

Foster Care Redesign

Spring 2023 Information Sessions

MAY 2023

Welcome!

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which Mi'kmaq Wəlastəkwiyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726.

The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wəlastəkwiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Additionally, we would like to acknowledge that within Nova Scotia, people of African ancestry settled and contributed to the building of many formative developments, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries:

This includes the Black Loyalists who fought on the side of Britain during the American War of Independence, The Maroons, who fought and never surrendered to the Spanish and British in Jamaica and Southern American Black Refugees, who fought on the side of the British during the War of 1812.

Session Purpose

Our objectives today are to:



Increase your understanding of Foster Care Redesign and related changes.



Provide information about the timing of upcoming changes.



Provide an opportunity for you to ask questions.

Discussion Topics

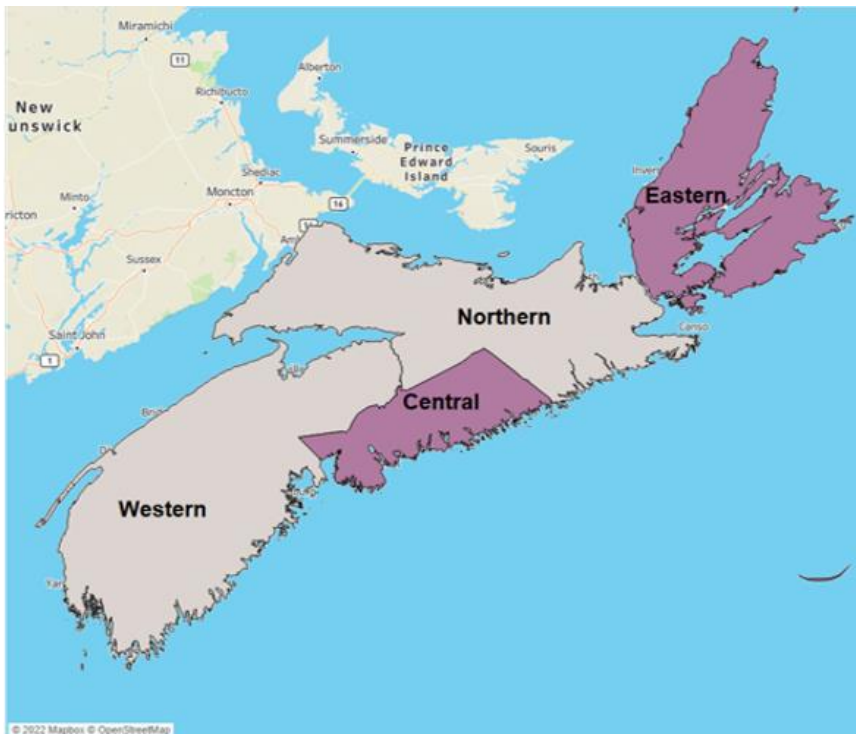
Topics	Agenda items
Constellation Approach	“Welcome to MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ ” video
	Update on the MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellations
	Constellation Rollout
Placement Continuum	Understanding the Placement Types and the Transition to New Placement Types
Funding Approach	Understanding Block Funding
Recruitment & Retention	Recruitment & Retention Strategy
	Overview of Years of Service Payments

Constellation Approach

Nova Scotia's First Two Constellations

The implementation of MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ officially began with the launch of two Constellations in December 2022. This approach has provided a valuable learning opportunity as we prepare for the broader roll later this year.

Below is a snapshot of Nova Scotia's first two Constellations as of March 2023.



Eastern Constellation

Satellite Homes: There are 8 Satellite Homes in the Eastern region. Each Satellite Home has at least one child in full-time placement.

Children/Youth: There are 16 children and youth in total within the Constellation.

Central Constellation

Satellite Homes: There are 6 Satellite Homes in the Central region. Each Satellite Home has at least one child in full-time placement.

Children/Youth: There are 15 children and youth in total within the Constellation.

Hearing from our Hub Homes

Our first two Hub Homes shared some of their thoughts on the Mockingbird Family™ approach, constellations and the new funding model:

- Eastern Hub Home Foster Caregiver – Evelyn:
 - ▶ "It's great, just not having to fill out those expense sheets every month and having enough money to do the things you would like to do for the kids, and that's pretty much what all of the other foster parents are saying."
 - ▶ "I'm just hoping that you guys will give this program a chance because it's here and it's working well for the kids and that's what we're here for."
- Hub Home Foster Caregiver – Debbie:
 - ▶ "My role as a hub home foster caregiver is to support and advocate for all the foster caregivers and the children in my constellation."
 - ▶ "I'm really excited about being one of the first hub homes because what I notice is that it centers around family, strengthening families and giving children a sense of permanency and also to prevent placement breakdown."

Constellation Rollout



Constellation rollouts across Nova Scotia are expected to **begin in the Fall of 2023 and be substantially completed by Spring 2024.**



A Hub Home will first be identified, and where possible, the closest surrounding foster caregivers (with the exception of respite exclusive) would be assigned to the Constellation as Satellite Homes.



Constellations will be formed based on Hub and Satellite Homes who have a mix of varying skills, experience, cultural backgrounds, and years of service as caregivers. **The potential to embrace the natural Constellations that currently exist in communities** will also be considered through the rollout.

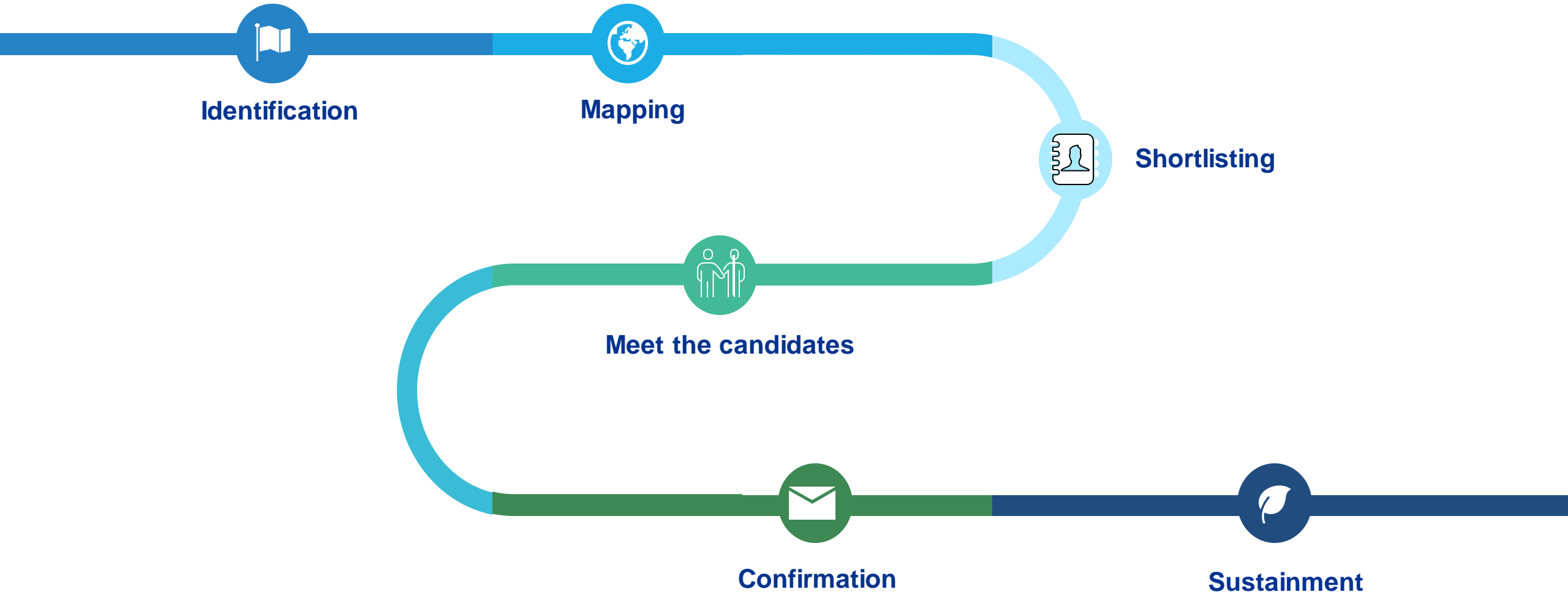
Hub Home Identification

The following criteria will be used to select Hub Homes:

- Demonstrated skills and experience to serve as resources and provide peer support to Satellite Homes (strong organizational skills are required, as well as the ability to support transportation needs and maintain a calendar of events, etc.)
- Proximity to Satellite Homes to ensure utilization of services and to promote connectedness
- Open and approved caregivers (approved by DCS/MFCS)
- Nearly 24/7 availability (excluding annual leave) to provide planned respite
- Comfortable talking with children / youth
- Comfortable talking with adults
- Skilled in interacting with a group of children / youth
- Availability of two open beds for respite use by the Constellation
- Sensitive and responsive to the culture, identity, and ethnicity of the children / youth being served
- Models anti-racism and anti-bias practices within the Constellation.

Hub Home Recruitment / Selection

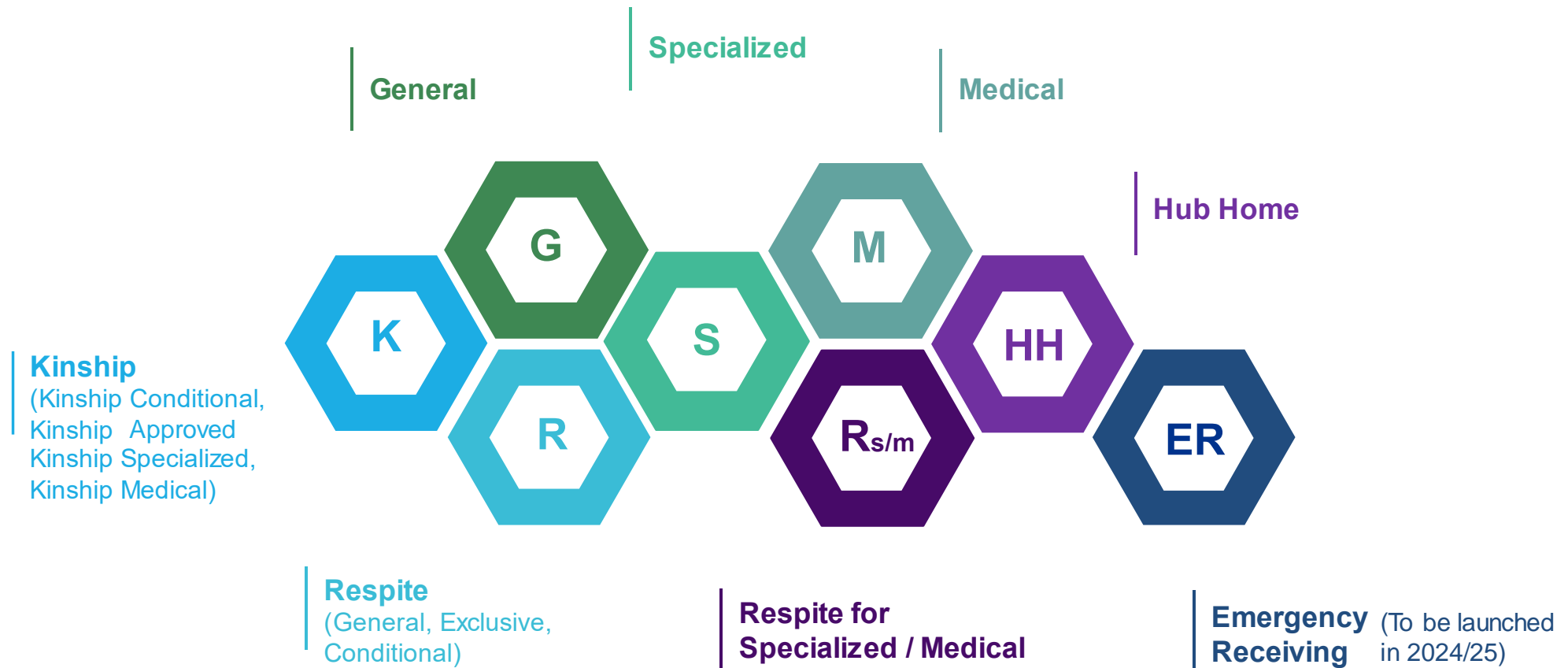
The process below defines how new Hub Homes would be selected for the Constellation roll-outs later this year:



Understanding Placement Types

Foster Care Placement Types

The following outlines the set of new, expanded and enhanced foster care placement types. The aim is to better support children and youth with placements that are tailored to help them thrive.



Considerations for Placement Types

The following summary includes the considerations for foster care placement types as it relates to children/youth in care.

General/ Kinship Approved

- Child/ youth has no complex specialized or medical needs that exceed developmental, emotional, and physical norms of a child/ youth in care.

Specialized/ Kinship Specialized

- Complex behavioural conditions and a range of specialized needs
- Medical diagnosis that requires regular monitoring and support from the caregiver
- Regular verbal assistance / coaching.

Medical/ Kinship Medical

- Hands on support for routine physical activities outside of normal developmental needs
- Life sustaining medication that needs to be administered, monitored, and adjusted
- Specialist medical intervention at least monthly.
- Regular hospitalization.

Placement Assignment Scenarios

- Sam is a 15-year-old Mi'kmaw child who has been in care for 5 years. They have been in ten foster placements since being in care. They have been at their current foster home for the last two years. Sam attends school; however, they struggle academically and with attendance.
- They require resources for math and has a tutor for English. They self-harm and take medication for anxiety and depression. Sam sees a therapist weekly to assist with coping techniques. Sam's caregiver is involved in taking Sam to their appointments and engages with the therapist to support Sam throughout the sessions
- Their foster caregiver has to consistently and regularly encourage them to complete all daily tasks with constant reminders and supervision due to their self-harming behaviour. The foster caregiver is of advanced competency and has taken numerous trainings specific to self-harm, depression and anxiety.

Placement Type:

Specialized

Placement Assignment Scenarios

- Sarah MacDonald is a kinship caregiver that has been fostering her grand-nephew for the last two years. She has completed the A Tradition of Caring Program, as well as NVCI, Sensitivity training, and First-Aid.
- She also has taken trainings from IWK as recommended by the doctors specifically to care for her grand-nephew who has been diagnosed with epilepsy, autism, and a rare condition that affects his brain development. Her nephew seizures between 25-30 times per day, is non-verbal, requires assistance with walking, bathing, dressing and feeding.
- Her nephew is non-verbal but he attends public school for 2 hours per day and has a TA assigned to him while he is there.

Placement Type:

Kinship Medical

Placement Assignment Scenarios

- Robert is 7 years old, African Nova Scotian, and has been in care 3 months. He has been diagnosed with ADHD and attends public school. Robert is in grade 2 and despite being unable to sit still or concentrate on his tasks in class, he is doing well academically.
- The school reports that he is quiet and doesn't interact a lot with the other students and often interrupts the teacher when they are speaking, so they are working with him on these behaviors.
- Within the home he eats and sleeps well and generally gets along with the other two children in the home.
- His foster caregiver is an ANS caregiver who has been fostering over 6 years and accepts children between ages 5-10 years with low needs. She has many trainings including Pride Preservice, all Prides, Sensitivity training, and First Aid.

Placement Type:

General

Placement Assignment - Next Steps



Conversations will be taking place between Foster Care Social Workers and caregivers throughout June 2023. These conversations will outline the placement type and the corresponding block funding amount.



Questions about placement types or block funding amounts can be discussed directly the Foster Care Social Worker.



If further clarity is required, the Social Worker will initiate a discussion with their Supervisor, who will be able to provide more support in understanding the placement type and corresponding payment amounts.

Funding Approach

Block Funding Objectives

The desired objectives of Block Funding are to provide:

- **Flexibility and autonomy** to make child and family focused decisions around how to spend funding.
- A **single block funding amount** that covers all expenses for the foster caregiver and the child(ren) being cared for.
- Rates that are **adjusted annually based on inflation** and are more reflective of the costs of living and raising a child in Nova Scotia.
- **Reduced administrative burden** on foster caregivers and social workers by eliminating receipting and approvals.
- **Reimbursement at more frequent, upfront and consistent intervals** based on the placement of a child / youth in foster care.

Block Funding Amounts

Foster Placement Type	Bi-weekly Block Funding Amount for the first child/ youth	Bi-weekly Block Funding Amount for each additional child/ youth	Monthly Block Funding Amount (per Satellite Home)	Proposed Daily Rate (1 child-overnight)
	FY 2023/24	FY 2023/24	FY 2023/24	FY 2023/24
Kinship and General	\$1,493	\$950		
Specialized	\$3,060	\$1,058		
Medical	\$4,264	\$2,191		
Hub Home			\$469	
Respite – Conditional				\$106
Respite – General				\$106
Respite – Specialized				\$219
Respite – Medical				\$304

Block Funding Key Dates

- Block funding is expected to be effective for all foster caregivers on July 1, 2023, at the new indexed rates reflected on the previous slide.
- Caregivers will receive their regular payments for June as usual in July, or whenever receipts are submitted for payment.
- **The first disbursement will be made around July 10.** This will include retroactive funding from July 1 to 8, as well as the advance funding for July 9 to 22.
- On **July 19**, the next bi-weekly advance payment will be made (for the period of July 23 to August 5).
- The specific timing of the payment being deposited into the caregiver's account will be dependent on the caregiver's bank and their processing time (this will be generally 2 days after the above specified dates).

Block Funding

All expenses for raising children in care are encompassed in the block funding amount, including but not limited to: child-care, babysitting, transportation, medication, recreation, clothing and anything that has historically been paid automatically.

There are some services that will be direct billed to the Department and may be outside the scope of block funding such as:

- Dental (including braces),
- Prescription Medication (excluding co-pay) Ramps, Wheelchairs, Glasses / Contact Lenses
- Car Seats, Cribs
- Therapeutic Services
- Purchase / lease of Accessible vehicles that are deemed necessary based on the specific needs of the child / youth in their care, as determined in consultation with the Children in Care Social Worker (e.g., wheelchair accessible van)
- Tutoring,
- Post-Secondary Education,
- Respite.

Additional Childcare Support

Two or more infant and / or preschool aged children in care require full-time childcare. This childcare will be supported as follows:



The foster caregiver would pay for the childcare for the first child from the block funding amount received. The foster caregiver would be reimbursed for the amount spent on childcare for any additional children in care by working closely with their social worker, who will determine the level of financial support required.



This will be applicable for General and Specialized placement types.

Extraordinary Circumstances

In instances where foster caregivers believe their placement-specific circumstances are extraordinary, their CIC Social Work Team will work with a CFW Specialist to determine if financial support outside of their block funding amount is required. **Extraordinary circumstances are only applicable to children or youth requiring general care.**

The following extraordinary circumstances have been identified:

**Therapeutic
Interventions**



**Mileage for Acute
Medical Events**

Block Funding Scenarios

Scenario: Travel

- Helene is assessed as requiring a specialized level of care.
- Helene is a 13-year old who lives in Bridgewater.
- Helene and their foster caregivers drive to Yarmouth twice a week after school so Helene can attend therapy.

Outcome

The expenses associated with this travel would be included in the block funding because child is assessed as specialized level of care.

Block Funding Scenarios

Scenario: Childcare – I

- Katie and Jill are assessed as requiring a general level of care.
- Katie and Jill are 3 years old, and both their foster caregivers work full time.
- Full-time childcare is needed for both children.

Outcome

The amount for the first child would be paid out of the block funding. The amount for the second child would be provided by the Department.

Block Funding Scenarios

Scenario: Childcare – II

- John, Taylor and Matt are assessed as requiring a general level of care.
- Their foster caregivers work full time.
- Full-time childcare is needed for two of the children.

Outcome

A total Block Funding amount of \$6,786 will be provided for all three children for a month.

- Assuming \$700/month is required for childcare for each of the two children, half of that will be provided by the Department.
- So, for all three children, \$6,086 will be the amount left after paying for childcare, that can be used to cater for other expenses.

Block Funding Scenarios

Scenario: Medical

- Sam and Carter are new hub home foster caregivers.
- Sam and Carter provide sleepovers (respite) to all of the children and youth in their constellation.
- A satellite home within the Constellation has recently begun caring for Andy, a 9 year old who uses a wheelchair.
- To enable Andy to participate in sleepovers, Sam and Carter are inquiring about installing a wheelchair ramp.

Outcome

The cost associated with installing a ramp would not be covered in the hub home block funding. A request under extraordinary circumstances could be made to the Children in Care Social Worker for this consideration.

Block Funding Scenarios

Scenario: Recreation

- Nadir is assessed as requiring a general level of care.
- Nadir is 13 years old and enjoys art.
- Nadir's foster caregivers enroll him in a day art camp for a week in the summer.
- The camp requires families to purchase supplies to use throughout the camp.

Outcome

The cost of the art supplies and camp would be included in the block funding.

Block Funding – Next Steps

Payments to Foster Caregivers

- The Department/MFCS now has the ability to enable payments through email remittance to caregivers. Caregivers are encouraged to provide their email information to their Foster Care Social Worker to allow this payment method as an option going forward.

Key Dates

- **June 2023:** The Foster Care Social Worker will communicate the assigned foster care placement type to the foster caregivers. This will be a conversation with caregivers with an accompanying letter that outlines the placement assignment as well as the corresponding block funding amount.
- **July 2023:** Block funding will be launched to all caregivers across the province.

Recruitment & Retention

Goal and Objectives of the Strategy

The following objectives have been identified to support the goal of increasing the number and diversity of caregivers in Nova Scotia:

1

Promote better recruitment practices for foster caregivers by providing staff with the resources they need to recruit new and more diverse foster caregivers.

2

Recruit enough foster caregivers to match the placement needs and cultural backgrounds of children and youth in care.

3

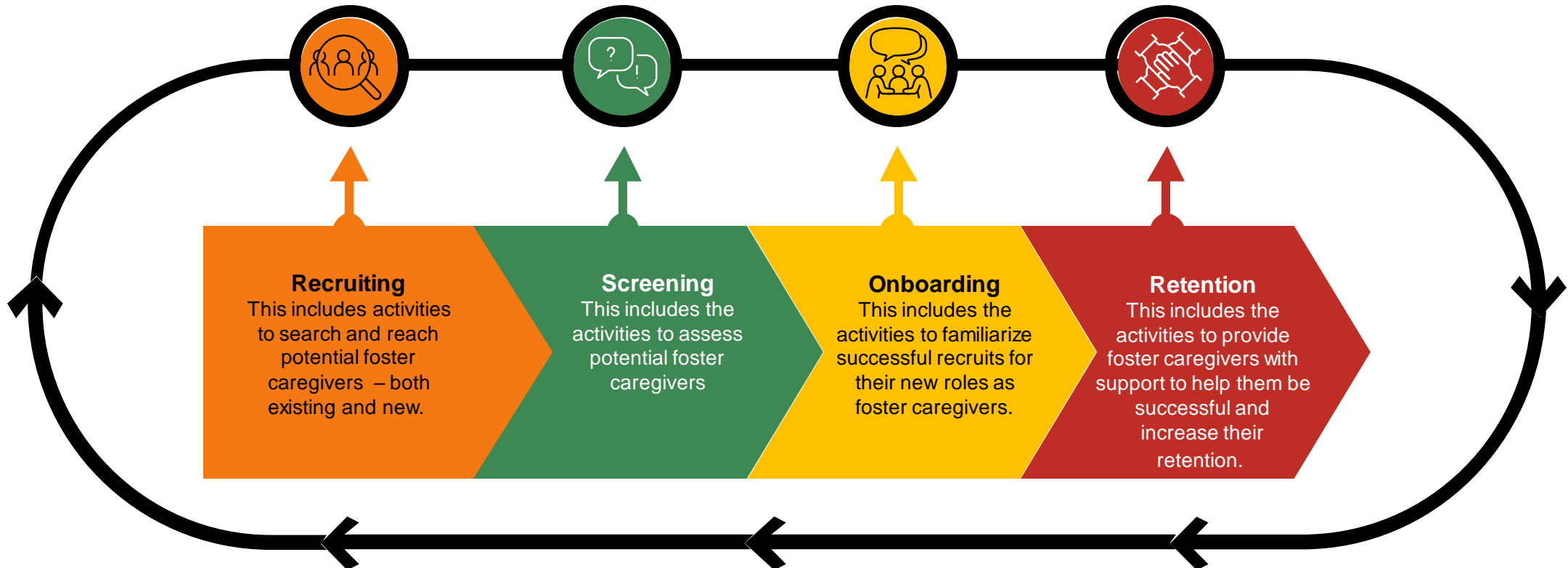
Develop better retention practices for foster caregivers by improving availability of and access to supports and resources.

4

Encourage increased awareness of Foster Care Redesign

Overview - Recruitment and Retention Strategy

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy is based on the following elements which will support the work:



Underpinning this is a set of **roles and responsibilities**, **monitoring** approaches, and **performance reporting** to support the success of the Strategy.

Years of Service Payments Overview

As a way to recognize the level of experience and competency of Nova Scotia's foster caregivers and to promote increased retention, foster caregivers will be compensated to reflect their years of service as a foster caregiver in Nova Scotia.

The Amount

Foster Caregivers will receive annual funding of \$50 per year for their cumulative years of service as a foster caregiver in Nova Scotia.

Start Date

The years of service funding will begin in October 2023 with prior experience as an approved foster caregiver in Nova Scotia factored into the calculation. Payments are planned to be disbursed on the third week of October, in-line with Foster Caregiver Appreciation Week.

Annual Leave Overview

Foster Caregivers that are a part of a Constellation will be eligible to paid leaves from their role each year. The leave entitlement for Foster Caregivers has been summarized below.

Up to 15 years of Service

Each full-time foster caregiver household will be eligible to a minimum of 14 days of paid leave from their role each year, up to 15 years of service

After 15 years of Service

After 15 years of service, Foster Caregivers will be eligible for up to 21 days of paid leave each year, and after 25 years of service they will be eligible for up to 28 days of paid leave each year.

Thank You!