
Representative for
Children and Youth

2016-2017
ANNUAL REPORT



CONTACT

Our business hours are Monday to Friday
8:30am to 5:00pm EST, excluding public holidays.

TOLL-FREE
1-855-449-8118

IN IQALUIT
867-975-5090

FAX
867-979-0444

STREET ADDRESS
Third Floor, Qamutiq Building,
Iqaluit, NU

MAILING ADDRESS
PO Box 488, Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

EMAIL
contact@rcynu.ca

WEBSITE
www.rcynu.ca

THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
www.rcynu.ca.

© Representative for Children and Youth's Office.

ISBN
English/Inuktitut - 978-1-55325-351-8
Inuinnaqtun/French - 978-1-55325-352-5



ᓄᑕᓐᓐᓐᓐ ᓄᓐᓐᓐᓐ
ᓄᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐ

NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAQTIKHAANIK

REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Photography:

This annual report uses photos by RCYO staff and other professional and amateur photographers. Original photos by professional and amateur photographers are noted with photo credit. Cover and inside cover photos by Clare Kines.



ᓄᑕᓐᑕᓐᑕᓐ ᑎᓄᓄᓐᑎᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᑎᓄᓄᓐᑕᓐᑕᓐ

NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAGTIKHAANIK

REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

January 12, 2018

The Honourable Joe Enook
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
PO Box 1200
Iqaluit, NU, XOA OHO

Dear Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the *2016-2017 Annual Report of the Representative for Children and Youth* to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. This document reports on the period of April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. This report has been prepared in accordance with section 35 (1) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Respectfully,

Sherry McNeil-Mulak
Representative for Children and Youth
Territory of Nunavut

Our Mission:

We are an independent

child and youth
advocacy office

that ensures the Government of Nunavut

supports and protects

the rights and interests of young Nunavummiut.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Representative.....	1
About Our Office.....	2
Our Mandate	2
Our Team.....	3
What Guides Our Work.....	7
What We Do	9
Inuit Societal Values in Our Work.....	13
Reporting on Our Activities	17
Individual Advocacy Report.....	17
Systemic Advocacy Report.....	21
Public Awareness and Communications Report	24
Looking Ahead to 2017-2018	32
List of Presentations, Key Meetings and Community Visits	33
Budget Report	34

Our Vision:

All children and youth in Nunavut

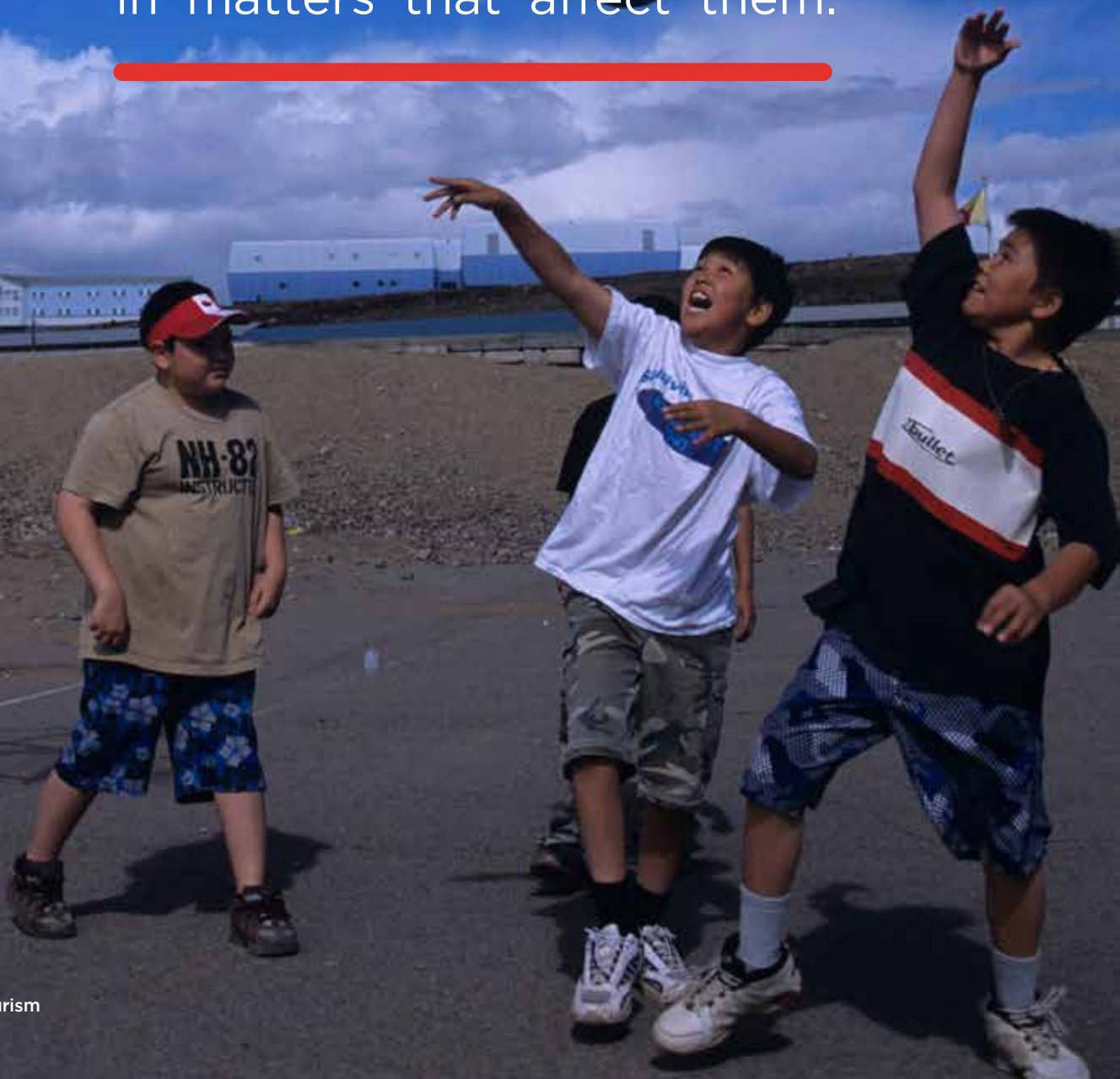
know their potential,

value their identity

and feel supported and empowered to

express their views

in matters that affect them.



MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE



This past year was our first full year offering advocacy services to Nunavut's children and youth. Over this year, the Representative for Children and Youth's Office (RCYO) opened more than 80 cases – each one referred to us by a person who was concerned the Government of Nunavut (GN) was not respecting a child or youth's rights.

Our office is still in its early days. But, with a year and a half of working with young people behind us, it is already clear that the Government of Nunavut must do better. Time after time this year, our office has worked on cases that have revealed a lack of basic government services, particularly in the areas of child and youth mental health and family supports. We've also repeatedly seen the negative impacts the lack of coordination between government departments and the lack of communication between government service providers are having on young Nunavummiut. There is so much at stake if things do not improve: young people's physical safety and security, their mental health and well-being, and their family relationships. Young Nunavummiut deserve better.

Despite this, every day I am amazed by the strength, creativity, and resilience I see in the young people I meet. The genuine kindness and goodwill that they have to offer, even when facing great adversity, never ceases to inspire me.

To the young people who may read this, know you have rights that the world designed just for you and our office can work with you to make sure those rights are respected. One of your key rights – and one we bring into our work with young people and the GN whenever possible – is your right to be heard. This means that the GN must listen and consider your opinion about situations and decisions that affect you. Your voice is so very important to the future of this territory. In the years ahead, our office will continue to press the GN to do a better job of respecting this important right.

As we turn to 2017-2018, much work remains. Our office will continue to advocate for the GN to strengthen its investment in young people and their families. We also remain committed to protecting all child rights and attaining our long-term vision for young Nunavummiut. We challenge the GN to work with us toward this vision by applying a child-rights approach to their work and decision-making. Together, we can do the work required to make things better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherry McNeil-Mulak". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sherry McNeil-Mulak
Representative for Children and Youth

ABOUT OUR OFFICE

The Representative for Children and Youth's Office (RCYO) is an independent office that is devoted to ensuring the rights of young Nunavummiut are respected. We have a legal mandate to advocate for young people's interests and rights and to assist the Legislative Assembly in ensuring their needs are met. Typically, we work on behalf of children and youth who are 18 years old and younger. However, the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* (RCYA) allows us to work with young people up to 25 years of age in specific situations.

OUR MANDATE

Our mandate includes the following specific duties outlined in the RCYA:

- ✦ Ensure children and youth's rights and interests (individually and collectively) are protected and advanced, and that departments of the Government of Nunavut (GN) and its designated authorities¹, hear and consider the views of children and youth on matters that affect them;
- ✦ Ensure children and youth can access GN services and that the GN considers their concerns about those services;
- ✦ Help children, youth and their families communicate with GN service providers, to improve understanding between them;
- ✦ Inform the public about the rights and interests of children and youth, and the roles and responsibilities of the Office;
- ✦ Provide advice and recommendations to the GN on how to make its programs, services, laws and policies, better for children and youth in Nunavut.



Photo: Clare Kines

¹ Designated authorities are listed under Schedule A of the RCYA.

OUR TEAM

The Representative for Children and Youth (Representative) leads the RCYO, guiding the work of a team of eight staff, as well as one intern from the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program. In addition, each summer the RCYO is pleased to add a summer student to our advocacy team. Each member of our team brings a unique personal and professional background to the RCYO, while sharing a passion for child rights and advocacy. The following illustrates our organizational structure.

At the end of 2016-2017, the RCYO had filled all its staff positions except two that had become vacant over the course of the year: manager of communications and public awareness and a child

and youth advocacy specialist position. A new manager of communications and public awareness is expected to start in April 2017. The competition for the vacant child and youth advocacy specialist position remained open at the end of 2016-2017, after Article 23 considerations led our office to re-advertise the position as a restricted competition.

The RCYO encourages all staff who leave our office to complete an exit survey. This helps us assess their experience and identify strengths and areas for improvement. This is an important part of our ongoing commitment to create a supportive and engaging work environment.

RCYO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

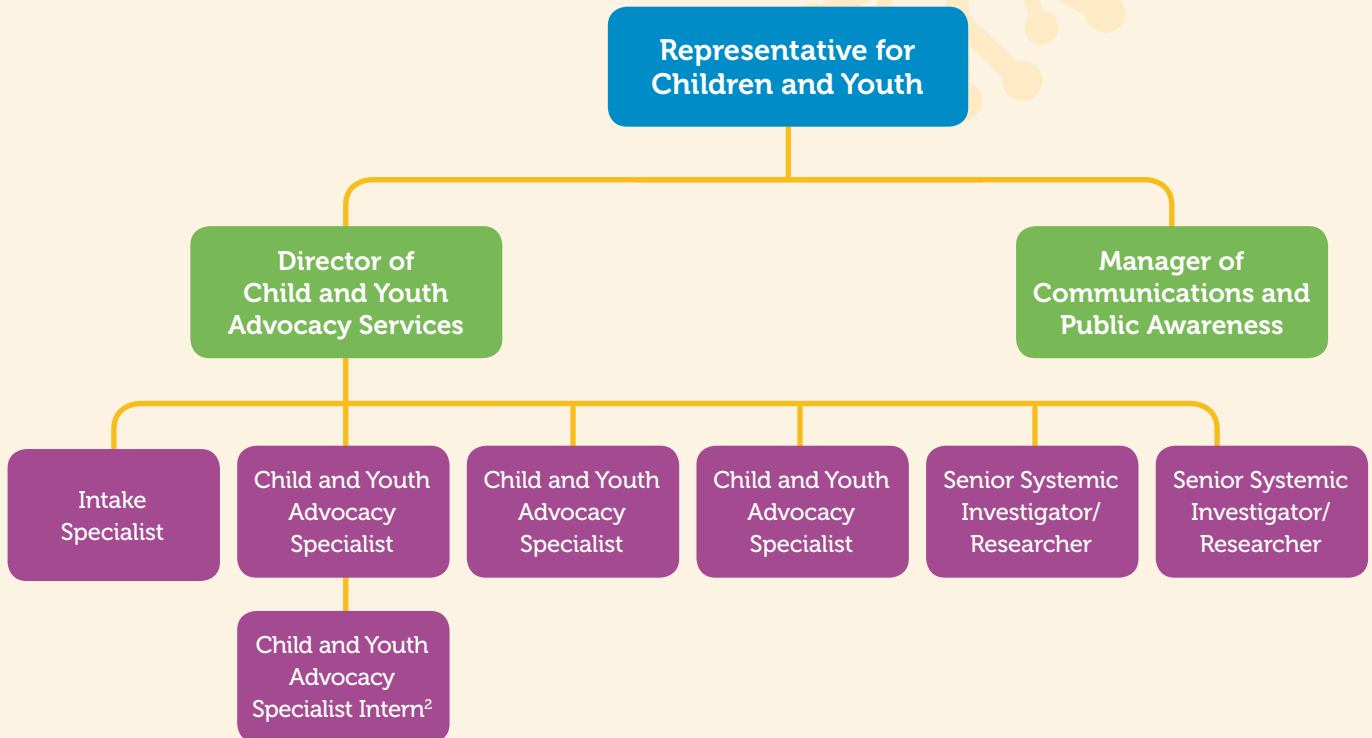


FIGURE 1: RCYO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

² Two-year position under the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program.

SIVULIQTIKSAT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program offers Inuit beneficiaries on-the-job training in specialized and management positions, with an end goal of increasing Inuit beneficiary representation in Nunavut's public service. Interns spend one to three years following a specific training plan under the guidance of a designated trainer. In 2016-2017, under this program, David Korgak joined our office as a child and youth advocacy specialist intern. David is working closely with Christa Kunuk, one of our child and youth advocacy specialists and his designated mentor, for the two-year internship period.

Meet David Korgark

I was born and raised in Iqaluit and come from a large family of eight. I was motivated to join the RCYO after I saw the opportunity to learn about the rights of children and youth through the internship program. I am proud to be a part of the RCYO and contribute to the work it is doing. I am also enjoying the training opportunities it provides, the constant support and coaching of my mentor Christa, as well as the opportunity to work in an environment where I can practice all I have learned about Inuit societal values.



SUMMER STUDENT

In 2016-2017, we again hired a summer student as part of our continuous efforts to involve youth in our work. Clara Akulukjuk was an instrumental part of our team over the summer of 2016 – offering communications and office support. She brought a unique youth voice and perspective directly to our office and played a key role in the development and launch of our Elder advisors' orientation.

Meet Clara Akulukjuk

During the summer of 2016, I worked with the RCYO, having just completed the second year of my Bachelor of Education through the University of Regina and Nunavut Arctic College. I wanted to work at the RCYO for several reasons. Partly, because its mandate was perfectly aligned to my field of study. But also, because it was quite new.

Most of my tasks related to communications and I really liked how I was able to adapt to the pace of work at the RCYO. During this time, I enjoyed providing a better understanding of our office's purpose and mandate by consulting with stakeholders, sending out promotional items to schools and government agencies, and creating a positive connection between our team and the public. My work also included some website maintenance. The website helps increase public awareness of the RCYO, which is important because we have a responsibility to educate children and the public about child rights. I had a great experience.



INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

The RCYO is the only organization in Nunavut with the legal mandate to advocate for children and youth's rights and interests to the GN. Given this responsibility, we continuously strive to strengthen our internal capacity and expertise by providing staff with relevant training opportunities.

The following table summarizes the universal training and development initiatives that RCYO staff participated in during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Staff also received individual training tailored to their distinct needs and roles.

TABLE 1: STAFF TRAINING 2016-2017

TRAINING	DATE COMPLETED
Child and Human Rights Extension Certificate	June 2016
Workplace Violence and Harassment	June 2016
Child Rights Impact Assessment	July 2016
<i>Representative for Children and Youth Act</i>	July, November and December 2016
Advanced Investigative Training for Administrative Watchdogs	August 2016
Policy and Procedure Manual	November and December 2016
Applied Suicide Intervention Skills	December 2016
Case Management System	December 2016 and January 2017
Workplace Wellness	January 2017
Inunnguiniq Parenting	February 2017



ADVOCATE'S APPLAUSE



BUS SHELTER PROJECT

Our office would like to recognize the Department of Community and Government Services for its Student Mentorship program. This program was designed to promote early interest in engineering and architecture. Through this initiative, several students at Inuksuk High School designed a school bus shelter prototype that could be reproduced in locations around Iqaluit.

The Department worked with grade 11 and 12 students to gather and analyse data, city maps and school bus schedules. The students then created an impressive business case that included information on potential sites, design concept, sketches, and a plan.

The students prepared a slide presentation of their business case and presented it to the Department of Education and the City of Iqaluit, as well as the Iqaluit District Education Authority (DEA) and other key stakeholders. In 2017-2018, the Department of Community and Government Services hopes to continue working with students on the project's next phase: securing funding for the prototype.

This experience provided a unique opportunity for students to fully participate in a community project that could directly benefit other young Iqalummiut. This project was an excellent example of true youth engagement.



WHAT GUIDES OUR WORK

Key documents and concepts guide our staff in their advocacy work. These include the RCYA, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), Inuit societal values, the voice of children and youth and national advocacy standards.

REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACT (RCYA)

Nunavut's RCYA is the law that outlines our office's duties, responsibilities and overall mandate. Essentially, it contains what the RCYO can and must legally do. It also describes key principles that guide our staff in their work. It was passed in 2013 and all its sections are in force – except one. This section pertains to the RCYO's critical injuries and deaths program, which will come into force at a later date.



How the RCYA Guides Our Work

Each time someone contacts the RCYO to raise a concern, our staff rely on the RCYA to determine if the concern falls within our mandate. For instance: Does the concern relate to a young person who is 18 years old or younger? If not, does the RCYA allow our office to make an age exception? Is there a GN service involved?

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

The CRC is an international agreement that identifies child rights recognized by countries around the world. It also provides information on the roles and responsibilities governments and adults have to support these rights. Child rights are the essential things all children are entitled to because they can help children live a life of dignity and thrive. Canada signed the agreement in 1991.



How the CRC Guides Our Work

Each time an issue is brought to our office's attention, our staff rely on the CRC to determine if the GN is not respecting the young person's rights. For instance, has a government service provider sought a young person's opinion on a matter that involves them? If not, how can our staff work to ensure the service provider is aware of a child's right to be heard?

INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES

The RCYA clearly states the Representative must apply Inuit societal values in carrying out the RCYO's work. Our staff follow the same eight guiding values that the GN has adopted. The Inuit Societal Values in Our Work section of this report provides more information on how we've used these values in our work this fiscal year.



How Inuit Societal Values Guide Our Work

When seeking a solution to an issue affecting a young person, RCYO staff endeavor to collaborate with government service providers to find the best possible way forward – *piliriqatigiinniq*. This often entails thinking outside of the box and seeking innovative solutions to complex problems with our key partners – *qanuqtuumiq*.



THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

A fundamental right in the CRC is children's right to express themselves in matters that affect them. This is what our office calls the voice of the child. The CRC also states that governments must consider a child's opinion, according to the child's age and maturity.



How the Voice of the Child Guides Our Work

The voice of the child guides our staff's work on a daily basis. Whenever possible, our staff seek out the opinion and views of the young person we are working with. By doing so, we ensure their voice is at the center of our work, that government service providers hear their views and that we ourselves are respecting this key right.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY STANDARDS

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) has set national advocacy standards for child advocates to follow in their work. These standards cover such things as confidentiality, accessibility and accountability. They help hold advocates accountable to a minimum level of service and provide a way to evaluate our office's advocacy services.



How National Advocacy Standards Guide Our Work

The RCYO has developed a number of internal quality assurance standards to guide its work. One measure requires staff to respond to all contacts made by children and youth within one business day. In 2016-2017, the RCYO was able to meet that standard 100% of the time. This quality assurance measure aligns with national advocacy standard #5, which expects the RCYO to be accountable to the children that it serves.



Photo: Clare Kines

WHAT WE DO

Our office works in four areas: individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, reviews of critical injuries and deaths, and communications and public awareness. The following gives a brief overview of these four areas.

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

The GN provides many programs and services to support children and youth. However, despite best intentions, problems can occur. A child, youth or family member may not know who to contact about a program or they may feel uncomfortable raising questions with service providers. Maybe a service provider hasn't returned a parent's repeated calls or followed-up, as promised. Perhaps a youth-in-care doesn't understand why he or she can't visit a family member. In these types of situations, our office can assist by providing information, coaching in self-advocacy, or providing individual advocacy support.

Every individual case that is brought to the RCYO's attention is unique and we tailor our response to meet each case's circumstances. That said, the overall individual advocacy process generally involves three sequential phases: intake and assignment, investigation and problem solving, and resolution and follow-up (Figure 2).

PROVIDING INFORMATION

Nunavummiut can always contact our office for information on child rights and/or government services and programs that support children and youth. Even if we receive a request that falls outside of our mandate, we try to always help connect the client to the person or resource that can provide the necessary information.

SELF-ADVOCACY COACHING

It is not always easy for a young person or a concerned parent or guardian to express his or her views to government service providers.

At any point in the advocacy process, our staff can coach an individual in self-advocacy, so that he or she feels more empowered to express his or her views.

ADVOCACY SUPPORT

Most of the cases that come to our office involve advocacy support. This is when one of our child and youth advocacy specialists works directly with a young person and with a government service provider(s) to resolve an issue. A government service provider could be a teacher, nurse, mental health worker, social worker, or probation officer – any individual who works for the GN who provides a government service or program to children or youth.

We are able to resolve some issues in a matter of days or weeks, while others may take several months and involve multiple service providers from many departments. Typically, advocacy support includes direct work with service providers, meetings with the child or youth and their parent or caregiver and case conferences. Whenever possible, the voice of the child leads the advocacy work.

FIGURE 2:
THE INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY PROCESS

Intake and Assignment

- * An individual reaches out to us for support. This could be a child or youth, parent or guardian, service provider or community member.
- * We determine if the issue falls within what the RCYA allows us to do.
- * If it does, we assign a child and youth advocacy specialist to the case.

Investigation and Problem Solving

The advocacy specialist:

- * Learns about the child or youth's issue and what rights are being breached.
- * Interviews the people involved and reviews relevant documents to determine the facts.
- * Works with the client to develop an advocacy plan to guide the process toward resolution.

Resolution and Follow-up

- * The advocate follows up to make sure the solution is implemented and the child's rights are supported.
- * When appropriate, the advocate notifies the systemic researcher/investigator that there is a potential systemic issue.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Sometimes many young people encounter the same issue. When this happens, we call the issue “systemic.” Typically, systemic issues affect many children or youth, happen when government policies or services aren’t working as intended, have a good chance of reoccurring if not addressed, and may require government to change its policies, practices or laws.

Systemic issues can come to our office’s attention in many ways. Our staff might see the same issue present repeatedly in different individual cases and then flag this for further investigation. MLAs or youth parliamentarians might raise an issue in Nunavut’s legislature. A media outlet could bring an issue to the public’s attention. Young people and adults can also contact our office directly with a systemic issue they would like to raise with us.

When our office becomes aware of a systemic issue, we can then choose to investigate it. We can do this informally or formally. Informal systemic advocacy mainly uses discussion and collaboration to bring about change. We believe this type of systemic advocacy aligns well with Inuit societal values, particularly the values of *piliriqatigiinniq*, working together for a common cause and *aajiqatigiinniq*, decision making through consensus and discussion. Issues that qualify for informal reviews tend to be less complex. They also tend to resolve quickly. An informal review may or may not result in a public report outlining recommendations.

Formal systemic reviews generally focus on more complex issues. Considerations that may raise a matter to a formal review include: severity of the issue, the potential for harm if the issue is not addressed, the urgency of the issue, and the potential benefit to the public resulting from the review.

Systemic issues that require formal review tend to be comprised of many layers. For this reason, formal reviews require interviews, requests for and review of documentation, and significant research and analysis to formulate well-informed conclusions and recommendations.

Formal systemic advocacy typically results in recommendations issued to government departments targeting system improvements. It is not uncommon for such recommendations to be shared through a public report. Our team anticipates we will announce the RCYO’s first formal systemic review in 2017-2018.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS

Our office can also review when a child or youth receiving government services dies or experiences a serious injury. These reviews provide meaningful opportunities to learn from mistakes. They are not about placing blame. Rather, they are opportunities to understand what went wrong and to initiate changes to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

We recognize these reviews are highly sensitive. They require the proper knowledge and capacity to conduct thoroughly. As a result, we are currently developing this program with particular attention and care and the section of the RCYA related to reviews of critical injuries and deaths is not yet in force. Significant research and development on this area of our work will take place in 2017-2018.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The RCYO has a legal duty to raise Nunavummiut’s awareness of child rights and how our team can work with young people to protect their rights. But equally important are the opportunities this area of our work creates to listen to Nunavummiut and learn directly from them about issues affecting young people.

Our public awareness work takes many forms: presentations, information sessions, community outreach, contests, developing information material, attending public events and maintaining our office’s website (www.rcynu.ca). All these activities share one goal: to build and strengthen relationships with children, youth, families and the many Nunavummiut who are invested in our territory’s young people.

ADVOCATE'S APPLAUSE



UQALIMAARIUQSANIQ READING SERIES

In 2016-2017, the Department of Education continued to develop a series of leveled reading books in Inuktitut to improve literacy among Nunavut students. The books feature northern stories and imagery, and provide reading experiences relevant to Nunavut students. The books also align with learning outcomes in the Nunavut curriculum.

Uqalimaariuqsaniq is a sequential and progressive Inuktitut reading program that supports students in their development as readers. The program gives teachers a variety of instructional tools to support students in becoming confident, fluent Inuktitut readers. Uqalimaariuqsaniq also acknowledges the importance of developing and maintaining key reading skills at home and in the community.

The availability of Inuktitut reading material is an essential component of a strong, culturally appropriate education system in Nunavut. The RCYO recognizes the GN must do more to support young Nunavummiut's right to quality education. However, we commend the Department for its work to date, which has produced more than 300 Inuktitut books and we encourage continued development of the reading series and other Inuktitut learning resources.



INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES IN OUR WORK

Inuit societal values are an integral part of what we do and how we conduct our business. The RCYA emphasizes that respect for Inuit societal values can support the development of healthy young people and families. The Act also states the RCYO must apply these values when carrying out its duties and exercising its powers.

With this in mind, our office continued to include Inuit societal values as a standing agenda item at our monthly team meetings throughout 2016-2017. This has proven to be an effective way to ensure Inuit societal values remain in the forefront of our minds as we conduct our work. In addition, this past fiscal year we further supported the use of Inuit societal values in our work through the development of our Elder advisors program and by seeking out opportunities for cultural training.

ONGOING INCORPORATION OF INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES

In 2016-2017, the RCYO incorporated Inuit societal values in our daily work in a number of ways. In our advocacy work, we remained consistently mindful of respecting the value of *aajiiqatigiinni*. This value means decision making through discussion and consensus. Every day our staff worked to include the voice of children and youth in both our individual and systemic advocacy. We listened to them and encourage them to be partners in resolving issues with government.

Our team also worked with young people in a way that honours *pilimmaksarniq*, which encourages learning and mastering new skills through observation, mentoring, practice and effort. A key way we do this is by coaching young people in



Photo: Leeveena Nuyalia

how to advocate for themselves or self-advocacy. In 2017-2018 we will further our work in this area by providing self-advocacy workshops in communities.

The value of *tunnganarniq* – of being welcoming and inclusive – continued to play an important role in guiding how our staff work with our many stakeholders in 2016-2017. Our policy and procedure manual clearly identifies for staff that we should approach all our interactions in a way that is mindful of this value. We remain dedicated to taking the time for people, making ourselves available and creating an environment where children and youth are comfortable seeking support. Our office also seeks to be inclusive through ongoing and open communication with stakeholders and the public.

Finally, and significantly, we remain committed to working collaboratively with government departments to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and youth. This approach is mindful of the value of *piliriqatigiinniq* – or working together for a common cause.

ELDER ADVISORS

Under the RCYA, our office can seek the expertise of Elders on matters related to dispute resolution, Inuit culture and Inuit societal values. Our team firmly believes that by working with Elders we can better support children, youth and their families.

In the previous fiscal year, we completed a Nunavut-wide public nomination process for Elder advisors and selected five advisors from across the territory. This fiscal, the RCYO hosted a two-day orientation and training session for our new Elder advisors.

The orientation was an excellent opportunity for our Elder advisors and staff to share information and exchange ideas. During the session, we discussed child and youth rights, the mandate of the RCYO, and the roles and responsibilities of the RCYO's Elder advisors. RCYO staff presented case studies, which helped to clarify the type of work our office does and the role Elder advisors will play. Our advisors also shared traditional parenting approaches and practices with our team. The RCYO looks forward to consulting with our Elder advisors on individual and systemic advocacy matters to improve GN services for children and youth.



CULTURAL TRAINING

Ongoing training related to Inuit societal values and culture is a requirement for all RCYO staff. Over the last year, various staff members participated in the following training opportunities:

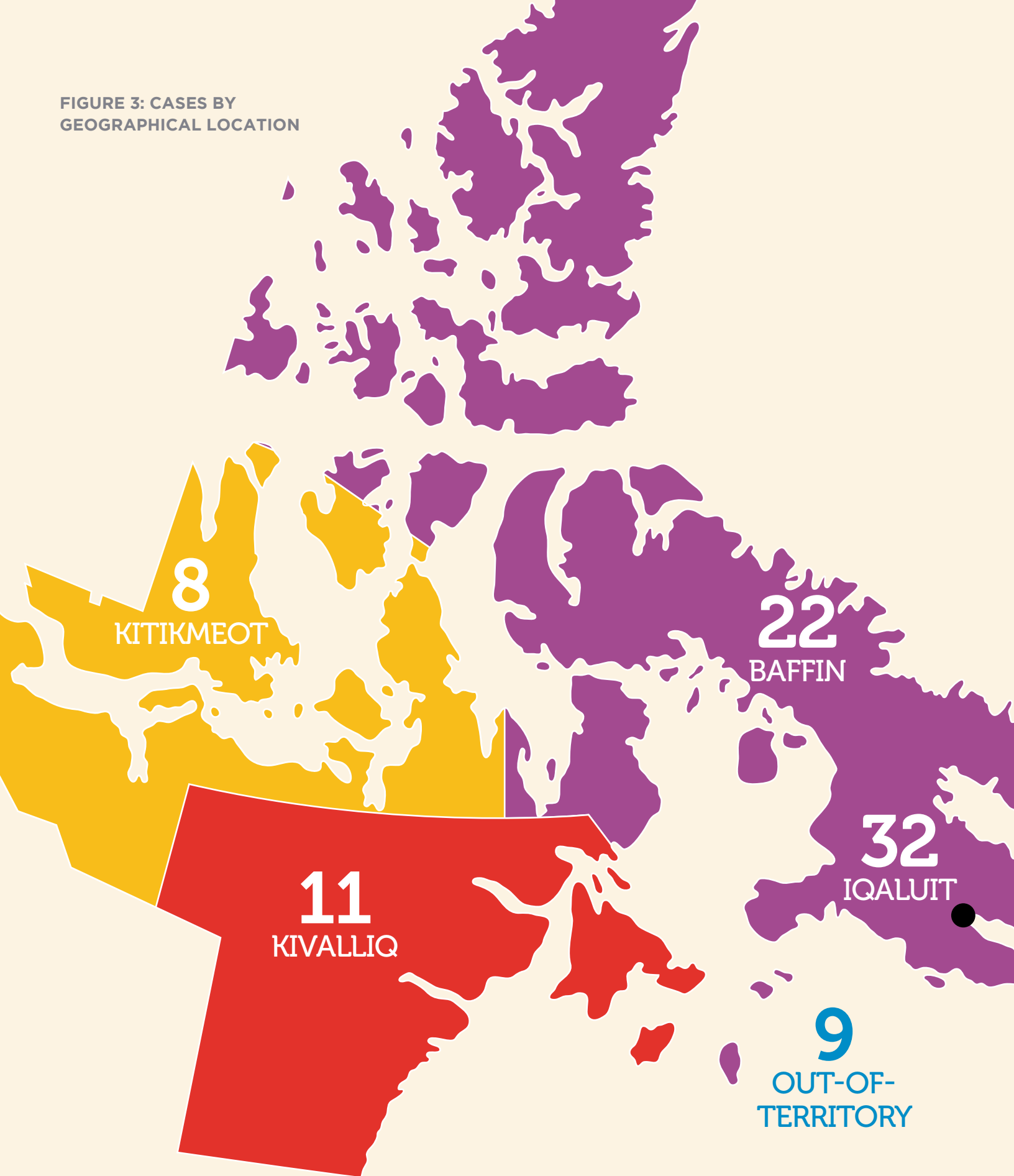
- ✧ Ingalangaiittukuurvik lecture series
- ✧ Inunnguiniq Parenting Program
- ✧ Pigiarnvik (Inuktitut as a second language, level one)

The RCYO also continued its tradition of participating in Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq, Nunavut's annual celebration of the Inuktitut language and Inuit culture. This month-long celebration happens every February and provides our team an additional opportunity to promote the use of Inuktitut and increase cultural awareness in our workplace. The theme for 2017 was Inuit legends and we embraced this year's theme by sharing seven legends with staff over the month. These legends helped staff learn about traditional stories that are significant to Inuit culture.



The RCYO's Elder advisors with our office staff at Sylvia Grinnel in Iqaluit, Nunavut during our Elder advisor orientation.
Back Row, from left : Clara Akulukjuk, Christa Kunuk, Meeka Arnakaq, Regilee Ootook, Bessie Sitatak, Lucy Makkigak, Helen Iguptak.
Front Row, from left : Jeff Kheraj, Sherry McNeil-Mulak, Nancy Pellerin, Colby O'Donnell.

FIGURE 3: CASES BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



REPORTING ON OUR ACTIVITIES

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY REPORT

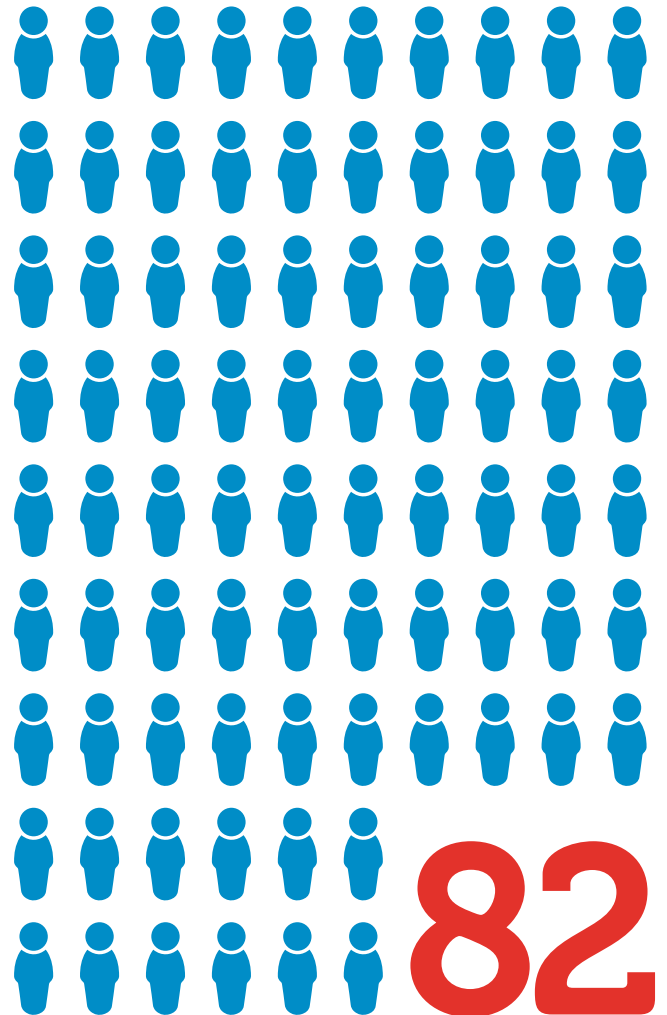
This past fiscal year marked our first full year of offering individual advocacy services to young Nunavummiut. Looking back, our individual advocacy cases from this year reinforce many of the emerging themes we first saw in 2015-2016. This includes the key observation that our territory's children and youth often face unnecessary barriers when accessing much-needed government services. In 2016-2017, we continued to see that inadequate care coordination, including poor communication and a lack of long-term planning, are contributing to the barriers that young people and their families face when trying to obtain needed services. These past 12 months also saw a few interesting shifts in our individual advocacy statistics. These shifts include where cases are typically originating from and who is bringing cases to our attention.

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY CASES

Our office opened 82 individual advocacy cases between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017. Two additional matters were raised with our office, but staff determined these matters didn't fall within the RCYO's mandate. Examples of matters that fall outside our mandate include a private family matter that doesn't involve a government service, and a client who may not be the right age to receive our services. In addition to the 82 cases we opened this fiscal year, our team continued to work on 19 cases that we had opened in 2015-2016. By the end of 2016-2017, our staff had closed 44 cases.

WHERE OUR CASES COME FROM

Between this year and last year, the geographic distribution of our individual advocacy cases shifted. In 2015-2016, the largest number of our cases came from Iqaluit (44%). However, in 2016-2017, about 50% of our cases came from communities outside Iqaluit (Figure 3). We expect this shift may be due in part to the significant number of community visits we made in 2016-2017.



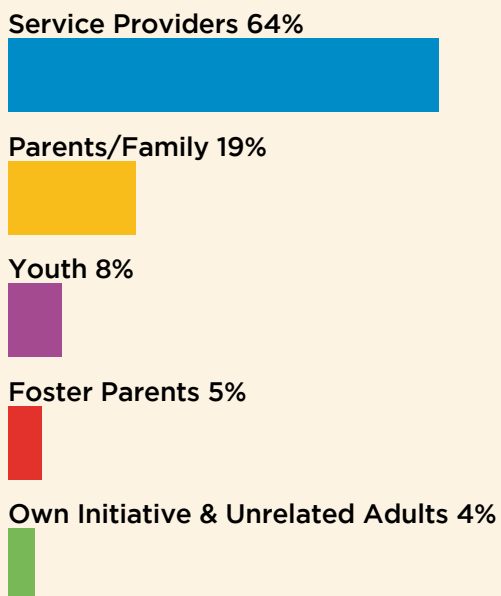
INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY CASES

SOURCE OF OFFICE CONTACTS

In 2016-2017, government service providers initiated 64% of our individual advocacy cases (Figure 4). This represents a significant increase in service provider contacts over last year (39% in 2015-2016). These front-line government employees, while responsible for supporting the needs of young Nunavummiut, have shared with our office frustration with Nunavut's child and youth serving systems. This frustration often stems from barriers within their own department. It also happens because barriers between departments exist. The poor coordination that results from these barriers continues to cause delays, gaps and sometimes the denial of services to young Nunavummiut.

This situation is of grave concern to our office. The inability to work together is contrary to the Inuit societal value of *piliriqatigiinniq/ikajuqtigiinniq*. It also runs contrary to the CRC, which emphasizes that governments must consider a child's best interests. It is clearly not in the best interests of children to have poor government service coordination as it can delay or prevent young people from accessing needed services. Such delays can have both short and long-term impacts on a child's development and even survival. Given this, the RCYO strongly urges the GN to take a holistic, coordinated approach to providing services to children and youth.

FIGURE 4: CONTACTS BY SOURCE

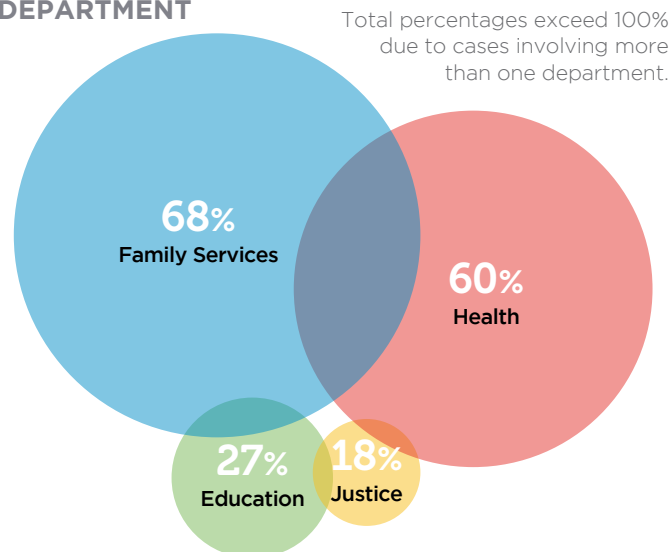


CASES BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

Our individual advocacy cases typically involve the GN departments most focused on offering services or programs for children and youth. For the second year, the departments the RCYO worked with most frequently followed the same order: 1) Family Services, 2) Health, 3) Education and 4) Justice (Figure 5).

Many of our cases involved multiple departments and/or multiple service areas from a single department. If we look at cases by the department involved, we can further explore which service areas within that department were cause for concern.

FIGURE 5: CASES BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT



Department of Family Services

The majority of cases we saw in 2016-2017 involving the Department of Family Services related to child protection matters (93%). The next largest service area of concern within the Department was lack of parental supports (39%). The third related to adoptions (9%). Interestingly, in every case involving the Department, the barriers to service involved one or more of the issues highlighted in the Office of the Auditor General of Canada's (OAG) reports: *Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut* (March 2011) and the *Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut* (March 2014). Our office's systemic advocacy team continues to monitor the GN's progress on implementing the OAG's recommendations. See page 23 of this report for more details.

CASE SAMPLE

Lack of planning and communication with foster parents

A child's grandparents were fostering the child as part of a kinship care placement. The placement was ongoing for more than a year. The Department of Family Services abruptly ended the kinship care arrangement and put the child in an unrelated foster placement. The grandparents did not know if the Department would return the child to their home. The Department also did not provide information to the child. This left the grandparents and the child uncertain of future living arrangements.

An RCYO advocacy specialist spoke with the child's grandparents and the community social services worker (CSSW) to gather information. The grandparents shared that they were confused about the Department's decision and wished to have their grandchild returned to them. For three weeks, they had tried unsuccessfully to set up a meeting with the CSSW and their supervisor.

The advocacy specialist then learned the Department had moved the child because staff felt the grandparents needed respite from their foster parenting duties. However, the grandparents had not requested this.

A meeting between department officials and the grandparents finally occurred after inquiries were made by the RCYO. The Department explained its decision to temporarily remove the child and shared information on respite care for foster parents. Soon after, the Department placed the child back in the grandparents' care.

Department of Health

For those cases that involved the Department of Health, mental health services was the most frequently cited service area of concern (71%). This was followed by general health services usually accessed through community health centres (14%) and then rehabilitation services (8%).

CASE SAMPLE

Gaps in child and youth mental health services

An individual reached out to the RCYO as they were concerned about a child who had witnessed a traumatic event. This event was having a noticeable effect on the child's behaviour. The individual suspected the child had not received any counselling services to help process the traumatic experience.

Our office reached out to mental health staff in the community. Our staff learned there were no existing protocols or policies in place for screening or assessing children who have experienced trauma. Staff also learned the local mental health team did not know the child and did not have training to work with young people.

Despite the lack of age-specific training, the local counsellor was willing to provide basic counselling services. As a result of RCYO involvement, the counsellor contacted the child's parents to gain consent to begin working with the child. In addition, RCYO staff worked to ensure counselling could take place at the child's school so the child was in a familiar and safe environment. This also allowed school and mental health staff to coordinate their approach to meet the child's needs.

Before the RCYO became involved, mental health staff in the community didn't know they could access psychiatric assessments for young people through the Department's contract with SickKids Hospital. When this case closed, the Department had started to implement a staggered, mandatory, two-week orientation for all mental health staff. This orientation should help staff gain a more complete understanding of the mental health services system in Nunavut. Our office recognizes this training is a positive step. However, we remain concerned about the availability and appropriateness of mental health services for young Nunavummiut.

Department of Education

When we examined the cases that involved the Department of Education in 2016-2017, we noticed an overwhelming majority of concerns related to school services (86%). Many of these cases required coordination with services from other departments to help the child or youth succeed in the classroom. The second and third most common areas of concern were district education authorities (23%) and early childhood education (9%).

CASE SAMPLE

Inadequate coordination of services

A child with physical challenges was having difficulty getting to and from school because the accessible bus would regularly break down. The child found it disruptive to not have reliable transportation. Additionally, no notice would be given to inform the child's family that the bus was not working. The child's parent had made multiple requests for a back-up plan. But the parent was becoming frustrated. Even after many years of advocacy and requests, the transportation issues had continued.

The matter was brought forward to our office and a RCYO advocacy specialist began working with the family. The advocacy specialist reached out to the local municipal government, who provided the accessible bus, and the school principal. Together, they worked out a bussing schedule and a back-up transportation plan. Having the schedule and better lines of communication with the bus operator reduced the family's frustration.

The advocacy specialist also contacted a non-governmental organization to explore whether there was funding to purchase an accessible vehicle. The specialist then shared this information with the relevant service providers. A community member submitted an application and was successful in obtaining funding for a new accessible vehicle. This vehicle can now be used when the accessible bus is not in service. It can also provide transportation to and from other community facilities.

Department of Justice

In 2016-2017, the individual advocacy cases related to the Department of Justice primarily involved the service areas of community corrections and law enforcement (47% each). Cases concerning community corrections included situations involving young people and sentencing or probation orders. Cases related to law enforcement generally involved community policing services.

CASE SAMPLE

Hearing and considering young people's opinions

The RCYO was asked to provide advocacy assistance to a young person who was about to be released from custody. A service provider approached our office as part of a Section 19 under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA). Section 19 of the YCJA allows judges and others to call special conferences to obtain expert advice on matters such as sentencing or terms of release. Often, a Section 19 requires participation and coordination from numerous service areas including probation, mental health, education and social services.

The RCYO was called on to participate in discussions around the young person's reintegration plan. Our advocacy specialist began by speaking with the young person. The advocacy specialist discovered the youth wanted to remain in their current community rather than return to their home community. This option would allow the young person to live with relatives and support schooling continuity. However, to stay in the current community, the young person would need additional financial support for food and clothing.

The advocacy specialist facilitated a meeting with the youth and the youth's CSSW. The young person had the opportunity to share reasons for wanting to remain with relatives. This meeting also provided a chance to ask about additional support. As a result, financial support was put into place through a voluntary service agreement and the young person was able to continue to live and study in their community of choice.

INFORMATION FILES

In addition to reaching out for advocacy support, Nunavummiut often contact the RCYO seeking information on child-related matters that aren't directly related to advocacy. We do not count these information requests as individual advocacy cases. Instead, we refer to these requests as information files.

Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, we opened 13 information files. Our office closed half of these on the same day. The rest took between one and three weeks to complete as staff won't close an information file until they can follow-up and make sure the information provided was helpful. In these instances, follow-up normally happened within five business days.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY REPORT

The focus of systemic advocacy shifts from individuals to a broader, in-depth look into the systems designed to support young people. Systemic advocacy involves both analyzing the root cause of an issue and making recommendations for improvement. Work to develop this core area of our mandate began following the RCYO's official launch in 2015. In 2016-2017, our staff entered the final stages of developing our systemic advocacy program. This section of the annual report highlights our key activities in regards to this development, as well as other ongoing work.

SYSTEMIC ISSUES RAISED WITH THE RCYO

Maintaining a record of systemic issues began when the Representative was first appointed in 2014. Since then, a variety of sources have continued to bring issues to our office's attention: children, youth, and their families, GN service providers, media monitoring, reports, legislative proceedings, and our individual advocacy program.

In 2016-2017, the systemic advocacy team developed a database for systemic issues. This database was designed to help the RCYO easily access information on the growing number of

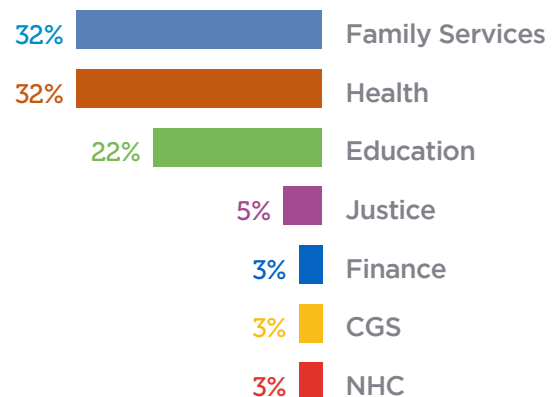
issues being brought to our attention. One of the main functions of this database is to capture issues for future consideration and potential review once we launch our systemic advocacy program. Information such as when the issue was first identified, how often it has been raised, priority level, relevant stakeholders, and key contacts are all compiled in this database.

By the close of the 2016-2017, our office had recorded more than 20 broad systemic themes. Under each of these, there can be a number of sub-themes/issues. For example, one broad theme is children who are in the care of the Director of Child and Family Services. Under this theme, seven additional systemic sub-themes/issues have been brought to our attention. Any one of these sub-themes have the potential to become the focus of a systemic review.

With each systemic issue, the RCYO determines one government department as the lead. However, the involvement of several departments may be needed to fully address an issue. The systemic issues recorded to date pertain to services and programs offered by the following GN departments or corporations: Family Services, Health, Education, Justice, Community and Government Services (CGS), Finance and the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC).

Figure 6 shows the percentage of systemic issues identified for each department at the close of 2016-2017. These percentages are based on all systemic issues brought to the RCYO's attention, including overarching themes and subthemes.

FIGURE 6: PERCENTAGE OF SYSTEMIC ISSUES BY LEAD GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT



As shown in Figure 6, our systemic advocacy team has identified the departments of Family Services (32%), Health (32%), Education (22%), and Justice (5%) as the four departments with the highest number of systemic issues. These same departments also have the highest involvement in the RCYO's individual advocacy cases.

PRIORITIZING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Every systemic issue raised with the RCYO matters to us and we are committed to giving each issue its due consideration. With this in mind, in 2016-2017 our team developed a tool to guide us in prioritizing issues for review. This Issue Categorization and Prioritization Tool (ICP tool) is not the RCYO's only means of prioritizing systemic issues. We also consider input from RCYO staff, the discretion of the Representative, and our office capacity. However, it has provided us with a systematic means of assessment.

The ICP tool uses 12 questions, each with its own point value, to assess an issue from different angles. A sample of these questions includes:

- ✦ What is the severity or gravity of harm or potential harm to children and/or youth if this issue is not addressed?
- ✦ Are there violations of the children's rights under the CRC?
- ✦ Will the benefits of modifying the law, policy or practice be significant?
- ✦ Has this issue been raised more than once and by different sources?

From these questions, staff calculate a score that helps assign a priority level to the issue. The systemic advocacy team then categorizes the issue as either requiring an informal review, formal review, or no action. At the close of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, our staff had used the ICP tool to assess approximately 70% of the systemic issues recorded in the database.

THE RCYO'S PILOT INFORMAL SYSTEMIC REVIEW

In 2016-2017, the RCYO launched our first pilot informal systemic review. The objective of the pilot was to give the systemic advocacy team an opportunity to evaluate the time, resources, research, information, and communication required to conduct reviews. The pilot also allowed our team to identify strengths and weaknesses within our systemic program while it was still under development.

Our pilot review focused on the issue of medical consent for children and youth who have been custom adopted. This issue was first raised with the RCYO in 2015. At the time, our office was advised that some children and youth who had been custom adopted were facing delays in receiving treatment when attending medical appointments outside of their home communities. These delays stemmed from uncertainty surrounding their adoptive parents' legal authority to provide medical consent.

In June 2016, our staff notified the departments of Health and Family Services that we would undertake a pilot informal systemic review on this issue. As part of the pilot, staff collected information from various sources in accordance with the RCYA. They also reviewed policies, protocols, legislation, and relevant reports. The final report will outline key findings and recommendations. The RCYO will provide this report to the departments of Health and Family Services and other relevant stakeholders in 2017-2018.

Internally, the pilot review offered the RCYO many key learnings. These included: ensuring a comprehensive investigation plan is created at the outset of the review, involving key stakeholders in the information gathering process, and the need to focus on the issue under review while also considering any related issues or information. In addition, the pilot review reinforced that a comprehensive, thorough review requires dedicated time, focus and resources. Working on the pilot review will help establish a solid foundation for the systemic advocacy program's official launch in 2017-2018.

ADVOCATE'S APPLAUSE



BABY BED PROGRAM

The Department of Health's Baby Bed program is the first publicly funded, universal program of its kind in Canada. A baby bed promotes early prenatal care, safe sleep environments and breastfeeding in an effort to reduce infant mortality. It also promotes a child's right to safety and supports maternal and child health.

Since the program's official launch in the fall of 2016, the Department of Health has distributed several hundred baby beds to community health centres across the territory. The baby beds are filled with products for baby and parents, such as information kits and books. We commend the Department of Health on the success of this universally-funded program and encourage its continuation.

MONITORING OF OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA (OAG) RECOMMENDATIONS

The RCYO's systemic program includes monitoring the GN's progress on recommendations issued in the OAG's child and youth-related reports. These reports contain objective, fact-based information and advice on the government programs audited.³

The following OAG reports are of particular interest to our office:

- * *Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut* (March 2011)
- * *Safety of Schools and Childcare Facilities in Nunavut* (November 2013)
- * *Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut* (March 2014)

In order to monitor the GN's progress, the systemic advocacy team reviews government responses to the OAG; reports from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Independent Officers and Other Entities (Standing Committee); and the Department of Family Services Quality Protects Action Plans (QPAPs). RCYO staff also request information directly from relevant departments.

In 2016-2017, the systemic advocacy team continued to compile the GN's responses to the OAG recommendations from 2011, 2013 and 2014. In addition, our team also compiled other relevant information, such as responses to questions posed by the RCYO, to evaluate whether the GN has met, made progress or not yet actioned the recommendations. We will continue this work into 2017-2018.

EDUCATION ACT SUBMISSION

In 2016-2017, the GN's Department of Education continued to work on amending the 2008 *Education Act*. As part of this process, the Department conducted public consultations and invited public submissions. In September 2016, our office made a submission as part of the RCYO's duty to make recommendations on child-related legislation.

³ Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2017). *What we do*. Retrieved from: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/au_fs_e_371.html

For this submission, our staff first reviewed the CRC and education legislation from other jurisdictions. Our team then identified opportunities for the *Education Act* to better protect child rights in the education system. In particular, our submission highlighted that the CRC establishes young people have a right to form an opinion and to have this opinion considered when adults make decisions that affect them. However, the proposed *Education Act* did not provide children and youth sufficient opportunity to participate in the development of policies and procedures, to participate in administrative proceedings, or to have their opinions considered.

As a result, the RCYO's submission made the following four recommendations to the Department of Education:

- 1 Expressly include commitment to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* as a guiding principle in the administration and interpretation of the revised *Education Act*.
- 2 Deliberately and thoughtfully seek input from students past and present when developing policies and procedures in support of the revised *Education Act* and in future legislative reform.
- 3 Address the exclusion of minor students from initiating and actively participating in administrative proceedings, particularly those that pertain to student suspension and expulsion.
- 4 Strengthen student participation in the work of the DEAs by adding clearer provisions in the legislation and establishing voting privileges for elected student representatives.

A copy of our submission to the Department of Education can be found on our website at www.rcynu.ca.

In addition to this submission, at the close of 2016-2017, the RCYO's systemic advocacy team had begun a thorough review of Bill 37, *An Act to Amend the Education Act and Inuit Language Protection Act*. This Bill had passed its second reading in the Legislative Assembly in March 2017. Our office's review of Bill 37 was ongoing as of March 31, 2017.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS PROGRAM

As noted earlier in this report, the reviews of critical injuries and deaths section of the RCYA is not yet in force. However, in 2016-2017 the RCYO began to lay the foundation for its development of this program area. In December 2016, a second systemic investigator joined our office and began preliminary research and development of the program. This work included researching existing initiatives and programs within Nunavut that pertain to child and youth injuries and deaths. It also included a jurisdictional scan of existing critical injuries and deaths programs in Canada, a review of relevant academic reports, and research on international programs.

RCYO staff also travelled to Alberta in January 2017 to meet with members of Alberta's Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) to learn about their investigative review program. This program investigates issues arising from a serious injury or death of a child receiving government services. The site visit to the Alberta office provided our systemic investigators insight into how other jurisdictions conduct investigations, develop critical injuries and deaths reports, and share report results with the public.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION REPORT

One of the key priorities of the RCYO is to raise awareness of our office and the importance of children and youth's rights. There is a strong need for this – given the newness of the RCYO and the many people our office has a duty to communicate with: children and youth, government service providers, Inuit organizations and other stakeholders. In 2016-2017, we continued to roll out the communications plan we developed in the last fiscal year. This plan has acted as an essential guide to our work in this area – helping us prioritize key initiatives.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The RCYO and its team are based in Iqaluit but responsible for providing advocacy services to the entire territory. This poses some unique challenges for our office. How can we raise awareness of our work and child rights in 25 isolated communities spread out across a territory more than two million square kilometres wide? How can we build long-term relationships with those we serve and work with at a local level?

Clearly, community outreach is a crucial way for the RCYO to address these challenges. As a result, we have set a goal of visiting each Nunavut community at least once every two years. Such visits help our office become aware of the realities, strengths and challenges of communities first-hand. They also are a small way to build ongoing relationships across the territory.

In 2016-2017, the RCYO created a travel plan to visit 18 communities. By the fiscal year's end, we had successfully visited 15 of them. Staff were weathered out of Nauyasat and Whale Cove, and a staff illness forced a cancellation of our trip to Grise Fiord. As of March 31, 2017, our staff had visited all but four Nunavut communities since the RCYO

first opened in September 2015. Our office is now prioritizing travel to these remaining communities and we anticipate visiting them by the end of the first quarter of 2017-2018. Figure 7 provides a summary of our community visits and those we will prioritize in the next fiscal year.

When RCYO staff visit a community, we follow an ambitious schedule to maximize our outreach efforts and connect with as many Nunavummiut as possible. Our visits typically include meeting with students in every grade at each school, teachers, community members, and other services providers, such as health centre staff, community social services workers and probation officers. We also try to visit Elders, MLA offices, RCMP and hamlet radio stations. In the evenings, our staff often participate in community gatherings or events. This has included playing badminton with youth, spending time at the local youth centre, making pizza with teens, and setting up information tables at local grocery stores.



RCYO staff visiting with Del Graff, Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate. The RCYO travelled to the province to learn about the OCYA's investigative review program.

FIGURE 7: RCYO COMMUNITY VISITS

2016	APR	Taloyoak Chesterfield Inlet Kugluktuk Cambridge Bay
	MAY	Rankin Inlet
	SEP	Clyde River
	OCT	Coral Harbour
2017	JAN	Sanikiluaq Arviat
	FEB	Kimmirut
	MAR	Pond Inlet Arctic Bay Resolute Bay Pangnirtung Qikiqtarjuaq
2017-18	Community Visit Priority List <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Baker Lake 2 Grise Fiord 3 Naujaat 4 Whale Cove 	

SCHOOL VISITS

School visits are a priority for our staff whenever they travel to a community. In 2016-17, these visits focused on introducing young Nunavummiut to the idea of child rights – both what rights are and how our office can support them. They are also opportunities to make connections with young people and school staff across the territory.

Before our staff travel to a community, they reach out to local principals to discuss travel plans and schedule a time for a visit. When at a school, they spend time in each classroom, introducing themselves to the students and starting a discussion about the RCYO and child rights. Staff take time to focus on the idea that with child rights, young people also have responsibilities. These discussions are geared towards the appropriate grade level and often use activities to explore the differences between rights, wants and needs.

Whenever possible, our team also give presentations to school staff about our office and service providers' obligations under the RCYA. They check to ensure the school has information posters about the RCYO displayed where all young people can see them – a key obligation for government facility managers under the RCYA. Staff always leave our resource materials at the end of school visits. These include information posters, comic strips and other materials that provide the RCYO's contact information, as well as a tangible reminder that the RCYO is here to support young Nunavummiut.



Kugaardjuk School in Kugaaruk, Nunavut

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT'S BIENNIAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT

This past year, the Representative was invited to participate in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut's Biennial Youth Parliament. The Legislative Assembly holds this event every two years to encourage youth to learn more about politics and legislative procedures.

On November 27, 2016, the Representative and members of our office staff attended the event and presented opening remarks to the youth parliamentarians on child rights and the role of the RCYO. The Representative answered questions from the parliamentarians and listened to the concerns they shared from their communities. The RCYO also hosted parliamentarians at our Iqaluit office.

The experience was truly invaluable, giving the RCYO an excellent opportunity to speak directly with young Nunavummiut. More importantly, it provided a forum for the Representative to hear directly from youth representatives from across the territory - providing our office with additional insights into systemic issues affecting young people at a local level.

Following the event, our systemic advocacy team thoroughly reviewed the proceeding's transcript and identified the top issues raised by youth parliamentarians. The top four issues youth identified were:

- 1 The need for more recreational facilities and activities.
- 2 The need for increased cultural education, particularly with respect to language and traditional practices and values.
- 3 The need to address drug and alcohol issues, including smoking cessation and in-territory drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs.
- 4 The need for increased mental health education, awareness, treatment and suicide prevention.

To support young Nunavummiut's right to have their opinion taken into consideration, the RCYO sent letters to government decision makers that outlined these issues. These letters were sent to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier of Nunavut, ministers, regular members of the Legislative Assembly and deputy ministers.

The RCYO also noted all issues that youth parliamentarians raised at the event and subsequently recorded these in our office's systemic issues database. Their thoughts will now play an essential role in our systemic advocacy work. The Representative wishes to acknowledge the 2016 youth parliamentarians for raising these important issues and advocating for young Nunavummiut across the territory.



The Representative and staff attending Nunavut's Biennial Youth Parliament.

YOUR STORY, YOUR VOICE CONTEST

Another key communications activity the RCYO carried out in 2016-2017 was our second annual Your Story, Your Voice Contest. Our office established this contest in 2015-2016 as a fun way to raise awareness of our office and child rights among young Nunavummiut. The contest aligns with National Child Day. This day is marked every year on November 20 to recognize the ratification of the CRC.

Our inaugural contest was a writing contest that appealed to individual children and youth to make submissions. However, in 2016-2017, after some feedback from Nunavut schools, we changed the format to an art contest targeting classroom participation through direct outreach to schools. We shared the theme of this year's contest - a child's right to participation (Article 12 of the CRC) - with schools across the territory. Classrooms were then asked to create a mural or door decoration that explored this right.

Our office received submissions from each region across the territory and all participating classes received a thank you package from the RCYO. An evaluation panel of RCYO staff then reviewed each submission and selected the following winners:

* K-3 grade category

Catherine Eleehetook's P3 class,
Quqshuun Ilihakvik School Gjoa Haven -
"Let Our Voices Be Heard"



* 4-7 grade category

Joanni Sallerina's P5 class,
Quqshuun Ilihakvik School, Gjoa Haven -
"Rights Children Have"



* 8-12 grade category

Jamie Samuel's 8B class,
Qitiqliq Middle School, Arviat -
"No Child Left Behind"



ADVOCATE'S APPLAUSE



INUNNGUINIQ PARENTING PROGRAM

The Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre, along with its partners, is responsible for the development of a culturally relevant parenting support and intervention program. The Innunguinik program has three goals:

1. Revitalize the wisdom and practices of inunnguiniq in our lives today.
2. Support healing for participants and their families.
3. Increase the practice of inunnguiniq in communities, strengthening the roles of extended family and community in child-rearing.

In 2016-2017, the Department of Family Services funded the delivery of four sessions of the Innunguinik Parenting Facilitator Training program. This was the first time the program was offered in all Nunavut regions. It provided training to more than 50 Nunavummiut, with the majority of trainees indicating that they plan to implement the information they learned. The RCYO commends the Department for its funding support and encourages all front-line service providers who support families in Nunavut to consider registering for future training sessions.



Photo: Clare Kines

RCYO WEBSITE

The RCYO website is one of the main communication tools we use to share information about our office. The website provides basic information about our areas of work, updates on our community visits and access to our office's publications and reports.

Data compiled between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, showed a significant increase of web site users over the previous year. In 2015-2016, 877 users had visited the site while this past fiscal year 4,106 users were recorded. Of these users, 66% were new visitors, while 34% were returning visitors.

There was also significant growth in the number of sessions by Nunavut users in 2016-2017. This fiscal, Nunavut users visited the website more than 1,400 times. Last fiscal, Nunavut users visited 651 times.

SURVEY CONDUCTED ON INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

Before the RCYO officially opened in September 2015, our staff developed a broad communications plan, designed to reach our many audiences: children and youth, families and the public, government leaders and service providers. One aspect of our initial communications work was a targeted information campaign. This campaign was designed to let government leaders and staff know about our office and their legal obligations under the new RCYA. It included in-person meetings with government senior management teams, phone calls to government service providers and mailing out information packages to government leaders, department heads and service providers.

Monitoring the effectiveness of our communication work is essential for our office and we followed-up these mail-outs with a survey to evaluate the campaign's success. This survey had two main goals: 1) to assess whether government service providers had received the mail-out packages as intended and 2) whether the information contained in the packages had increased awareness of our office among service provider groups. In 2016-2017, we began an initial review of the data collected and a full report on the results is expected in 2017-2018.

PROACTIVE MEETINGS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Our office identified early on that building relationships with the Government of Nunavut, its leaders and service providers, was a priority for our office. We recognized that strong relationships with the GN would help reinforce our common goal of supporting young Nunavummiut.

In 2016-2017, we continued our efforts to build relationships with GN employees by holding meetings with senior management and service providers across the GN in order to ensure we approach our work in a collaborative way. This proactive approach has provided the RCYO with opportunities to ensure that GN staff are aware of their legal obligations under the RCYA and their responsibility to protect and promote the rights of children and youth.

We appreciate the ongoing opportunities we have had to work with the departments and their staff and we strive to continue developing these important relationships in the years ahead. Our interaction with departments has included presentations, discussions, consultations, meetings and information sessions. A complete list of the activities that took place in 2016-2017 can be found on page 33.



Photo: Clare Kines

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2017-2018

Next year will mark another milestone for our office: we will announce our first formal systemic review. Such reviews are in-depth and require significant investigation, analysis and resources. Our review will focus on producing a comprehensive report with well-researched and practicable recommendations that can lead to true systemic improvements for all young Nunavummiut.

We will also continue to build upon our individual advocacy and public awareness work. Our staff have found that community visits with young people, service providers and Nunavummiut across the territory provide significant opportunities to raise awareness of child rights and our office. With this in mind, we will continue our regular outreach with Nunavut communities, with an emphasis on offering self-advocacy workshops to young people across the territory.

These self-advocacy workshops are one way our staff can work with young people to encourage their right to participate in matters that affect their lives. The workshops will help young people understand their rights, gain basic skills to help them advocate for themselves, and empower them to use these skills to also advocate for larger change.

Over the past year, many young Nunavummiut have showed us what advocacy in action looks like: Kimberly Tanuyak of Chesterfield Inlet used a school project to begin a dialogue around the high suicide rate among young Nunavummiut; Sasha Evetalegak, Carter Lear, Courtney Nakahok, Bailey Evetalegak, Charmaine Panegyuk, Thomas Kaohina, Calvin Ehaloak, and Shania Angohaitok were sworn into Cambridge Bay's hamlet council and have been raising young people's concerns with municipal officials; Trina Qaqqaq of Baker Lake represented Nunavut at the House of Commons on International Womens' Day and called passionately for more support for suicide prevention.

We take great inspiration from these youth. We draw equal inspiration from those young Nunavummiut who practice self-advocacy without public recognition, as well as those we work alongside every day in our individual advocacy work. As we enter 2017-18, we renew our commitment to support self-advocacy skill development across the territory - recognizing young Nunavummiut who know their rights and feel empowered to raise their concerns are essential to creating long-lasting, system-wide improvements in Nunavut.



Photo: Clare Kines

LIST OF PRESENTATIONS, KEY MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY VISITS

Whenever possible, our staff meet with Nunavummiut in person to share information about our office and listen directly to their concerns. Below is a list of the RCYO's presentations, key meetings and community visits in 2016-2017.

- * Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates
- * Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta
- * Canadian Human Rights Commission
- * Tammaativik Boarding Home
- * CSSWs and supervisors (core training)
- * Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Independent Officers and Other Entities
- * Quality of Life Deputy Ministers Committee
- * Department of Health (Medical Advisory Committee and QGH management)
- * Department of Health (nursing directors)
- * Department of Health (Senior Management Team)
- * Department of Health (psychiatric nurses)
- * Department of Health (Iqaluit rehabilitation team)
- * Department of Health (Iqaluit mental health service providers)
- * Department of Health (Iqaluit Public Health)
- * Department of Health (Maternal and Newborn Child Health consultation)
- * Department of Family Services (Senior Management Team)
- * Department of Education (Senior Management Team)
- * Department of Justice (Senior Management Team)
- * Department of Finance
- * Iqaluit Foster Parents
- * Iqaluit Makkuttukkuvik Youth Centre
- * Atlantic Youth (Iqaluit Youth Group Home)
- * Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre
- * 2016 Legislative Assembly of Nunavut Youth Parliamentarians
- * Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- * Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
- * Nunavut Arctic College (nursing students)
- * Nunavut Arctic College (early childhood education students)
- * Nunavut Arctic College (political studies class)
- * Toronto SickKids Hospital
- * CASP Conference
- * Ranch Erhlo (out-of-territory group home)
- * Iqaluit Northmart
- * Iqaluit - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Taloyoak - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Chesterfield Inlet - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Kugluktuk - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Cambridge Bay - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Rankin Inlet - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Clyde River - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Coral Harbour - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Sanikiluaq - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Arviat - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Kimmirut - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Pond Inlet - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Arctic Bay -Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Resolute Bay -Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Pangnirtung - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community
- * Qikiqtarjuaq - Schools, GN Service Providers and Community



RCYO staff at the Arviat co-op store, sharing information about our office.

BUDGET REPORT

Summary Statement of Budget and Expenditures
Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2017

	BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	% OF BUDGET SPENT
Permanent Salaries	1,381,000	1,202,600	
Casual Wages	-	66,774	
TOTAL COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	1,381,000	1,269,374	92%
Travel & Transportation	195,000	123,084	
Materials & Supplies	195,000	85,431	
Purchased Services	65,000	35,215	
Contract Services	250,000	180,340	
Fees & Payments	5,000	31,323	
Other Expenses	-	5,870	
Tangible Assets	19,000	223	
Computer Hardware & Software	20,000	7,420	
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	749,000	468,906	63%
TOTAL	2,130,000	1,738,280	82%
SURPLUS		391,720	18%