

Summary of Education Results for Children and Youth in Care: 1997/98 – 2006/07

Introduction

Alberta Children and Youth Services (ACYS) and Alberta Education are working together to improve high school completion and other educational outcomes for children and youth in care. To support this joint work, the ministries of ACYS and Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow data matching in order to generate education results for children and youth in care, specifically:

- High school completion (within three years and within five years of entering Grade 10)
- Dropout and returning rates for students age 14-17
- Provincial achievement test results, at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence
- Proportions of Grades 1-9 children and youth in care registered in an age appropriate grade.

The MOU data match for this report covers the school years from 1995/96 to 2006/07. Although children and youth enter and leave care throughout the year, the results are based on children and youth who were in care and registered in school on September 30 in each school year, which is Alberta Education's official enrolment count data used for funding K-12 schools. In-care statuses reflect the child or youth's legal status with Alberta Children and Youth Services on this particular date. The in-care legal statuses include children and youth under Permanent Guardianship Order (PGO), Temporary Guardianship Order (TGO), Custody Order, Custody Agreement and Permanent Guardianship Agreement. These permanent and temporary in-care statuses are defined in the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

There was an overall match of 84.4% between the school-aged children and youth in care and students with an Alberta Student Number in the Ministry of Education's Student Information System affiliated with a school in Alberta's K-12 education system. This was satisfactory to both ministries since Alberta's K-12 system does not include band or Lloydminster schools. Some children and youth in care are placed in Lloydminster and on First Nation reserves, and would be attending school in those locations. The results presented in this report are based on the 76.6% of school aged children and youth in care, from the ACYS files provided for matching, that had an active registration (i.e., were enrolled in the K-12 education system in one or more of the school years over the study period).

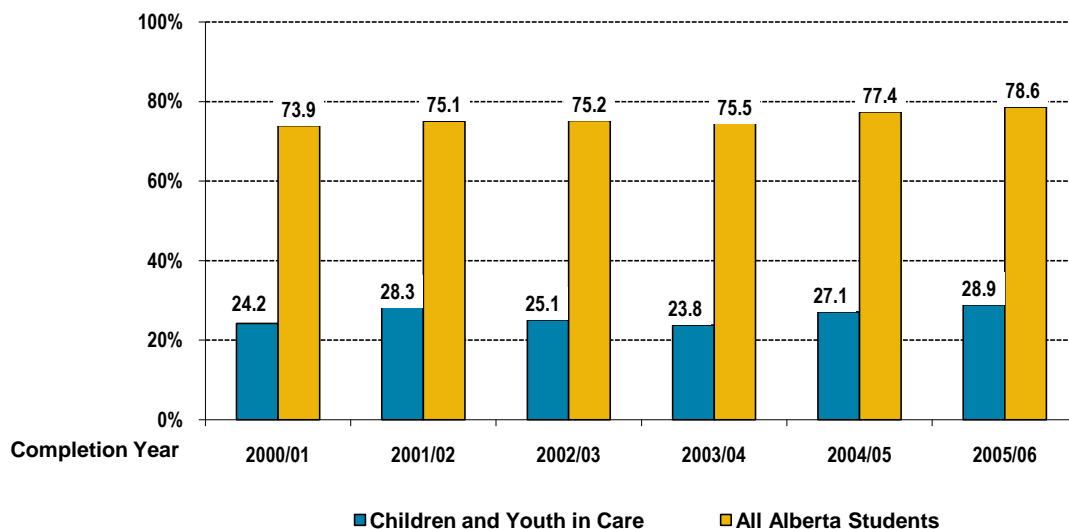
The percentage of Aboriginal children and youth in care in the K-12 education system was slightly lower than in the ACYS file (56% vs. 59%) because students attending schools on First Nation reserves are not included in this analysis. Aboriginal children and youth in care are identified by the Aboriginal notation on file with ACYS, not the First Nations, Métis or Inuit self-identifier in the Ministry of Education's student information system.

High school completion rates for children and youth in care have improved, as have rates for all students, but remain well below provincial rates.

- Over the study period (1996/97 – 2005/06):
 - The three-year completion rate for all children and youth in care improved from 11.3% in 1998/99 to 19.8% in 2004/05, and then declined slightly to 18.1% in 2005/06. The corresponding provincial rates were 62.9% in 1998/99 and 70.4% in 2005/06.

- The five-year completion rate for all children and youth in care improved from 24.2% in 2000/01 to 28.9% in 2005/06. The corresponding provincial rates were 73.9% in 2000/01 and 78.6% in 2005/06. **(Figure 1)**
- Both the three-year and five-year rates have improved both for Permanent Guardianship Order (PGO) status children and youth in care and for those with other in-care statuses. Results for children and youth with other in-care statuses (rates in brackets) are consistently lower than results for PGO status children and youth in care. The three-year rate for PGO status children and youth in care rose from 15.3% (6.6%) in 1998/99 to 21.4% (11.3%) in 2005/06, and the five-year rate rose from 28.2% (19.3%) in 2000/01 to 35.0% (20.8%) in 2005/06.
- Both the three-year and five-year high school completion rates were lower for Aboriginal than for non-Aboriginal children and youth in care (rates in brackets) but have improved over time. The three-year rate rose from 9.2% (12.1%) in 1998/99 to 16.3% (19.3%) in 2005/06. The five-year rate rose from 18.4% (26.1%) in 2000/01 to 27.5% (29.6%) in 2005/06.

Figure 1: Five-Year High School Completion Rates (by completion year): Children and Youth in Care and All Alberta Students



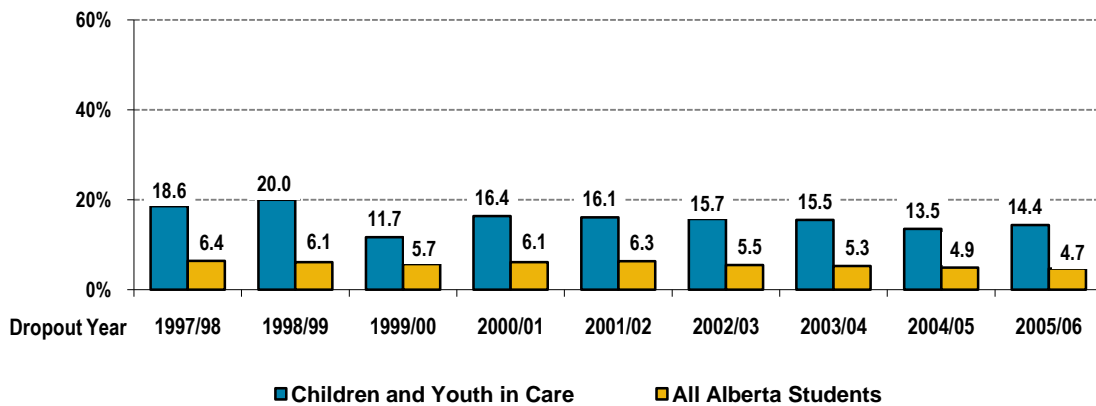
Notes:

1. Completion rates are for the fifth year of each cohort tracked (e.g. for the Grade 10 cohort with registration year 1996/97, the five-year completion rate is 2000/01).
2. Students were included in the analysis if they were in-care as of September 30th of the Grade 10 year.
3. Completion rates for children and youth in care have not been adjusted for attrition (loss of students due to out-migration and mortality). The provincial rates (all students in Alberta) have been adjusted for attrition, using estimates from Statistics Canada. Attrition is about 2.5 - 3.0% of each Grade 10 cohort over the five-year tracking period. Attrition accounts for a very small portion of the difference between rates for children and youth in care and rates for Alberta students overall. Provincial results are from Alberta Education's 2006/2007 Annual Report.
4. Results do not include children and youth in care attending school on a First Nation reserve or in Lloydminster.

Dropout rates for children and youth in care are declining, as are rates for all students, but they are still approximately three times higher than rates for all Alberta students. Rates for all Alberta students reflect the percentage of students aged 14-18 who are not in school the following year. The results for children and youth in care do not include 18 year-olds, as they are adults for whom the children and youth in care legislation does not apply.

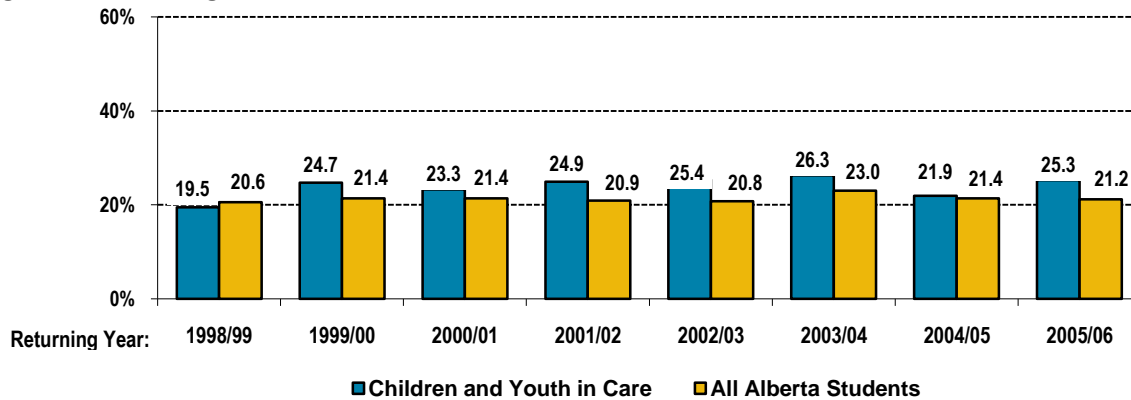
- Over the study period (1996/97 – 2005/06):
 - The dropout rate for all children and youth in care declined from 18.6% in 1997/98 to 14.4% in 2005/06; the corresponding rates for all Alberta students were 6.4% in 1997/98 and 4.7% in 2005/06. **(Figure 2)**
 - The returning rates for children and youth in care have been relatively stable around 24-25% for most of the study period, somewhat higher than corresponding rates for all Alberta students (about 21%), which reflects the lower returning rates for 18-year-olds. **(Figure 3)**
 - Both the dropout and returning rates for PGO status children and youth in care improved over time. For those with other statuses, dropout rates were relatively stable over time, while returning rates improved. In most years of the study period, dropout rates were lower for PGO children and youth in care than for those with other in-care statuses, and returning rates for PGO status children and youth in care were lower than rates for those with other in-care statuses.
 - For most of the study, dropout rates were slightly higher for Aboriginal than for non-Aboriginal children and youth in care, as were returning rates. The dropout rate has declined slightly over time (from 18.6% in 1997/98 to 16.4% in 2005/06) and the returning rate has increased slightly (from 28.4% in 1998/99 to 30.4% in 2005/06) for Aboriginal children and youth in care.

Figure 2: Dropout Rates: Children and Youth in Care and All Alberta Students



See following page for Notes for Figures 2.

Figure 3: Returning Rates: Children and Youth in Care and All Alberta Students



Notes: (For Figure 3 and for Figure 2, preceding page).

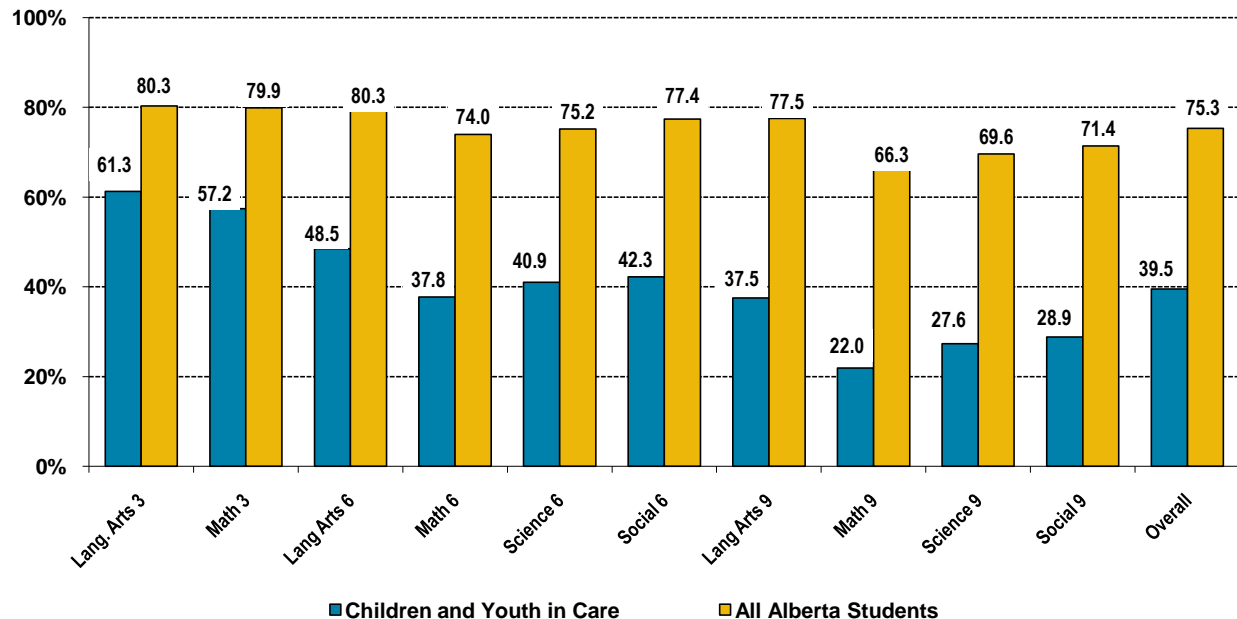
- Dropout rates are for the year after the registration year and returning rates are for the second year after the registration year (e.g., for the 1996/97 registration year, the dropout rate is for 1997/98 and the returning rate is for 1998/99).
- Students aged 14-18 (14-17 for children and youth in care) are included in the dropout rate if they are not enrolled in Alberta's learning system (a K-12 school, post-secondary institution or apprenticeship program) in the following year and have not completed school.
- Rates for children and youth in care have not been adjusted for attrition (loss of students due to out-migration and mortality). The provincial rates (all students in Alberta) have been adjusted for attrition, using estimates from Statistics Canada. Provincial attrition is about 1.2 – 1.5% of each 14-18 year old cohort. Attrition accounts for a very small portion of the difference between rates for children and youth in care and for all Alberta students. Attrition estimates are not available for children and youth in care. Provincial results are from Alberta Education's 2006/2007 Annual Report.
- Results do not include students attending school on a First Nation reserve or in Lloydminster.

Provincial Achievement Test results for students in grades 3, 6 and 9 (all grades and subjects) have been relatively stable over time for children and youth in care and have declined slightly for all Alberta students. Results for children and youth in care are lower than results for all Alberta students.

- Over the study period (2002/03 – 2006/07):
 - Results for children and youth in care tend to decline substantially from Grade 3 to Grade 6 to Grade 9 at both the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence. Results for all Alberta students also declined from grade to grade, but not as markedly.
 - At the acceptable standard, results over time have declined for all subjects and grades except Grades 3 and 9 English Language Arts and Grade 9 Mathematics and Science. At the standard of excellence, results declined for all subjects and grades except Grades 3 and 9 English Language Arts.
 - Results for children and youth in care with PGO status are slightly lower than for children and youth in care with other in-care statuses.
 - Results for Aboriginal children and youth in care are slightly below those for non-Aboriginal children and youth in care in most years and have declined slightly over time (e.g., from 38.5% in 2003/04 to 36.8% in 2006/07 for overall results at the acceptable level).
- In 2006/07: (**Figure 4**)
 - 39.5% of children and youth in care met the acceptable standard overall, compared to 75.3% of all Alberta students, while 2.5% of children and youth in care also met the standard of excellence overall, compared to 19.0% of all Alberta students (results at the standard of excellence are from the full report - not shown in Figure 4).

- the highest results at the acceptable standard were in Grade 3 English Language Arts (61.3%) and Mathematics (57.2%), while the lowest were in Grade 9 Science (27.6%) and Mathematics (22.0%).

Figure 4: Percentage of Students Meeting the Acceptable Standard on Provincial Achievement Tests: Children and Youth in Care and All Alberta Students, 2006/07



Notes:

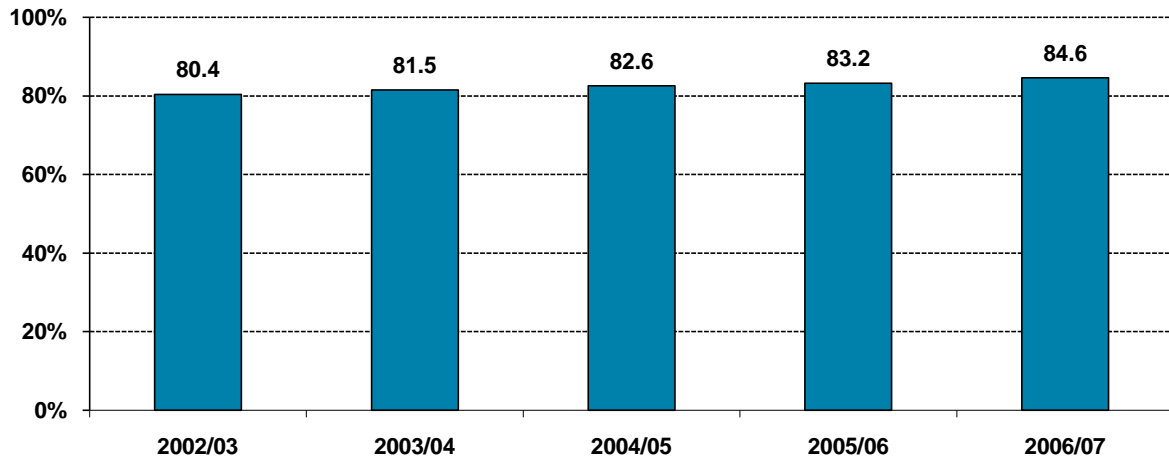
1. Percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard includes those who also met standard of excellence.
2. The percentages are based on total enrolment in grades 3, 6 and 9. About 10% of all Alberta students in grades 3, 6 and 9 do not write provincial achievement tests. Participation of children and youth in care in the provincial achievement tests is considerably lower; over the study period 35%-40% of children and youth in care did not write the tests.
3. Overall results are weighted averages; provincial results are from Alberta Education’s 2006/2007 Annual Report.
4. Results do not include children and youth in care attending school on a First Nation reserve or in Lloydminster.

Age Appropriate Grade Placement for children and youth in care has increased slightly over time.

- Over the study period (2002/03 – 2006/07):
 - The percentage of children and youth in care (Grades 1 – 9) in the province having an age appropriate grade placement increased from 80.4% to 84.6%. (**Figure 5**)
 - The proportion of children and youth in care in Alberta with age appropriate grade placement decreases from Grade 1 to Grade 9 (e.g., for 2006/07: 92.6% in Grade 1, 84.9% in Grade 5 and 81.1% in Grade 9.)
 - The percentage of children and youth in care with age appropriate grade placements is similar for those under PGO status and those who have other in-care statuses.
 - The percentage of children and youth in care with age appropriate grade placements is slightly lower for Aboriginal students than for non-Aboriginal students (e.g., 83.0% and 86.8% respectively in 2006/07), but has increased slightly over time (from 79.1% in 2002/03 to 83.0% in 2006/07).

- Analysis of the 2006/07 age appropriate grade results indicated that the percentage of children and youth in care with a special education need code was 49%, more than four times higher than the rate for all Alberta students in Grades 1-9 of about 11%.

Figure 5: Age Appropriate Grade (AAG) Placement for Children and Youth in Care, Grades 1-9, 2002/03 - 2006/07



Notes:

1. In Alberta's K-12 education system, students typically are kept with their age mates through school, regardless of achievement level.
2. Data on age appropriate grade placement (AAG) is available only for children and youth in care, not for all students in the province. This information was generated for Alberta Children and Youth Services to provide data for an indicator in the National Child Welfare Outcomes Indicator Matrix.
3. Ungraded students (who typically have severe cognitive disabilities and comprise between 0.1% and 0.5% per year of students in the matched file) are excluded from the AAG analysis.
4. Results do not include students attending school on a First Nation reserve or in Lloydminster.