

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

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Child and Youth Advocate Releases Investigative Report on the Recovery of Child Support Payments from Income Support Recipients

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has completed a review into the recovery of child support payments. Today the office has released the report *Making Waves: Ensuring Children Benefit From Child Support Payments*. This systemic review focuses on current practices related to recovery or claw back of child support payments from Income Support benefits. There is growing dialogue and legal actions throughout the country criticizing such policies as regressive and infringing on the rights of children.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, every dollar of child support that someone on Income Support receives for their child(ren) is recovered dollar for dollar from their Income Support by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. This means that money one parent pays which is intended to support the child(ren), actually reduces an equal amount that government pays to the custodial parent for the family's basic costs of living.

This report demonstrates that those most vulnerable to poverty, i.e. children in female-led single parent households, are disproportionately disadvantaged by this policy. The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate makes only one recommendation in this report: the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour eliminate the recovery of child support payments from Income Support Program calculations.

Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Child and Youth Advocate, stated, "Children have a right to the support of both their parents. For children growing up in poverty, every effort must be made to help break this cycle, to enable them to see opportunity and hope in their future, and very importantly to enable them to live with dignity as participating members of our communities. We can and must do better to advance these children's rights."

This report can be viewed on the OCYA website: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

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