




Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

# Annual Report

**2019-20**



CHILDREN'S YOUTH  
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

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# Message from the Child and Youth Advocate

I am pleased to present the Annual Performance Report for 2019-20. This report has been prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** provisions for a Category Two entity. As Child and Youth Advocate, I recognize my obligations under the Act and I am accountable for the results in this report.

I am privileged to advocate for young people in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I am certain that my entire team shares this sentiment. Thank you to the young people, families, and professionals who have placed your trust in us. All of our collective actions shape Newfoundland and Labrador into a province that can better support children and youth. It is important to press hard for these changes for individual children and youth, as well as work on a systemic level for all children and youth. The work is challenging, but it is more important than ever in a pandemic. Children and youth cannot be left behind and their voices must be heard.

2019-20 ended on a very unusual note with staff working from home due to COVID-19. Like so many others, we had to shift quickly, develop new routines, secure additional equipment, and transition to an alternate way of working. But we know it was vital to do this quickly because young people and their families suddenly had questions and concerns about how they could navigate and access needed services. I am proud of staff efforts to adapt to our new way of working, and to ensure we could continue to advocate for young people in need.



*Jackie Lake Kavanagh*  
**Jackie Lake Kavanagh**  
Child and Youth Advocate



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# Overview

## Mandate

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) is an Independent Statutory Office of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. We work independent of direction from any government department in fulfilling our mandate. The governing legislation for our office is the **Child and Youth Advocate Act** and our advocacy work is guided by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is mandated to protect and advance the rights of children and youth. We represent the interests and viewpoints of children and youth under the age of 19 years in Newfoundland and Labrador. If a young person has been in care or custody the age of service is extended to their 21st birthday.

We help young people speak up for themselves, we speak up with them, or we speak up for them. We do this through individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, investigations and reviews, as well as public education about the rights of children and youth.

We advocate for changes and accountability that promote the interests and well-being of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. The office advocates to ensure children and youth have access to services they are entitled to, that their issues receive appropriate attention, and their voices are heard in matters affecting them.

## Financial Information

The budget approved for Fiscal Year 2019-20 was \$1,398,900.

### Vision

The rights and interests of every child and youth are protected and respected, and each child and youth has access to the government services they require in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## What We Do

### Individual Advocacy:

We speak up for you, with you, or help you speak up for yourself so your voice is heard and your rights are respected.

### Reviews/ Investigations:

We review and investigate complaints or concerns on behalf of an individual or group of children or youth.

### Systemic Advocacy:

We look into issues that affect groups of children and youth.

### Education and Outreach:

We provide education sessions and workshops with youth groups, community organizations and schools about your rights.





## Core Values

Our Core Values guide our work on a daily basis:

### Respect:

Each employee performs their duties in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of young people we serve, other employees and the public.

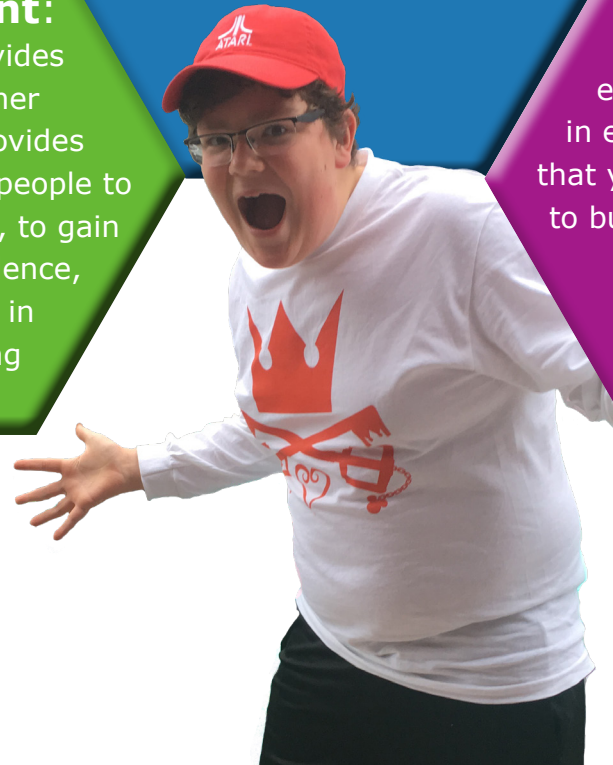


### Integrity:

Each employee performs their duties honestly, ethically, and with the needs of young people as the primary consideration.

### Empowerment:

Each employee provides services in a manner that supports and provides opportunities for young people to have their voices heard, to gain a sense of self-confidence, and to participate in decisions affecting them.



### Diversity:

Each employee embraces the differences in experience and expression that young people bring, in order to build an open, accepting and dynamic service.

## Staff

Our dedicated staff are passionate about our advocacy work for children and youth. In addition to the Child and Youth Advocate, we have 13 staff members on our team with diverse educational and professional backgrounds. Professional backgrounds include social work, nursing, education, law and psychology. Our administration staff serve important support roles to ensure advocacy and investigative staff can dedicate their efforts directly to issues affecting children and youth every day.

Team members have worked in a variety of practice settings including public service, community organizations and private practice.

Here are examples of why staff say they are passionate about this work:



"I think everyone agrees that kids are vulnerable and despite best efforts, are often not listened to. In my job, I get to listen to the voices of children and youth and hear their stories. It is always a powerful experience." - *Bonnie Poole, Advocacy Services Specialist*



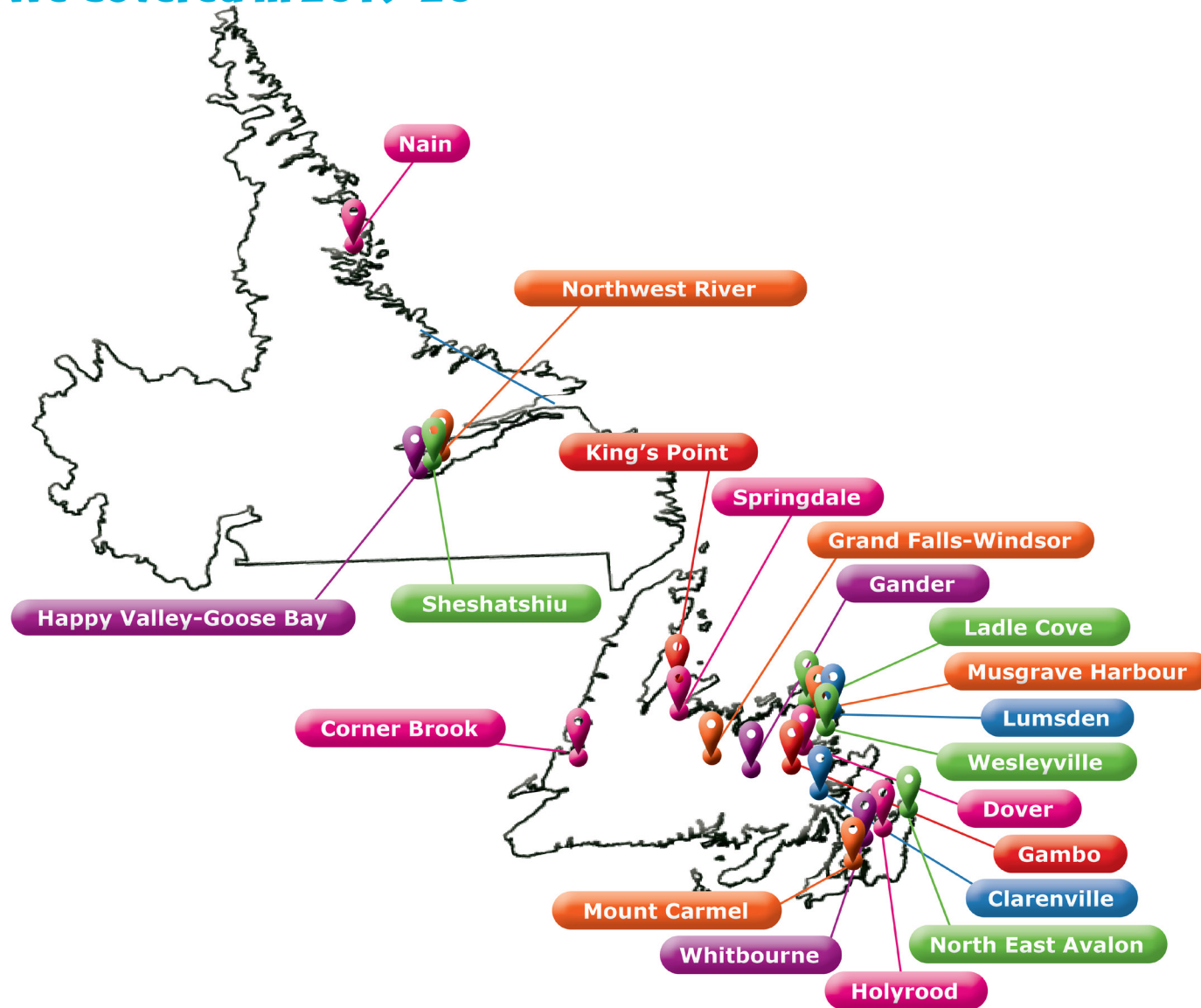
"I believe that every child has a story that deserves to be told. I am committed to honoring their stories in our systemic advocacy and investigative work".  
- *Jillian Roberts, Systemic Advocacy Consultant*



"In these challenging times it is more important than ever for all systems to work together to ensure children's rights are respected and upheld. I care about the children of this province and ensuring that they are safe, protected, and provided with the services and tools they need to thrive."  
- *Stephanie Walsh, Systemic Advocacy Consultant*

# Highlights and Accomplishments

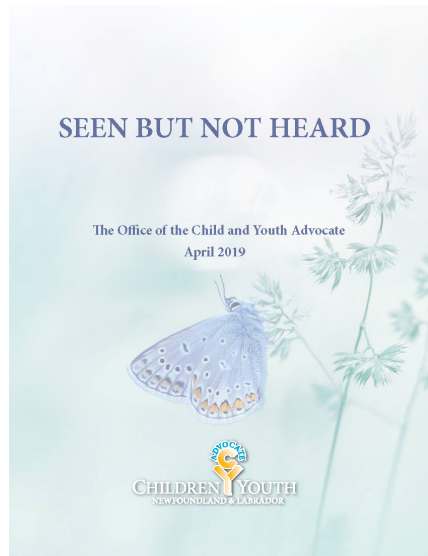
## Ground We Covered in 2019-20



## Investigation and Systemic Reports

### Seen But Not Heard (April 2019)

<https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/pdfs/SeenButNotHeardInvestigativeReport2019.pdf>

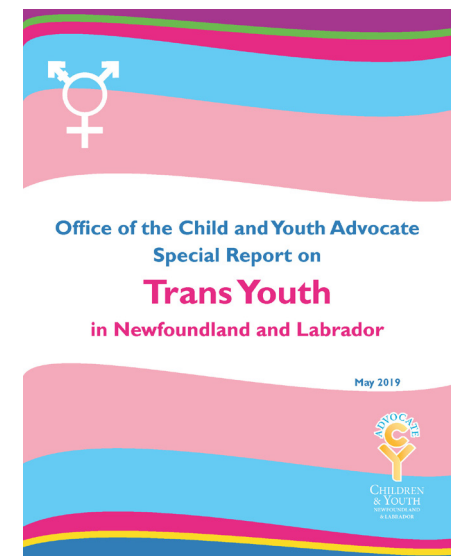


This investigation involved children subjected to years of abuse within their family and in a subsequent alternate care arrangement while they were receiving protection services from the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. The Report makes six recommendations focusing on several systemic areas for improvement, including early intervention and prevention, mental health responses, services for children in care, as well as permanency planning for children and youth in care.

### Trans Youth In Newfoundland and Labrador (May 2019)

<https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/pdfs/SpecialReportTransYouthNL2019.pdf>

This systemic report focuses on the struggles and challenges of many gender diverse youth in Newfoundland and Labrador and presents the stories and experiences shared by young people in focus groups. It builds awareness and amplifies the voices of these youth who have important messages to share about inclusion and discrimination. The Report makes five recommendations and highlights the challenges these youth identified in several key areas, including school, medical, and social support services.

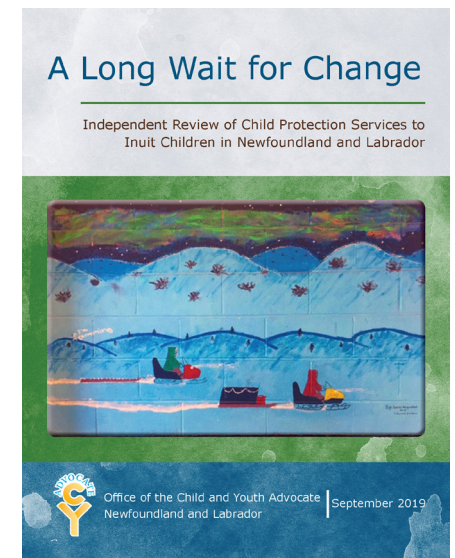


## A Long Wait for Change: Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador

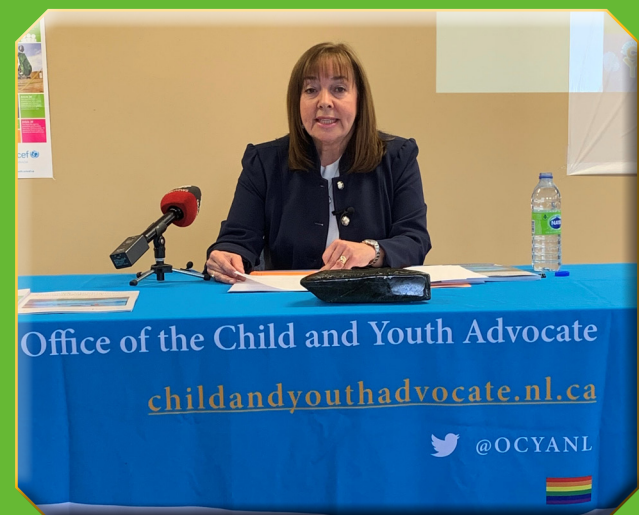
(September 2019)

<https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/pdfs/IndependentReview2019.pdf>

The Child and Youth Advocate launched this comprehensive review in April 2018 and released the report in September 2019. This Review examined several program areas where Inuit children receive services from the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development including protective intervention, in care, foster care, youth services and other alternative placements. The report identifies 33 recommendations resulting from community sessions and other interviews, a review of 213 case files, an analysis of relevant literature on this issue, and from experiences advocating for vulnerable Indigenous children and youth over the years.



Jackie Lake Kavanagh released the Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador at a community gathering in Nain on September 4, 2019.



## Engagement and Outreach

The **Child and Youth Advocate Act** mandates us to provide education on children's rights, among other services. This outreach and education is a highlight for our staff. We are energized when visiting with youth groups, community organizations and schools to provide education and awareness sessions about your rights. While we are located in St. John's, we are provincial in scope and try to reach as many parts of the province as we can. In 2019-20, we met with children, youth, parents, caregivers, and professionals in various settings, and participated in a variety of community events that benefit children and youth. Undoubtedly, these activities will look different as a result of the pandemic.

### School Outreach

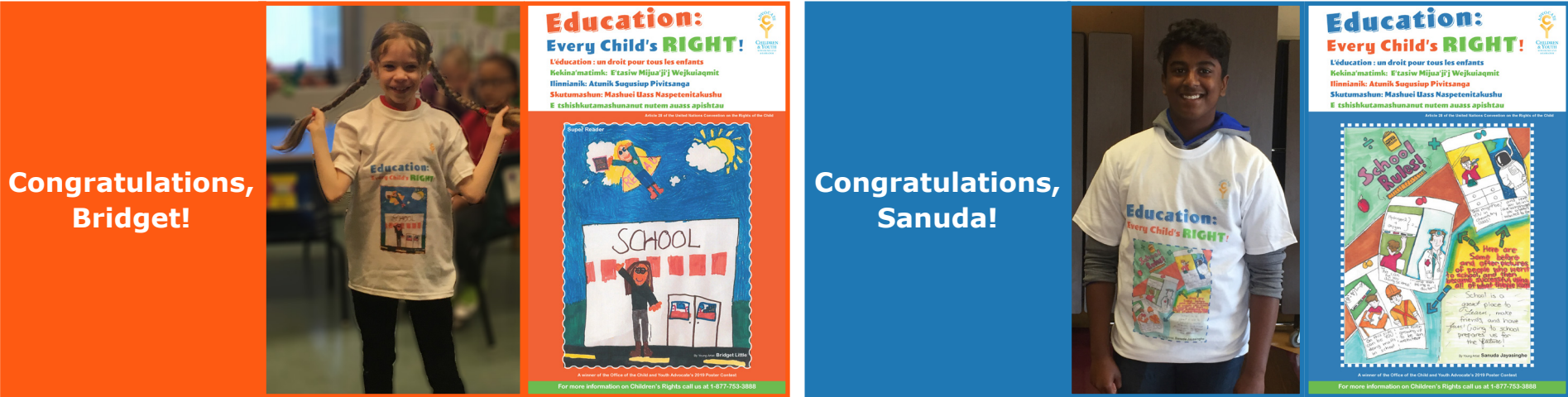
We always appreciate the opportunity to meet with students throughout the province to discuss their rights and the role of our office. We accomplish this through school assemblies, student council meetings, classroom visits, and interactive and fun activities. During 2019-20 we visited:

- Upper Gullies Elementary (Conception Bay South),
- St. Teresa's Elementary (St. John's),
- Waterford Valley High School (St. John's),
- Valmont Academy (King's Point),
- Indian River Academy (Springdale),
- St. John Bosco (Shea Heights, St. John's),
- Gander Collegiate (Gander), and,
- St. Catherine's School (Mount Carmel-Mitchell's Brook-St. Catherine's).



We know a great way to start the day is with a healthy breakfast. We were so pleased to connect with schools and students through the School Breakfast Program. We visited: St. Teresa's Elementary (St. John's) and Goulds Elementary (Goulds). We also had fun participating in Christmas lunch with students at East Point Elementary (St. John's).

We also had the pleasure of visiting Ecole des Grands-Vents (St. John's) and Mealy Mountain High (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) to announce the winners of our poster contest on a child's right to education. We distributed their winning posters provincially, and we provided t-shirts with the winning poster design to their classmates.



## Conferences and Community Outreach

During 2019-20, we also connected with children and youth at various activities, groups and conferences to build awareness of children's rights and how we can help young people. We participated in Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Forums and Conferences in St. John's, Gander, Grand Falls - Windsor and Springdale to bring attention to young people's right to be free from discrimination. These forums are always very energizing and inspiring. We also delivered a self-advocacy session and set up an information booth at the NL English School District Student Leadership Conference (Clareville).

We valued our time with the Aboriginal Family Centre (Happy Valley - Goose Bay), Froude Avenue Community Centre (St. John's), and summer staff at Holyrood Recreation (Holyrood). We had lots of fun with children and youth at the Fluvarium Day Camp Program, City of St. John's leadership program, Choices for Youth Family Fun Day, Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador's Youth Justice Camp, and the Association for New Canadians' Kids Summer Camp.

We also regularly visited the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre (Whitbourne) to discuss youth rights and to offer direct access to residents for individual advocacy. These visits were also a good opportunity to tap into resident feedback for our Youth in Custody booklet. It was an honour to attend their annual Remembrance Day Memorial event. This is always a very moving experience.





## Parents and Adults

It is important for parents, guardians and other adults to understand our advocacy services, how they can advocate for their children, and to know about the rights of children and youth. In the last year we:

- Attended the Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association's inaugural conference and shared children's rights information, St. John's;
- Visited Stella's Circle Parents Group, St. John's;
- Visited the LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Association for New Canadians parents group, St. John's; and,
- Visited Choices for Youth's Momma Moments program, St. John's to provide information about our advocacy services.

## Professionals and Future Professionals

It is important to foster professional networks to share information about advocacy services, children's rights, and to stay apprised of emerging issues. Some of our contacts included:

- Human Rights Commission, St. John's;
- Key Assets Carers Group, St. John's;
- Aboriginal Family Centre, Happy Valley - Goose Bay;
- Association for New Canadians' Satellite Office, Happy Valley - Goose Bay;
- Mokami Status of Women Council, Happy Valley - Goose Bay;
- SHIELD (Sexual Health Information Exchange Labrador District), Labrador Friendship Centre, Happy Valley - Goose Bay;

- ◆ Jens Haven Memorial School, Nain;
- ◆ Gander Boys and Girls Club, Gander;
- ◆ Chief Hart and Innu First Nation staff, Sheshatshiu; and,
- ◆ Navnet's Making Connections & Mapping Systems Session, St. John's.

Our Office attended the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District's "Good at Learning-Good at Life" provincial conference where we presented to school professionals and administrators on our recent reports related to absenteeism, culture in the classroom, and gender diversity.

We are always excited to meet with future professionals to share information about children's rights and the role of our Office. It is important that they understand children's rights and can also educate children and youth they are working with. It is also crucial that those in the helping professions understand the fundamentals of advocacy for their clients. We were pleased to provide children's rights sessions to:

- ◆ Students of Eastern Academy's Child and Youth Care with Addictions class (St. John's);
- ◆ Memorial University's Social Work Child Welfare class (St. John's);
- ◆ Keyin Tech Child and Youth Care Worker program (Grand Falls-Windsor);
- ◆ Bachelor of Social Work students working with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (St. John's);
- ◆ Memorial University's Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education at the Faculty of Medicine (St. John's); and,
- ◆ Bachelor of Social Work students from MacMorran Community Centre (St. John's).

## Community Events

We truly appreciate the many invitations we receive for various community events. We try to accept as many as possible in order to share our message of advocacy, children's rights, systemic deficiencies, and to learn about the work of many children's champions in the community. In 2019-20, we attended:

- ◆ St. John's Youth Week Luncheon;
- ◆ Roots of Empathy Celebration;
- ◆ Daybreak Annual General Meeting (AGM);
- ◆ Choices for Youth AGM;
- ◆ Waypoints AGM;
- ◆ Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council open house;
- ◆ St. James United Diversity Fair;
- ◆ Multicultural Women's Organization AGM;
- ◆ Key Assets 10th Anniversary;
- ◆ Thrive AGM;
- ◆ Multicultural Women's Organization Christmas Party;
- ◆ Learning Disability Association session; and,
- ◆ Jimmy Pratt Foundation Strategic Visioning Session.



## National Child Day

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate joins many organizations in Canada to celebrate National Child Day on November 20th each year. Children bring a richness to our lives, and depend on all of us to protect them and pave the way for them to have happy and healthy lives.

The **United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child** offers a comprehensive framework for children's rights. Canada ratified the Convention in 1991, however, significant work is required throughout the country and in Newfoundland and Labrador before children's human rights are fully realized.

We decided to celebrate National Child Day 2019 all week. Here is what our busy, fabulous week looked like:

- ◆ On November 20th we celebrated by launching our first video contest which invited children and youth to create a video about children's right to be free from discrimination. We also visited children, youth and those who serve them in various settings, including:
  - ◇ Corner Brook High School;
  - ◇ Family Resource Centre, Corner Brook;
  - ◇ Gill Memorial Academy, Musgrave Harbour;
  - ◇ Sandstone Academy, Ladle Cove;
  - ◇ Breakfast program at St. Andrews Elementary, St. John's;
  - ◇ Brighter Futures AGM, St. John's;
  - ◇ Our Child and Youth Advocate addressed the school assembly at St. Teresa's Elementary. Charlie Bear was there as well and met the students and a new friend, Timmy the Tiger, the school mascot; and,
  - ◇ Our Child and Youth Advocate visited the First Light Child Care Centre in St. John's. She and staff participated in a circle with the children and learned about their culture and traditions, including participation in a smudging ceremony.



During the week we also visited:

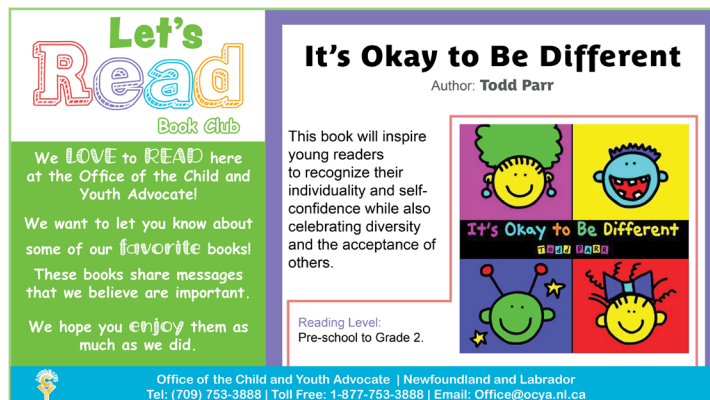
- ✦ Status of Women, Corner Brook;
- ✦ Qalipu First Nation, Corner Brook;
- ✦ Corner Brook Intermediate School, Corner Brook;
- ✦ Smallwood Academy, Gambo;
- ✦ Dover Family Resource Centre, Dover;
- ✦ Lumsden Academy, Lumsden;
- ✦ Pearson Academy, Wesleyville;
- ✦ GSA Conference, St. John's;
- ✦ Me and Wee Book Club, Womens Centre, St. John's; and,
- ✦ City of St. John's Move it Event, St. John's.



## Information Materials

We regularly develop and distribute informational materials about children's rights and our advocacy services. This year we:

- Released our Newsletter in January, which includes information about our work, including advocacy services, investigative reviews and outreach activities.
- Enhanced our diversity poster to include the Mi' Kmaq translation. So it now reflects Innu-aimun (Sheshatshiu and Mushuau dialects), Inuktitut, French, and Mi' Kmaq. It looks great and sends a powerful message.
- Launched our Book Club initiative on Twitter to promote books that we believe speak to children's rights, inclusion and diversity. We would love to hear your recommendations too.
- We engaged youth in secure custody as we finalized our Youth In Custody booklet. Thanks to everyone who helped.



This is a Positive Space that Welcomes and Supports Everyone

Cet endroit est un espace positif qui accueille et soutient tout le monde

Ula na tett ta'n pasik wen wla'sulaten aqq apoqnmuatén

Enkuenu uta tshishue kamashtashatsheneshkatshet kie kamashta uauitshiakent mishiue auen

Ekuta ute minuenitakuak tshetshi uauitshiakanit kassinu auen

Tamanna piujummagik iniuvuk tujummiKujingitumik amma ikajotigijautluni kinakkutuinnanut

Compliments of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Newfoundland and Labrador  
Tel: (709) 753-3888 | Toll Free: 1-877-753-3888 | Email: Office@oyca.nl.ca | Twitter: @OCYANL

## Young Artist Program

Our Young Artist Program is an ongoing program for anyone under the age of 21. We accept artwork all year long and display it on our Young Artist Wall of Fame, and use it on our website, social media, newsletters, reports and other resource materials about children's rights. We are interested in artistic creations such as drawings, paintings, pictures and poetry. If you would like to learn more please visit <https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/YoungArtistProgram.htm>. Every submission receives a prize pack and certificate.



By Young  
Artist:  
**Benjamin**

## Continuous Learning and Information Sharing

We have a strong, ongoing commitment to learning so we can better serve young people in the province. In 2019-20, we supported staff to participate in a variety of learning opportunities:

- Bi-monthly webinars with the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) to explore new initiatives in advocacy services;
- Sessions on:
  - ✧ Jordan's Principle;
  - ✧ Mental health;
  - ✧ Trauma;
  - ✧ Assistive technology;
  - ✧ Diversity and inclusion;
  - ✧ Parenting across cultures;
  - ✧ Resilience in times of change;
  - ✧ Conflict resolution;
  - ✧ Information management;
  - ✧ Newfoundland and Labrador's Vital Signs through the Harris Centre; and,
  - ✧ Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers (NLCSW) sessions focused on Human Rights and Reconciliation: Indigenous Child Welfare, children's rights, Bill C-92 (**An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families**), pandemic strategies, changes to the **Divorce Act**, the **Children, Youth and Families Act**, social work documentation standards, navigating practice and deaf and hard of hearing awareness.

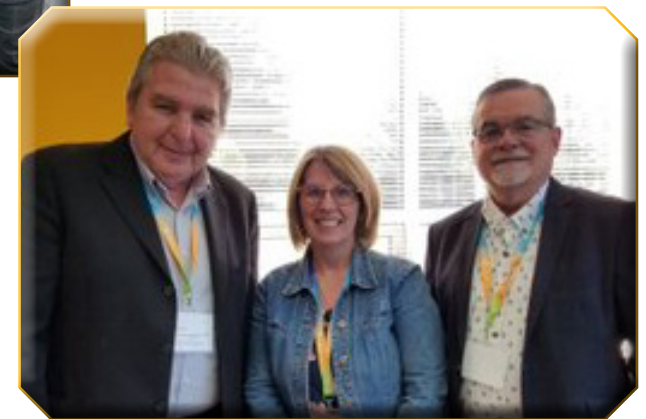


## Conferences, Courses and Presentations

- Stuttering Association of Newfoundland and Labrador's Conference;
- Learning Disability Association of Newfoundland and Labrador's conference on technology-assisted learning;
- Newfoundland and Labrador English School District's "Good at Learning-Good at Life Conference", where we also had the opportunity to present on several of our recent reports to school personnel and administrators;
- Early Years Conference in British Columbia focused on early childhood development, early childhood intervention, and family support;
- Presented and participated in the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocate's biennial national Conference in Winnipeg;



- ◆ Safe and Inclusive Schools Program Itinerants from NL English School District;
- ◆ Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- ◆ Eastern Health e-Mental Health Services;
- ◆ RCMP session on street and prescription drug abuse;
- ◆ International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child in Moncton;
- ◆ Certificate program on children’s rights through Mount Royal University; and,
- ◆ Workplace NL’s Safety Symposium.



## Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates is an association of children's advocates from across Canada who have mandates to advance children and youth rights, and to promote their voices. Through Council, advocates identify areas of mutual concern, share best practice, information and resources, facilitate joint learning opportunities for staff in all jurisdictions, and work to develop ways to address issues at a national level. As a small jurisdiction, Newfoundland and Labrador benefits greatly from Council's network and resources. Advocate Jackie Lake Kavanagh served her second year as Vice President of Council in 2019-20.

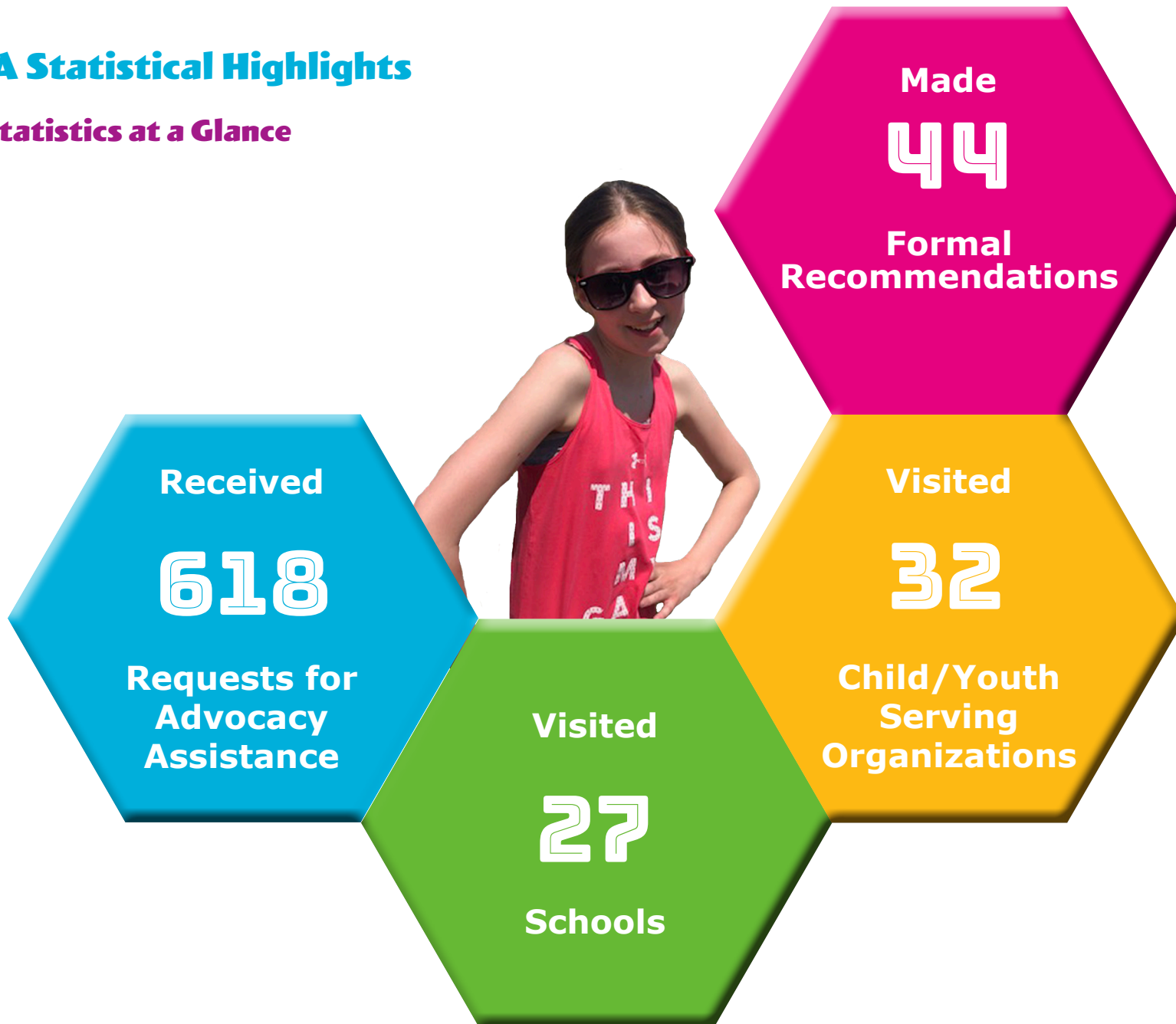
The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates held its biennial national conference in Winnipeg in 2019. Manitoba and Saskatchewan co-hosted the conference. Provincial and territorial advocates and staff came together to discuss topics including youth engagement, Indigenous child welfare, working with younger children and other current research and trends.

We presented our findings from two recent reports. Our Advocate presented on our findings from **A Long Wait for Change: Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador**; and our Director presented on **Chronic Absenteeism: When Children Disappear**. We also hosted an information booth.

Council released its **National Paper on Youth Suicide**, including recommendations. This is a valuable discussion and resource for all Canadian jurisdictions.

# OCYA Statistical Highlights

## Key Statistics at a Glance



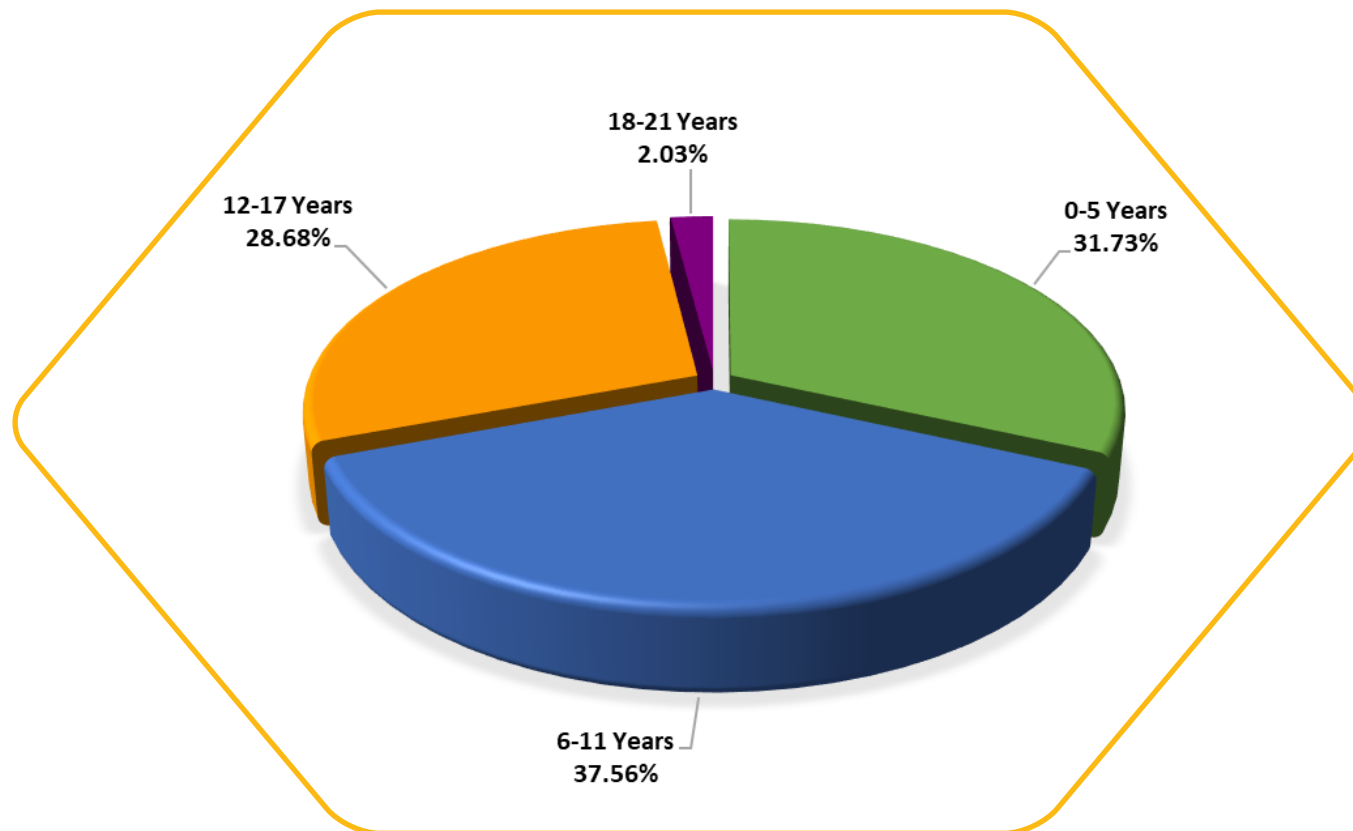


## Service Delivery and Performance

We responded to 617 requests for service/individual advocacy and information. This in addition to 77 requests carried forward from the previous year.

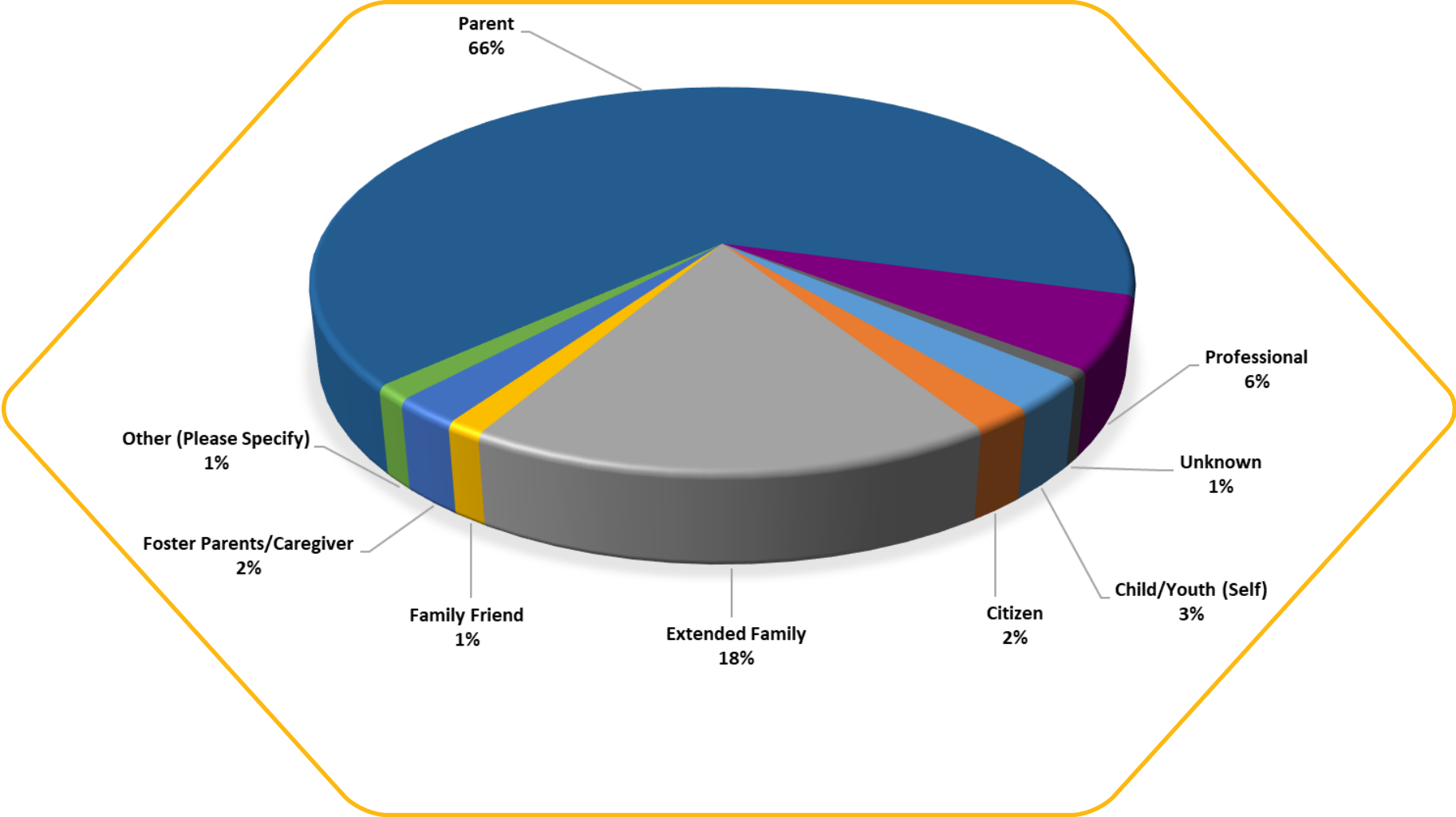
### Age of Client

This chart identifies the ages of the clients who were the subject of the requests for advocacy assistance. Children aged 6-11 years continue to be the subject of most requests for advocacy assistance at 37.56%, which is a consistent trend. These age trends have been fairly consistent over the years.



# Person Requesting Advocacy for Child/Youth

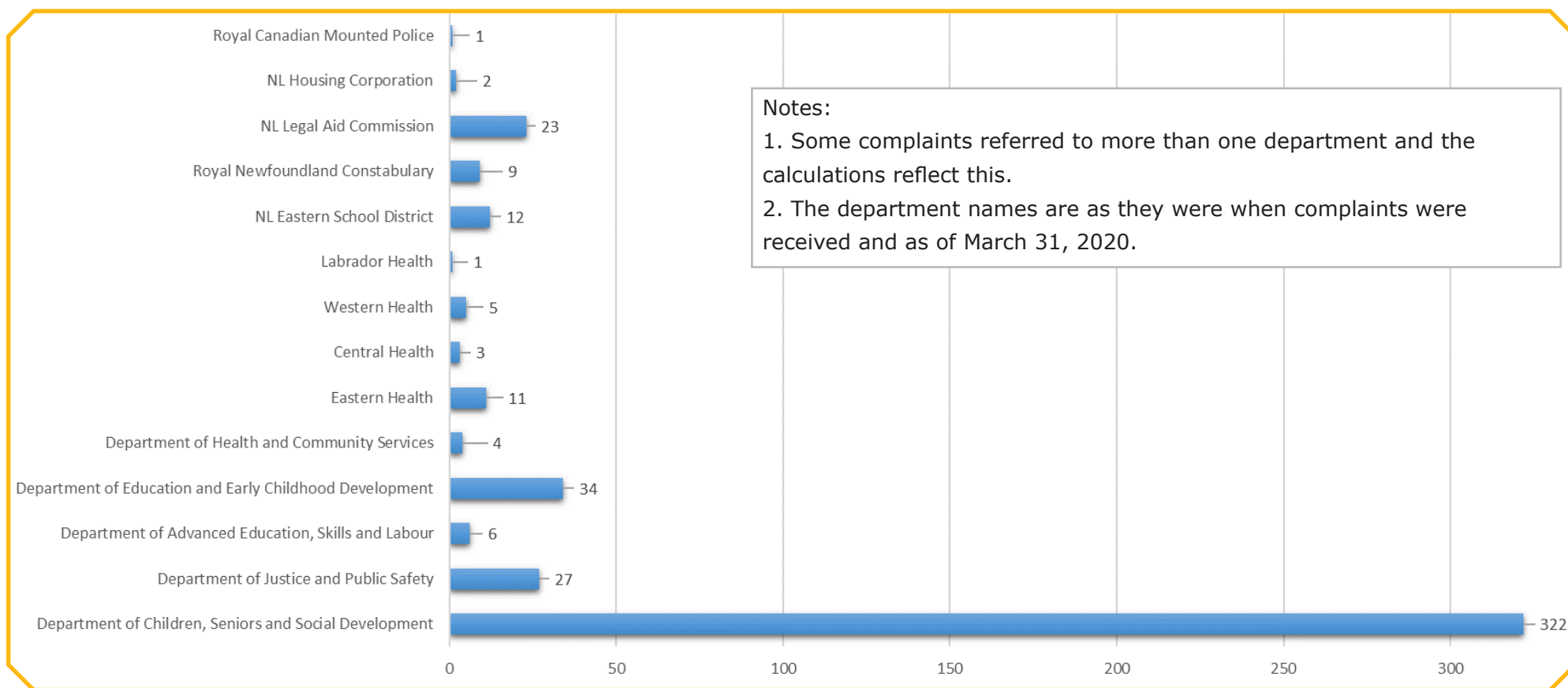
This chart identifies the person requesting advocacy assistance. Consistent with previous years, parents continue to be the primary group requesting advocacy services for their children (66%) followed by extended family (18%).



## Departments or Agencies We Received Complaints About in 2019-20

This graph below represents the department or agency which was the focus of a concern or complaint. The Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development continues to be the highest department or agency of focus.

In addition to the graph below, we also responded to 223 shorter-term requests for information, as well as assistance with navigating various systems of government and its agencies.





## Mandatory Reporting of Deaths and Critical Injuries

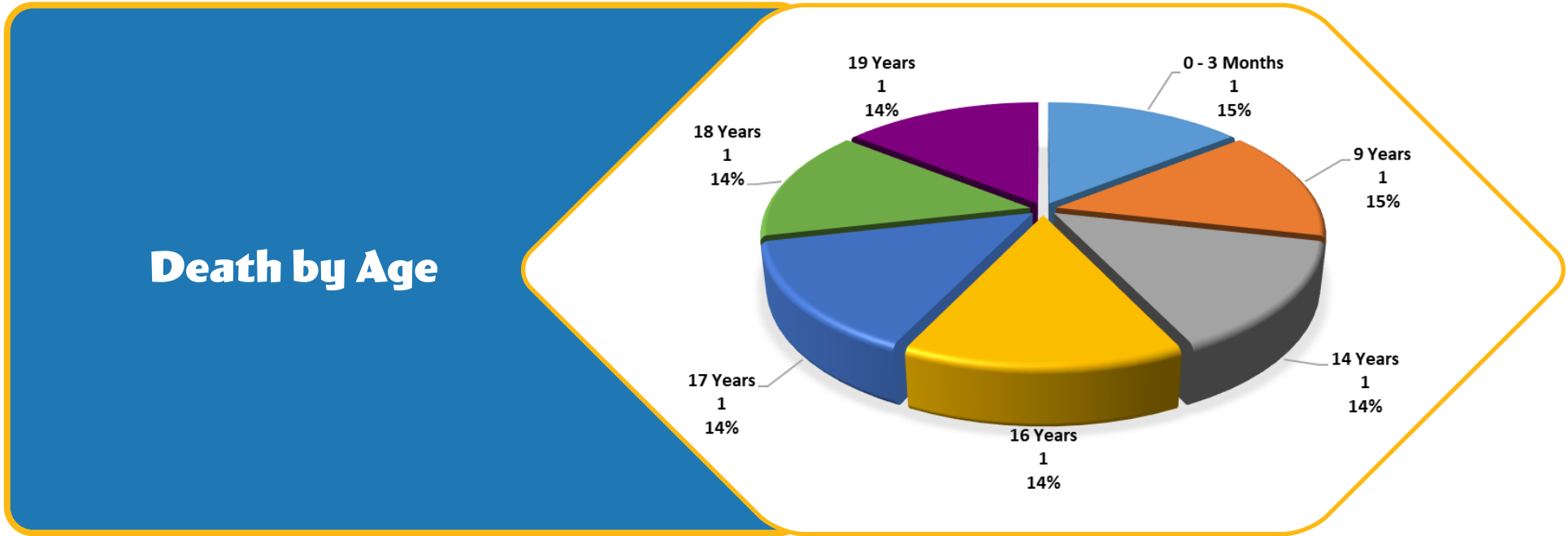
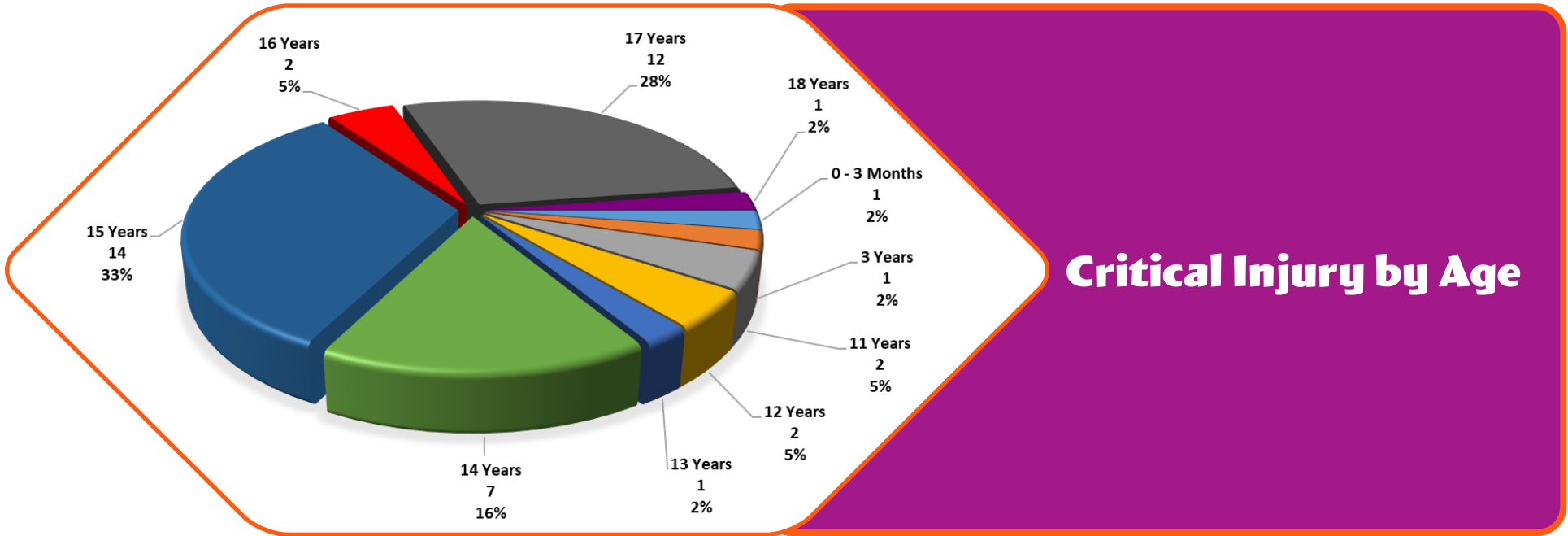
The **Child and Youth Advocate Act** requires the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and the Department of Justice and Public Safety to report all child and youth deaths and critical injuries to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. Section 16.1 in the legislation defines critical injury as "an injury, including physical or psychological injury, which may result in the death of a child or youth or may cause serious or long-term impairment of the health of a child or youth". These departments are also required to report a death or critical injury within 12 months of the young person receiving a designated service, if the young person is no longer a client.

From April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development reported 42 critical injuries and seven deaths. The Department of Justice and Public Safety reported one critical injury.

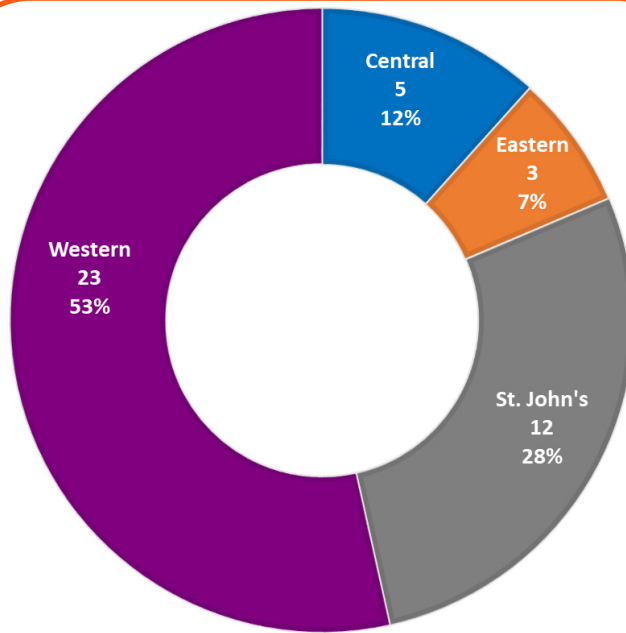
Of the critical injuries reported, 33 were received within the required timeframes. Of the 10 late notifications, nine were explained to the satisfaction of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. Of the seven deaths reported, the notification for one was late and this was explained to the satisfaction of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. We requested more information on eight critical injuries and three deaths.

The causes of critical injuries or deaths are categorized as:

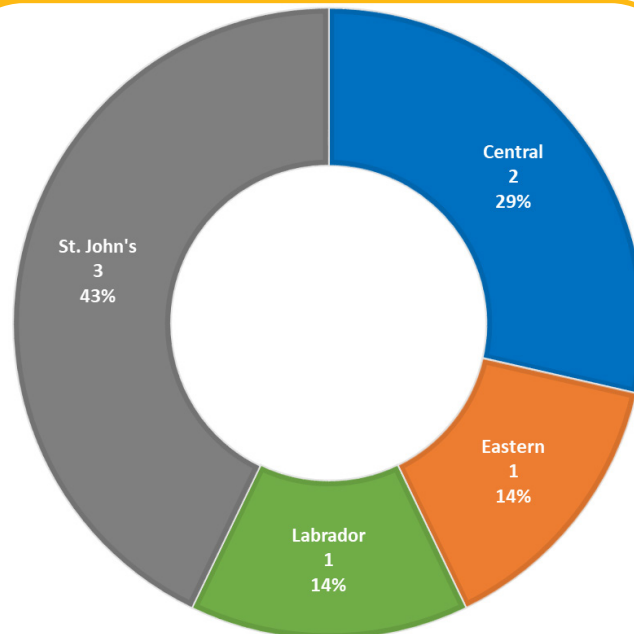
- Medical: a medical condition results in the critical injury or death (e.g. allergic reaction, heart failure)
- Accidental: an accident results in the critical injury or death (e.g. motor vehicle accident, drowning)
- Attempted Suicide: where the critical injury results from a person harming themselves in an attempt to cause their own death.
- Unknown at the time of the report: the cause of the critical injury or death was not determined by the time the mandatory report was sent to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.



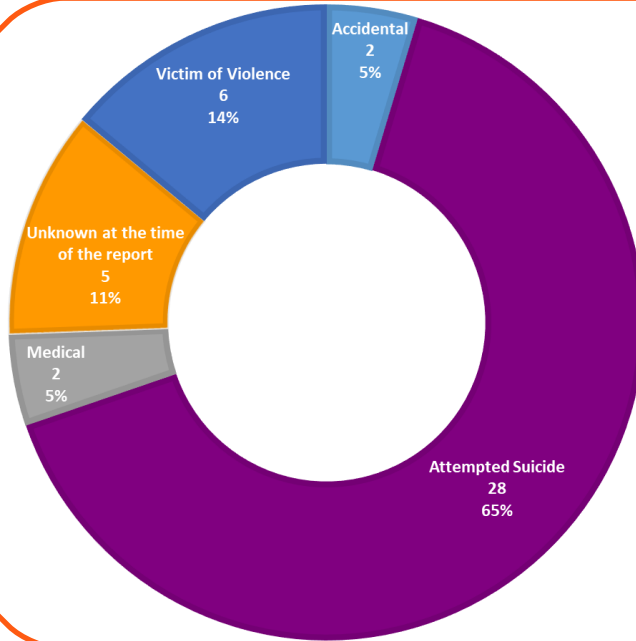
## Critical Injury by Region



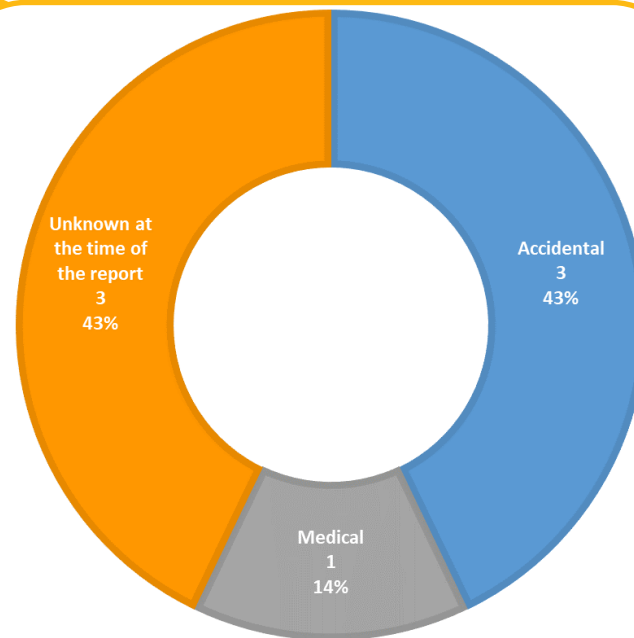
## Death by Region



## Nature of the Critical Injury



## Nature of the Death



## Report on Performance

This section reports on the goals, objectives and indicators outlined in the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's 2017-20 Business Plan. This marks the final year of this three year plan, which means that we will report on the goals which reflect on the last three years of our work.

Information here will provide summary information of the more detailed information provided in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 annual reports.

The Business Plan and Annual Reports can be found under the Publications section of our website: <https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/publications.htm> .



## Issue 1: Community Outreach and Engagement

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate must be well informed and connected to young people, their communities and service-providers to advocate and educate effectively.

Three years ago we committed to renew and expand our relationship with young people and identified stakeholders through increased outreach and engagement initiatives. We feel our efforts have strengthened connections with young people, their communities and service-providers.

We believe we have enhanced access to and awareness of children's rights through the many activities and initiatives identified in this section. We will continue to engage children, youth, and stakeholders in safeguarding the rights, interests and well-being of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador.



**Goal:** By March 31, 2020 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have increased community outreach and engagement.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p><b>1</b> Develop, implement and assess youth engagement initiatives</p>	<p>Youth engagement initiatives were developed, implemented and assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We held a Listening Tour with visits to youth in Labrador and the western, central and eastern regions of the island. We prepared a report of what we heard during this tour and released it publicly on our website.</li> <li>✓ We implemented regular outreach to Thrive, Choices For Youth and the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Correctional Center.</li> <li>✓ We participated at youth focused events such as school breakfast programs, student leadership groups, Community Youth Networks, summer programs and camps, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth organizations and events, Boys and Girls Clubs, Community Education Network, Waypoints, St. John’s Native Friendship Centre, Qalipu Youth Group, and the Association For New Canadians.</li> <li>✓ We developed and implemented the <b>You Can Speak Up: Self Advocacy Workshop</b>. Feedback forms are distributed and collected at the end of each workshop.</li> <li>✓ We launched the Young Artist Program.</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We launched contests to engage young people, such as the Name the Bear Contest, a Poster Contest focused on the Right to Education and a video contest on the Right to Be Free from Discrimination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> Implement outreach activities to identify issues specific to Indigenous children and youth</p>	<p>Implemented outreach activities to identify issues specific to Indigenous children and youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Child and Youth Advocate issued a news release to express concerns about the challenges facing young people in Indigenous communities.</li> <li>✓ The Office conducted the Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children and Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. We met with Inuit youth to gain their insights and input, and involved children in learning about their rights through school or youth centres. As part of the review, we also met with some Inuit children in care to hear from them directly and played traditional Inuit games.</li> <li>✓ During the Listening Tour, we visited the Ussiniun Youth Centre in Sheshatshiu and the Qalipu Youth Group in Corner Brook.</li> <li>✓ We met with Aboriginal Family Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, First Light in St. John's, and Jens Haven Memorial School in Nain.</li> </ul>



Indicators	Accomplishments
<p><b>3</b> Implement education initiatives that support a continuous learning environment</p>	<p>Diverse professional development initiatives for staff included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mental Health First Aid;</li> <li>✓ Suicide Prevention;</li> <li>✓ Mental Illness and Mental Health;</li> <li>✓ Cultural Awareness;</li> <li>✓ Excellence in the Provision of Family-based Care for Children and Youth;</li> <li>✓ Autism;</li> <li>✓ Family Systems and Kinship Care;</li> <li>✓ Working with Trans Youth and their families;</li> <li>✓ Impact of Trauma on Brain Development, Trauma Informed Practice;</li> <li>✓ Sexual Exploitation of Youth; and,</li> <li>✓ Restorative Practices.</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p><b>4</b> Establish collaborative project initiatives with identified stakeholders</p>	<p>Established collaborative initiatives with identified stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Collaborated with Trans Support Inc. NL for the Special Report on Trans Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador.</li> <li>✓ In our summer outreach program 2017 we worked with Choices for Youth and hired a social work student to jointly develop and deliver play based education and activities. We reached 1,265 children and youth, 27 organizations and delivered 45 presentations on children's rights.</li> </ul>

**Objective 3 for 2019-20:** By March 31, 2020, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have participated in collaborative project initiatives with identified stakeholders.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p><b>1</b> Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children and Youth completed and final report released</p>	<p>Completed an Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children and Youth and released the final report in Nain in September 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Participation was broad and included Inuit communities, other Labrador and island communities, and people from other parts of Canada who have strong ties to Inuit communities in Labrador.</li> </ul>

**2** Community sessions held to present on findings of the Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children and Youth

Community sessions were planned, however, due to unforeseen circumstances could not take place during the 2019-20 fiscal year.

- ✓ The report was released in a community session in Nain.
- ✓ Labrador Inuit radio station OKâlaKatiget covered the event and also interviewed the Child and Youth Advocate.
- ✓ Copies of the Report were forwarded to all Inuit communities involved in the Review.

**3** Stakeholders engaged to inform the development and updating of select resource materials

Engaged stakeholders to inform the development and updating of select resource materials.

- ✓ Developed a “Youth in Custody” booklet with the feedback from the residents and staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre, staff from the departments of Justice and Public Safety and Children, Seniors and Social Development, as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission.
- ✓ Began developing a revised “Youth in Care” booklet with input of staff from the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.
- ✓ Engaged high school students to provide input and feedback on a youth-friendly version of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

## Discussion of Results:

Over the past three years we worked hard to expand our outreach and engagement activities to make meaningful connections and to enhance knowledge about the rights of young people. We have traveled to many communities around the province to engage children and youth about their rights and the role of our office.

We believe that our clients, the children and youth living in Newfoundland and Labrador, are best served when we are all well informed about the issues important to them. This includes fostering connections and knowledge exchange opportunities with other child and youth serving organizations. However, most importantly, it means connecting with children and youth to hear first-hand about all things important to them and speaking to them directly about their rights.

In 2017-18, we set out on a listening tour across the province and heard from approximately 550 children and youth in many communities. You spoke and we heard you!



## Issue 2: Enhanced Inclusion and Diversity Awareness

Three years ago the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate committed to developing and implementing initiatives that would focus on enhancing awareness of inclusion and diversity.

We had the opportunity to visit diverse Indigenous communities in Labrador and on the island, as well as many organizations serving new Canadians and other diverse groups of children and youth. We are so appreciative of the many community leaders, individuals and organizations who welcomed us to share our messages about children's rights and to tell us about their work. We are especially grateful to all the young people who took the time to speak with us, listen to our presentations and participate in activities with us. You inspire and motivate us in carrying out our advocacy work.

The population of Newfoundland and Labrador continues to become more diverse and it is important to ensure the needs of children and youth from diverse social and cultural backgrounds are considered in providing services.

This section provides details of our efforts in building awareness about and celebrating diversity.



**Goal:** By March 31, 2020 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have promoted and enhanced awareness of social and cultural inclusion, and diversity for children and youth.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p><b>1</b> Develop and implement education initiatives that promote heightened awareness of diversity and inclusion issues related to young people's rights</p>	<p>Developed and implemented education initiatives that promote heightened awareness of diversity and inclusion issues related to young people's rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Participated in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's cultural diversity training.</li> <li>✓ Participated in Trans Support NL's sessions focused on gender diversity and issues facing trans youth.</li> <li>✓ Engaged with trans youth in order to complete the Trans Youth Report.</li> <li>✓ Facilitated sessions at Camp Rainbow and Camp Eclipse.</li> <li>✓ Participated in the annual Sharing Our Cultures event.</li> <li>✓ Held sessions for students and parents of the Association for New Canadians.</li> <li>✓ Hosted meetings with the Multicultural Women's Organization to discuss children's rights and advocacy services.</li> </ul>

**2** Develop and implement an outreach plan that targets diverse and minority groups of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador

Developed and implemented an outreach plan that targets diverse and minority groups of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- ✓ Released the investigative report, **The Case for Culturally Responsive Services**, which presented four recommendations.
- ✓ Completed multiple visits to Labrador to engage with young Indigenous people and their communities about children's rights and advocacy.
- ✓ Developed and provincially distributed our diversity poster which includes Mi' Kmaq, Innu-aimun (Sheshatshiu and Mushuau dialects), Inuktitut and French.
- ✓ Worked with the Association for New Canadians and the Multicultural Women's Organization to plan and deliver outreach to children and youth in their programs.
- ✓ Participated in GSA Conferences.
- ✓ Issues the **Special Report on Trans Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador**.
- ✓ Delivered Self Advocacy Workshops.
- ✓ Participated in the Pride Parade displaying our diversity banner which permanently hangs in our office.

### 3

Develop and promote educational and awareness resources and communication tools which promote young people's rights with respect to inclusion and diversity

- ✓ Developed and promoted educational and awareness resources and communication tools which promote young people's rights with respect to inclusion and diversity.
- ✓ Rights Cards designed to educate children and youth about their rights were developed and posted on Twitter as well as our website.
- ✓ Developed an In Custody booklet which includes a section on young people's rights.
- ✓ Began the revision of the In Care booklet.
- ✓ Launched a book club initiative with recommended readings on children's rights, inclusion, and diversity.
- ✓ Held a poster contest on the right to education.
- ✓ Organized a video contest based on the right to be free from discrimination.
- ✓ Translated advocacy information cards into Inuktitut, Innu-aimun (Sheshatshiu and Mushuau dialects), and French.
- ✓ Ensured Inuktitut translation of the Executive Summary of **A Long Wait for Change: Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children and Youth.**



**Objective 3 for 2019-20:** By March 31, 2020, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have researched, evaluated and implemented education and communications tools, including promotional materials, which promote and respect inclusion and diversity in areas including language, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p><b>1</b> Finalized research and released report on Issues of Trans Youth</p>	<p>Finalized research and released the Special Report on Trans Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador in May 2019.</p> <p>✓ This report was informed by research as well as focus groups with gender diverse youth here in the province. The Report makes five recommendations and highlights the challenges these youth identified in several key areas, including school, medical, and social support services.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Offered and promoted the Self Advocacy Workshop to diverse and minority groups</p>	<p>Developed, delivered and promoted a Self Advocacy Workshop to diverse and minority groups:</p> <p>✓ The <b>You Can Speak Up: Self Advocacy Workshop</b> is a fun and interactive workshop to help young people to learn how to speak up for themselves. It builds on communication skills, focuses on rights and responsibilities, and identifies supports and resources in the community. It was piloted to the Social Justice Group of Crescent Collegiate of Dildo and the student government group of Waterford Valley High in St. John’s who provided excellent feedback to inform the final workshop.</p>

### 3

Continued to develop and deliver resource materials about the rights of children and youth

Resource materials continued to be developed and delivered about the rights of children and youth.

- ✓ Developed a Youth Rights Booklet that was provided to several school groups for feedback. Booklet will be finalized in 2020-21 fiscal year
- ✓ Finalized the “Youth in Custody” booklet with the feedback from the residents and staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre, staff from the Departments of Justice and Public Safety and Children’s Senior and Social Development as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission.
- ✓ Began the revision of “Youth in Care” pamphlet with input of staff from the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.
- ✓ Announced the Right To Education Poster Contest winners in June 2019. Created t-shirts of the winning entries for the two winners and classmates and distributed multilingual posters of the winning entries with the message: **Education: Every Child’s Right.**

4

Utilized various social media platforms to promote the rights of children and youth

Used social media platforms to promote the rights of children and youth.

- ✓ Used Twitter to educate the public and promote the rights of children and youth.
- ✓ In November 2019 we launched a video contest for youth focused on the Right to Be Free From Discrimination (Article 2 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- ✓ Used our website to distribute rights-based information and to promote the rights of children and youth as well as the role of the Office.
- ✓ Used Youtube to distribute videos about what we do, and for the media release of the **Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador** in Nain.

5

Developed and distributed multi-lingual resource and promotional materials

Developed and distributed multi-lingual resource and promotional materials.

- ✓ Broadened the language represented in our safe space poster with the message "This is a positive space that welcomes and supports everyone" to include Mi' Kmaq, English, French, Inuktitut and two dialects of Innu-aimun.
- ✓ Announced the Right to Education Poster Contest winners in June 2019. T-shirts for the two winners and classmates were created as well as multi lingual posters with the message: **Education: Every Child's Right**. These posters included the message in English, French, Inuktitut, Mi' Kmaq, and two dialects of Innu-aimun. Posters were distributed to schools in the province.

## 6

Engaged young people from diverse communities to ensure messages of inclusion are reflected in resource materials

Engaged young people from diverse communities to ensure messages of inclusion are reflected in resource materials.

- ✓ We visited with residents of the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre to hear their suggestions for the “Youth in Custody” booklet.
- ✓ We reached out to diverse groups to seek input to inform the redesign of our website.
- ✓ We met with children and youth to get feedback on our self advocacy workshop.
- ✓ We engaged students, including student who participate in the Association for New Canadians' FUN (Friends of the United Nations) Club, regarding their use of social media.
- ✓ We engaged Inuit children and youth to ensure their voices were reflected in the **Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children.**

## Discussion of Results:

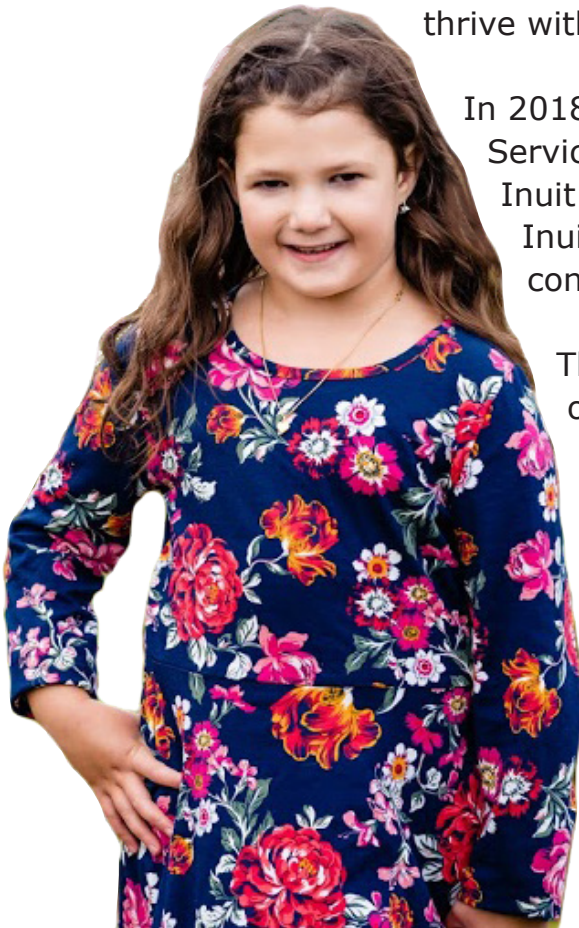
Over the past three years, we developed and implemented initiatives that enhanced inclusion and diversity awareness.

Newfoundland and Labrador has Indigenous communities in Labrador and on the island. In 2017, the Advocate publicly expressed concern through the media about the challenges facing young people in Natuashish and other Indigenous communities. The Advocate encouraged the Province to "build new ways of supporting Indigenous communities to ensure sustainable and culturally responsive services that can grow and thrive within the communities".

In 2018-19 we completed and released the Independent Review of the Child Protection Services to Inuit Children and Youth. In conducting this review we spent time in Inuit communities, spoke directly to children, youth, community members and Inuit leaders. We travelled to Nain in September 2019 to release the report which contains 33 recommendations for change.

The Province continues to experience an increasingly diverse population comprised of families and individuals from many countries and cultures. In responding to the needs of children and youth from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, it is important ensure that services are inclusive and culturally responsive. We actively connected with culturally diverse communities and organizations to exchange knowledge.

We also reached out to members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to inform the Trans Report. We participated in multiple GSA conferences. In 2018 we participated in our first Pride Parade. We continue to use the rainbow on all our publications and proudly distribute our diversity posters throughout the province. We offer a safe space for all.

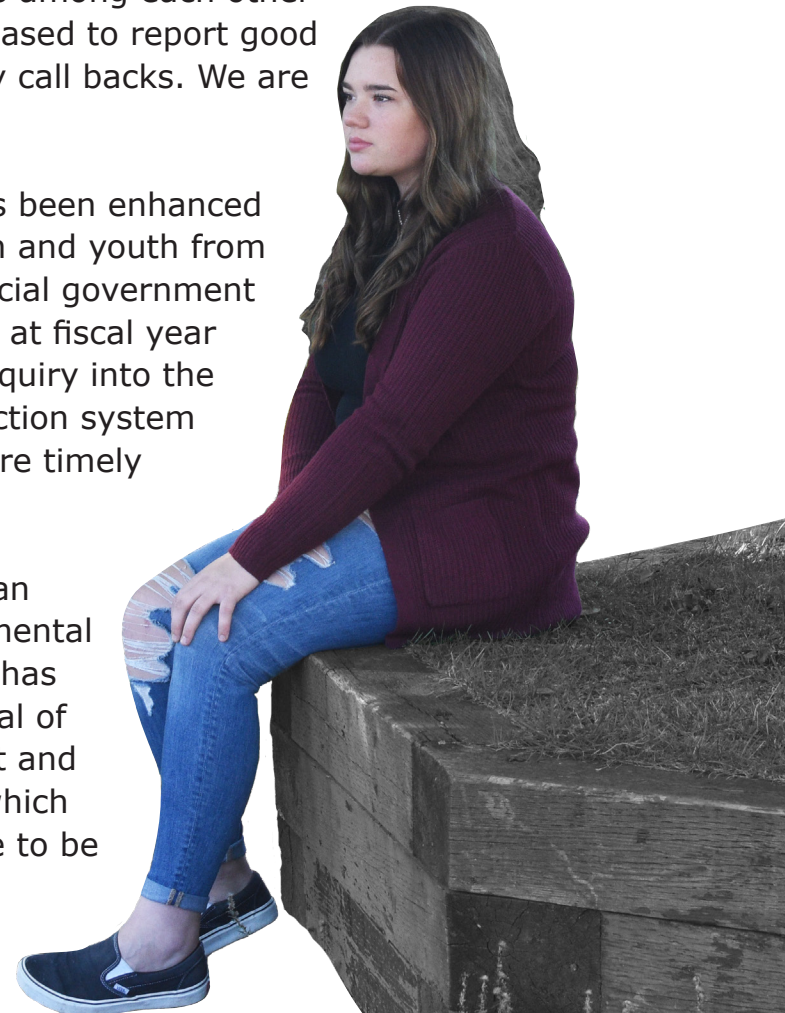


## Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

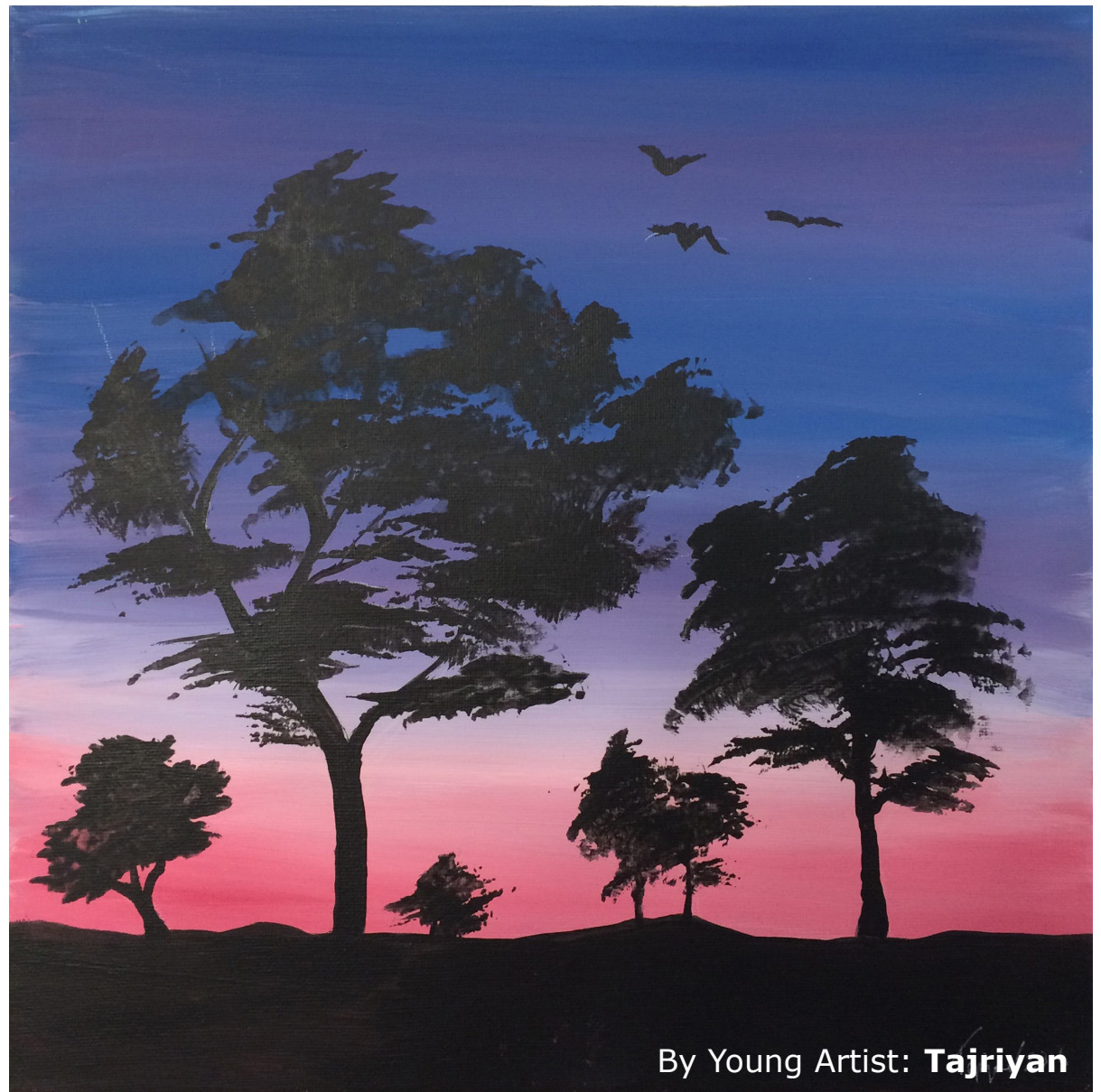
As 2019-20 drew to a close, we saw the province, country, and indeed the world face unprecedented challenges with the spread and threat of COVID-19. Similar to government offices and community agencies, we were challenged with developing new ways of delivering our services as staff shifted to work from home. We lined up additional laptops and phones and our work continued. We missed providing the option of in-person contact for people, and we certainly missed the consultation and collegial discussions among each other about investigations, cases and advocacy strategies. However, we are pleased to report good response times for advocacy requests, which normally involved same-day call backs. We are now better positioned to pivot in the future if it is ever needed again.

One of our key strategic commitments during this past planning cycle has been enhanced inclusion and diversity awareness. We worked hard to respond to children and youth from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and we advocated for the provincial government to provide more sensitive and informed responses and services. However at fiscal year end, we were troubled that government's commitment to hold a public inquiry into the treatment, experiences, and outcomes of Innu children in the child protection system had not been realized. We will continue to advocate for improved and more timely responses for Indigenous children and youth.

COVID-19 has created many unknowns for young people. While there is an obvious physical health threat with COVID, we are also keenly aware of mental health threats and risks for young people. The ground beneath their feet has shifted almost overnight, and those who were vulnerable before the arrival of COVID now find themselves in a more precarious place. With government and community services operating from an alternate service delivery model which sometimes meant a decrease in service and accessibility, we will continue to be vigilant in our advocacy for children and youth in the time of COVID .



Throughout this three year planning cycle, we have worked hard to build our public education and outreach services so that we have more direct contact with young people and their communities throughout the province. This can be challenging when working from a single provincial office, but we have been committed to broadening our accessibility and reach. We believe this is important to support education on children's rights, but it is also important because we also offer advocacy clinics in these visits throughout the province. We must now build on the foundation we have laid and the connections we have made, and explore how we can use technology and alternative approaches to continue this work together in the future.



By Young Artist: **Tajriyan**

# Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on information provided in the **Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 2020.**

	Estimates		
	Actual \$	Amended \$	Original \$
<b>01. Salaries</b>	<b>1,142,413</b>	<b>1,150,100</b>	<b>1,150,100</b>
<b>Operating Accounts</b>			
Employee Benefits	1,980	3,500	3,500
Transportation and Communications	53,734	63,900	65,400
Supplies	5,838	6,000	6,000
Professional Services	7,035	9,000	9,000
Purchased Services	151,684	160,900	160,900
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	5,408	5,500	4,000
<b>02. Operating Accounts</b>	<b>225,679</b>	<b>248,800</b>	<b>248,800</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,368,092</b>	<b>1,398,900</b>	<b>1,398,900</b>









# Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador

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