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CONNECTING CHILD WELFARE AND IMMIGRATION SYSTEMS

THE ROLE OF CWICE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report outlines how the Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence (CWICE) bridges the gap between child welfare and immigration by supporting children, youth and families with immigration issues. Through participatory systems mapping (PSM), we gained insights from workers' perspectives on how CWICE interacts with both child welfare and immigration systems. The systems map (see [Appendix 2](#)) visually represents the support systems for child welfare considerations at entry ports, highlighting CWICE's role in connecting these systems to build holistic support and safety for families and communities.

The challenges and benefits of CWICE's involvement are explored through worker interviews. Participants acknowledged the expertise of CWICE workers in navigating the complex immigration process, while indicating that challenges like worker turnover and the lack of clarity in designated representatives can complicate the circumstances for families. The report emphasizes collaboration and training as factors leading to more effective services, as well as the need for greater awareness of CWICE's services among settlement agencies to provide comprehensive support. Lastly, we recommend future research initiatives to better understand unaccompanied children's experiences in various child welfare systems across Canada. The report concludes with encouraging continued innovation and proactive collaboration in the child welfare sector to increase the safety and well-being of families and children dealing with immigration issues.



INTRODUCTION

Innovation in the child welfare sector is needed to address the underlying issues that lead to child welfare involvement and to provide newcomer families with the support they need to keep their children safe and thriving in their new home. The Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence (CWICE), established by Peel Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), addresses Ontario's increasing demand for transformative services. CWICE supports children and youth with immigration issues, including helping them attain immigration status in Canada—an essential aspect of safety often overlooked in the child welfare sector (CWICE, 2021). While this growing trend in Canadian child welfare involves children and families concurrently navigating child welfare and immigration systems (Ungara, 2023), data to inform or understand practice for workers at the intersection between child welfare and immigration is limited. The report aims to help address this gap by using Participatory Systems Mapping (PSM) to understand the intersection of immigration and child welfare from front-line¹ workers' perspectives of the systems, particularly their experiences working with CWICE.

CWICE is a Centre of Excellence with a multi-disciplinary team, including child welfare workers that assist children, youth and families experiencing immigration challenges (CWICE, 2021). This report is based on interviews conducted with front-line workers who worked with youth involved to varying degrees with the child welfare and immigration systems and engaged with CWICE services. Workers discussed their positive experiences with multi-agency collaboration and the need for further training to providing more effective services to children and families. A subsequent systems map was developed (see [Appendix 2](#)) to visually represent the 'behind-the-scenes' work and interconnected support systems involving child welfare considerations at the ports of entry. After this key entry point to the system at the port of entry, the map follows the institutional support available for children and families. The map shows that CWICE is critical in connecting the two systems to provide holistic support and safety to children and families with immigration needs. The report emphasizes the urgency for continued innovation and collaboration within the child welfare sector to provide essential support for children and families.

¹ In this report, we define a 'front-line worker' as someone who directly works with family and children in the provision of services related to settlement or child welfare (e.g., housing or legal services).

CONTEXT OF THE REPORT

Immigration in Ontario, Canada

As a settler-colonial nation, Canada has a long-standing immigration history characterized by the development of evolving immigration policies and systems. The past century has included various periods of exclusionary and discriminatory practices, particularly towards racialized migrants based on broader sociopolitical contexts. With a shift towards more ethical and proactive approaches to immigration, Canada's practices have been driven by addressing labour market demands, stimulating economic progress, and promoting cultural diversity. As there is a growing acknowledgement and understanding of Canada's history among professionals and the general public, government initiatives have made considerable progress in addressing these historical injustices and promoting inclusivity (GC, 2023). There are still many challenges and disparities that persist, but efforts to address systemic racism embedded in Canada's immigration system and overtly racist attitudes toward migrants are emerging.

National data shows that in 2021, more than 8.3 million people, or almost one-quarter (23.0%) of the population, were, or had ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident in Canada, meaning that almost 1 out of 4 people in Canada were born outside the country (Statistics Canada, 2022). These statistics further vary by region, such as in Regional Municipality of Peel, where 1 in 2 residents were born outside of Canada. More than half of the residents of four municipalities in the Toronto CMA were born outside of Canada, with varying periods of immigration: Markham (58.6%), Richmond Hill (58.2%), Mississauga (53.2%) and Brampton (52.9%) (Statistics Canada, 2022). The province of Ontario, Canada, is a popular destination due to a multitude of factors. Among these, economic prospects and the aspiration for an enhanced standard of living emerge as prominent motivations for those migrating. Moreover, the desire for family reunification is a strong factor for immigration, as people opt to join family members already residing in Ontario. Ontario's geographical location plays a role in its status as a primary point of contact for immigration, as it shares borders with the United States, and has several international airports, such as Toronto Pearson International Airport in the Peel region.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has a substantial role in monitoring, deterring and intercepting entry to Canada (GC, 2021). Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, every person who wants to enter Canada must appear for an examination at a port of entry for government officials to determine whether the person can enter and remain in Canada (GC, 2021). While the Canadian government states that CBSA officers are "keeping Canadians safe" (GC, 2021, p. 1), Atak et al. (2019) offer a critique of CBSA officers, viewing them as having the power to deny or delay access to services, health care and education.

Child Welfare in Ontario, Canada

Ontario's child welfare system is distinct compared to other provinces and territories in Canada, as it has a decentralized model for the delivery of services (Fallon et al., 2015; Lwin et al., 2018). Currently, 51 Children's Aid Societies (CAS) in Ontario, including 13 Indigenous societies, are legislated to provide child welfare services (Government of Ontario, 2022). Each CAS is "an independent, non-profit organization run by a board of directors elected from the local community or, in the case of two Indigenous societies, band councils" (Government of Ontario, 2022, p. 3). CAS provide child welfare services governed by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA). While independently operated, the shared goal is to promote child safety, well-being, and permanency (Lwin et al., 2018). CAS provides services for children up to 18 years old; however, services for children 16 and 17 years old that do not require immediate protection are voluntary (Government of Ontario, 2020). Of the 51 Children's Aid Societies, Peel CAS in Ontario responds to child welfare referrals from Canada's largest airport, Pearson International Airport. Due to the increased movement in the area and the high need for a specialized child protection team to support the growing, diverse population, Peel CAS developed an immigration team in 1999, to assist children, youth and families experiencing immigration challenges, then later developed CWICE in 2018 (CWICE, 2021). CWICE provides services across Ontario related to immigration-related issues within a child welfare context and is mandated to provide the following:

"(1) consultation and support for Ontario [Children's Aid Societies] managing complex child protection and immigration cases; (2) eight-part Training Series Certificate Program for child welfare professionals; (3) short-term interventions to assist children with immigration-related status challenges; (4) raise awareness on the scope and importance of immigration status issues; (4) identify and develop partnerships and protocols with local, provincial and federal partners to resolve immigration issues; (5) collect data and facilitate research to promote an improved understanding of the scope of immigration issues across the Child Welfare Sector; and (6) develop resources that can be used by [Children's Aid Societies], children and families" (CWICE, 2020).

Disaggregated data that informs the total number of non-Canadian citizens involved with the child welfare system is unavailable. Nevertheless, CWICE reported providing services to 666 individuals across Canada from the 2021 to 2022 fiscal years and responding to 105 child protection cases from the airport or within the Peel Region (Ungara, 2022). CWICE reported service recipients from 82 countries, which included continents of origin from Asia (32%), North America (20%), South America (19%), Africa (17%) and Europe (12%) (Ungara, 2022).

OUR APPROACH

This report is a subset of a collaboration between the Rights for Children and Youth Partnership (RCYP) and the CWICE. The larger RCYP project seeks to increase knowledge of factors that hinder or support the rights of children and youth in Central America, the Caribbean and their diasporas in Canada. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and approved by the Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) Research Ethics Board (2006–079-01).

We used purposive and snowball sampling for recruitment, circulating posters through collaborating organizations' professional networks. Initial participants also helped recruit additional participants through their networks. We interviewed fourteen front-line workers: nine from various social service sectors (housing, outreach, settlement, legal) and five from child welfare. We invited CBSA officers, but they did not respond. Our goal was to understand the specific phenomenon rather than generalize findings due to the small sample size. After analyzing the initial interviews, we conducted a follow-up focus group with six participants for clarification and member checking. All participants gave verbal and/or written consent to participate. To protect privacy and confidentiality, we use pseudonyms and altered identifying information.

We collected data from January to August 2021. Interviews, which lasted 30 to 60 minutes, involved participants discussing their work, client situations, and interactions with external agencies. We asked open-ended questions focusing on institutional knowledge and the outcomes of their interactions. After the initial analysis, we held a focus group further to understand the points of contact across different sectors. Due to COVID-19, we conducted all interviews and the focus group virtually via Zoom and recorded the audio separately.

Participatory Systems Mapping (PSM)

Meadows (2008) describes systems as an “interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something” (p. 11). Systems mapping is a methodology used to represent and understand complex systems through a graphical representation of the components of the system, the relationships between them, and how they interact to achieve a particular goal or outcome (WEF, 2023). Systems maps can also analyze interconnected issues by mapping the process of intertwining systems and envisioning a collective process meant to address a complex problem (Dentoni et al., 2023). Participatory Systems Mapping (PSM) is a collaborative approach to systems mapping that involves stakeholders in creating and analyzing a system map (Barbrook-Johnson & Penn, 2022). PSM recognizes that stakeholders have unique perspectives, knowledge, and expertise that can enrich the understanding and analysis of the system. PSM shares some features and complementarity with other

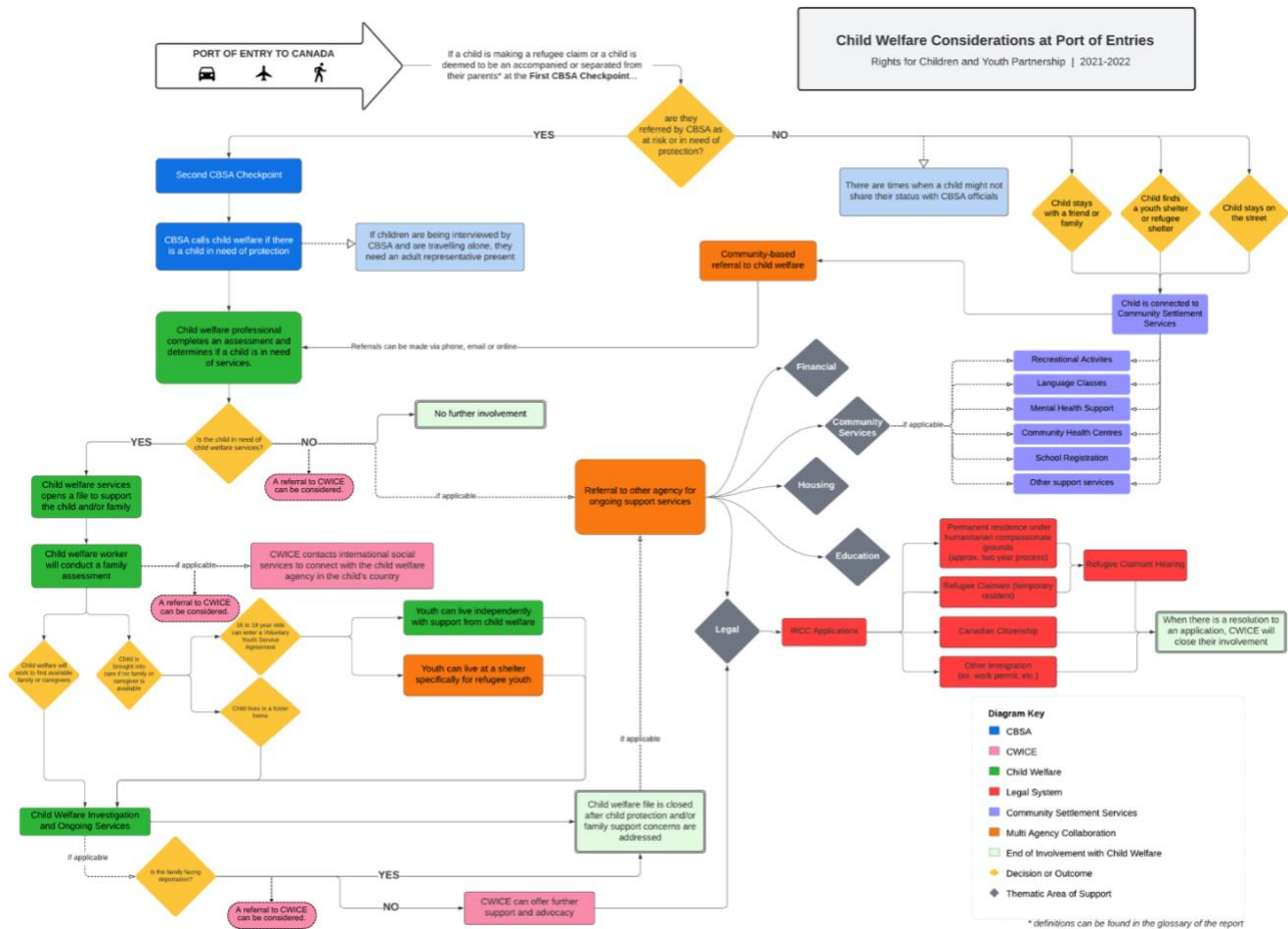
participatory methods, such as scenarios and visioning approaches, namely by using workshops and group interactions as platforms for deliberation and creative thinking while accounting for multiple values and diversity of represented worldviews (Sedlacko et al., 2014). The use of PSM can help identify the key drivers of a system and how they influence each other, leading to improved decision-making, communication, and, ultimately, more effective and sustainable outcomes (Sedlacko et al., 2014). The process of systems mapping typically involves identifying the fundamental elements of the system and representing them using symbols or diagrams (Barbrook-Johnson & Penn, 2022).

As part of our research, we determined the system boundaries as being focused on children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum, as this was suspected be a circumstance where child welfare services are involved at early stages. The immigration and asylum system were designed for adults, meaning there is limited support available to all children and youth who are unaccompanied and separated (CWICE & JIAS, 2022). CWICE has been engaging in front-line and advocacy work related to unaccompanied and separated children and the absence of a framework, leader, definition or identified coordination in the roles that many individuals and organizations should and do play related to such issues (see CWICE & JIAS, 2022). The starting point of the map is the “port of entry” by land, air or water. We collected data, coded the data for variables and connections, determined the structure focal factors and developed the first map. The relationships between elements were mapped out using arrows or lines, indicating the direction of influence or flow of resources or information. Next, we verified and amended the map based on feedback from relevant stakeholders and research participants. Lastly, we completed an analysis to understand the interactions, synergies and clashes. The purpose of using PSM for this report was to synthesize and connect information while developing a knowledge repository for workers involved with both systems to make the information accessible.

PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS MAP: CHILD WELFARE AND IMMIGRATION

Figure 1 shows the Participatory Systems Mapping (PSM) as a method of inquiry and maps out the practices of child welfare considerations at the Port of Entries to Canada (see [Appendix 2](#) for larger map).

Figure 1: Child Welfare Considerations at Port of Entries



Source: Developed by the authors based on data, 2023

The map is structured around a child who is unaccompanied and seeking asylum arriving at the port of entry by land, air or water into Canada. The anatomy of the system map confirms the interconnectedness of child welfare and immigration systems for children arriving at the border and the complex nature of the systemic responses. Indeed, there is a lack of clear frameworks and coordination between individuals and organizations involving children in immigration and asylum systems designed for adults (CWICE & JIAS, 2022).

Despite this complexity, the map suggests the necessary role CWICE plays in connecting the two systems. There are points of leverage that have the potential to impact (positively or negatively) the outcomes for children and youth. Key variables outlined in the map include:

- Community-based referrals to child welfare;
- Interactions at the port of entry with CBSA officers;
- If the child and/or family are connected to CWICE through child welfare.

The systems map showing child welfare and immigration is based on qualitative interviews with the participants. The following sections provides quotes to describe the nuances of these interactions visualized in the map and offer the perceptions of the systems from the view of front-line workers.

Connection Between Child Welfare and Immigration Support

The involvement of CWICE was shown to positively impact outcomes for children navigating the intersection of child welfare and immigration systems due to their interpersonal interactions and systemic involvement. As part of community support services, a settlement support worker explained how working with CWICE bridged the gap in systemic knowledge between child welfare workers and community settlement services:

We really appreciate [CWICE]. A local [child welfare agency] might respect them more than they would us. We say, “well, this is the way the rules are”, for refugee youth or something, they might not trust us. But if we send them to [CWICE], then they'll get it (Settlement support worker).

An immigration lawyer described the additional system benefits to children when workers collaborate with CWICE, suggesting that children experience streamlined processes within the immigration system as well due to their proximity to the program by saying, “[...] anyone involved with CWICE would be kind of a candidate for being accepted faster, or fast-tracked”. In these circumstances, CWICE’s collaboration and knowledge of the systems led to improved benefits for the children and their respective cases. For instance, a child welfare worker shared how accessing CWICE services helped both them and their client understand the complexities of the asylum-seeking process:

To have somebody like CWICE who is there to support and walk not only me, but [the youth] through that process. I found they're very, very helpful. I know that my young person appreciates it, the support and the guidance because, like I said, I'm sure you know, it's a... it's a lengthy process, right? And it's a lot of... a lot of information (Child welfare worker).

The need for such collaboration given the absence of a formal framework was clearly identified. Adequately supporting an unaccompanied minor or refugee family happened across programs and there was significantly more 'behind-the-scenes' work that went on for children with concurrent child welfare and immigration needs:

It takes a village just to help families in general, so I'm not able to do it myself, absolutely, there's no way I can do it. After I've talked to a family, I'm making calls to find out who can help them and try to get them connected to that. I do a lot of the coordination to try to get them connected to the appropriate services (Immigration lawyer).

As detailed in the systems map, CWICE is an intermediary that facilitates communication and cooperation between front-line workers and immigration officials while enhancing the credibility of support services among refugee youth, making such collaboration possible. Thus, CWICE has the potential to positively influence the trajectory of children's experiences within these systems.

Perceptions of Experiences with CWICE

Through our interviews with child welfare workers, immigration lawyers, and settlement support workers, various positive insights emerge regarding CWICE's impact on service delivery and outcomes for unaccompanied minors and refugee children. A child welfare worker spoke about how CWICE seeks out external feedback and has received overall positive evaluations of its services:

We do receive a lot of positive feedback, whether sometimes it's during a presentation, during or after a presentation or working on a case, just a lot of people are really, really grateful, and there's so much that they don't know, so whether it's a client, sometimes we've had kids in care who've had difficulty obtaining status or citizenship for years (Child welfare worker).

A conversation that emerged during interviews was regarding who would be the first at the port of entry to meet an unaccompanied minor; an immigration lawyer explained how youths had better outcomes during their hearings if CBSA called a CWICE worker to meet the youth at the port of entry:

[CWICE's] role is especially really useful at the beginning if they're a port of entry claim and there's a child or minor that's flagged at [the airport] that they're first on the scene to kind of advocate and get the child to the right place. And if the handoff happens later, I at least know that the early stages of the refugee part were dealt with well because they understand the process (Immigration lawyer).

Participants suggested that their positive experiences with CWICE’s services were tied to outcomes, but also the quality of the processes and ongoing interactions with children and families. For instance, a settlement support worker spoke about the caring service provision:

Initially, my general perspective on child welfare agencies was very nuanced at the beginning, but I'd say [CWICE] are much better, and then most agencies where the quality of the worker can vary significantly. Everyone at CWICE seems to be, you know, an excellent worker, and really care about their clients seem to go the extra mile (Settlement support worker).

Often, these positive experiences were described in contrast to “regular” child welfare work, who may not have the additional specialized knowledge:

...it's no slight at all on [child welfare workers], it's just, [CWICE workers] are experts in this very specific field. And there's not a ton. There's really not a ton of unaccompanied minors. So, it would be it's like an unusual thing, probably on a caseload for a, like a regular worker. And then like for CWICE, they deal with it all the time (Immigration Lawyer).

A child welfare worker correspondingly acknowledged their lack of knowledge in the sector and the benefit of accessing CWICE services to navigate the immigration and child welfare processes:

...with CWICE, we can contact them, and they have all the wealth, knowledge and experience. And they can help navigate us through that process. Not only us, but the children and family. And they can definitely develop that relationship because that's their area of expertise... in my situation, we were very much a team effort. We worked cooperatively together (Child welfare worker).

However, like with all child welfare services, participants observed that maintaining worker continuity posed a challenge when engaging with the system, including CWICE:

CWICE workers seem to rotate every couple of months, sometimes—at most every year. I understand. It's an exceedingly difficult job. People burn out quickly. But it means there's [a] constant turnover of workers and staff that children are exposed to. So having at least one stable worker at CWICE while their principal worker turns over is very helpful for giving them some stability and making sure things keep moving and the applications don't get dropped (Immigration lawyer).

Overall, participants positively perceived their experiences with CWICE regarding their impact on service delivery and outcomes for children and families. Participants noted the significance of CWICE's specialized expertise in immigration matters, which often surpassed that of regular child welfare services. However, the increased need for continuity was noted in this specialized sector.

DISCUSSION

This report aimed to explore the experiences of front-line workers supporting children, youth and families with immigration issues and, more specifically, their experiences with CWICE. Several key themes emerged, including the expertise of CWICE workers in supporting cases involving unaccompanied minors and refugee children. CWICE workers were viewed as effective advocates in navigating the complexities of immigration processes and ensuring that children accessed culturally and contextually appropriate support networks. Participants indicated how the presence of CWICE workers led to a smoother transition into the refugee claim process and contributed to favourable outcomes during legal hearings.

However, challenges related to worker turnover within CWICE were acknowledged. Like existing literature, workers noted that child welfare social workers deal with internal pressures of complex caseloads with limited staff, high burnout and turnover rates, all of which diminish a worker's capacity to engage with a family how they intended (Ferguson et al., 2021). Participants shared that the high worker turnover encountered with CWICE, mainly when a relationship with a client had already been established, negatively impacted the trust and relationship building with clients. Participants stressed the importance of having a stable worker at CWICE to ensure continuity, stability, and the uninterrupted progress of applications and support services. The rates of turnover suggest stress associated with the CWICE workers' role, similar to other child welfare work and consistent with the high burnout rates in child welfare (Alger & Gushwa, 2021; Cameron et al., 2011; Mandell et al., 2013; McFadden et al., 2018; Ray et al., 2013; Shier et al., 2018). Changing workers can negatively impact a child already dealing with instability due to the circumstances of the migration process.

Another challenge highlighted by participants was the need for more regulation or clarity about designated representatives (DR). Participants shared that anyone could be a DR, reporting that shelter workers or lawyers could have acted as such and perceived that CWICE workers might have as well. During member checking, we found that CWICE staff could not be a DR due to a conflict of interest; this further suggests the unclear processes in this area of immigration. According to participants, having a knowledgeable or unknowledgeable representative determines many outcomes for unaccompanied refugee minors, impacting access to resources and the success or failure of their refugee claims. Given the consequence of designating the right representative on a child's future, more regulation and information on who can be one, who should or should not be eligible, and supervision throughout arose as a recommendation. Many participants saw CWICE services as a great benefit, both in individual workers and as service, as workers could serve to guide the DR.

Participants indicated that greater knowledge of the services CWICE provided would be beneficial among different settlement agencies. A participant stated that a professional relationship initially notified

them of the existence of CWICE, and from there, they could contact CWICE and have team members attend their training. Spreading awareness of the presence of CWICE and its many benefits to organizations was raised as an asset to those based outside of Ontario and across Canada. Participants spoke about the significance of multi-agency collaboration and coordination in delivering comprehensive support, and noted that the disconnect between organizations and systems presented a significant barrier to providing children and youth with the best possible care. Information between and about other agencies often depended on individual networks and professional connections made. Some participants suggested improved efforts could be made systemically to provide workers with a consistent foundational base of what organizations existed and how collaborations could be fostered and used.

Finally, it was emphasized throughout that collaboration between organizations that served child protection needs and organizations that served immigration needs was needed. Participants expressed their desire for cross-system coordination. CWICE was recognized as a key partner in this collaboration, bridging the knowledge gap between child welfare and immigration systems.

Future Research

There is limited existing literature about unaccompanied children in Canada in recent years. A recommendation for future research would be to understand the experiences of unaccompanied children in Canada's different child welfare systems from provincial perspectives. This recommendation recognizes that this population group is vulnerable, and research teams have limited access. Still, considering ethical research principles, the benefit of respectful, purposeful research that honours unaccompanied children's lived experiences to improve service delivery may outweigh the associated risks. Campbell et al. (2017) explain that clients' perceptions of their needs and experience of services are the most critical insight in informing how services are provided. Further research with more diverse populations is necessary to explore these findings in greater depth. Future studies could also assess the long-term outcomes and impacts of CWICE involvement on the well-being and integration of unaccompanied minors and refugee children.

CONCLUSION

The systems map offers a visual depiction of the journey an unaccompanied or asylum-seeking child goes on upon arrival at a Canadian port of entry, detailing the connection between child welfare and immigration systems. Amidst these intricacies, the map highlights the necessary role CWICE assumes in supporting children involved with these two complex systems. The map delineates several critical variables that can alter a child's trajectory, including referrals from the community to child welfare if child welfare is called during interactions with CBSA officers at entry points and how international family members and child welfare agencies are integrated in child welfare cases. In summary, CWICE stands out as an essential service, connecting these systems, thus improving procedures and results for those involved.

There is a pressing need for child welfare services in Canada that understand the complexities of the immigration system to provide support and resources to children and families, including legal advice, translation services, and connections to community organizations; these services can help ensure that immigrant families receive the support they need to navigate the child welfare system and keep their children safe and thriving. Considering the existing commitment to providing support to children at ports of entry to Canada, child welfare services must be inclusive of immigrant families and prioritize cultural competence and sensitivity in their approach. Recognizing the expertise and unique contributions of CWICE workers can inform the development of specialized training programs and professional development opportunities. Similar to other child welfare contexts, efforts to address worker turnover through strategies such as workload management, support systems, and career development pathways can improve the experience of families involved with the system. Enhancing collaboration among child welfare agencies, settlement services, and CWICE can further optimize the support provided to children involved with the immigration system. However, when identifying supports to adhere to the primary purpose of child welfare—keeping families together—CWICE fulfills a nuanced set of needs to support children's best interests.

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APPENDIX 1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
At-risk	Referring to child(ren) facing potential harm, danger, or negative outcomes due to specific vulnerabilities or circumstances in the context of child welfare services.
Brought into care	The act of placing a child under the care and responsibility of child welfare authorities due to concerns about their safety and well-being.
Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)	The federal agency responsible for enforcing immigration and customs regulations at Canadian borders and ports of entry.
Child	Any person under the age of 18, unless under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier.
Child in need of protection	A child (under 18) who is in a situation where their safety, well-being, and rights are at risk and requires intervention from child welfare services.
Child welfare	The system of policies, programs, and services designed to safeguard and enhance the well-being of children and ensure their safety.
Child welfare investigation	The process of examining and collecting information to determine if a child is in need of protection and to guide decisions on intervention and support.
Community Settlement Services	Programs and resources provided to newcomers and immigrants to facilitate their integration and adjustment in a new community, including language training and social support. These services aim to facilitate a holistic settlement in Canada by offering comprehensive support that addresses various aspects of the settlement process.
Deportation	The legal protocol by which an individual is lawfully and systematically relocated from Canada under immigration laws. The deportation must be a just, transparent process that adheres to international human rights norms, including access to legal representation and protection against refoulement.
Family Assessment	An evaluative process undertaken by child welfare professionals to comprehensively analyze the strengths, needs, dynamics, and resources of a family, guiding informed decisions regarding appropriate interventions and support measures within the child welfare framework.
Family finding	The process of identifying and connecting a child with their extended family or kinship network to provide a supportive and stable environment.

File	A collection of documents and information related to a specific child regarding their child welfare involvement.
Foster home	A residence where a child is placed under the care of approved foster parents by child welfare authorities.
Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)	The Canadian government department responsible for immigration, refugee, and citizenship matters.
Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)	An Act respecting immigration to Canada and the granting of refugee protection to persons who are displaced, persecuted or in danger. The Act provides a high-level framework detailing the goals and guidelines the Canadian government has set with regard to immigration to Canada by foreign residents. The Act relates to examinations at ports of entry; enforcement, including arrests, detentions, removals, and policy establishment; and inadmissibility on the grounds of security, organized criminality, or violation of international rights (incl. human rights).
Humanitarian Compassionate Grounds	The legal basis for granting immigration status in Canada due to compelling humanitarian and compassionate reasons. Individuals may seek humanitarian and compassionate grounds due to extraordinary and compelling circumstances, such as the need to escape violence, persecution, or extreme hardships in their home country.
Port of Entry	A designated location, such as an airport or border crossing, where individuals enter Canada.
Refugee Claimant	An individual who has applied for refugee protection in Canada and is awaiting a decision on their claim.
Refugee Claimant Hearing	A legal proceeding to determine whether an individual is eligible for refugee protection in Canada.
Separated child(ren)	Those separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members. A separated child <i>may</i> be seeking asylum.
Unaccompanied child (also called unaccompanied minor)	A child who has been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. An unaccompanied child <i>may</i> be seeking asylum.
Voluntary Youth Service Agreement (VYSA)	An agreement between a youth (16 to 18 years) and child welfare authorities outlining the terms and support provided when the youth is not in the care of their parents or guardians.

APPENDIX 2: Child Welfare Considerations at Port of Entries

Child Welfare Considerations at Port of Entries

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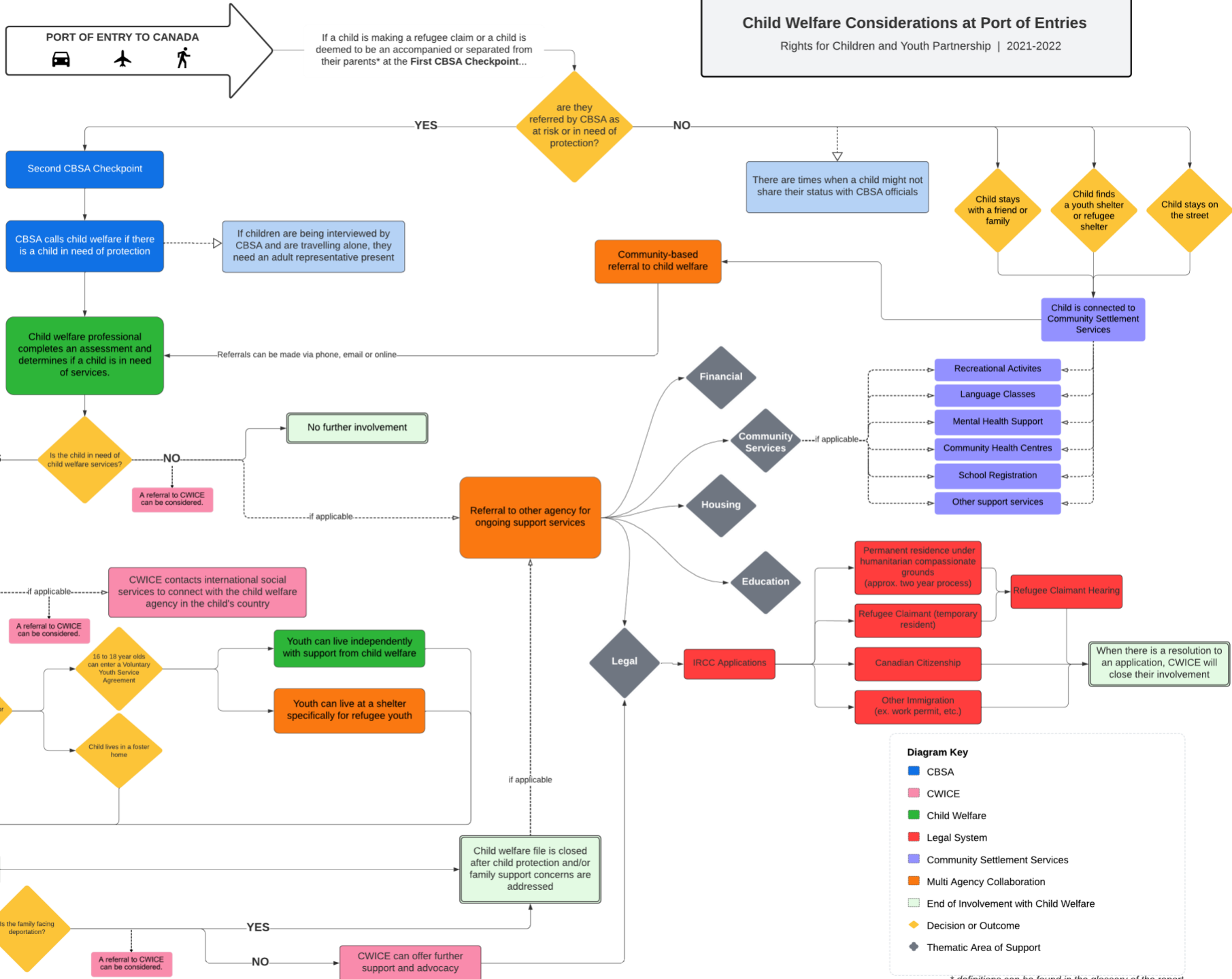


Diagram Key

- CBSA
- CWICE
- Child Welfare
- Legal System
- Community Settlement Services
- Multi Agency Collaboration
- End of Involvement with Child Welfare
- ◆ Decision or Outcome
- ◆ Thematic Area of Support

** definitions can be found in the glossary of the report*