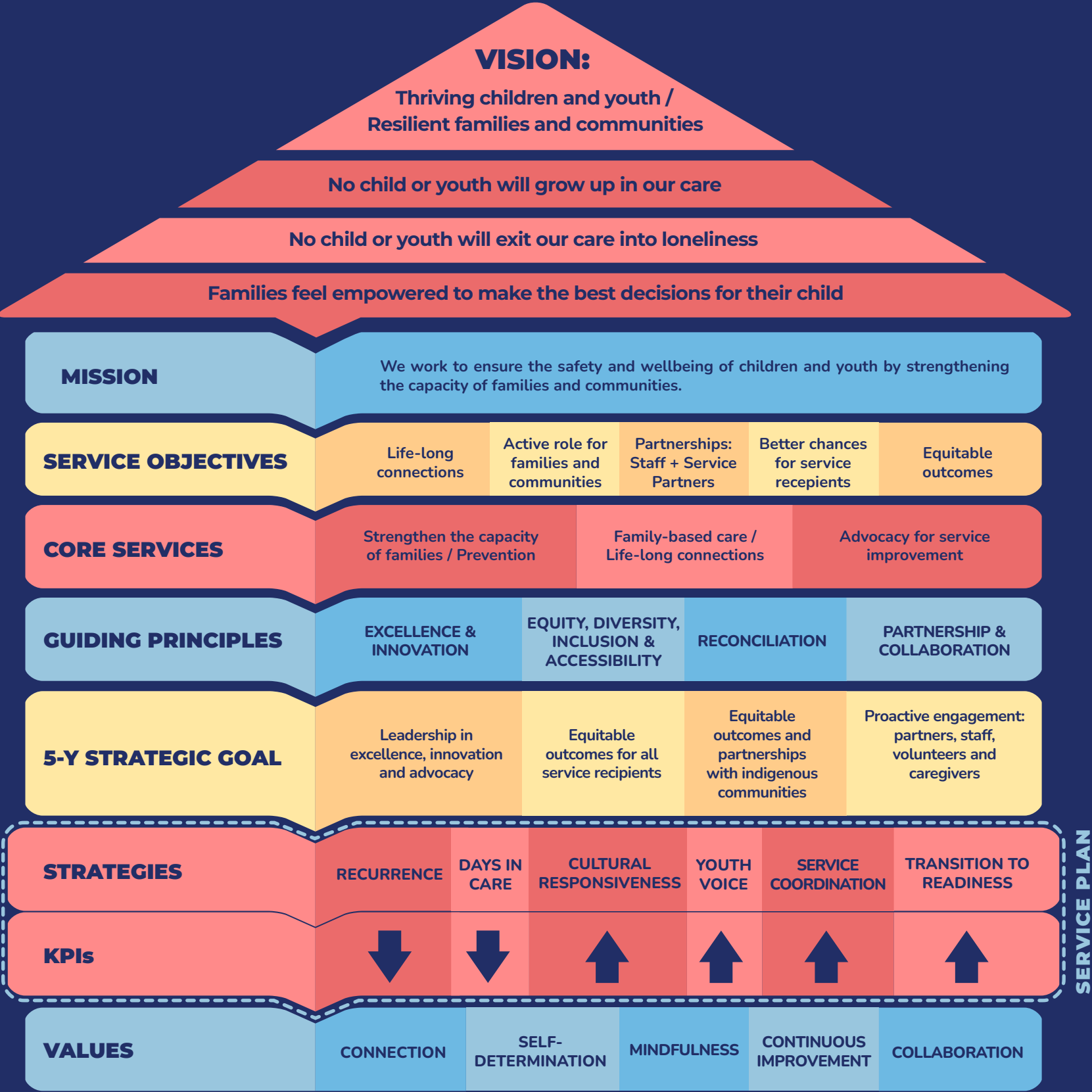




The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa | La Société de l'aide à l'enfance d'Ottawa

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2031





VISION

Thriving children and youth / Resilient families and communities

- No child or youth will grow up in our care
- No child or youth will exit our care into loneliness
- Families feel empowered to make the best decisions for their child



MISSION

We work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and youth by strengthening the capacity of families and communities.

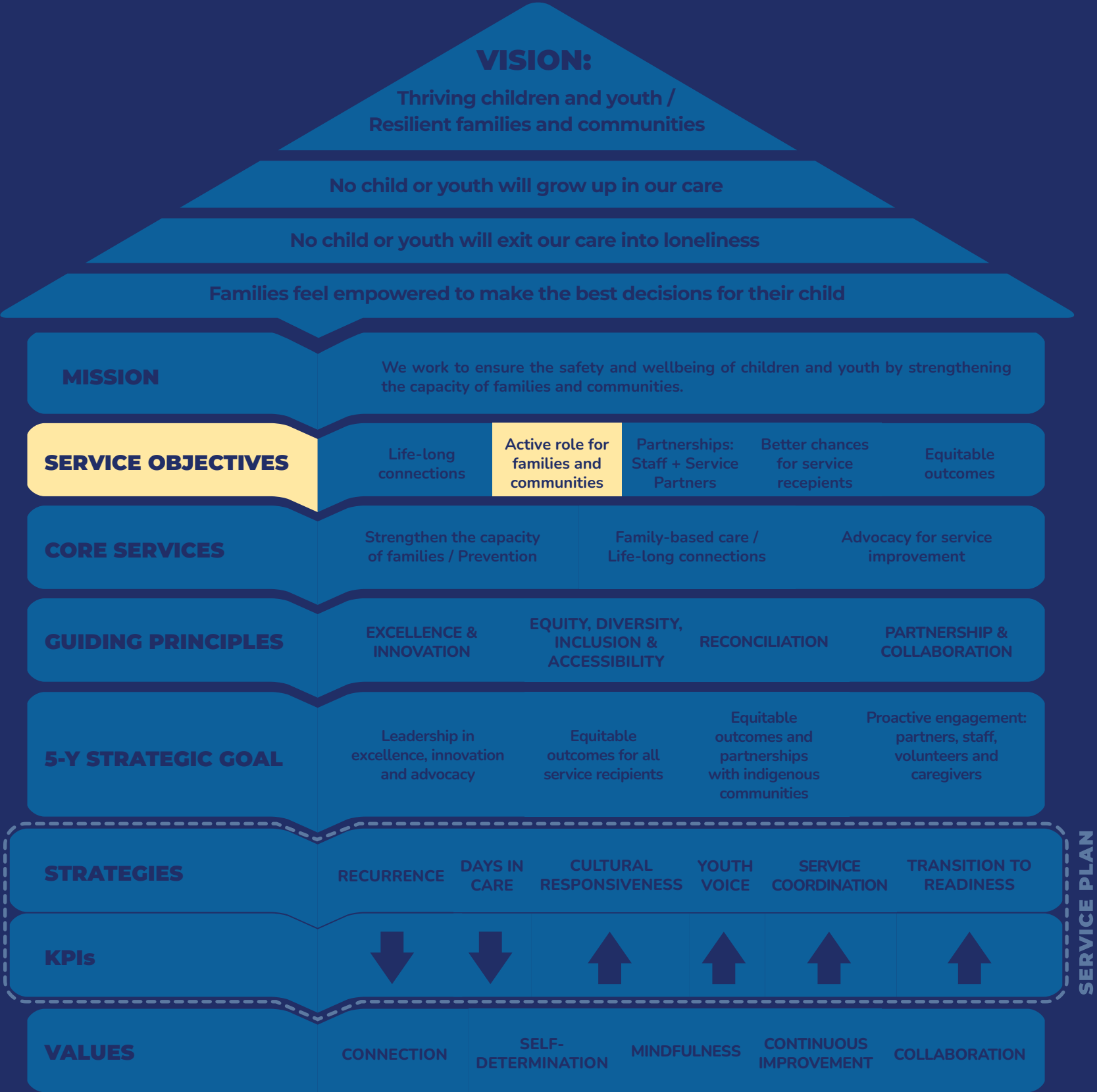


SERVICE OBJECTIVES



Life-long connections:

Children and youth are connected to life-long relationships, family, culture and tradition, in particular where out of home care is required.



Active role for families and communities:
Families and Communities have an active voice and role in service planning and decisions.



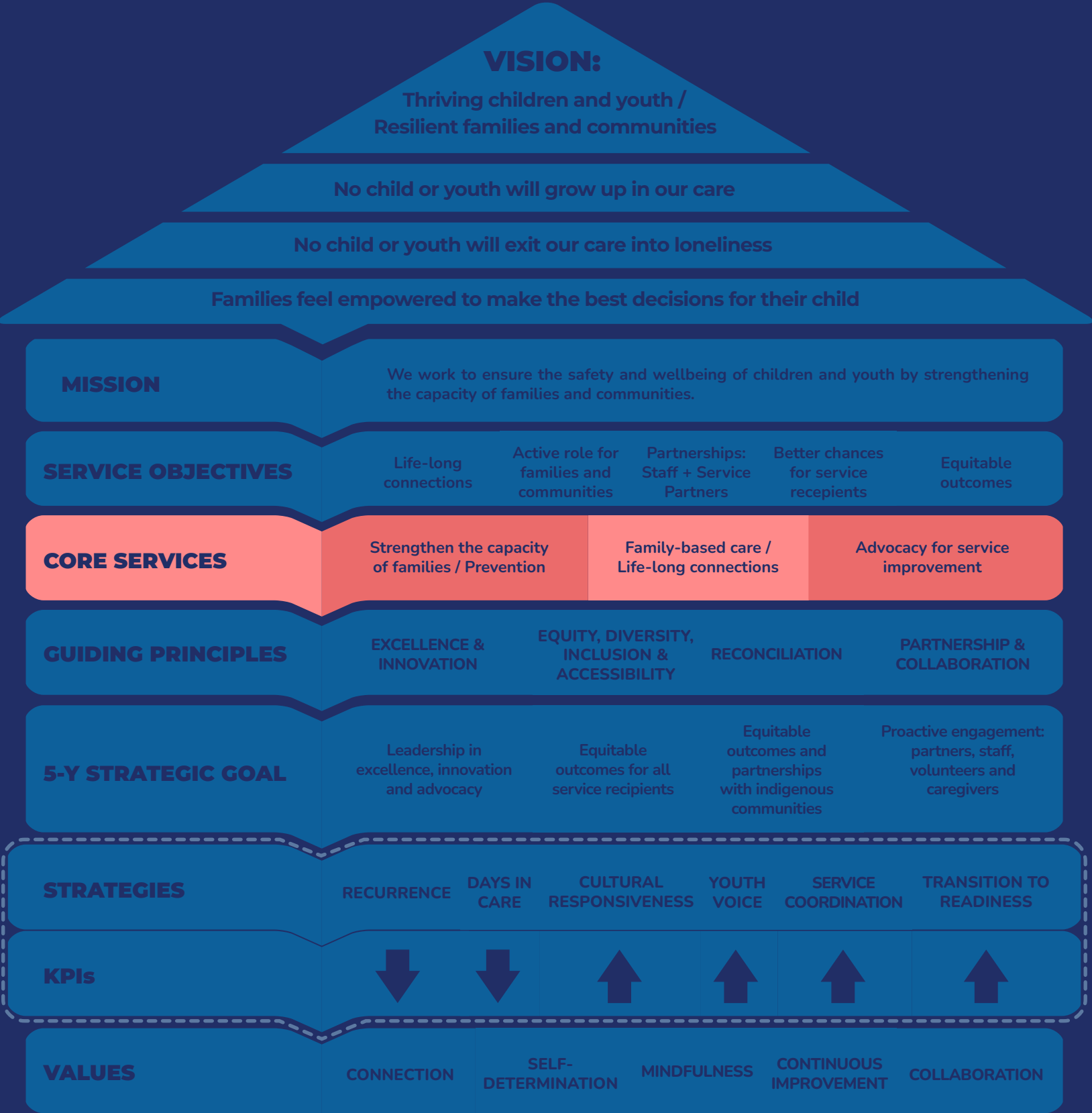
Partnerships between staff + service partners:
Authentic engagement, partnership and collaboration with staff and service partners.



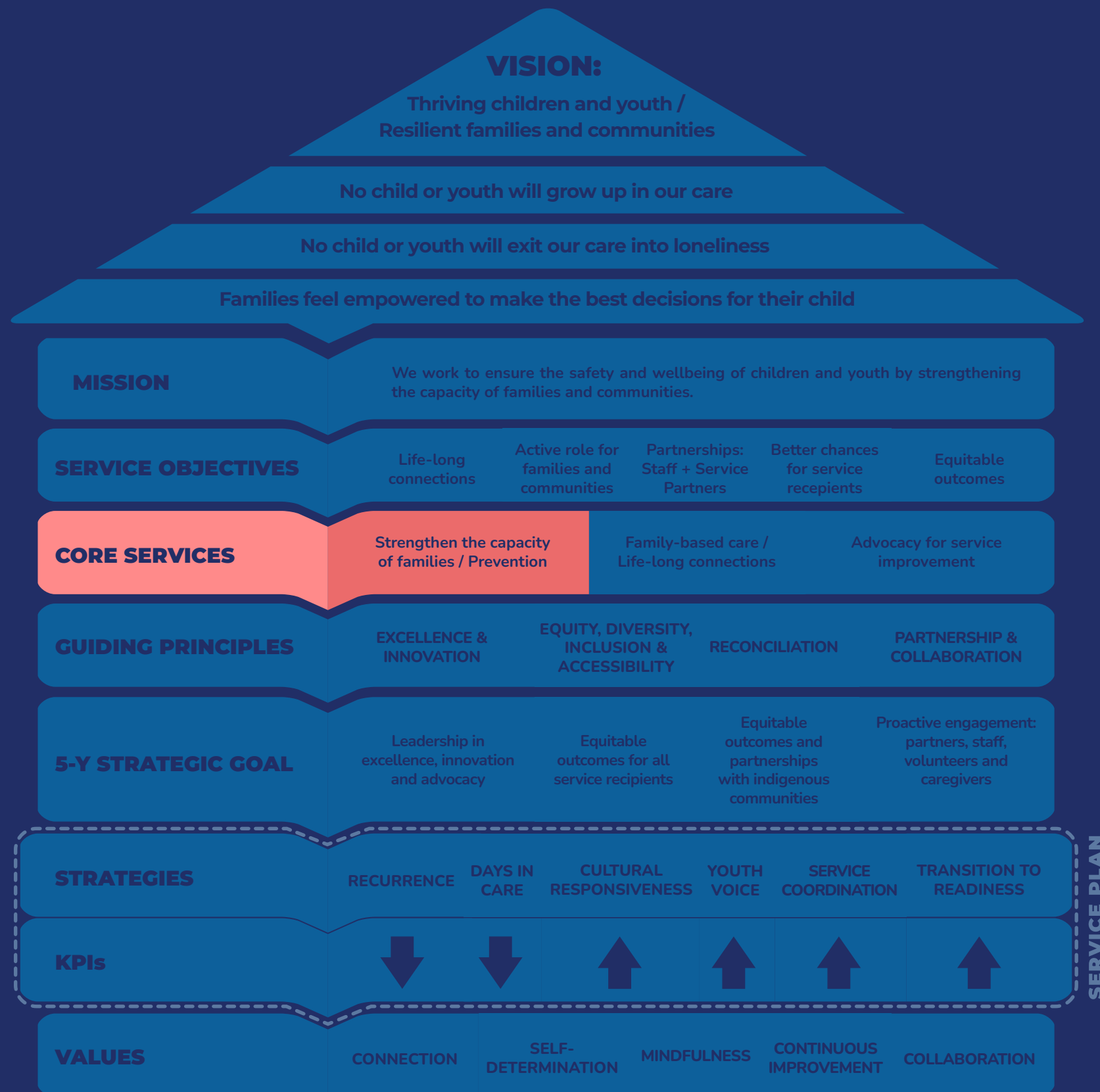
Better chances for service recipients:
Children, Youth and families involved with child welfare have increased strengths, resources and opportunities and have every chance to achieve their potential.



Equitable outcomes:
Equitable outcomes achieved for children, youth and families from diverse and marginalized communities.

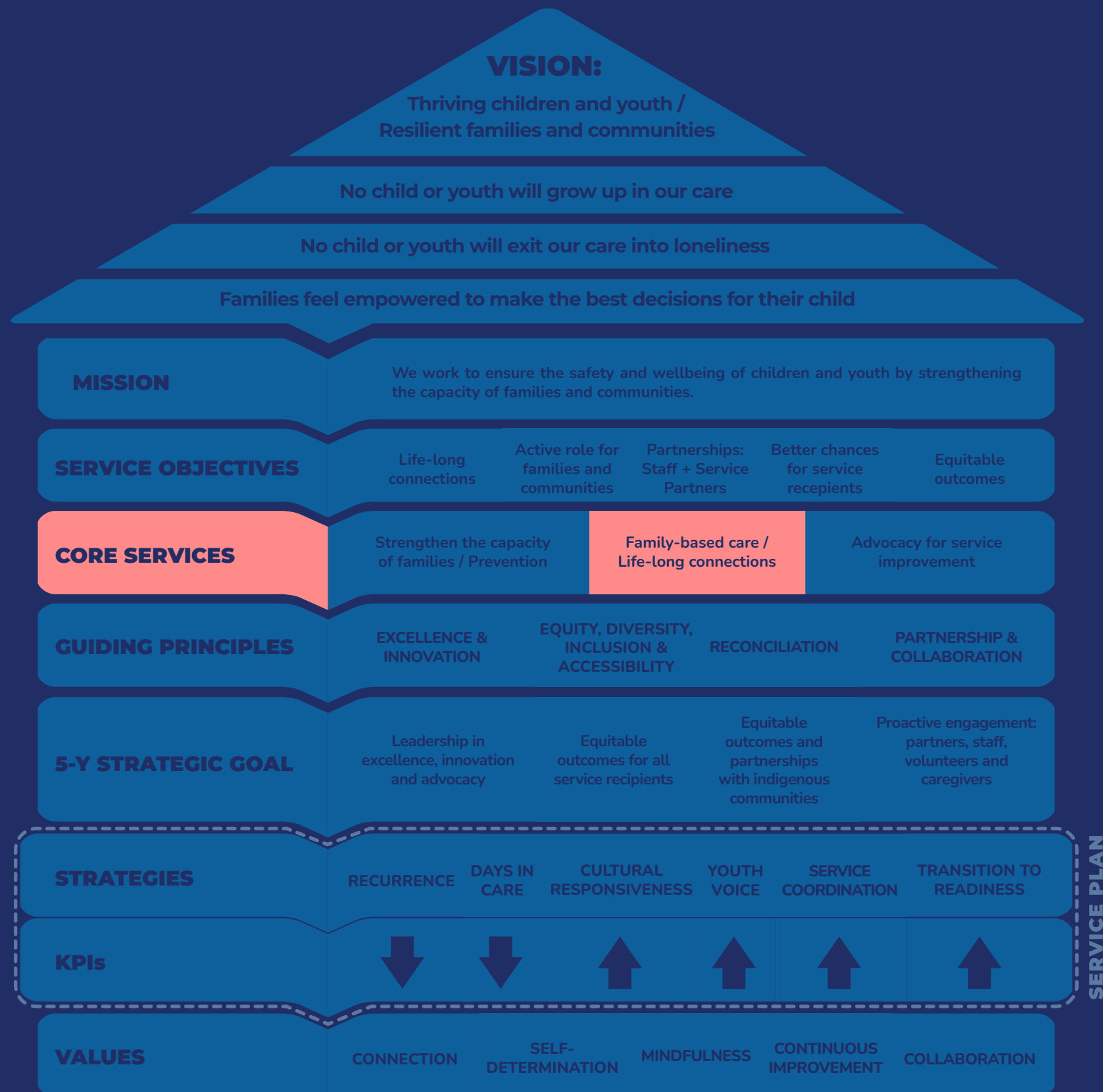


CORE SERVICES



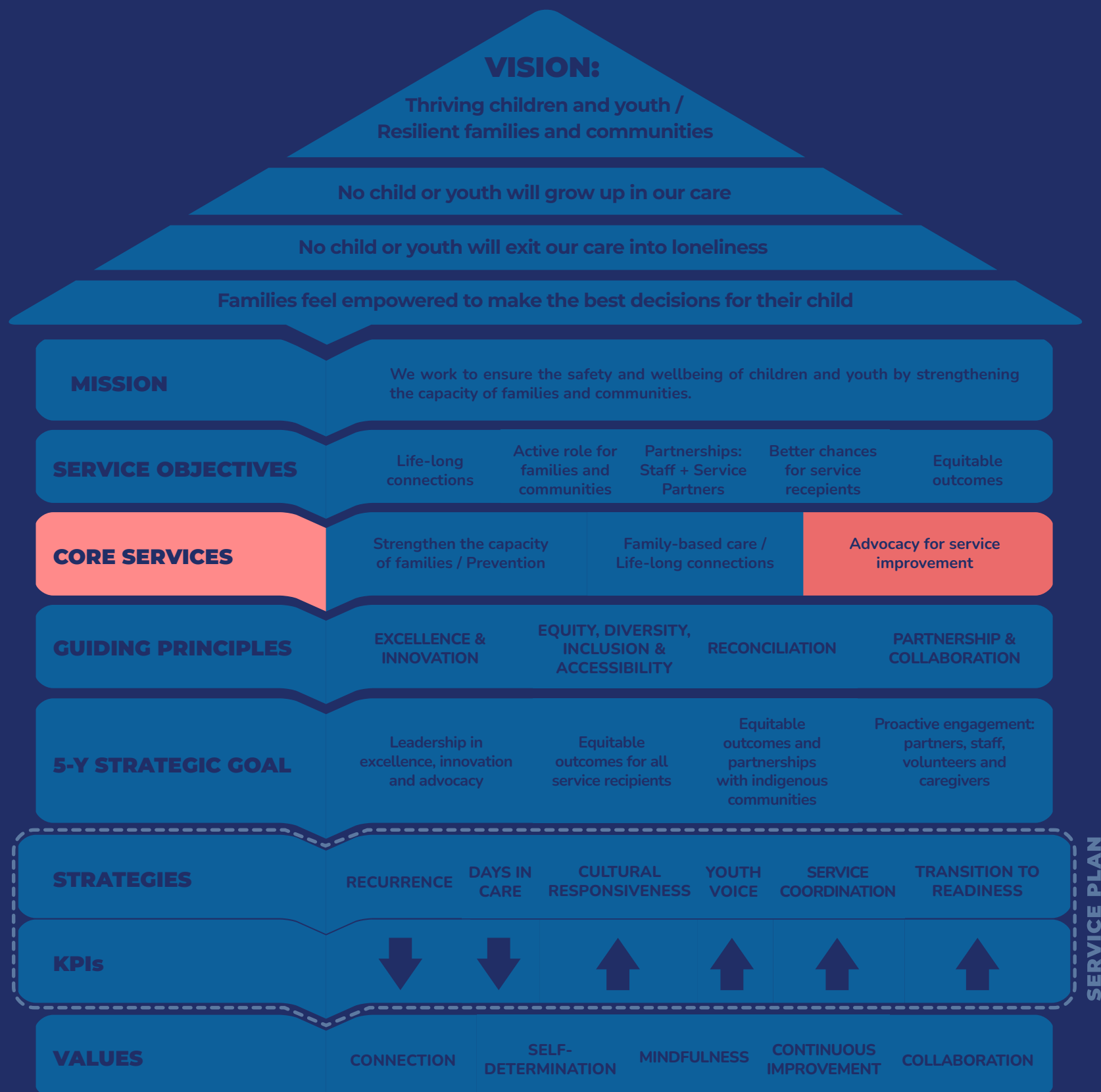
CORE SERVICES

Strengthen the capacity of families / Prevention:
Strengthen the capacity of families and prevent situations that lead to child abuse and neglect.



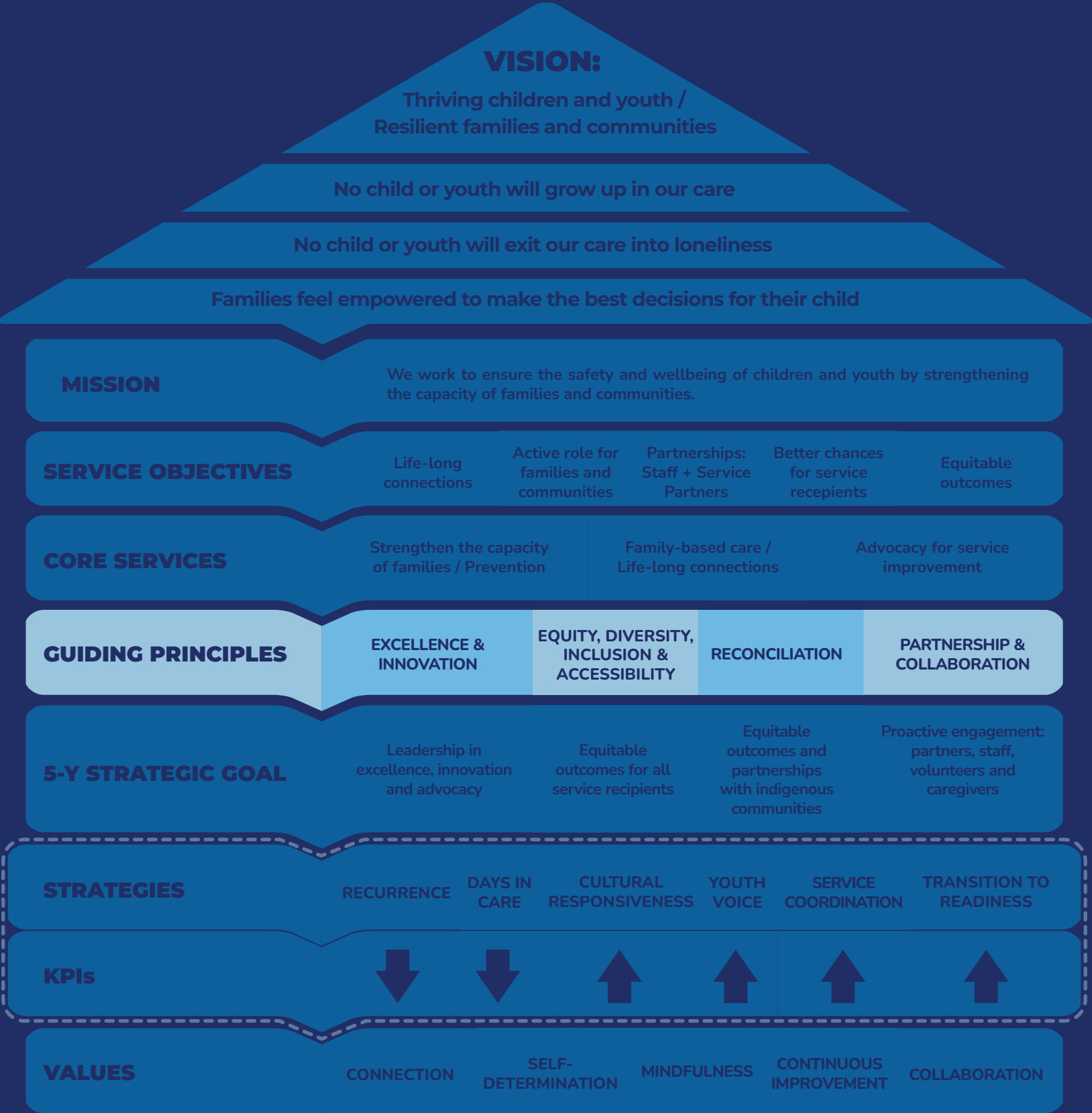
CORE SERVICES

Family-based care / Life-long connections:
Provide Safe and nurturing family-based care for children and youth and help develop permanency and life-long connections.



Advocacy for service improvement:

Advocate for improvements in wrap-around services locally and provincially, to better serve the needs of children, youth, families and communities.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

We are committed to ongoing learning, building on strengths, and reflecting research and best practices in our work.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

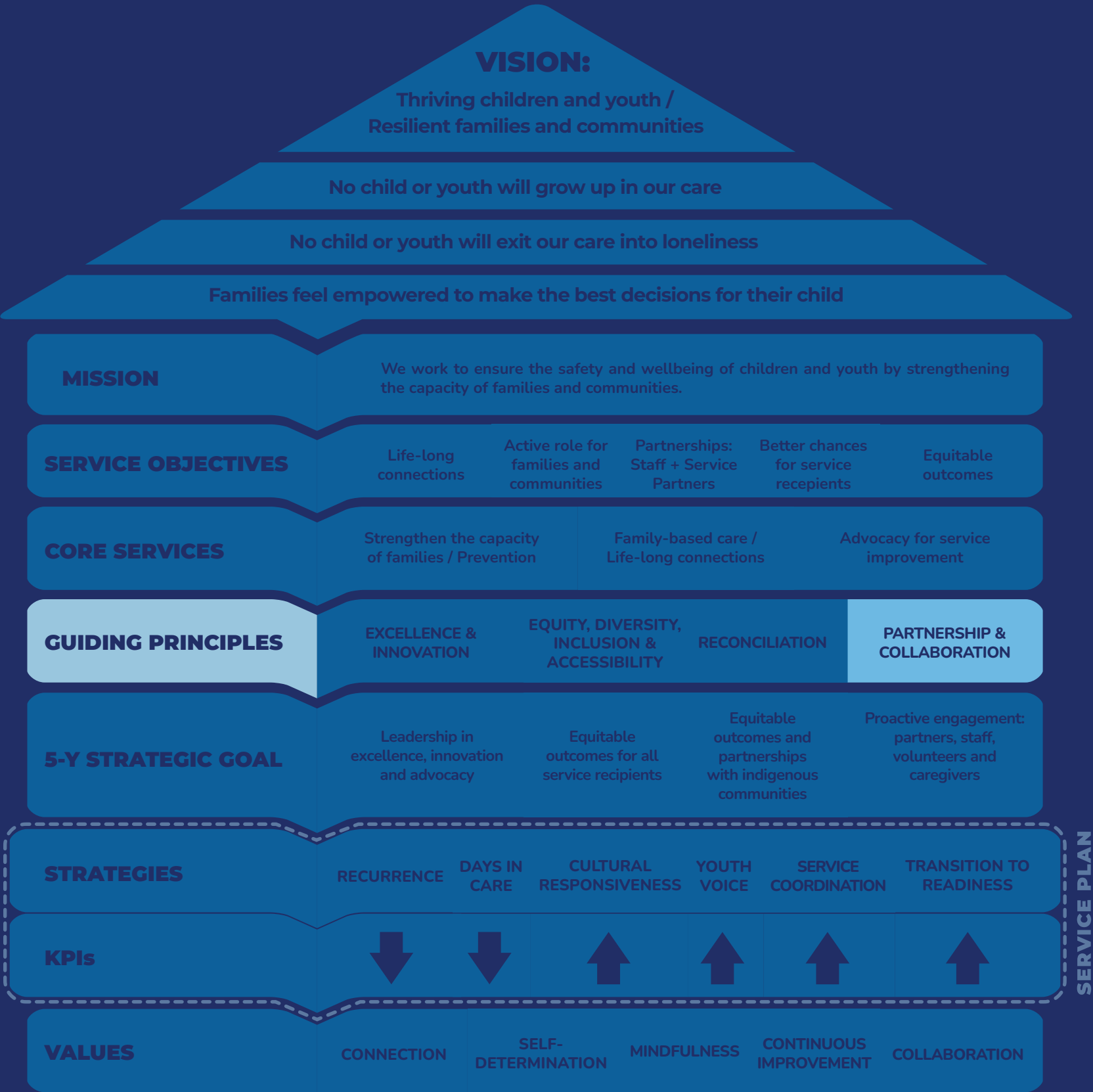
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

We recognize the unique strengths and needs of every child, youth, family, and community, and are committed to providing accessible, inclusive, and equitable services that are responsive to their needs and respectful of their culture, traditions, race, and social identity.

We deliver high-quality services in French, ensuring equitable access to culturally and linguistically appropriate supports for Francophone children, youth, and families.

**RECONCILIATION**

We recognize the strengths and resilience of Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous Peoples) and their historic relationships with child welfare. We commit to providing culturally informed services and to support them in improving the lives of their children, youth and families.



PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

We work collaboratively and build partnerships with children, youth and their families, communities and service providers to improve outcomes for those we serve.



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL

Leadership in excellence, innovation and advocacy:

- To be recognized as a leader in excellence and innovation in child welfare practice.
- To enhance CASO's leadership and advocacy to improve local and provincial systems serving children and youth.



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL

Equitable outcomes for all service recipients:

- Achieve equitable outcomes for children, youth and families from diverse and marginalized communities.
- Improve outcomes for children and youth from all communities in out-of-home care.



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL

Equitable outcomes outcomes and partnerships with indigenous communities:

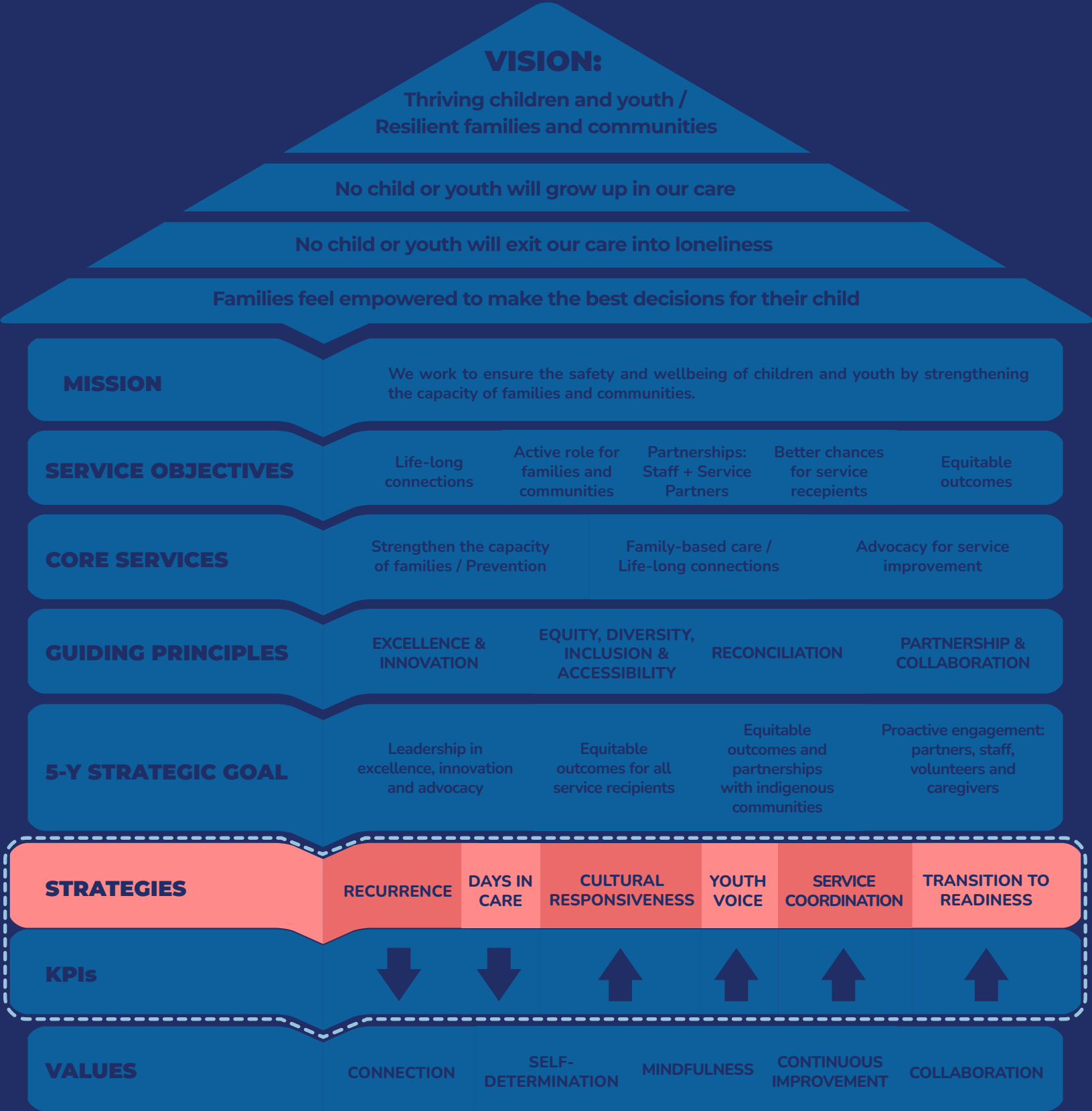
- Achieve equitable outcomes for children, youth and families from diverse and marginalized communities.
- Improve outcomes for children and youth from all communities in out-of-home care.



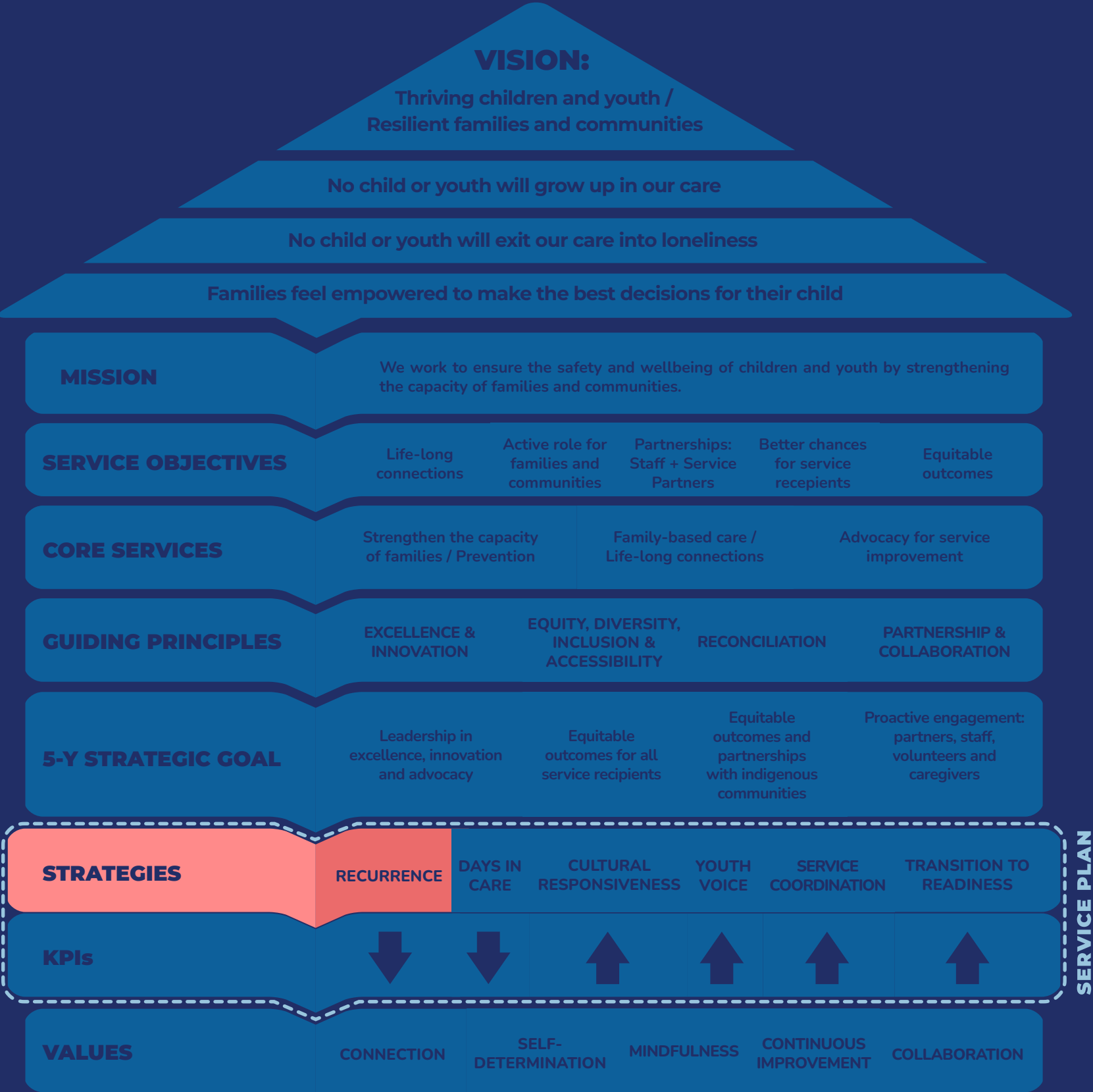
5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL

Proactive engagement between partners, staff, volunteers and caregivers:

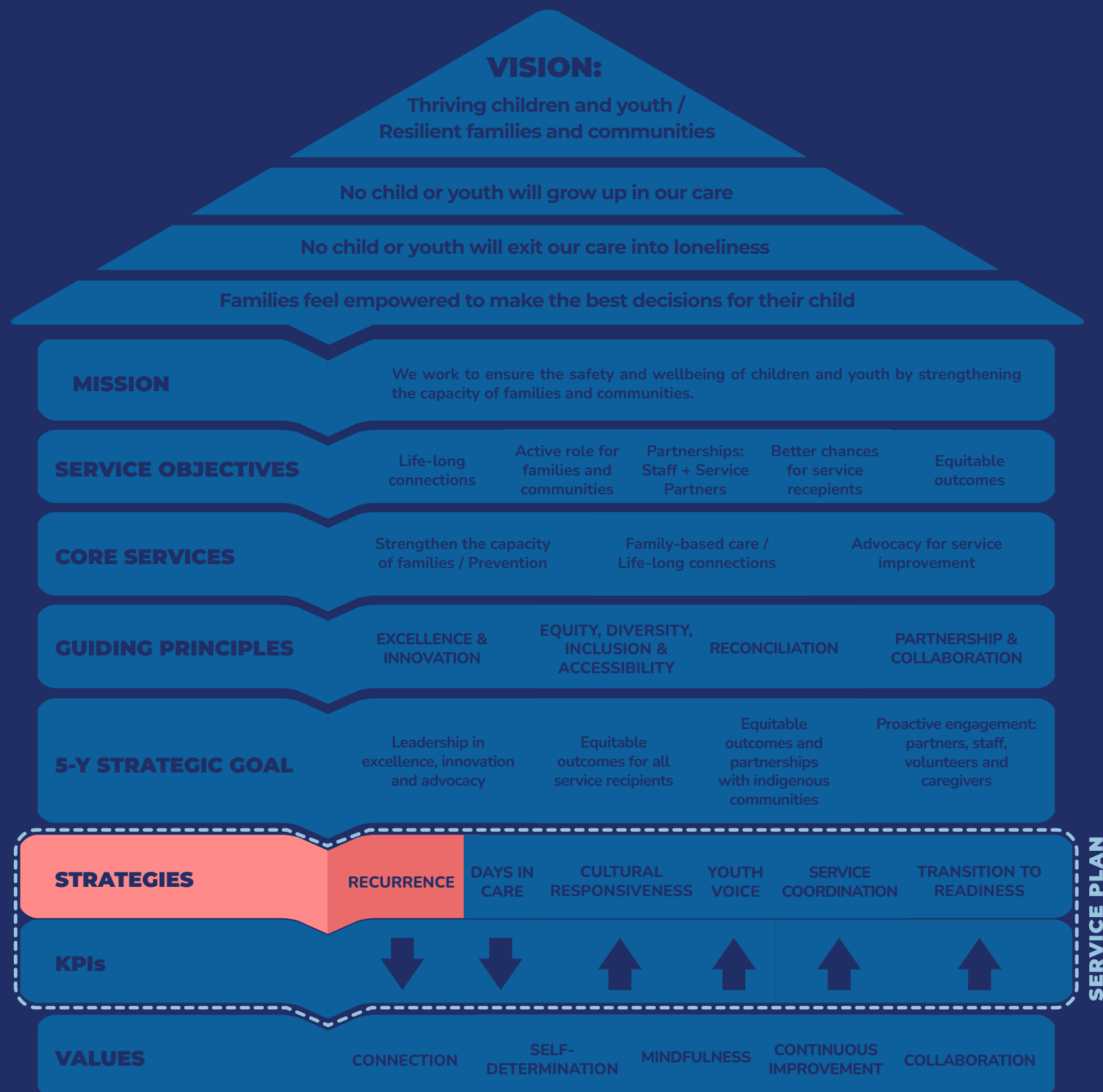
- Proactive engagement with local service partners to support children, youth and families and respond to emerging community needs; and with the broader child welfare sector to respond to emerging collective needs.
- CASO staff, volunteers and caregivers feel valued, supported and engaged, and work in partnership with each other to best serve children, youth and families.



STRATEGIES

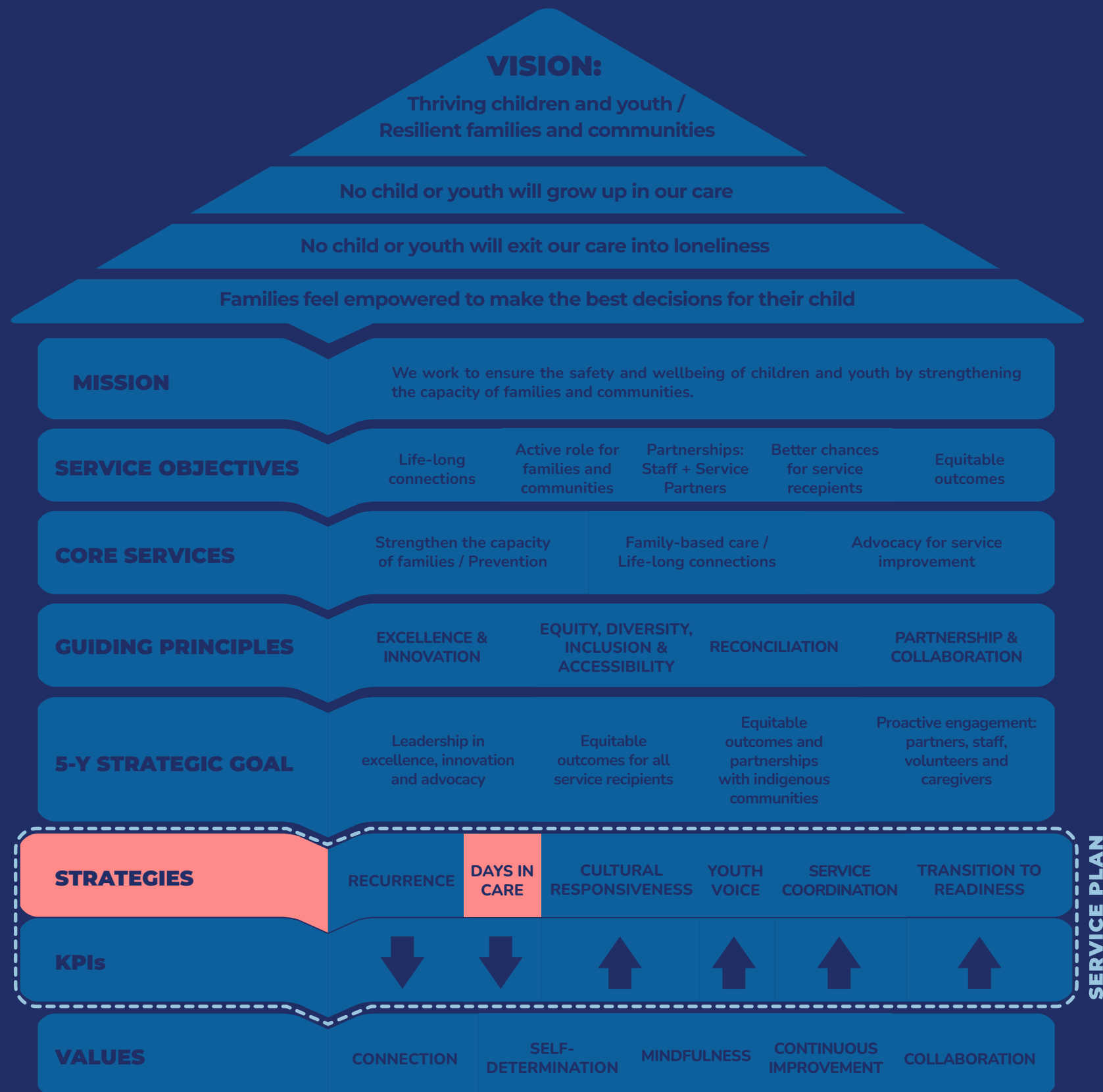


- Standardize documentation of safety plans in contact logs.
- Ensure safety plans are easily accessible across case records.
- Implement a Quality Improvement Plan based on the transfer-rate file review.
- Develop family and community support networks beginning at the investigation phase.
- Ensure consistent documentation of networks across case types.
- Identify networks to support safety planning, connection, and alternative placements.
- Integrate informal family and community supports into safety planning.
- Strengthen early family-led planning through network circles.



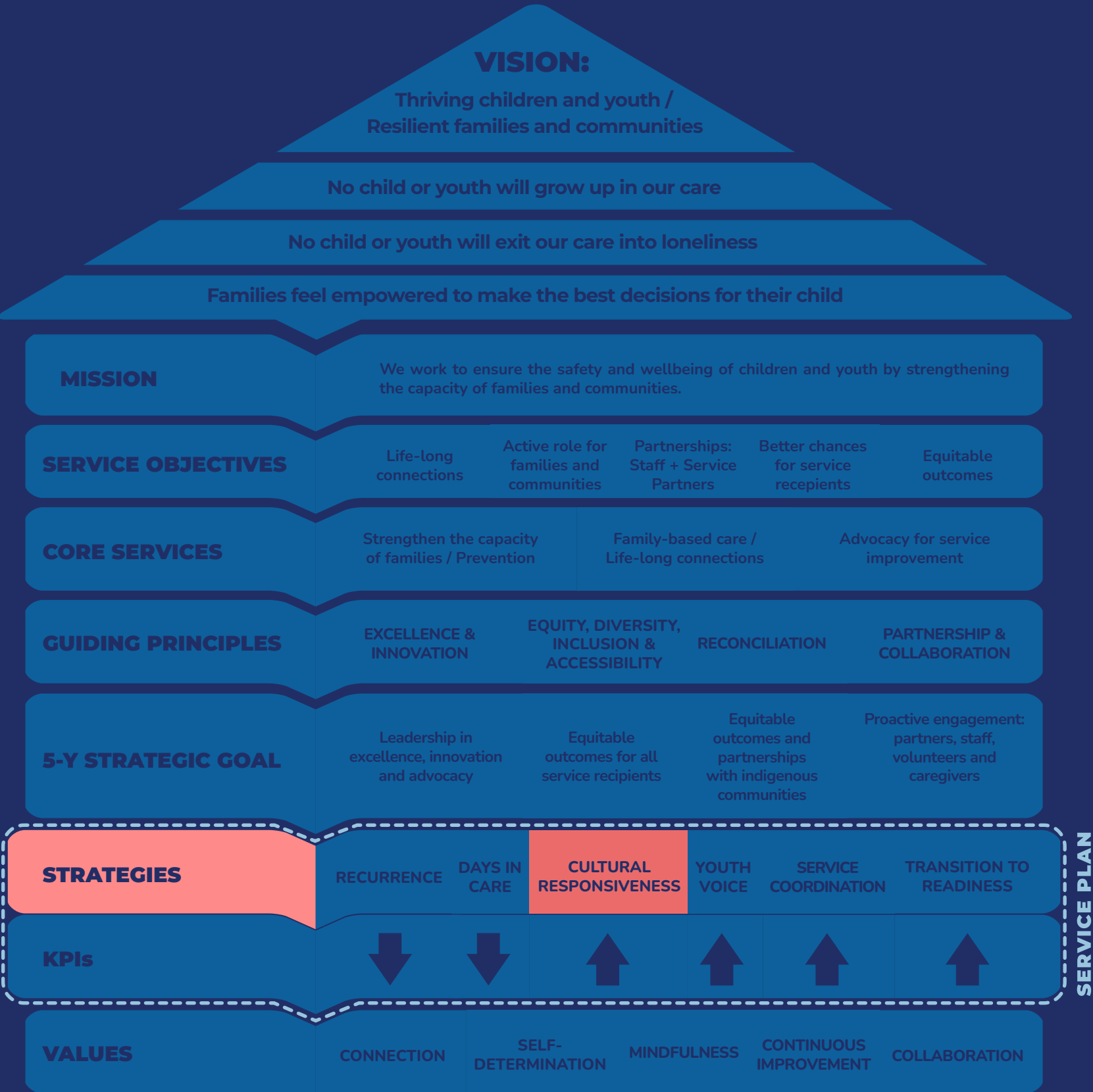
STRATEGIES > RECURRENCE

- Partner with FNIM organizations to integrate land-based healing, ceremony, and cultural teachings into prevention and support services.
- Integrate Indigenous knowledge into assessments, planning, and placement decisions.
- Create opportunities for relational feedback and storytelling from FNIM families and partners.
- Provide ongoing Indigenous-led learning to strengthen cultural safety in practice.
- Prioritize prevention, healing, and family connection over intervention and separation.



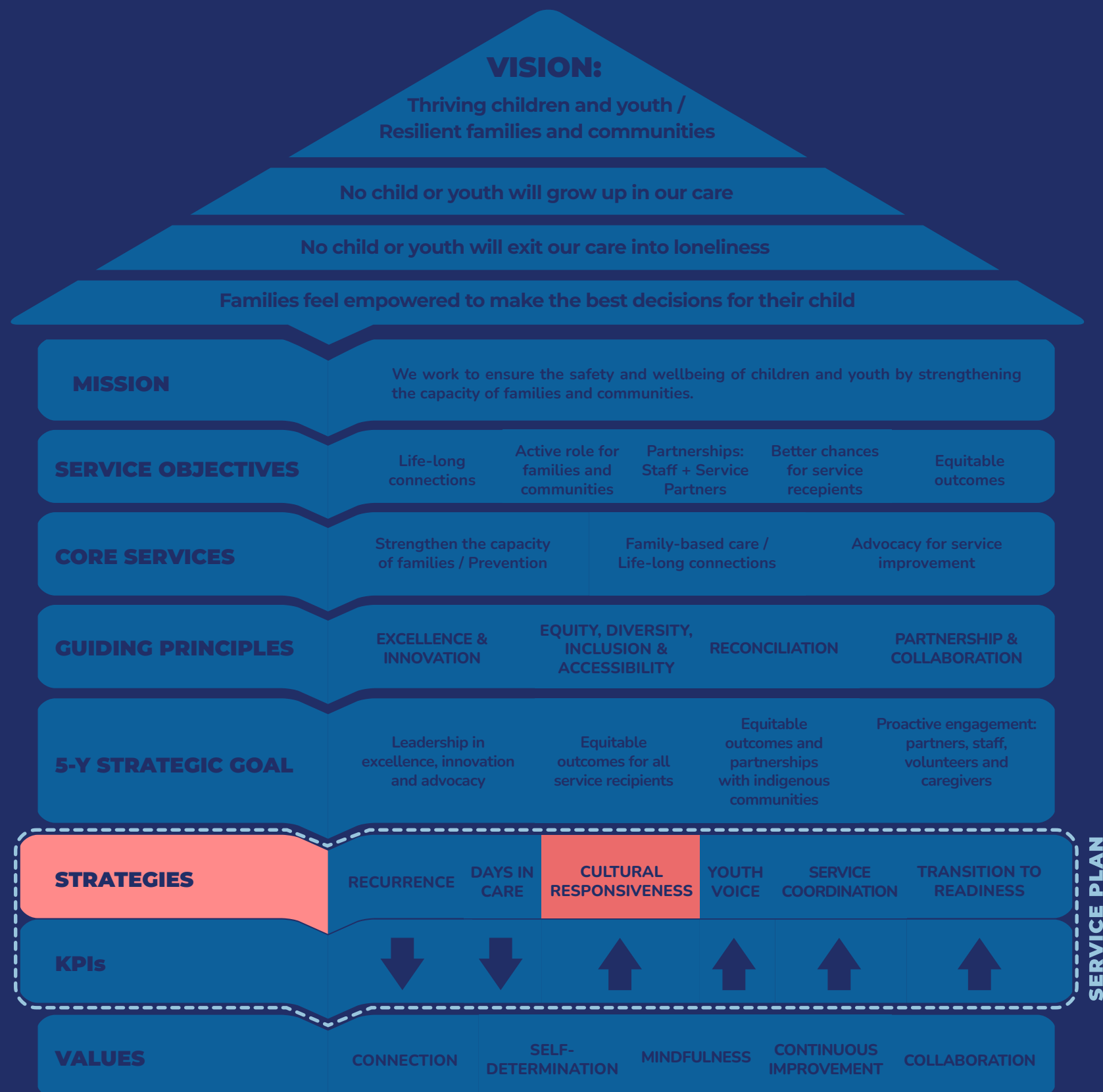
STRATEGIES > DAYS IN CARE

- Conduct quarterly reviews of group care and unlicensed placements.
- Monitor admissions and placement trends annually.
- Track days in care by placement type, prioritizing family-based and kinship placements.
- Advance community-led decision-making models that strengthen family and cultural connections.
- Increase the use of kinship and community-based placements for Indigenous children and youth.



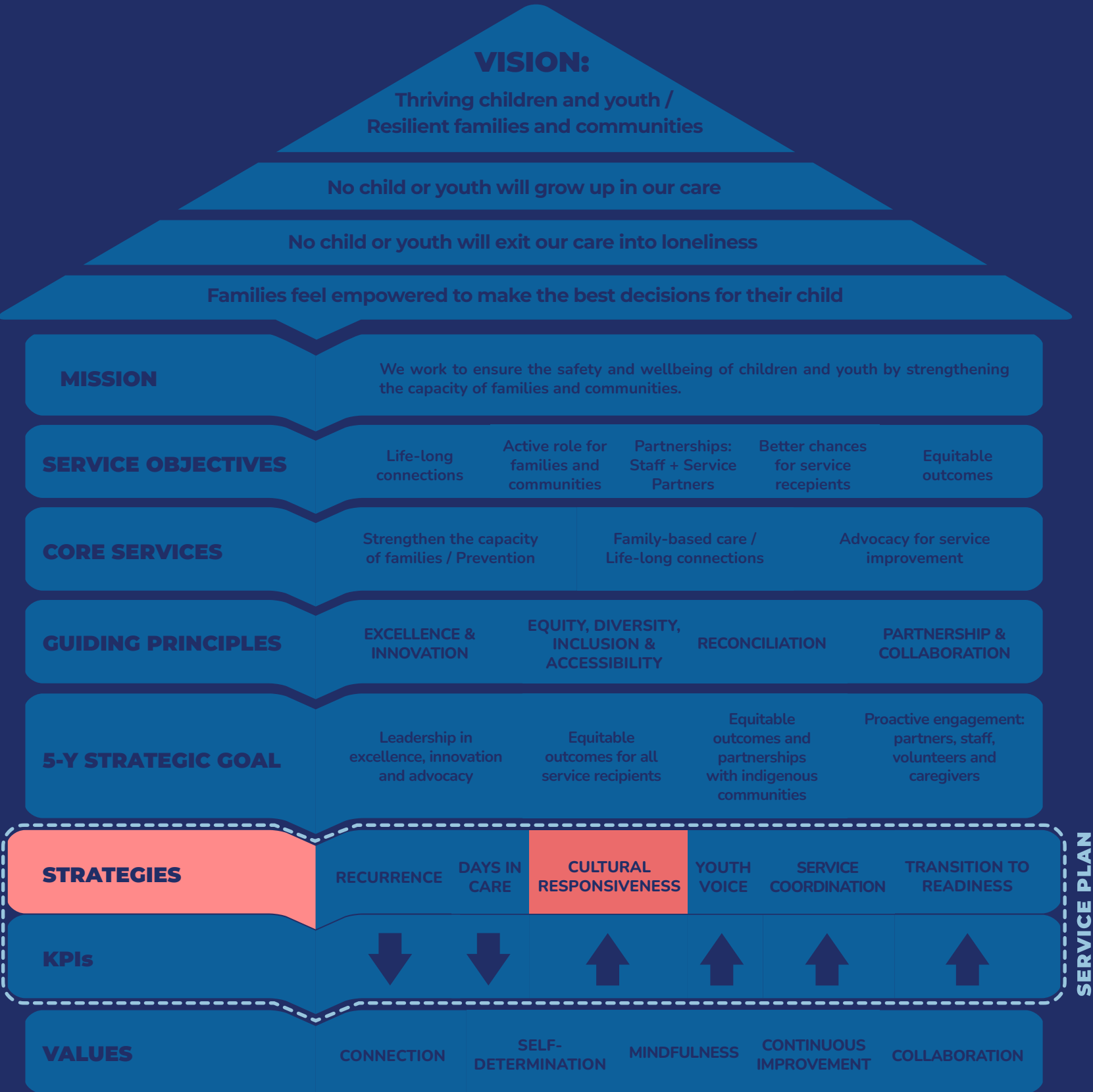
STRATEGIES > CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

- Strengthen partnerships with Black community organizations, parents, youth, and service providers.
- Apply the One Vision One Voice framework to guide policies, service delivery, and training.
- Review and adapt assessment tools to reflect the lived realities of Black families.
- Create community dialogue spaces (forums, cafés, listening circles) to build trust and gather feedback.
- Support recruitment and retention of Black foster caregivers through community partnerships.



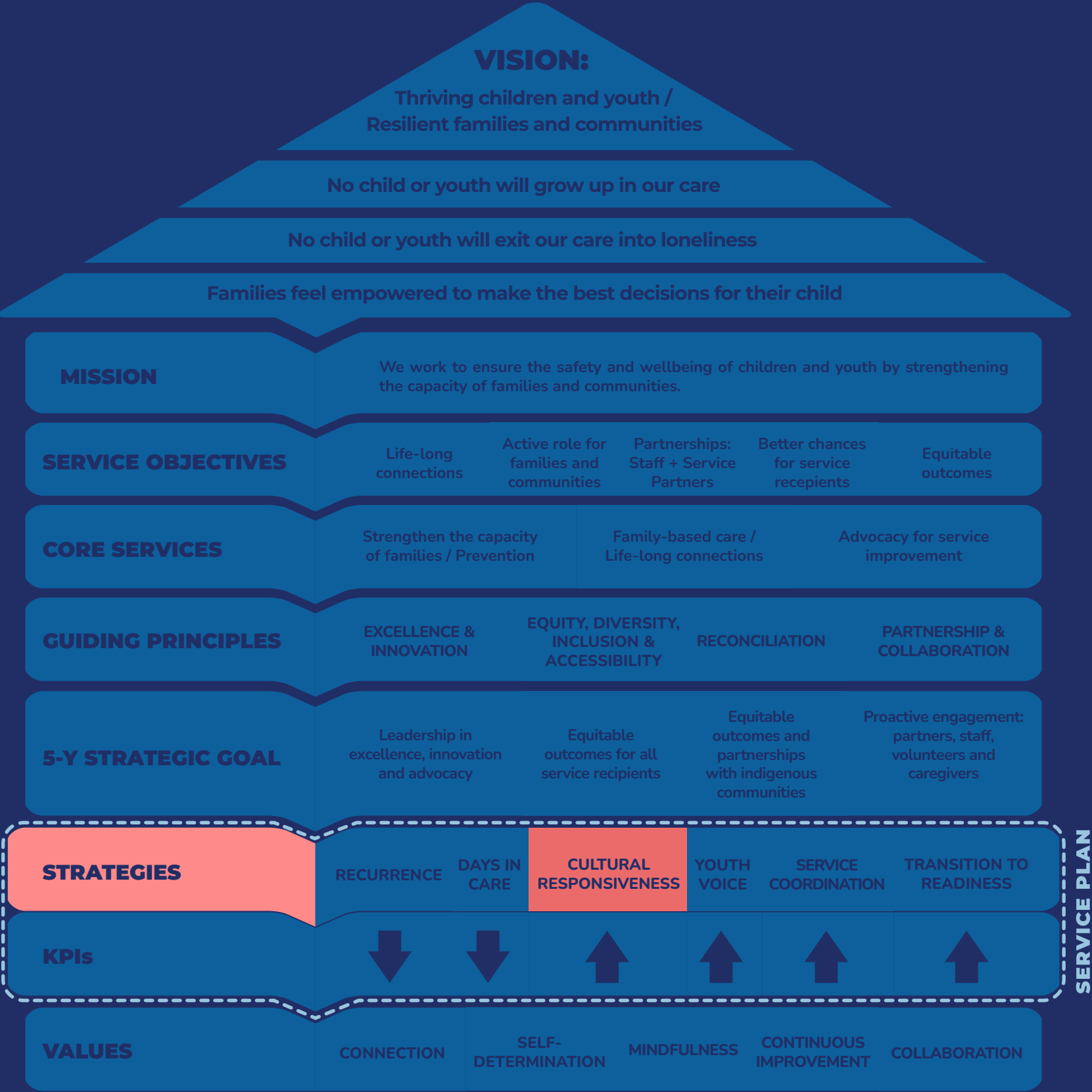
STRATEGIES > CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

- Ensure placements respect children’s cultural, linguistic, religious, and identity needs.
- Partner with programs such as Suradway to support parents navigating systems and strengthening stability.
- Expand community-led mental health education and culturally responsive supports.
- Provide staff training in anti-Black racism, cultural humility, active listening, and community-based practice.



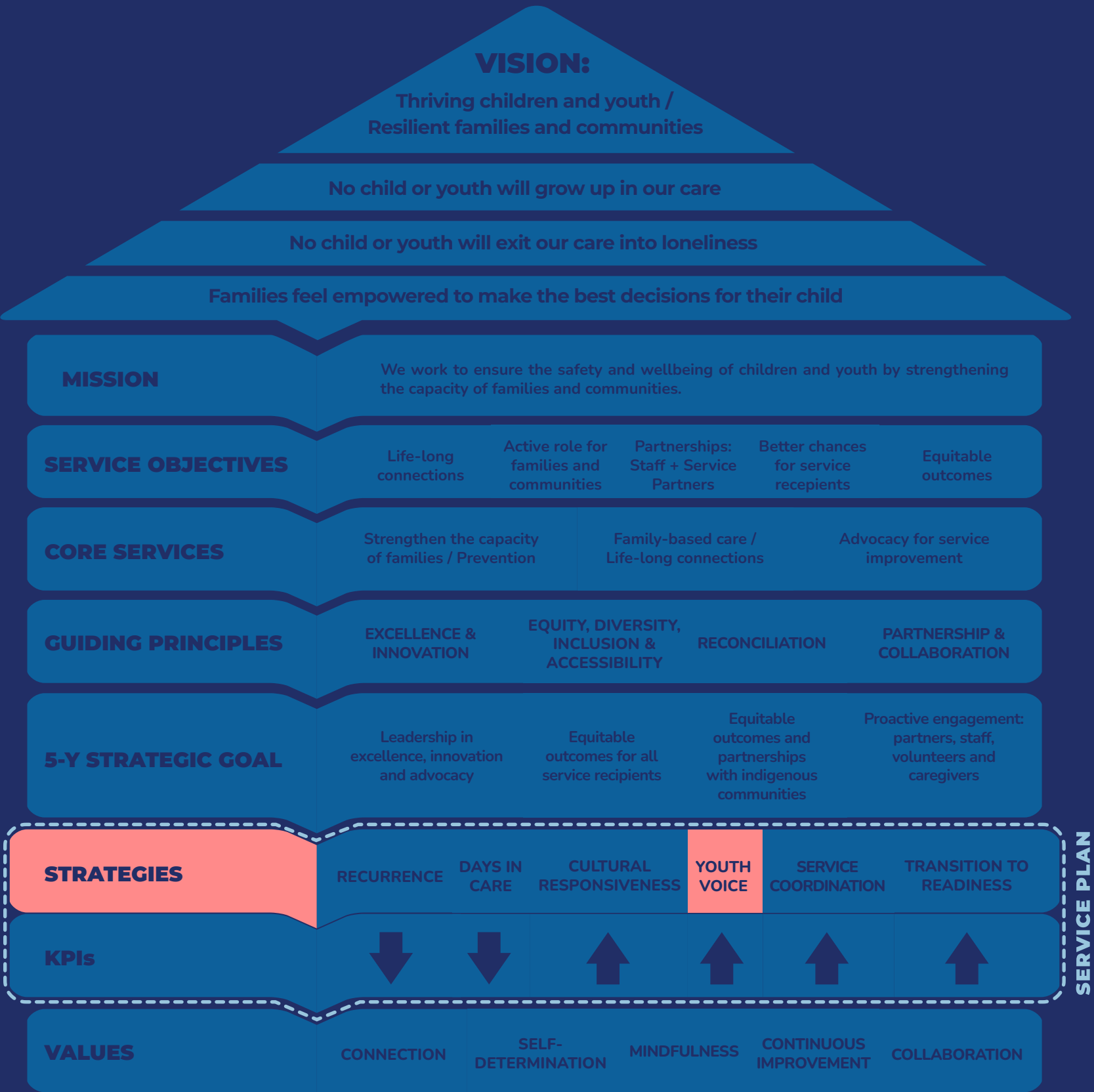
STRATEGIES > CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

- Create opportunities for Black parents and community leaders to participate in service planning and decision-making. • Share progress and challenges transparently with the community.
- Embed decolonizing practice principles in service delivery, supervision, and training.
- Expand land-based healing opportunities and partnerships.
- Integrate Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, and community wisdom into practice frameworks.

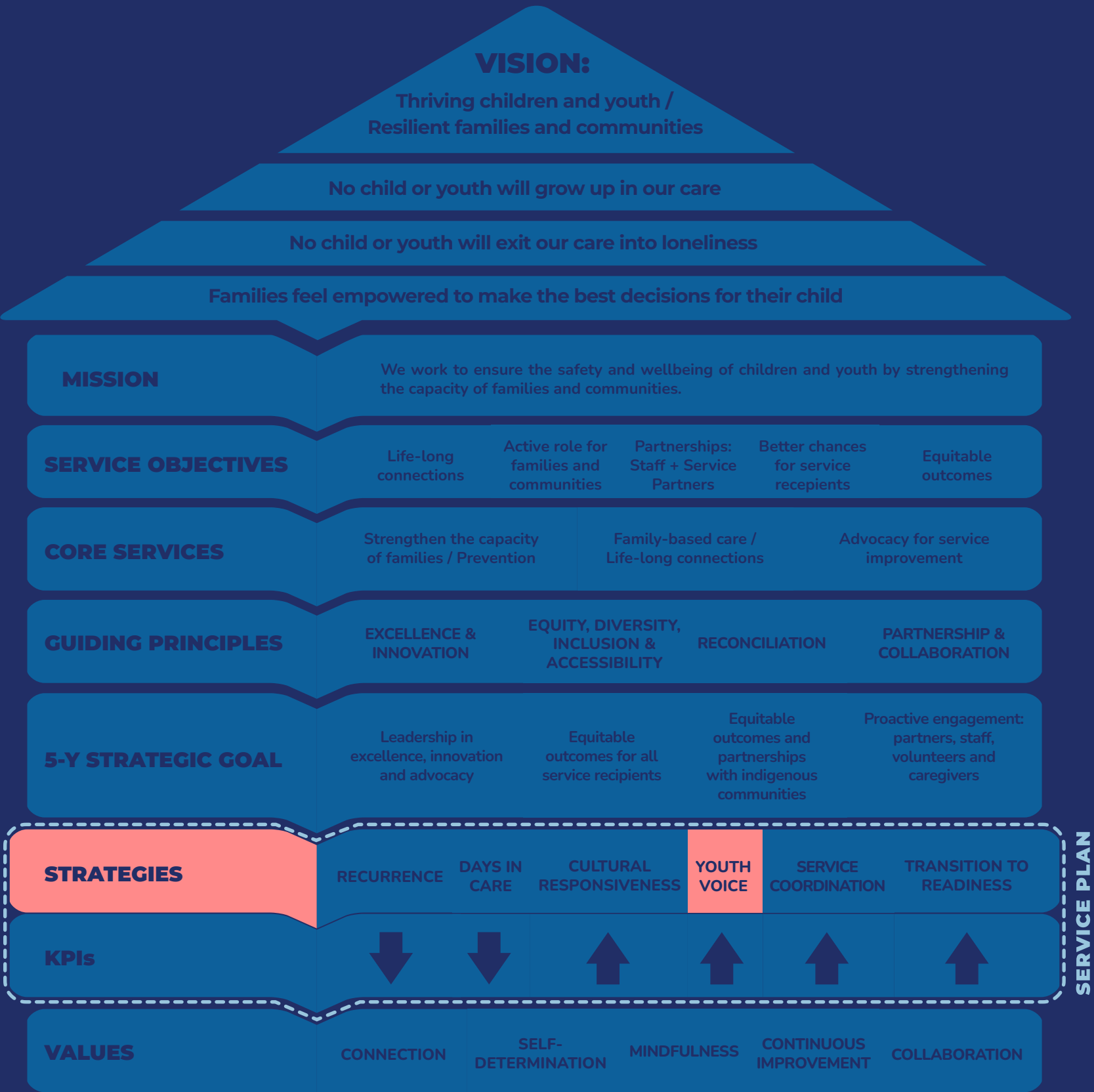


STRATEGIES > CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

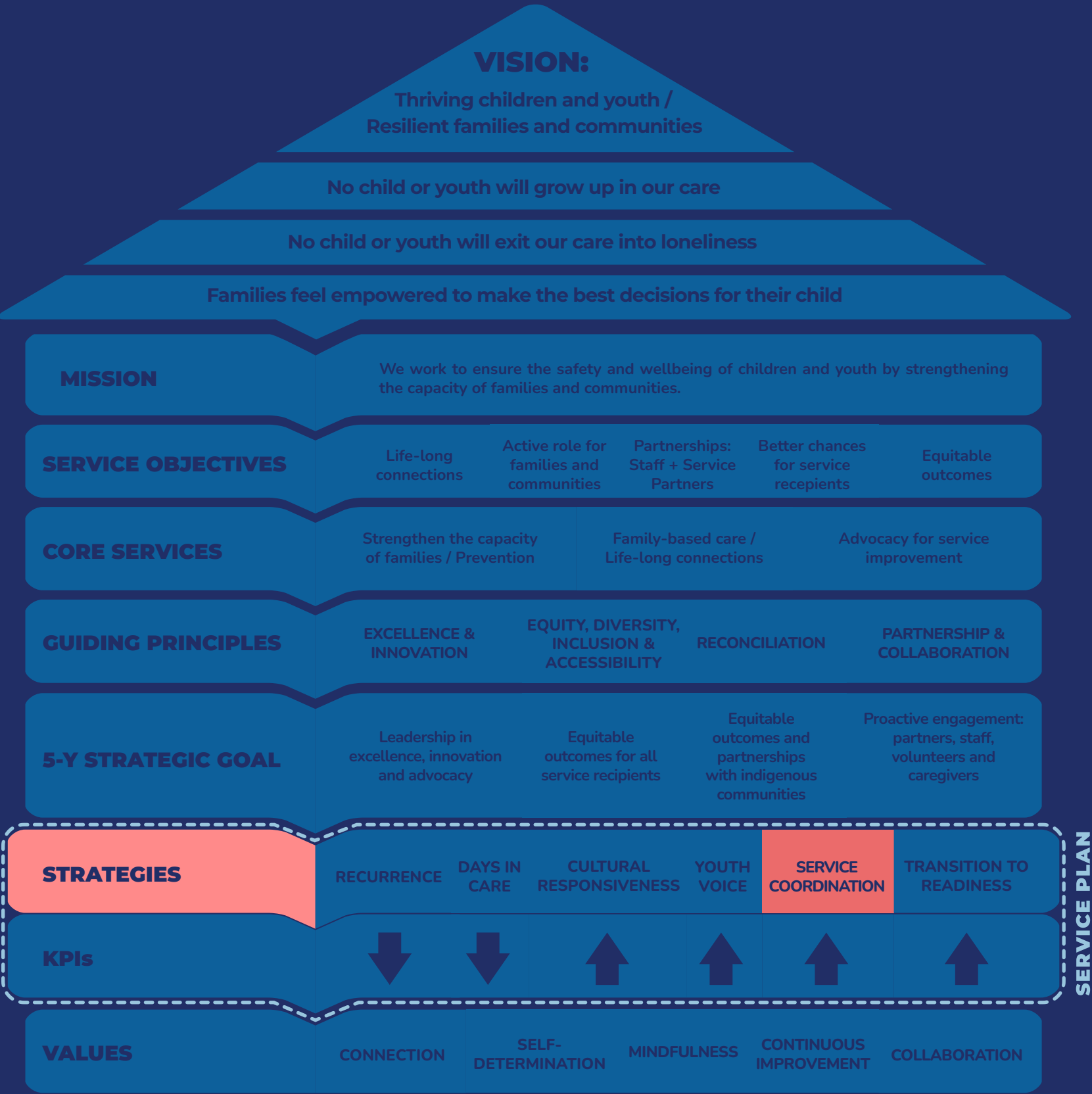
- Incorporate relational and story-based evaluation alongside quantitative data.
- Validate service guides and KPIs with FNIM partners.
- Establish data-sharing agreements that respect FNIM data sovereignty.
- Provide foundational Indigenous practice training for Indigenous-serving staff.



- Provide multiple youth engagement channels, including surveys, circles, focus groups, and virtual forums.
- Hold engagement sessions in youth-friendly and culturally safe environments.
- Involve youth in designing feedback questions and engagement formats.
- Create opportunities for youth to meet directly with CASO leadership.

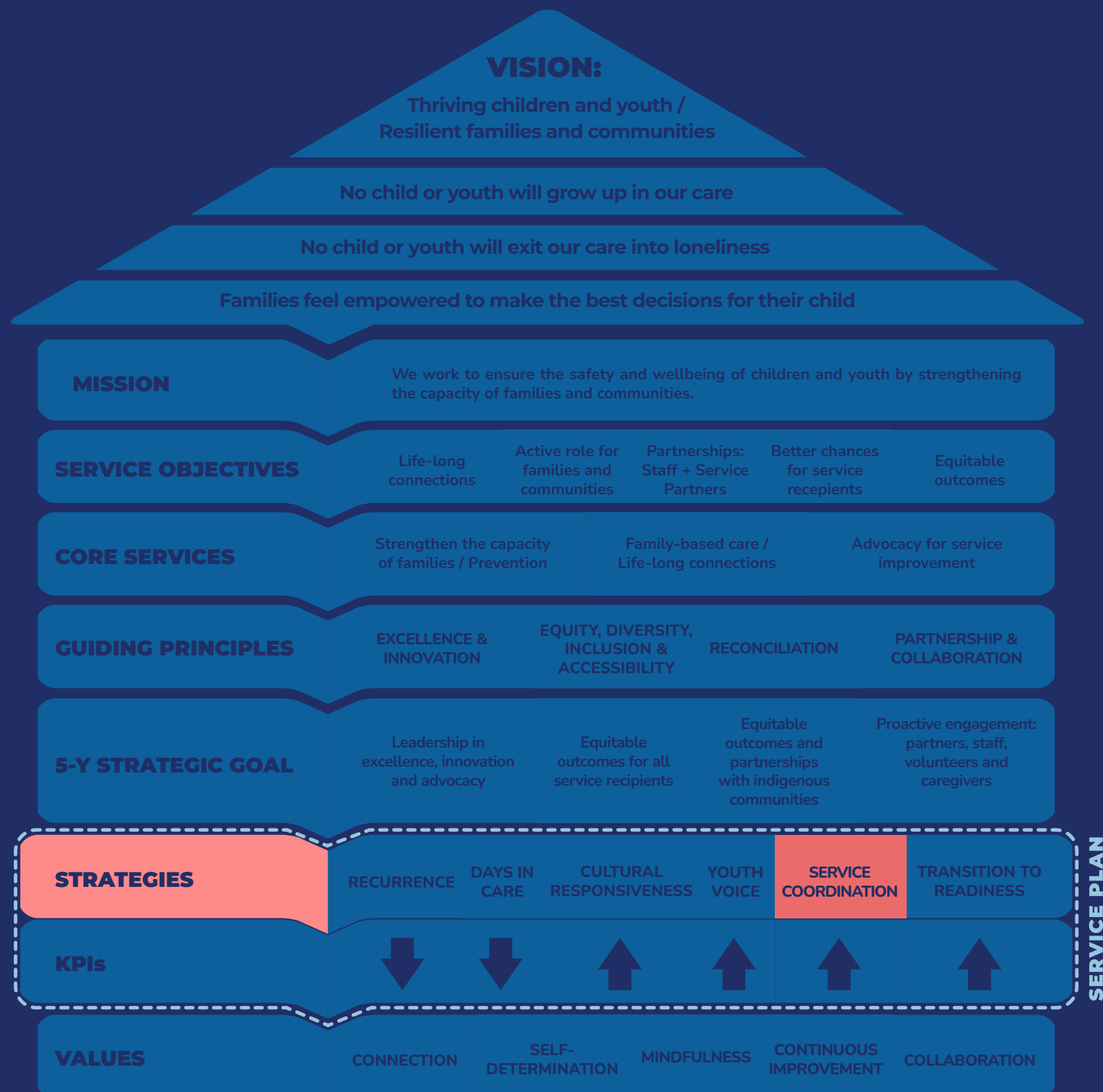


- Support youth participation in provincial consultations and MCCSS discussions.
- Share back with youth what was heard and what actions are being taken.
- Integrate youth feedback into service planning, program design, and quality improvement initiatives.



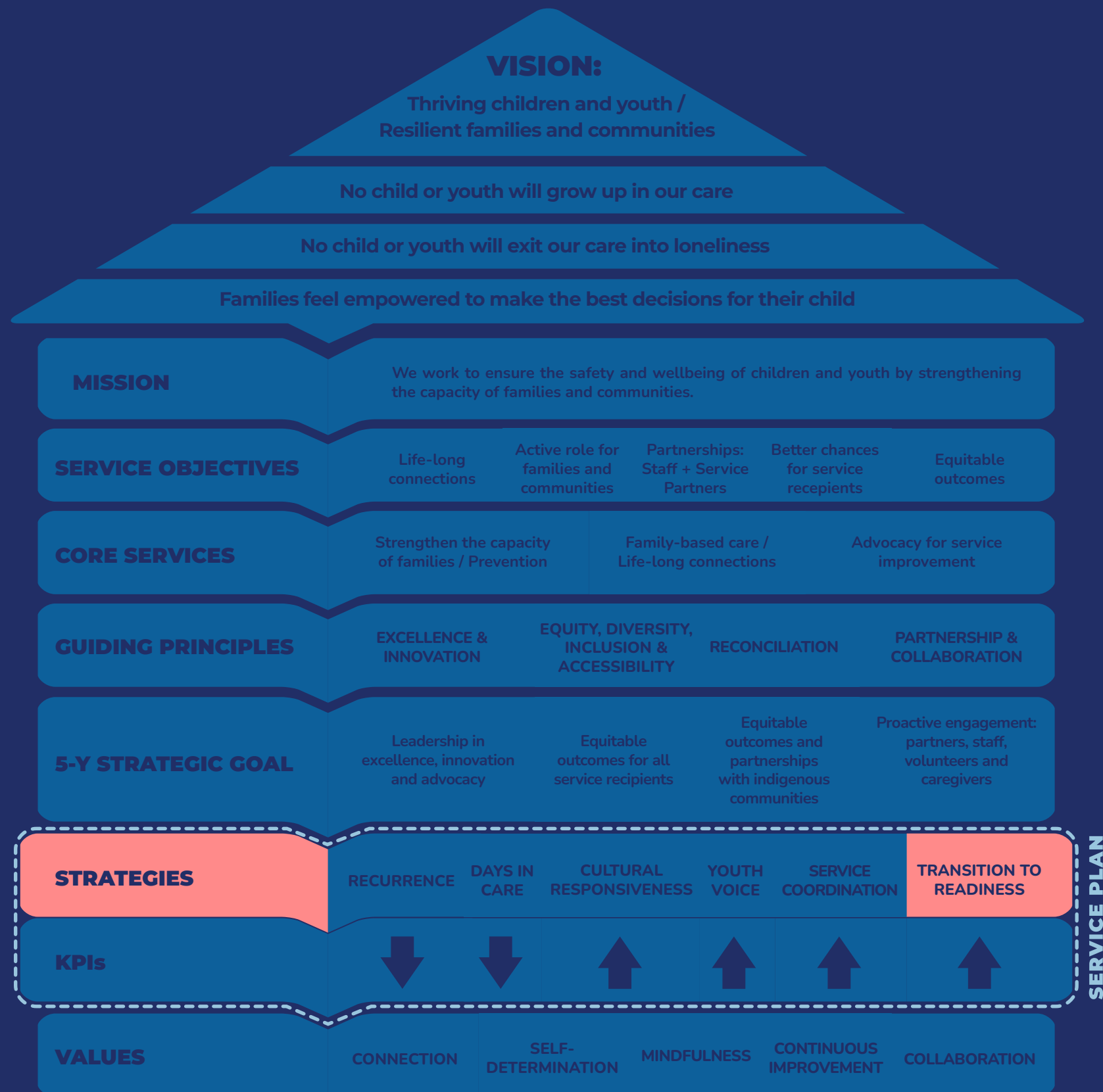
STRATEGIES > SERVICE COORDINATION

- Conduct a three-year trend analysis of service access and develop a Quality Improvement Plan.
- Strengthen referral pathways and clarify roles among community partners.
- Provide clear tools and guidance for staff on accessing partner services.
- Hold regular coordination meetings with community partners.



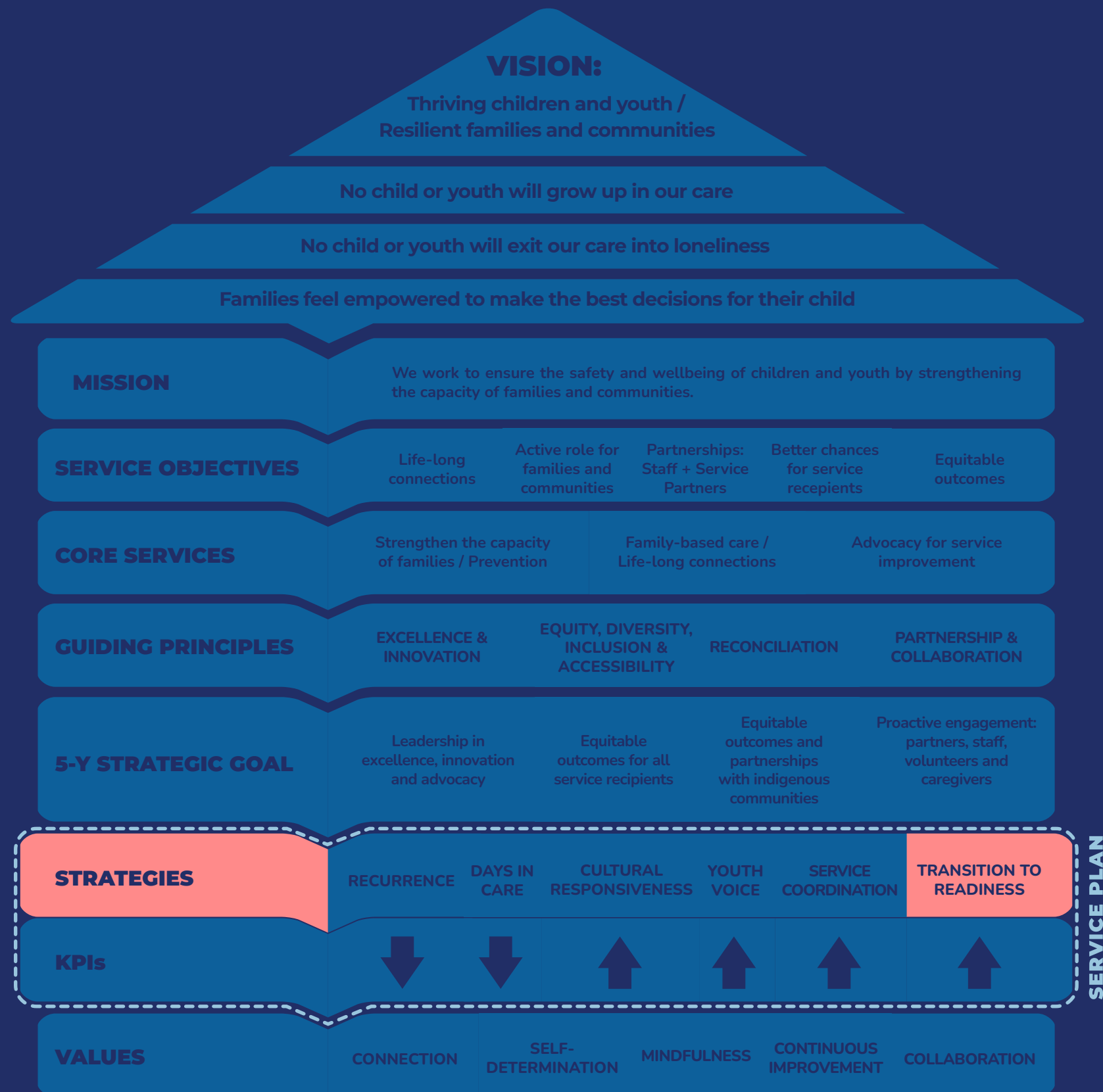
STRATEGIES > SERVICE COORDINATION

- Integrate partner services into case planning and transition planning.
- Use client and caregiver feedback to guide service improvements.
- Share service utilization and outcome data with partners to support accountability and learning.
- Strengthen the coordination and active offer of French-language services with Francophone partners to ensure an accessible, high-quality continuum of services for Francophone children, youth, and families.



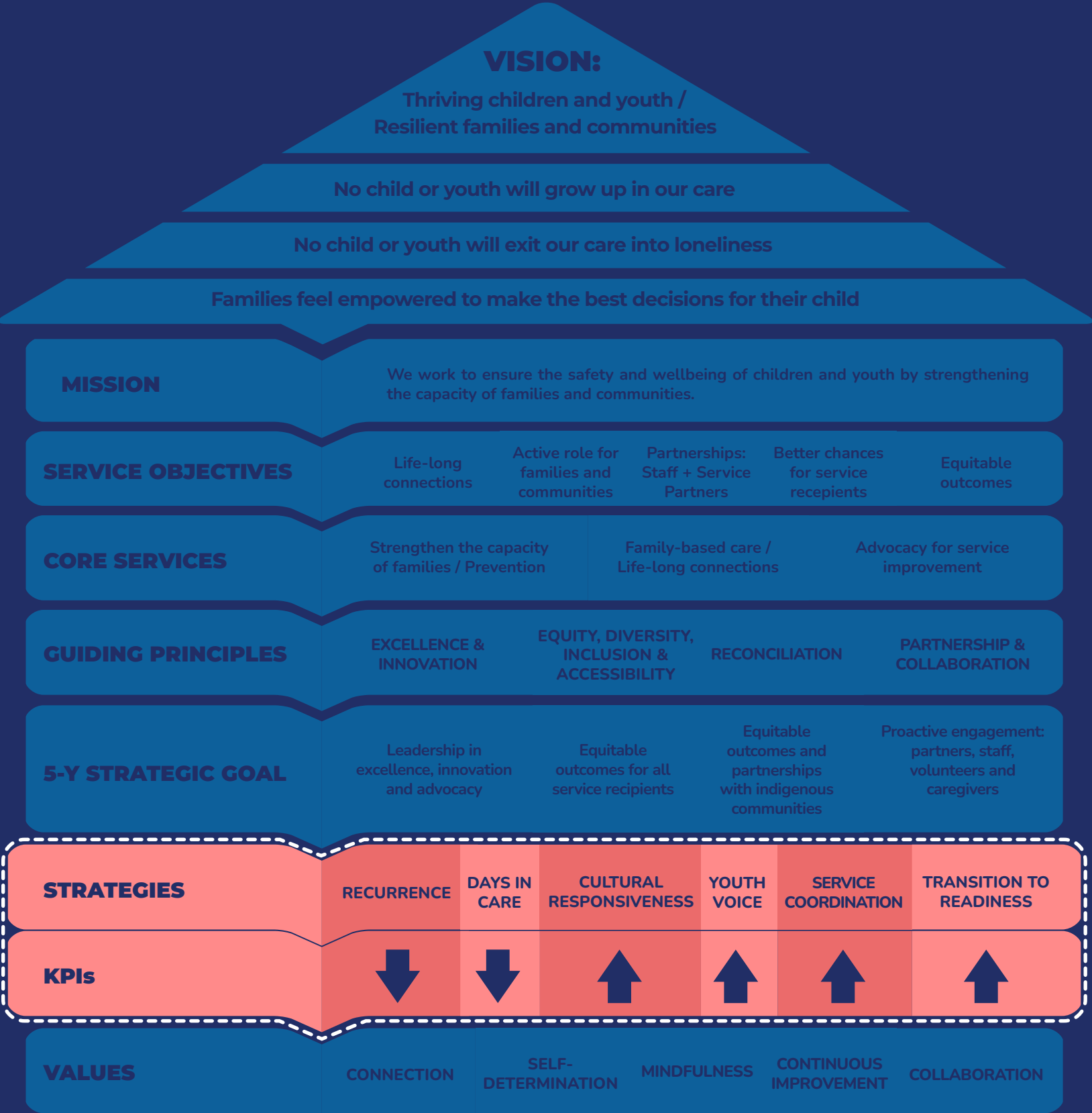
STRATEGIES > TRANSITION TO READINESS

- Conduct Youth Engagement Surveys and integrate findings into Quality Improvement Plans.
- Use HEERO and Ready-Set-Go groups to strengthen youth connection to networks and community supports.
- Maintain the NextSteps website as a centralized resource for youth and staff.
- Embed the Transition Readiness Assessment within the Next Steps Ottawa platform.



STRATEGIES > TRANSITION TO READINESS

- Provide consistent tools and resources to support youth preparing to leave care.
- Continue offering the Pod Model for Learning to support education success for youth in care. • Advocate with MCCSS and the Ministry of Education to expand the Pod Model.
- Ensure all youth in care age 14+ are actively offered Pod Model supports.
- Monitor and report outcomes from Pod Post-Secondary supports.



SERVICE PLAN

STRATEGIES	RECURRENCE	DAYS IN CARE	CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS	YOUTH VOICE	SERVICE COORDINATION	TRANSITION TO READINESS
KPIs	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑

SERVICE PLAN

STRATEGIES	RECURRENCE	DAYS IN CARE	CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS	YOUTH VOICE	SERVICE COORDINATION	TRANSITION TO READINESS
KPIs	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑
AREA	SAFETY	PERMANENCY	EXPERIENCE	ENGAGEMENT	PARTNERSHIPS	OUTCOMES

SERVICE PLAN



- **KPI:** % of closed cases with a new referral for a protection concern within 12 months
- **Data Source:** CPIN Administrative Data
- **What it Measures:** Captures sustainability of family safety after service closure.
- **Why it Matters:** Lower recurrence = safer, more stable families
- **Summary of Key Strategies:**
 - ◆ Standardized safety planning documentation
 - ◆ Early network development + family-led planning
 - ◆ Integration of informal/community supports
 - ◆ FNIM partnerships + culturally grounded approaches

SERVICE PLAN

STRATEGIES	RECURRENCE	DAYS IN CARE	CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS	YOUTH VOICE	SERVICE COORDINATION	TRANSITION TO READINESS
KPIs	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑

- **KPI:** # of days in out-of-home care per child/youth served
- **Data Source:** CPIN Administrative Data
- **What it Measures:** Tracks time spent in care across placements.
- **Why it Matters:** Fewer days in care = stronger permanency and connection
- **Summary of Key Strategies:**
 - ◆ Monitor placement trends and admissions.
 - ◆ Prioritize kinship and family-based placements.
 - ◆ Review group care and unlicensed placements.
 - ◆ Strengthen community-led and culturally connected decision-making.

SERVICE PLAN

STRATEGIES	RECURRENCE	DAYS IN CARE	CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS	YOUTH VOICE	SERVICE COORDINATION	TRANSITION TO READINESS
KPIs	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑

- **KPI:** % of caregivers and youth who experience services as culturally responsive
- **Data Source:** Client Satisfaction Survey / Youth in Care Survey
- **What it Measures:** Captures client perception of cultural safety and responsiveness.
- **Why it Matters:** Trust and cultural safety are essential for effective service outcomes.
- **Summary of Key Strategies:**
 - ◆ Strengthen Black community partnerships and engagement.
 - ◆ Implement One Vision One Voice framework.
 - ◆ Expand anti-Black racism and cultural humility training.
 - ◆ Integrate Indigenous knowledge, land-based healing, and decolonizing practices.

SERVICE PLAN

STRATEGIES	RECURRENCE	DAYS IN CARE	CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS	YOUTH VOICE	SERVICE COORDINATION	TRANSITION TO READINESS
KPIs						

- **KPI:** % of youth who feel heard, respected, and able to influence services
- **Data Source:** Youth in Care Survey
- **What it Measures:** Assesses whether youth experience meaningful participation in services.
- **Why it Matters:** Youth engagement leads to better decisions and stronger outcomes.
- **Summary of Key Strategies:**
 - ◆ Provide multiple youth engagement channels (surveys, forums, circles).
 - ◆ Involve youth in co-design of engagement and feedback processes.
 - ◆ Create direct engagement opportunities with leadership.
 - ◆ Close the feedback loop by sharing actions taken with youth.

SERVICE PLAN



- **KPI:** % of caregivers experiencing services as helpful, accessible, and coordinated
- **Data Source:** Client Satisfaction Survey
- **What it Measures:** Captures effectiveness of integrated service delivery across partners
- **Why it Matters:** Strong coordination improves access, experience, and outcomes
- **Summary of Key Strategies:**
 - ◆ Strengthen referral pathways and clarify partner roles
 - ◆ Hold regular coordination meetings with community partners
 - ◆ Integrate partner services into case and transition planning
 - ◆ Use client feedback and shared data to drive improvement

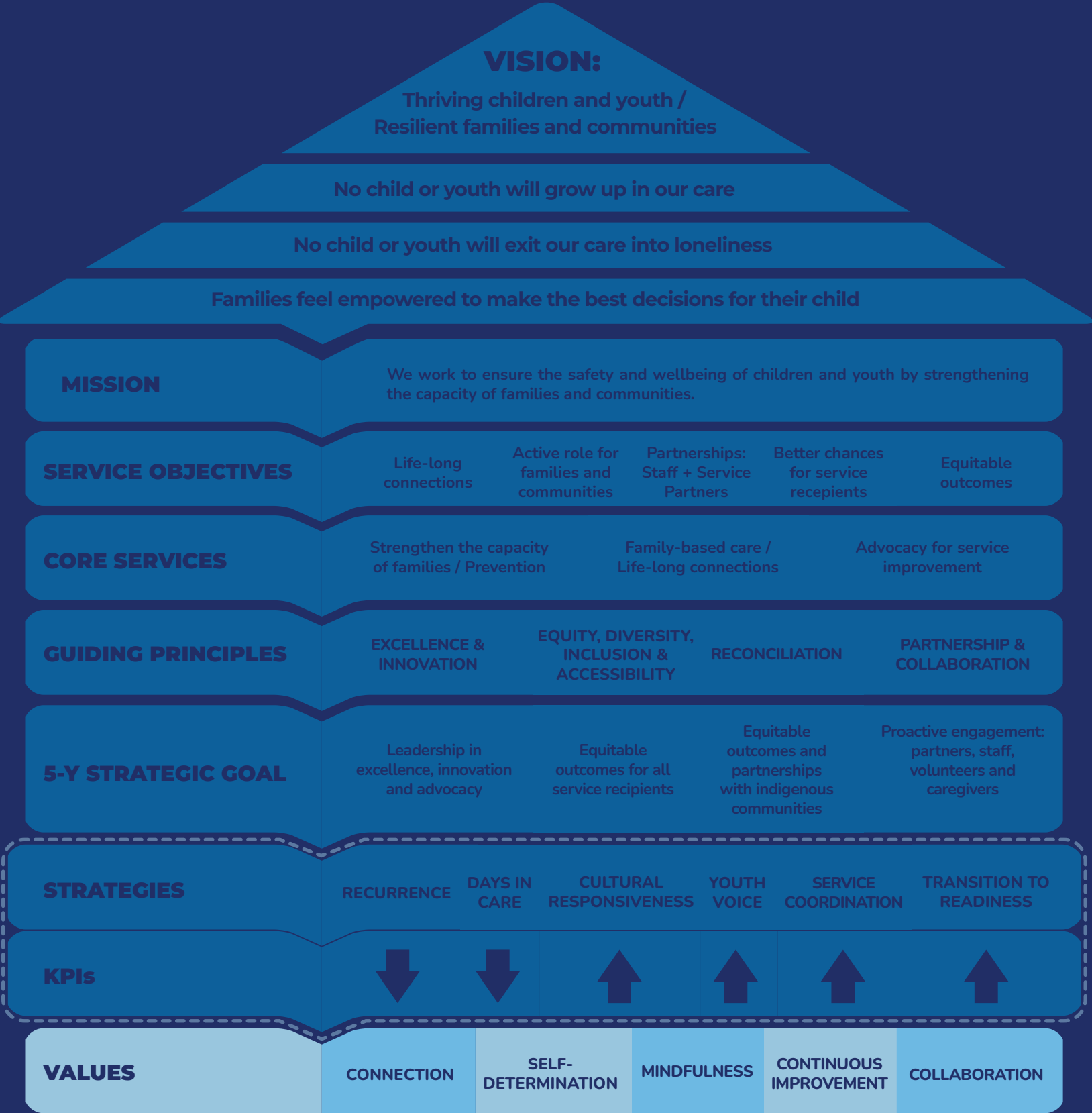
SERVICE PLAN



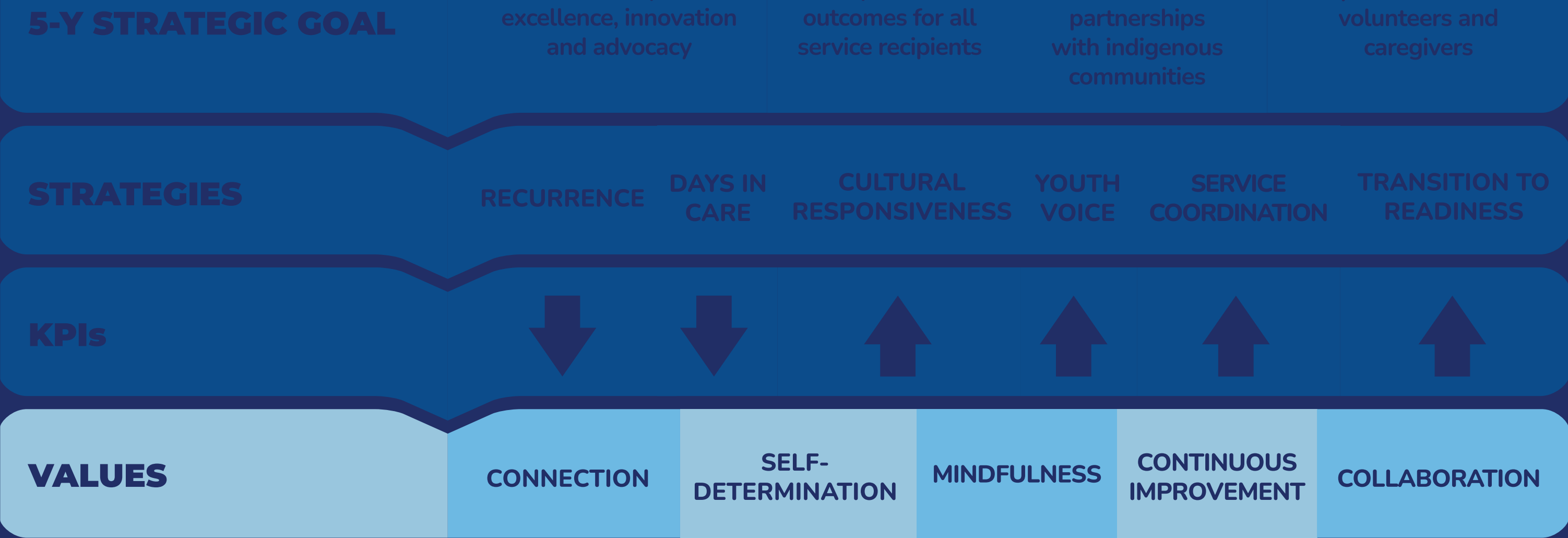
- **KPI:** AVG Child Protection Worker Accountability Checklist score
- **Data Source:** CP Worker Accountability Checklist
- **What it Measures:** Assesses youth readiness across key transition domains
- **Why it Matters:** Higher readiness = better outcomes in education, housing, and independence
- **Summary of Key Strategies:**
 - ◆ Use Youth Engagement Survey findings to inform QIPs
 - ◆ Strengthen network connections through HEERO / Ready-Set-Go
 - ◆ Maintain NextSteps platform as a central resource
 - ◆ Expand the Pod Model for Learning and post-secondary supports

HOW KPIs WILL BE USED

- **Annual Reporting to Board.**
- **Guide Strategic Decision-Making.**
- **Track Strategic Progress Over Time.**
- **Quality & Practice Committee Uptake.**



VALUES



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- **Improved outcomes across all KPIs.**
- **Reduced disparities for Indigenous & Black families.**
- **Stronger youth outcomes post-care.**
- **More coordinated, responsive service.**

For more details: communications@casott.on.ca