

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



Cover Art by Young Artist:
Gabriel

Published by:
The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
Newfoundland and Labrador
193 LeMarchant Road
St. John's NL, A1C 2H5

Printed by:
The Queen's Printer
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Message from the Child and Youth Advocate

I am pleased to present the 2020-21 Annual Performance Report for the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. 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 this Act, and I am accountable for the results in this report.

COVID brought a new round of lockdowns this year. This again presented significant challenges for children and youth in the province. While some families were able to find opportunities for more quality time together without external competing interests, many children and youth experienced the disruptions and isolation as a direct threat to their well-being. I speak on behalf of all my staff when I say that we felt privileged every single time our assistance was sought. We took pride in prompt response times to calls and helped navigate constantly changing service delivery systems. During these challenging times, children's rights are more important than ever, and young people must be seen and heard. This is one of their rights.

It is truly my privilege to serve the children and youth of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Jackie Lake Kavanagh
Jackie Lake Kavanagh
Child and Youth Advocate





Table of Contents

Overview..... 1

Mandate1

Financial Information.....2

What We Do3

Our Vision4

Our Values.....5

Staff6

Highlights and Accomplishments 7

Investigation and Systemic Reports8

Engagement and Outreach9

Continuous Learning and Information Sharing14

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates.....16

OCYA Statistical Highlights17

Requests for Advocacy Assistance by Department or Agency Involved (2020-21).....19

Mandatory Reporting of Deaths and Critical Injuries20



Report on Performance 24

Issue 1: Enhancing Awareness of Children’s Rights25

Issue 2: Enhanced Youth Engagement28

Opportunities and Challenges31

Financial Statements 32

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 are responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of all children and youth in the province and provide public oversight of government programs and services. We advocate 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.

We are mandated by law through the **Child and Youth Advocate Act**, to protect and advance the rights of children and youth. Our advocacy work is also guided by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and other policies and laws. Our primary clients are children and youth under the age of 19. If a young person is in extended care or custody, they are eligible until the age of 21. Young people may contact us directly. We also work closely with family members, professionals, other supporters, and champions working on behalf of children and youth.

We help children and youth by standing up for their rights in dealing with child serving systems. We help young people speak up for themselves, we speak up with them, or we speak up for them. We offer individual advocacy, as well as systemic advocacy where groups of young people are affected. We investigate and review complaints, and deliver public education on the rights of children and youth. The voices and rights of young people are very important to us, and guide our advocacy work on a daily basis.



Section 3 of the **Child and Youth Advocate Act** states the Office is established:

- (a) to ensure that the rights and interests of children and youth are protected and advanced and their views are heard and considered;
- (b) to ensure that children and youth have access to services and that their complaints relating to the provision of those services receive appropriate attention;
- (c) to provide information and advice to the government, agencies of the government and to communities about the availability, effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance of services to children and youth;
- (c.1) to review and investigate matters affecting the rights and interests of children and youth; and
- (d) generally, to act as an advocate of the rights and interests of children and youth.

Financial Information

The budget approved for Fiscal Year 2020-21 was \$1,439,800.

What We Do

Individual Advocacy:

We speak up for young people, with young people, or help young people speak up for themselves so their voice is heard and their 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, and advocate for needed changes.

Education and Outreach:

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

Our Vision

**A province where every
child's and youth's
rights are protected and
respected.**



Our Values

Integrity:

We act honestly, ethically and always in good faith in all areas of our work

Courage:

We lead with courage, as agents of change, to challenge the status quo in order to improve the circumstances and outcomes for children and youth

Inclusiveness:

We provide a safe space for all children and youth where differences in experiences and expression are valued and respected

Empowerment:

We work with young people in a way that builds their confidence, gives power to their voices, and recognizes their expertise in their own lives

Staff

The Child and Youth Advocate has a strong and committed team of 13 permanent staff. The team has diverse educational and professional backgrounds that include social work, nursing, education, law, psychology, and administration. Team members have worked in a variety of practice settings including public service, community organizations, and private practice.

All of our dedicated staff are passionate about standing up for the rights of children and youth. Here is what a few have to say:



“All children are born with rights. It is up to us as the adults, the leaders, the parents, the policy makers to ensure that those rights are advanced in all child and youth services. The potential for positive change is limited only by our imagination!”

- *Karen Gray, Director of Advocacy and Investigations*



“We must actively engage children and youth when making decisions that affect them. They are the experts in their own lives.”

- *Debbie Gillard, Systemic Advocacy Consultant*



“Listening, and really hearing the voices of young people is critical. They have a right to be heard in matters that affect them. We take this role very seriously.”

- *Wilma MacInnis, Director of Strategic Services and Outreach*



“As you grow, we want you to have your needs and rights met. Our Office can guide you, reach out!.”

- *Amanda Mercer, Administrative Officer*

Highlights and Accomplishments

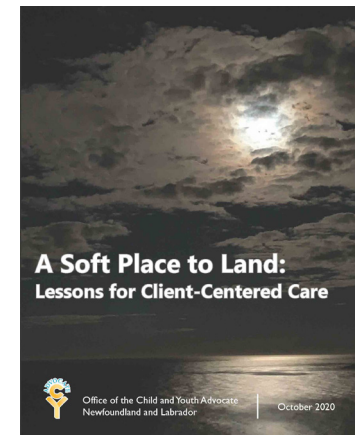
As many have said this past year, this has been a year like no other. Our office saw unprecedented changes to our daily work and service delivery model in the midst of a global pandemic. However, we remained steadfast in our commitment as we continued to deliver on our mandate where we promptly responded to over 500 requests for assistance. We released two investigative reports, and facilitated extensive virtual engagement sessions with youth and community partners.



Investigation and Systemic Reports

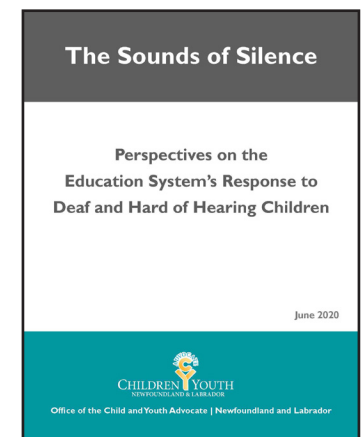
A Soft Place to Land: Lessons for Client-Centered Care

This report looks at the struggles of a young person who died by suicide while residing at a group home, and who had a history of sexual abuse, and a host of complex mental health and addiction issues. Interwoven were issues involving housing, residential services, the criminal justice system, and education services. In some instances, resources and services were clearly unavailable. At other times, significant resources were involved, but were not always appropriately coordinated and integrated. So while many people worked hard for this young person, systemic barriers significantly limited their progress. This report demonstrates that young people do not always fit into neat program criteria or eligibility requirements. Their lives can be chaotic and their life stories can often tell us why. They are frequently rooted in histories of trauma. It is important to meet young people where they are. This report identifies the importance of true client-centered care for young people, and identifies systemic deficiencies.



Sounds of Silence: Perspectives on the Education System's Response to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador have a right to the best possible education and school experience. There are no exceptions to this right. With this in mind, Newfoundland and Labrador's Child and Youth Advocate invited young people, their families, professionals, and stakeholders to reach out to discuss their experiences and ideas about education services to deaf and hard of hearing children and youth. This report provides an opportunity to hear and learn directly from those who know this issue well. Most of the responses were critical of the current model of services. This sentiment crossed all groups of participants. However, we also heard some positive stories. These stories offer hope and promise for what the future could hold for deaf and hard of hearing children in the education system.



Engagement and Outreach

The **Child and Youth Advocate Act** mandates us to provide education on children's rights, among other services. This year, our engagement and outreach looked different due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike other years, due to the pandemic and public health orders, we were unable to travel within the province to deliver in-person engagement and outreach. Instead we facilitated virtual sessions with children and youth in various locations throughout the province. We always enjoy speaking directly to young people, whether it is virtually or in-person.

School Outreach

During 2020-21 we held virtual sessions with students in:

- Grades 11 and 12 at Holy Name of Mary Academy in Lawn;
- Grades 10-12 at Menihek High School in Labrador City; and,
- Grades 4-9 at Lumsden Academy in Lumsden.

Conferences and Community Outreach

- Presented at the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers, College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador, and College of Licenced Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador session on "The Social Impact of COVID-19: Information for Health Care Professionals".
- Facilitated an information session on children's rights to the Association for New Canadians summer camp.
- Presented virtually to groups of Sparks, Brownies, Guides, Pathfinders, and Rangers.

Professionals and Future Professionals

- Presented to the new recruits of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary to educate them about the OCYA role, authority, and mandate, as well as the rights of children and youth.
- Facilitated an annual session at the Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education with students from: Faculty of Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, School of Social Work, and Department of Psychology. The session focused on the OCYA mandate, child and youth rights, and the importance of communication among health professionals in cases of suspected child abuse and neglect in Newfoundland and Labrador. We specifically focused on the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate’s investigative report entitled **Specialized Health Care Responses to Recognize and Prevent Child Sexual Abuse (2017)**.

National Child Day

We promoted National Child Day 2020 and children’s rights in several ways. We created an ad campaign with the theme “Children and Youth are our Experts”. The posters were tweeted and posted on our website (<https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/publications/resource-materials/>).

We placed campaign ads on metrobuses in the St. John’s area, and ran a series of radio spots on children and youth rights.



We prepared a series of child rights tweets that we shared during the week leading up to National Child Day 2020, including artwork from our Young Artist Program and the message “Happy National Child Day” translated into French, Innu-aimun (Sheshatshiu and Mushuau dialects), Inuktitut, and Mi’kmaq.

#NationalChildDay2020

Friday, November 20th

Remember to wear BLUE!



#NationalChildDay2020

Did You Know?

All children and youth in Canada have the right to equal protection of the law, without discrimination, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

#NationalChildDay2020

Did You Know?

Canada approved/accepted the UN Convention on the Rights of Child in 1991 and it’s the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in the world.

#NationalChildDay2020

Did You Know?

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes children’s rights to special care, protection and help due to their age and developmental stage.

#NationalChildDay2020

Did You Know?

Guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are: Freedom from discrimination; Best interests of child in all decisions; The right to life, survival, development; and, The right to express views in matters affecting them.

#NationalChildDay

November 20, 2020

Happy National Child Day

Bonne Journée nationale de l'enfant

Kuviasugitsi Nunatsualimâmi Suguset Ullungani

Minuatam Utshimau Auass Tshishuke

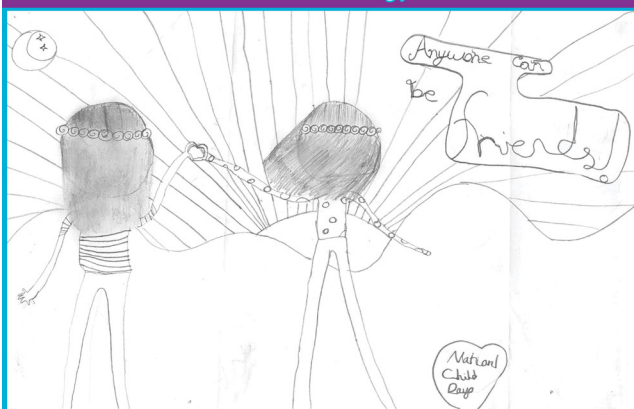
Manenitakun Auass Tshishuk

Kluktjît Msît Mijua’ji’jk Na’kwekmow



#NationalChildDay2020

Friday, November 20th



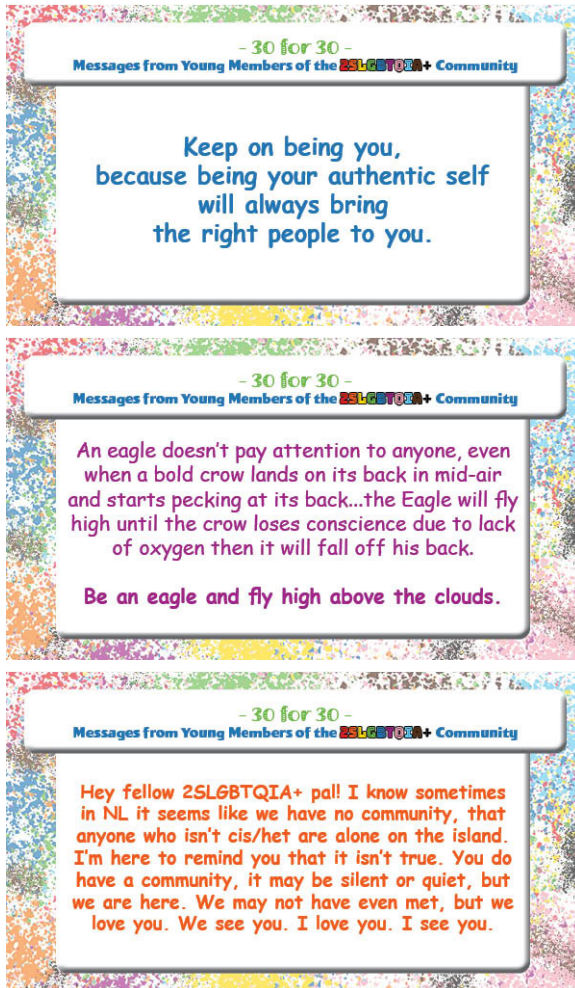
“Anyone can be friends”
by Young Artist Rodela.

Thank you, Rodela, for sharing your talent with us and your message of friendship on this special day.

Happy National Child Day to you and all young people today!



We launched the 30 for 30 campaign for young people who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in advance of National Child Day. We invited young people from this community to send in their messages that we would safely relay on their behalf through our twitter account each day in November. We tweeted 30 messages in 30 days. We know it is not always safe for these young people to speak out, so we offered them our platform, and they accepted. Here is a sample of the messages.



Are you a **YOUNG PERSON** who identifies as a member of the **2SLGBTQIA+** community in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Join our
- 30 for 30 -
Campaign

Do you have a message to build awareness and understanding?
We want to hear from you and amplify your voice!

We will share 30 messages in 30 days during November 2020 to our website (www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/) and Twitter feed (@OCYANL).

Please send your message by **October 15, 2020** using:
Email: Office@ocya.nl.ca , Text: TextUs@ocya.nl.ca , or
Call: 1-877-753-3888

Can't wait to hear from you!

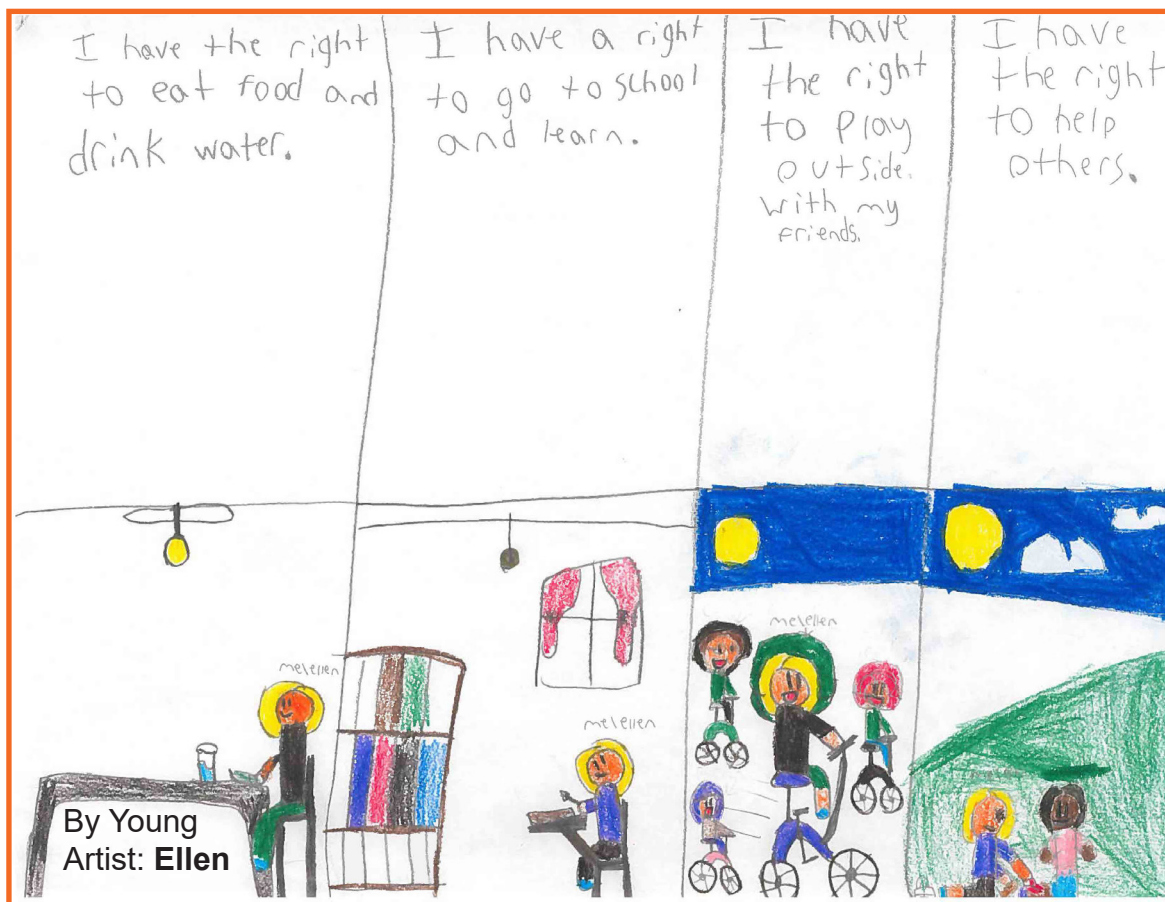
*Note: We will not publish your name or community.

 Office of the Child and Youth Advocate | Newfoundland and Labrador

Follow us on 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.



Continuous Learning and Information Sharing

We participated in many virtual learning events in 2020-21. This had both advantages and challenges. We discovered many new online learning opportunities which made attending more accessible and cost efficient. However, the same level of dynamic discussion, connection, and networking did not always unfold as occurs in live events.

Staff were pleased to attend sessions on a variety of child and youth related topics, including:

- Adoption
- Attachment
- Child welfare
- Childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences
- Cultural humility
- Diversity
- Intimate partner violence
- Indigenous specific issues
- Children and youth mental health
- Online sexual exploitation
- Pandemic impacts on children and youth
- Digital and social media
- Virtual engagement approaches
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Conferences, Courses and Presentations

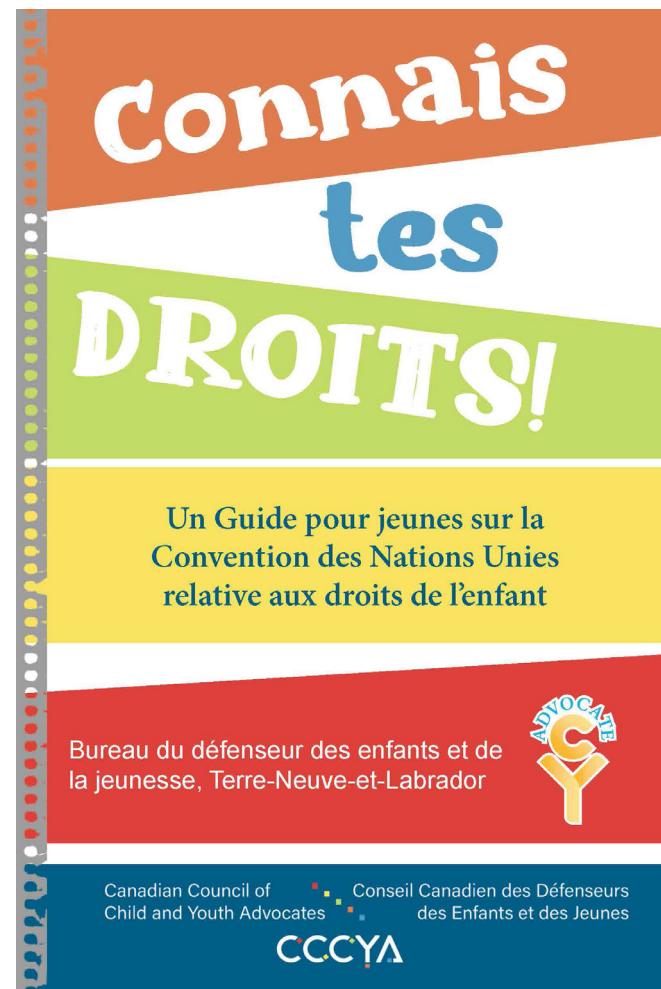
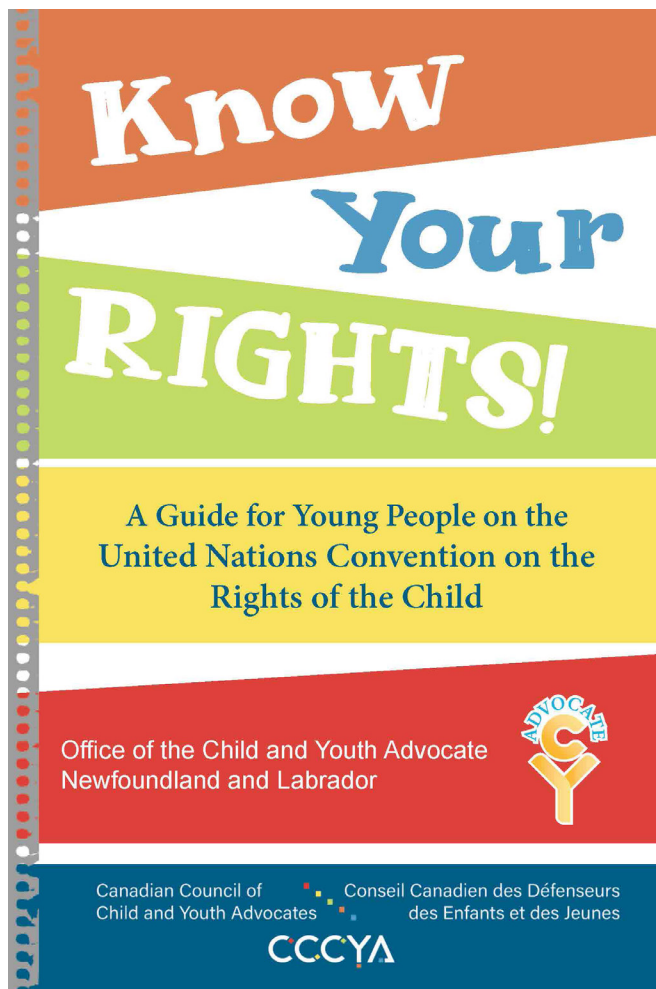
The list below offers a sampling of some specific educational opportunities:

- North American Council on Adoptable Children Adoption and Foster Care Conference
- 2020-Indigenous Health Building Our Future Conference
- Assembly of First Nations - Our Children, Our Future: Virtual Leadership Gathering on First Nations Child and Family Services and Self Determination (5 Sessions)
- Frayme Learning Institute - 2021 Conference highlighting Alternative Approaches to Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Services

- First Light - Introduction to Cultural Humility
- Trans Support NL Inc. - Gender Diversity
- Newfoundland and Labrador English School District - New Pedagogies for Deep Learning follow-up sessions
- Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador - Seminar on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Living Works training session
- Decolonize YYT - Pathways to Reconciliation Virtual Policy Conference
- Touchstones of Hope Dialogue Series
- (Dis)Placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System- Film Screening and Learning Guide Launch
- Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy - Support in Practice: Harm reduction in youth mental health and substance use services
- “Our Journey is Evolving: A conversation about collaboration with schools on youth homelessness prevention initiatives”
- Inuit Qaujimagatuqngit - The Importance of family connections and traditions, traditional laws and values for wellness
- Mental Health Commission of Canada - Covid-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health and Substance Use of Youth webinar
- Dr. Gordon Neufeld Institute -The Art and Science of Transplanting Children
- Public Safety Canada - online child sexual exploitation series
- Adoption Council of Ontario - ACE’s, the Brain, and Development Trauma
- Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers, College of Registered Nurses, and College of Licenced Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador - The Social Impact of Covid-19: Information for Health Care Professionals
- NAVNET - Making Connections and Mapping Systems event: Advocacy During Covid-19
- Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association Conference - “When I Stutter” premiere

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates is an association of independent government-appointed children's advocates, ombudsmen, and representatives from ten provinces and two territories. The Council identifies areas and issues of mutual concern, and addresses issues at a national level, and shares research and best practices. Our office led the development of a child-friendly rights booklet (<https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/publications/resource-materials/>), which was then made available electronically to all Council members for distribution in their jurisdictions. Our Advocate completed her two year term as Vice President for the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates in 2020.



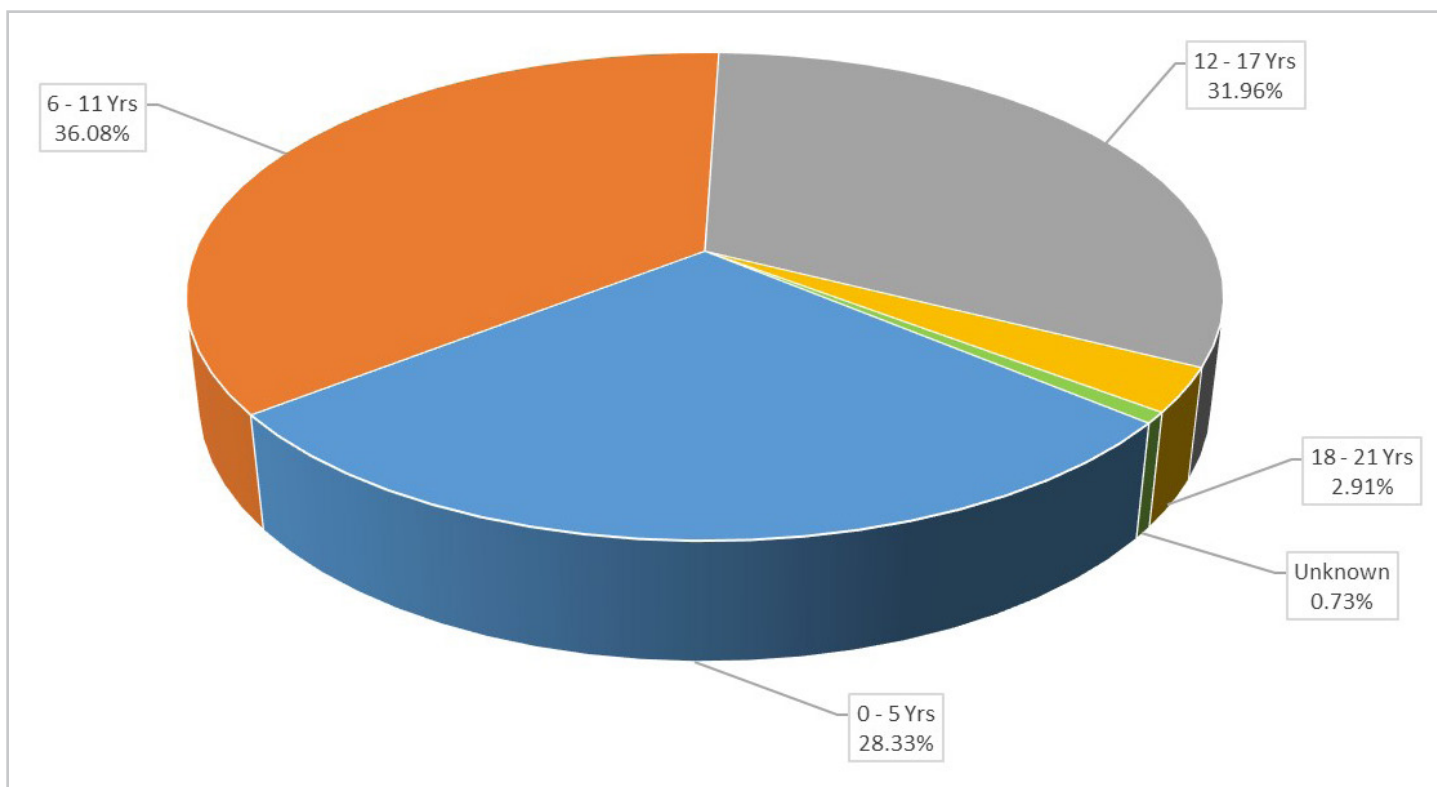
OCYA Statistical Highlights

Service Delivery and Performance

We responded to more than 500 requests for services and advocacy assistance.

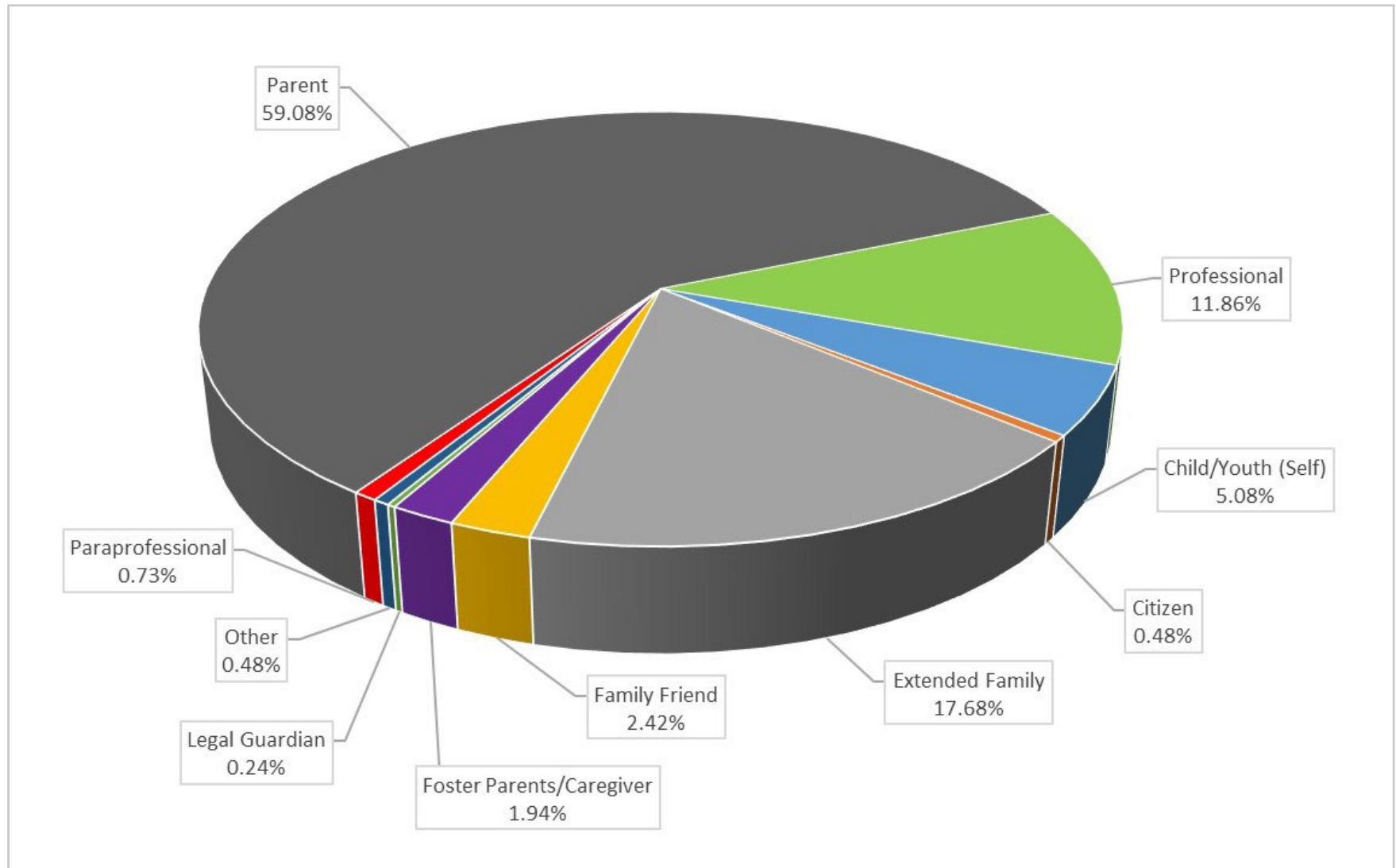
Age of Client

This chart identifies the ages of clients who were the subject of the requests for advocacy assistance. Children aged 6-11 years continue to be the focus of most requests for advocacy assistance at 36%, which is a consistent trend.



Person Requesting Advocacy for Child/Youth

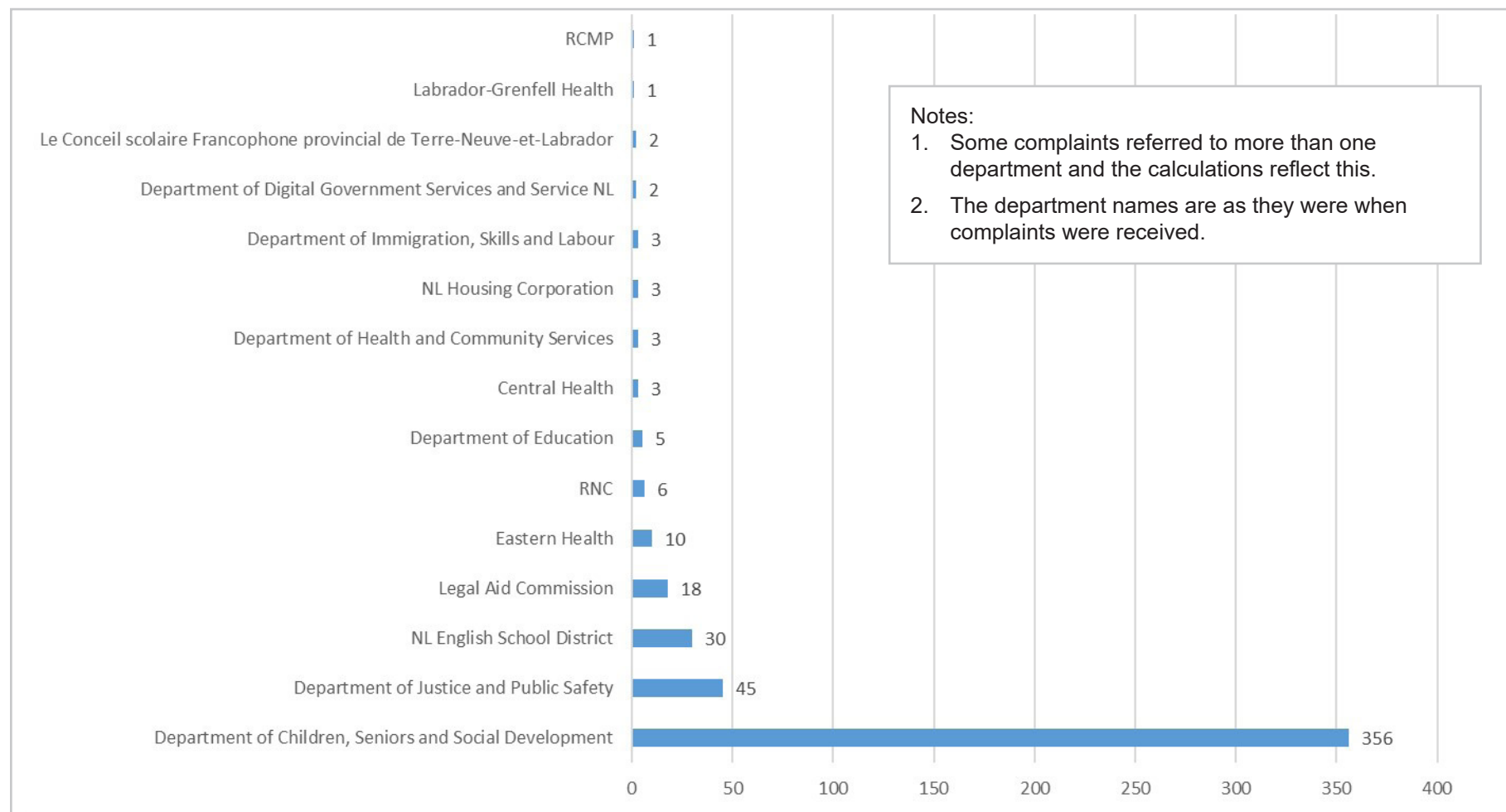
This chart identifies the person requesting advocacy assistance. Consistent with previous years, parents continue to be the primary group requesting advocacy services for their children (59%) followed by extended family (17.7%).



Requests for Advocacy Assistance by Department or Agency Involved (2020-21)

This graph below represents the department or agency which was the focus of a concern or complaint and where formal advocacy services were provided. 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 150 shorter-term requests for information, as well as assistance with navigating various systems of government and its agencies.



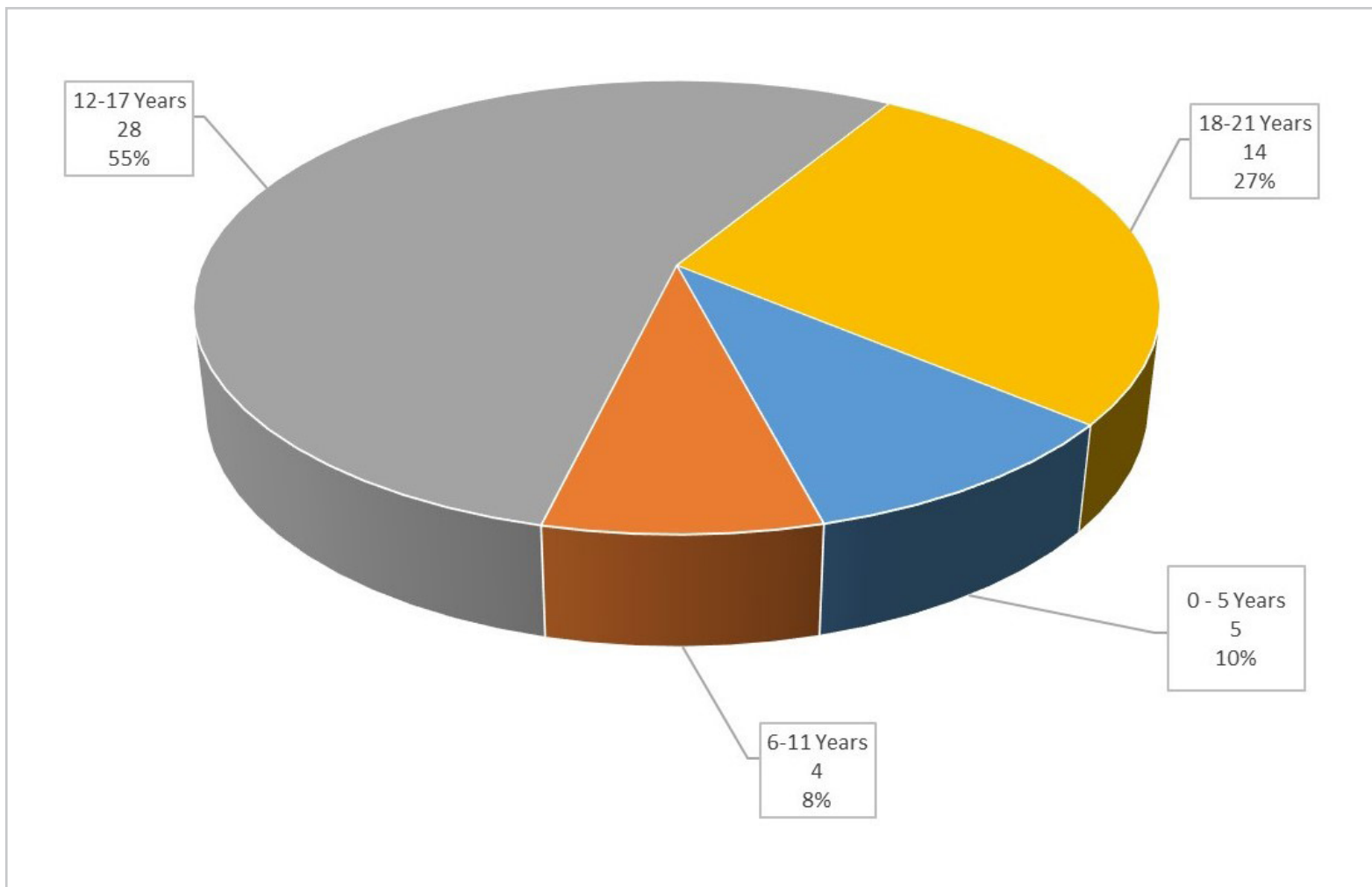
Mandatory Reporting of Deaths and Critical Injuries

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 child and youth deaths and critical injuries to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate where the young person received a designated service. 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.

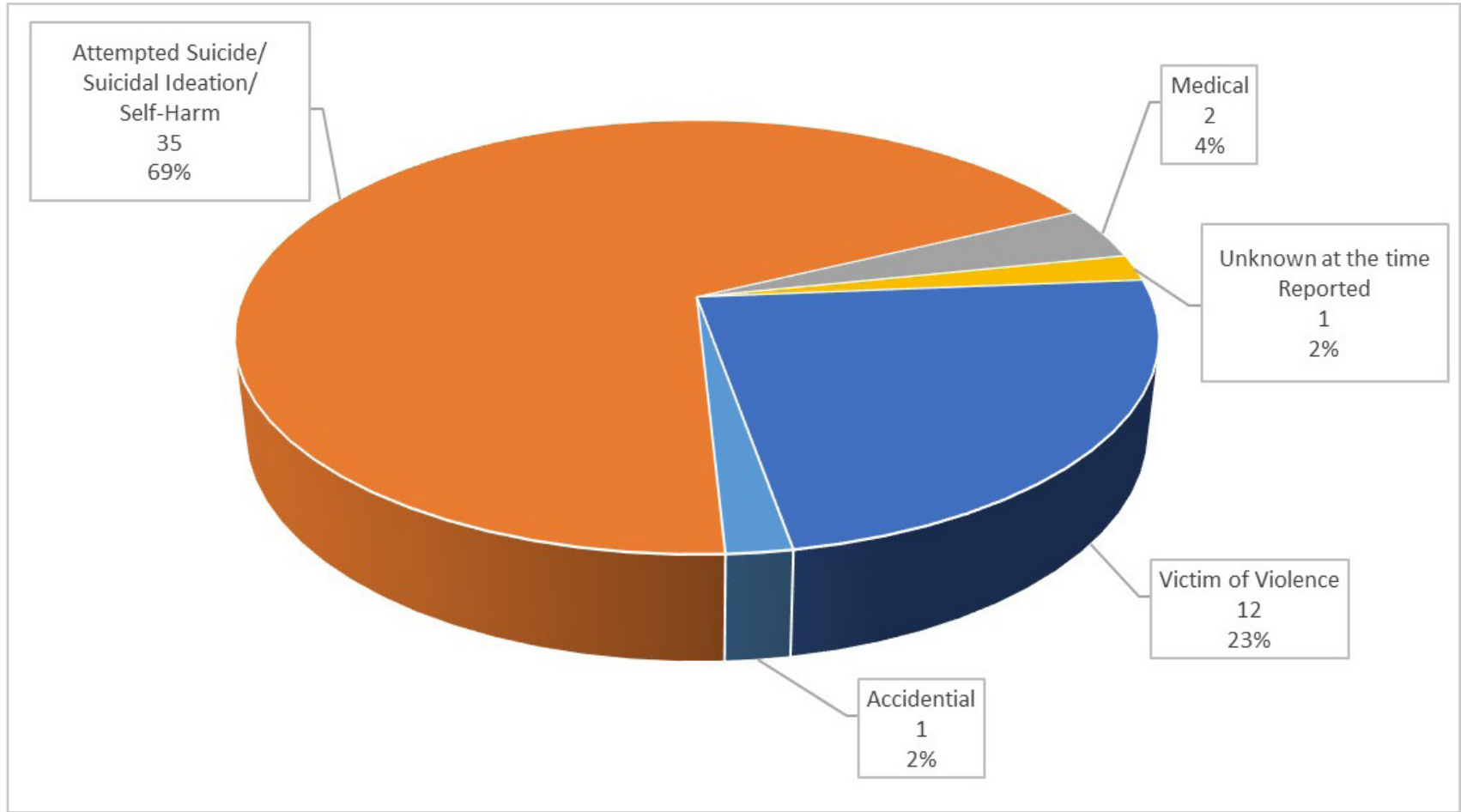
From April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development reported 51 critical injuries and one death.* The Department of Justice and Public Safety reported no deaths or critical injuries.

*Note: This office continues to pursue further information regarding this death and is reviewing the matter. Given this, no further details will be provided about the death at this time.

Critical Injury by Age Group

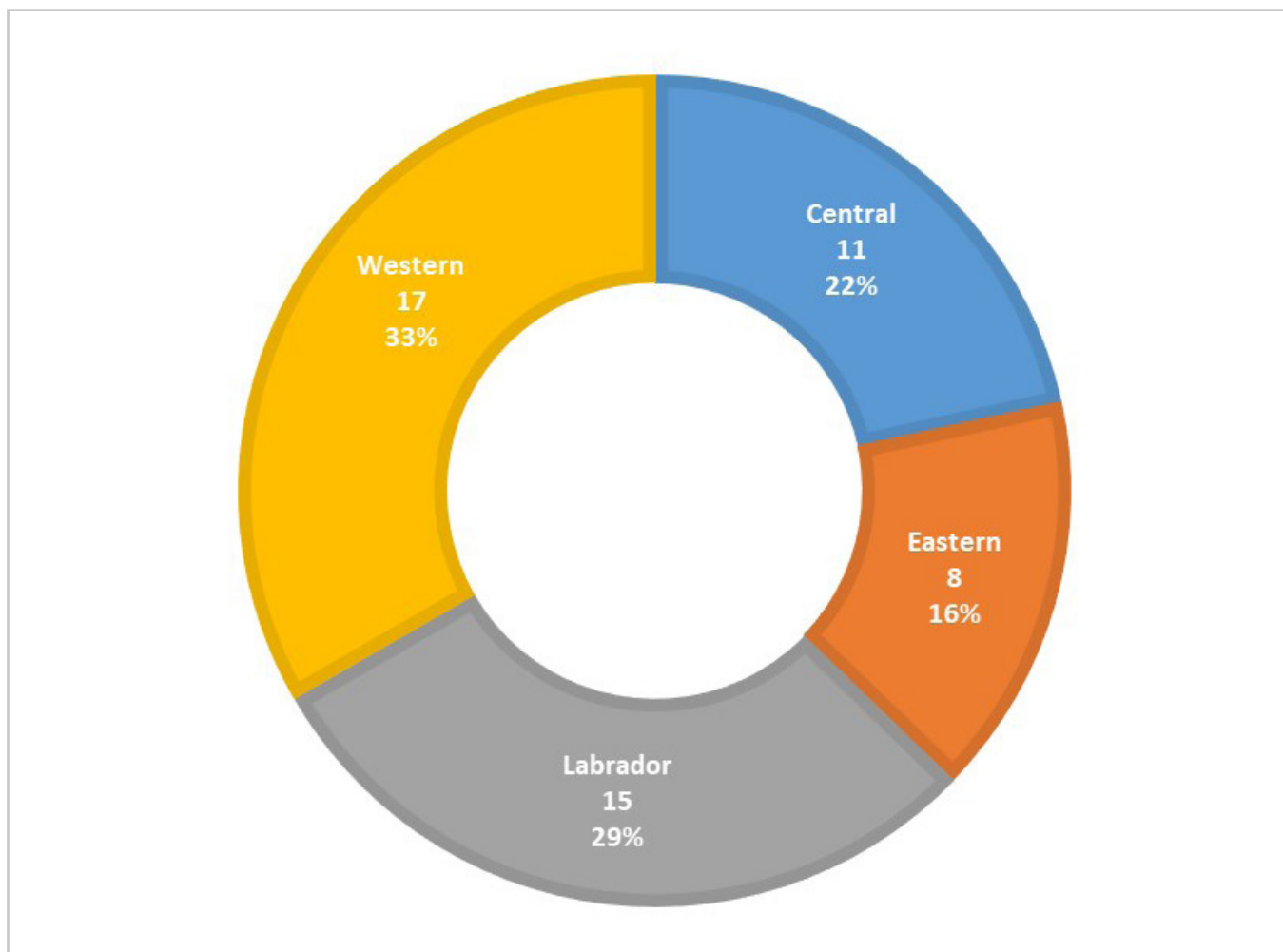


Critical Injury by Type



Critical Injury by Region

This chart continues to present an anomaly in 2020-21. While the largest portion of the province's population resides in the Eastern region, the reported incidents to this office are disproportionately low.



Report on Performance

This section identifies the goals, objectives, and indicators outlined in the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's 2020-23 Business Plan. This report represents the first year of the plan, so we will report on the objectives and indicators for 2020-21.

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: Enhancing Awareness of Children's Rights

We are continually looking for new and creative ways to build awareness of children's rights. In past years, we visited schools and youth serving organizations throughout the province. We met directly with children, youth, and those who nurture and serve them.

In the current context of a global pandemic, these in person meetings and activities cannot happen in the same way. We will explore virtual engagement opportunities to connect with children and youth, implement these virtual opportunities and assess how they worked. If deemed successful, this may provide a way for us to reach more children and youth every year. Our outreach and engagement may certainly look different and possibly consist of a hybrid model of virtual and in-person sessions (when deemed safe to do so).

Goal 1: By March 31, 2023 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have enhanced awareness of children's rights.

Indicators:

- Virtual engagement opportunities identified
- Virtual engagement opportunities implemented
- Virtual activities assessed



Objective 1.1: By March 31, 2021 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have identified virtual engagement opportunities.

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engaged with children and youth 	<p>We met virtually with 209 children and youth to share information about children’s and youth’s rights, and to seek their input on how they prefer to learn about children’s rights. We were pleased to lead sessions with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 110 students attending grades 10-12 at Menihek High School in Labrador City; ▶ 41 students attending grades 4-9 at Lumsden Academy; ▶ 17 students attending grades 11 and 12 at Holy Name of Mary Academy in Lawn; and ▶ 41 children ages 5-18 attending Sparks, Brownies, Guides Pathfinders and Rangers in Paradise, Mount Pearl, Torbay, and Corner Brook.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Met with school personnel 	<p>In the course of planning the above school sessions we had great discussions with school administration and staff in these schools. Our discussions focused on children’s rights, and approaches to deliver rights based education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connected with youth-serving organizations 	<p>We facilitated discussions with five community organizations during the past year, focusing on the pandemic impacts and approaches to reaching youth. We sincerely appreciated the insights and learnings from these connections and will continue to engage with other groups as we broaden our engagement opportunities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consulted with Office of the Chief Information Officer regarding technology 	<p>We engaged the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to learn more about various technology platforms and accessible virtual engagement options.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Researched best or promising practices in other jurisdictions 	<p>We conducted research on best practice and also engaged in discussions with other child/youth advocate offices across Canada focused on meaningful, effective, and sustainable youth engagement strategies and approaches.</p>

Discussion of Results

In this first year of our business plan, we identified virtual engagement opportunities and were able to connect and consult with over 200 children and youth in the province. We had discussions with school personnel and youth serving organizations, and consulted IT professionals at the OCIO. We also researched best practices in youth engagement and child rights education.

We will use all the learning from this year as we move forward with our work in 2021-22.

Objective 1.2: By March 31, 2022 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have implemented virtual engagement opportunities.

Indicators:

- Staff provided with learning opportunities regarding technological platforms for virtual sessions
- Virtual engagement sessions scheduled for young people in a variety of settings
- Virtual engagement sessions held for young people throughout the province

Issue 2: Enhanced Youth Engagement

We believe that children and youth are the experts in their own lives. Now, more than ever, it is important to engage youth in new and meaningful ways. There have been a number of studies of the impact of the global pandemic on young people. The research shows that many youth have experienced mental health issues related to isolation and feel uncertainty about the future. These young people need to have their voices heard and amplified. We will research best practices for youth engagement in the current context, develop and implement a plan to enhance youth engagement, and assess these initiatives to inform future engagement activities.

Goal 2: By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have enhanced youth engagement.

Indicators:

- Best practices in youth engagement researched
- Youth engagement plan developed and implemented
- Youth engagement activities assessed



By Young Artist:
Cameron

Objective 2.1: By March 31, 2021 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have researched best practices in youth engagement.

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completed a jurisdictional scan regarding youth engagement during a pandemic and beyond 	<p>The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate regularly connects with other child and youth advocate offices across the country and during the fiscal year, our office participated in several formal discussions focused on youth engagement. These discussions provided a valuable opportunity for provinces and territories to learn from each other. The group decided in January 2021 to form a Youth Engagement Community of Practice. This group met once during 2020-21 with another meeting scheduled early in the new fiscal year. Meetings will continue quarterly to discuss best practices in meaningful, effective and sustainable youth engagement strategies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Held meetings with youth serving organizations 	<p>During 2020-21 we held meetings with the following youth serving organizations about their approaches to engagement as well as child and youth rights and emerging issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Association for New Canadians ▶ Sexual Health Information Exchange Labrador District (S.H.I.E.L.D.) ▶ Trans Support NL Inc. ▶ Thrive ▶ Community Centre Alliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completed online research activities regarding youth engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Completed research and identified relevant findings. ▶ During virtual engagement sessions with students they were asked specific questions about how they want/like to be engaged and best approaches to learning about rights.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consulted children and youth to inform engagement practices and priorities 	<p>During 2020-21 we held virtual sessions with students in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 17 students attending grades 11 and 12 at Holy Name of Mary Academy in Lawn; ▶ 110 students attending grades 10-12 at Menihek High School in Labrador City; and ▶ 41 students attending grades 4-9 at Lumsden Academy.

Discussion of Results

Despite a global pandemic occurring this past year, we remained steadfast in our commitment to the young people of our province. We researched best practices in youth engagement by completing a jurisdictional scan, meeting with youth serving organizations, completing online research, and, most importantly by speaking directly with over 200 children and youth throughout the province to help inform our understanding and practice. We will use the learning from this year as we move forward with our work in 2021-22. We will also share our findings during our discussions with others involved with children and youth.

Objective 2.2: By March 31, 2022 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have developed and implemented a youth engagement plan.

Indicators:

- Assessed feedback from young people during virtual and in-person sessions
- Assessed research regarding best practices in child and youth engagement
- Developed a youth engagement plan
- Implemented a youth engagement plan



Opportunities and Challenges

As our office enters our third decade of advocacy, we find ourselves reflecting over the past 20 years. We have seen much growth and experienced more awareness about our office in the province. We have had the sincere privilege of meeting many children, youth, their families, and the volunteers and professionals who serve them. It's an honour to represent the rights, interests, and viewpoints of young persons and give a voice to their rights.

While we have seen progress and movement in the recognition of child and youth rights, we continue to see many needs and gaps in child/youth serving systems. Access to services, professional collaboration, and child and youth focused decision-making continue to be areas where improvement is needed. We are particularly concerned about the mental health of young people. Prior to the pandemic many young people were already struggling with poor mental health outcomes. Much of the research indicates that youth have experienced the greatest declines in mental health since the pandemic began. Those already experiencing poor mental health before the pandemic were impacted even more by the pandemic. This is a prime concern for our individual and systemic advocacy.

As we conclude this first year of this planning cycle, we are sincerely appreciative of all the feedback from youth. We will continue to reach out and engage young people to share information about their rights, ensure their voices are heard, and learn from them. After all, they are the true experts in their own lives.

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 2021** (<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/tbs/files/The-Report-FINAL-1.pdf>).





April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021

	Estimates		
	Actual \$	Amended \$	Original \$
01. Salaries	1,143,083	1,191,000	1,191,000
Operating Accounts			
Employee Benefits	2,511	3,500	3,500
Transportation and Communications	15,746	46,800	55,400
Supplies	8,987	9,100	6,000
Professional Services	4,745	19,000	19,000
Purchased Services	129,357	160,900	160,900
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	9,369	9,500	4,000
02. Operating Accounts	170,715	248,800	248,800
Total:	1,313,798	1,439,800	1,439,800

193 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, NL A1C 2H5

Telephone: (709) 753-3888

Toll Free: 1-877-753-3888

Fax: (709) 753-3988

Email: office@ocya.nl.ca

Twitter: @OCYANL

Website: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

