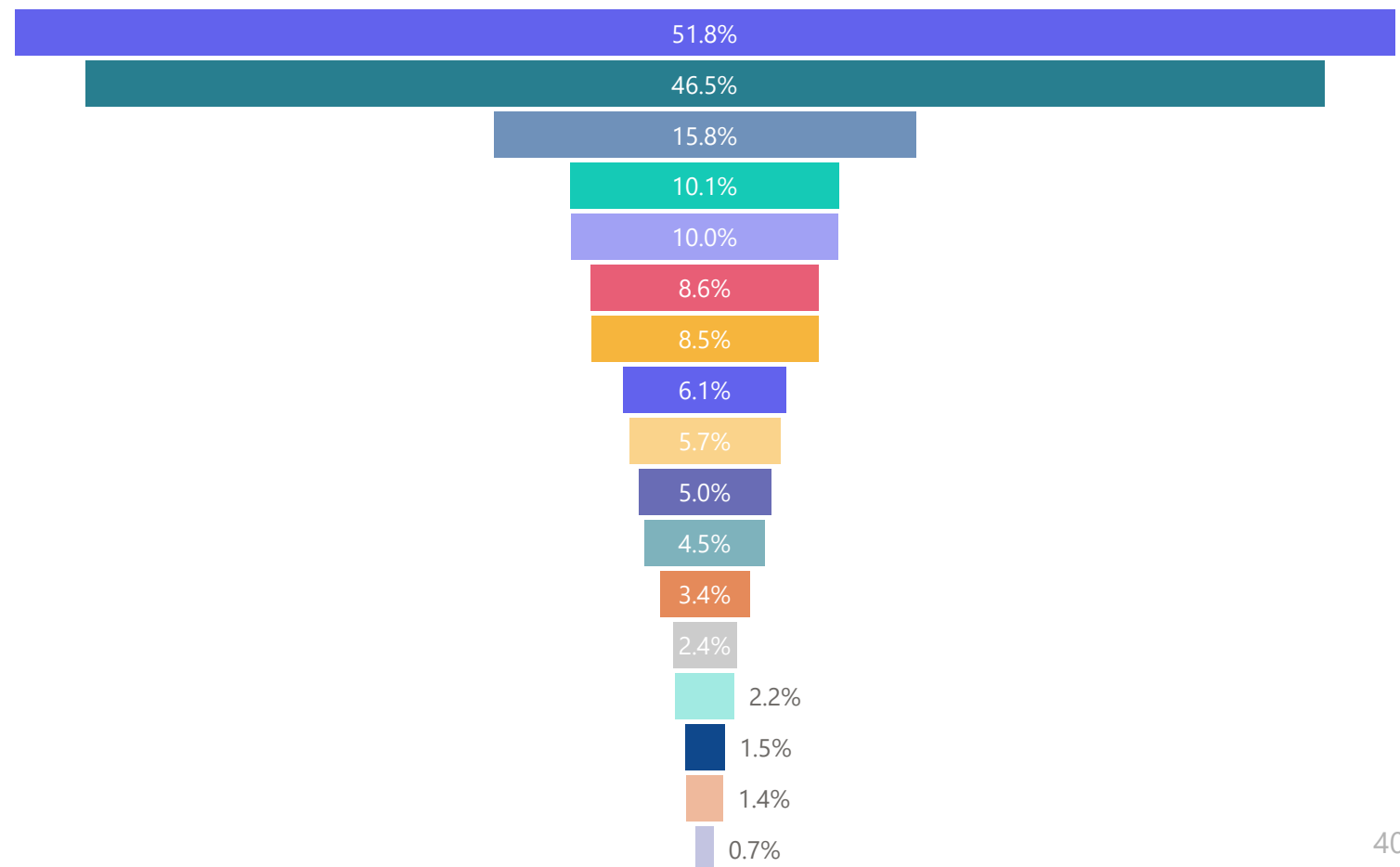
- 0 days
- 1-5 days
- 6-10 days
- Over 10 days



Main reasons for absence from school in the past 12 months

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 0 to 17 years old. Respondents could select all options that apply. It is important to consider that Covid-19 may have impacted these data, especially in the Illness and Other categories.

- Illness
- Appointments with doctor or dentist
- Appointments with mental health professional
- Meetings with social worker or child welfare worker
- Transportation issue
- Access visits
- Family vacation
- Completing AAR or Plan of Care
- Problems with teacher
- Problems with weather
- Problems with children/youths at school
- Fear of school
- Suspension
- Court appearance
- Truancy
- Attending FNIM ceremonies
- Other



educational achievement

Learning about future careers

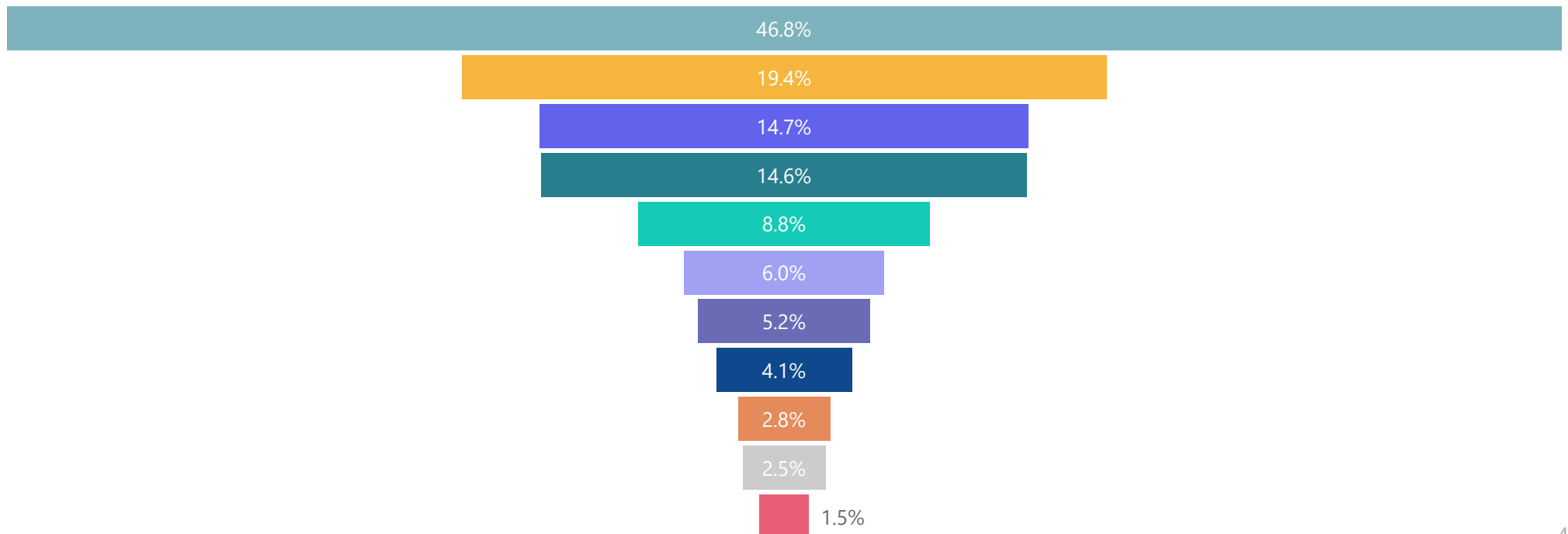
This item is reported by young people 10 to 15 years old. Respondents could select all options that apply. This item asks young people to identify any activities they have participated in that might help them to identify and learn about careers or work they would like to do in the future.

- Talked to a guidance counsellor at school
- Talked to someone in a job they might like
- Completed a questionnaire to find out about their interests and abilities
- Read information about different types of work or careers
- Attended an organized visit to a workplace
- Taken a school course where they spent time with an employer
- Attended a presentation by people working in different types of jobs
- Volunteered in an area you are interested in
- Talked to a FNIM Elder or Cultural Teacher or other Community member
- Other
- None of the above

Percentage of young people who have books of their own

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 0 to 15 years old.

97.1%



access to electronic communication

QUALITY STANDARD 11: ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Goal for Children and Young Persons

Where it has been deemed to be safe, children and young persons have developmentally-appropriate access to means of electronic communication, including electronic devices with internet access, in accordance with their needs and the placement setting.

The current version of the AAR has few items related to access to and use of electronic devices or the internet, and as such, is of limited utility in informing this Quality Standard. A future revision to the tool will provide an opportunity to ensure that items or measures are included that sufficiently address this Quality Standard.

Percentage of caregivers who talk to the young people in their care about social media safety

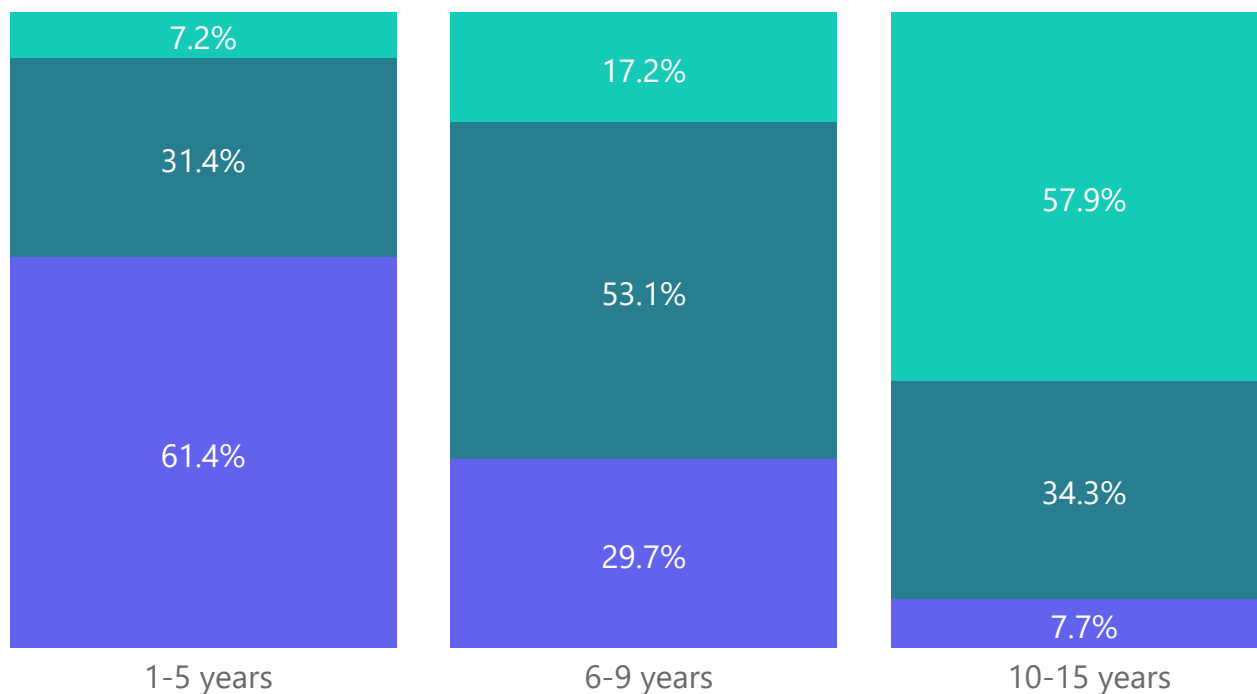
This item is reported by caregivers for young people 6 to 17 years old.

88.7%

Time spent on electronic devices per day (including television, social media, computer, and video games)

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 1 to 15 years old.

● Less than one hour ● One to two hours ● Two hours or more



supported transitions

QUALITY STANDARD 12: SUPPORTED TRANSITIONS

Goal for Children and Young Persons

Children and young person's receive care that helps them prepare and supports them in transitions, including placement changes, returning home, to independence and adulthood, and to adult services. Unplanned transitions are avoided as much as possible.

Percentage of young people who have a life book

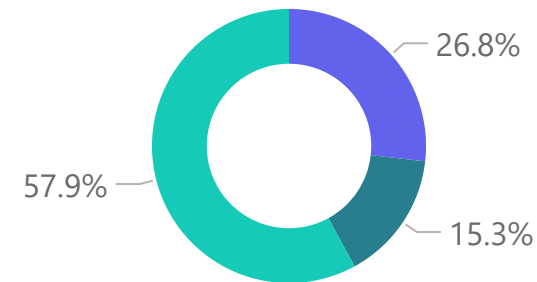
This item is reported by caregivers for children 0 to 9 years old and by young people 10 to 17 years old.

89.2%

Caregiver's intent to have the young person remain in the current placement until adulthood

This item is reported by child welfare workers.

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain



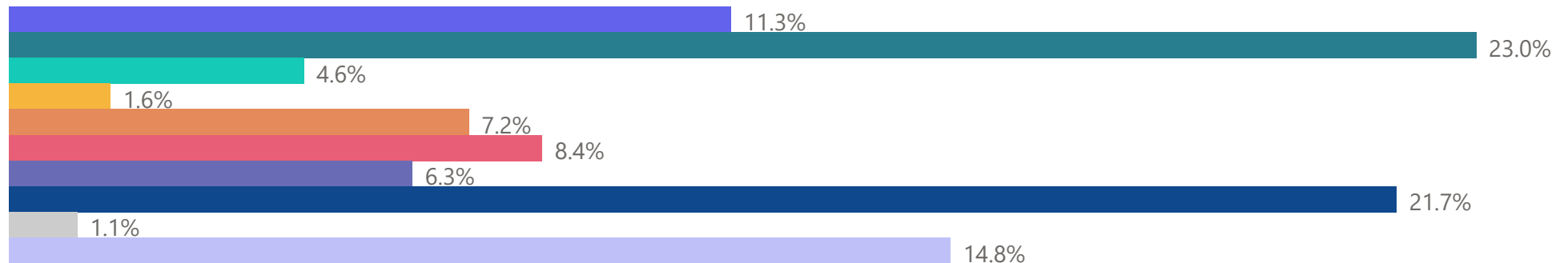
Percentage of young people who have a permanency plan

This item is reported by child welfare workers.

75.1%

What is the permanency plan for the young person

This item is reported by child welfare workers.



- Return home
- Kinship
- Customary care
- Adult services
- Other

- Adoption
- Status change to legal custody
- Independent living
- Remain in current placement
- Permanency plan is not yet developed

supported transitions



Average number of changes in main caregiver since birth

This item is reported by child welfare workers. Here, a caregiver is someone who has acted in that capacity for one month or more. Child welfare workers are invited to give their best estimate if the true number is unknown.

3.5

Percentage of young people who have had one or more school change

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old. This item is concerned with changes other than the natural progression through the school system.

72.7%

Average number of school changes since starting school

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old. This item is concerned with changes other than the natural progression through the school system. Child welfare workers are invited to give their best estimate if the true number is unknown.

3.5

Percentage of young people who have a part-time job

This item is reported by young people 16 to 17 years old.

26.8%

Percentage of young people 16 to 17 years old who report that they have the following documents

Driver's license

14.9%

Health card

96.3%

Birth certificate

96.5%

Passport

32.4%

Social Insurance Number Card

88.3%

Ontario Photo Card, if applicable

22.4%

Status Card, if applicable, for FNIM young people

44.1%

supported transitions

Percentage of young people are receiving all necessary assistance to learn independent living skills that are appropriate for their age

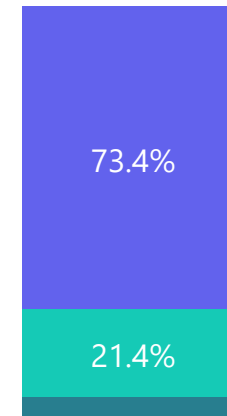
This item is reported by caregivers for young people 6 to 15 years old.

96.7%

Caregiver's involvement in helping prepare the young person for their transition to independent living

This item is reported by caregivers for young people 16 to 17 years old.

- Always or often
- Sometimes
- Rarely or never

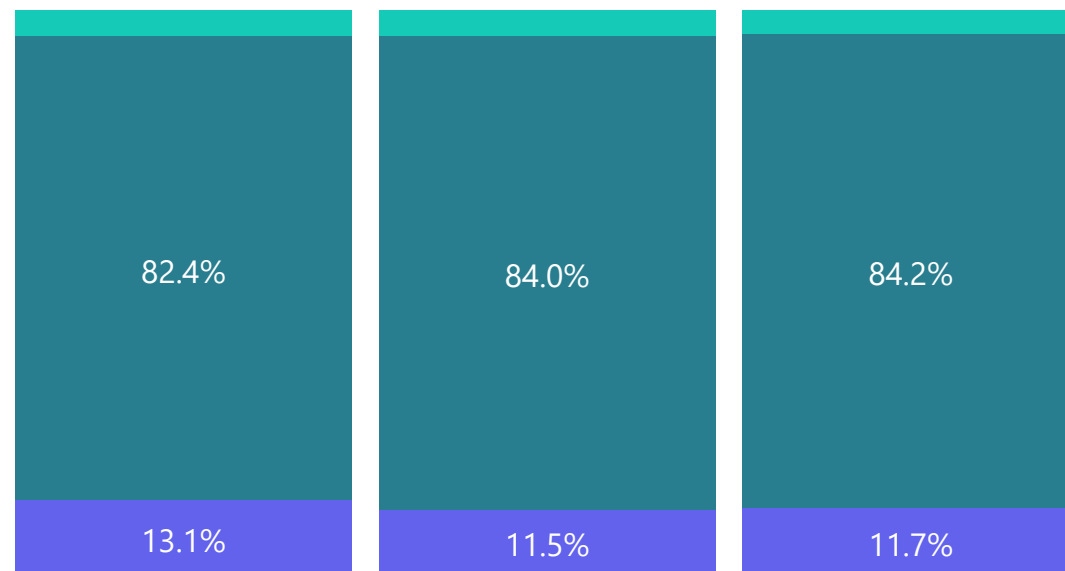


16-17 years

Young people who are learning to care for themselves at a level appropriate to their age and ability when given the necessary resources and support

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old as an objective of the Self-Care Skills dimension of the AAR.

- Already competent
- Learning to care for themselves
- Not learning to care for themselves



6-9 years

10-15 years

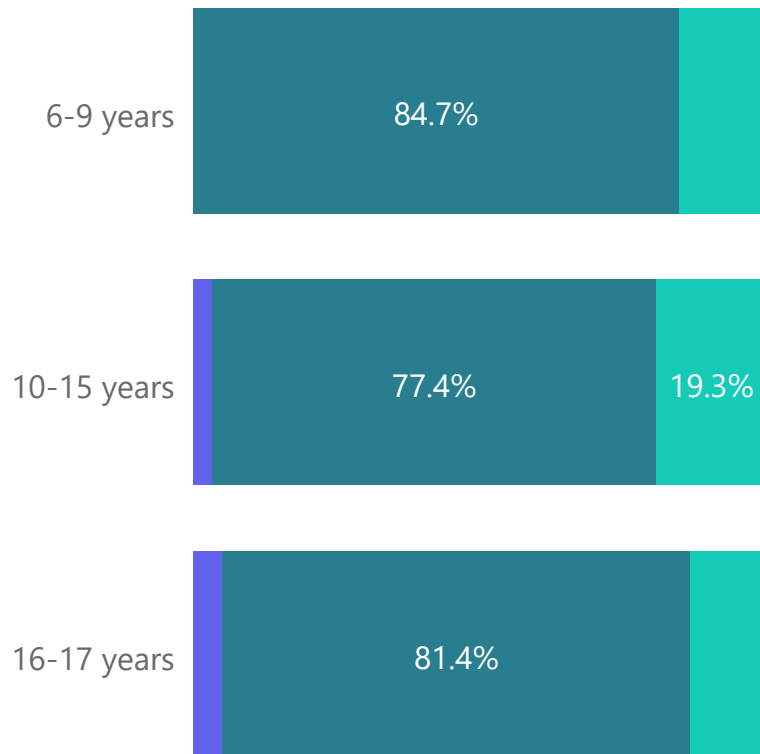
16-17 years

supported transitions

Money management skills

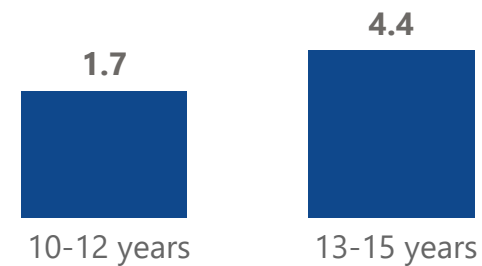
This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old as an objective of the Self-Care Skills dimension of the AAR.

- Already competent
- Learning money management skills
- Not learning money management skills



Financial literacy skills

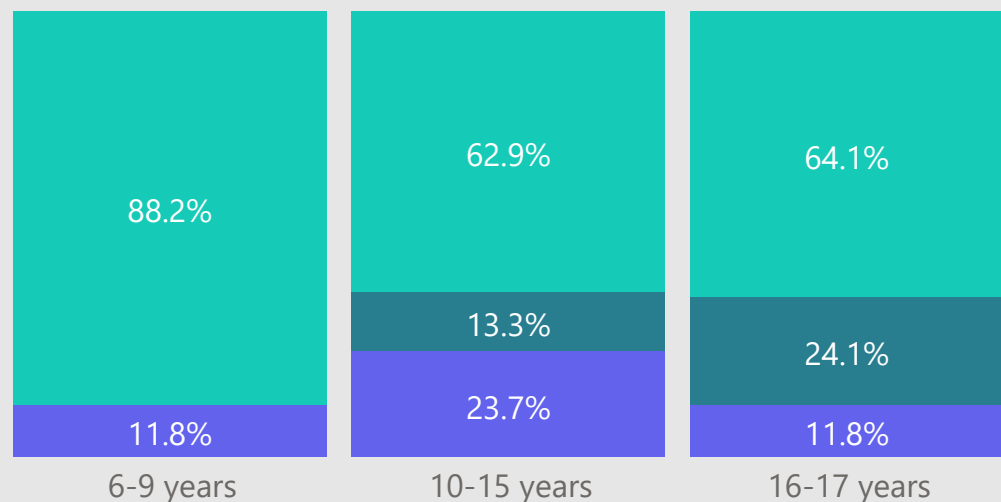
These measures are reported by caregivers for young people 10 to 15 years old. The 10-12 measure is four items, with a possible range of scores from 0 to 4. The 13-15 measure is eight items with a possible range of scores from 0 to 8. A higher score on both measures indicates that the young person possesses a higher level of financial literacy skills, appropriate to their age.



Learning Plan to build financial literacy skills

This item is reported by child welfare workers for young people 6 to 17 years old as an objective of the Self-Care Skills dimension of the AAR.

- Has a plan and it is implemented
- A plan is under development
- No action

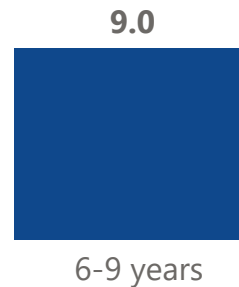


supported transitions

Self-care skills

Children 6-9 years old

This 13-item measure is reported by the caregiver for children 6 to 9 years old. With a possible range of 0 to 13, a higher score indicates that the child has acquired a higher number of age-appropriate life skills.



Young people 10-12 years old

This 13-item measure is reported by the caregiver for young people 10 to 12 years old. With a possible range of 0 to 13, a higher score indicates that the young person has acquired a higher number of age-appropriate life skills.



Young people 13-15 years old

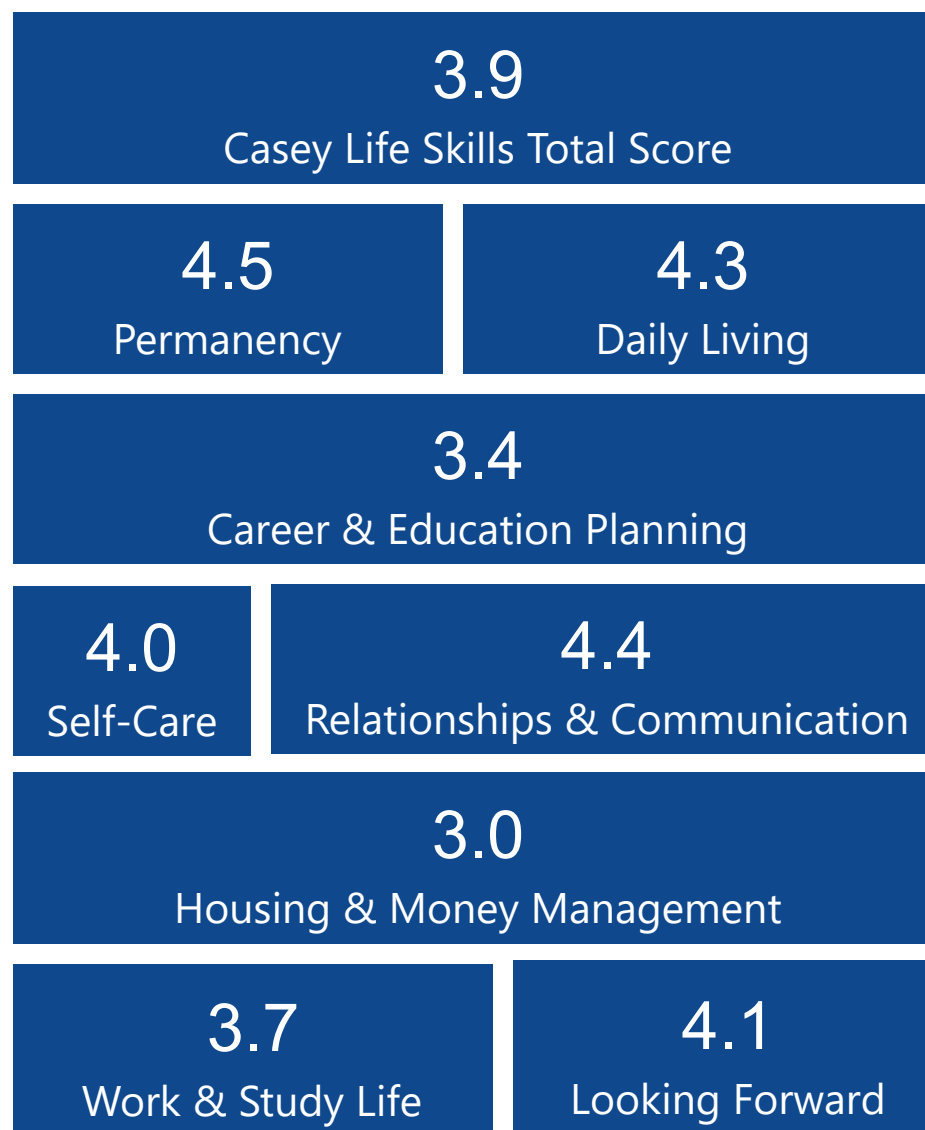
This 14-item measure is reported by the caregiver for young people 13 to 15 years old. With a possible range of 0 to 13, a higher score indicates that the young person has acquired a higher number of age-appropriate life skills.



supported transitions

Casey Life Skills

The Casey Life Skills measure is reported by young people 16 to 17 years old and the questions are interwoven throughout the AAR dimensions. Scores are averaged and have a possible range of 1 to 5, with a higher score indicating a greater level of familiarity, understanding, and/or proficiency in the eight life skills domains. The Casey Life Skills assessment was developed by Casey Family Programs specifically for young people in care and adapted for the Canadian context and inclusion in the AAR in 2016. Society results are colour-coded based on norms published in *Young People In Care: Findings from the Ontario Looking After Children Project* (Flynn et al., 2023)



further reading

Carnochan, S., Moore, M, & Austin, M. J. (2013). Achieving placement stability. *Journal of Evidence Based Social Work, 10*, (235-253).

Flynn, R. J., Miller, M., Bell, T., Greenberg, B., & Vincent, C. (2023). *Young people in out-of-home care: findings from the Ontario Looking After Children Project*. University of Ottawa Press: Ottawa, ON.

Miller, M. Flynn, R. J., & Vincent, C. (2017). User's manual for the AAR-C2-2016 (based on data from 2016). Prepared for the Ontario Looking After Children project by the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services, University of Ottawa.

Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. (2020). *Ontario's quality standards framework*. Retrieved from: files.ontario.ca/pdf/mccss-quality-standards-framework-en-2022-04-01.pdf