

Annual Report 2022-23



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Xander

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Message from the Child and Youth Advocate

I am pleased to present the 2022-23 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 the Child and Youth Advocate, I recognize my obligations under this **Act**, and I am accountable for the results in this report.

I was honoured to be appointed as the Child and Youth Advocate in October 2022. I share the work and successes profiled in this report with our dedicated staff.

Following several years of COVID-19 restrictions we were delighted to get back to more in-person outreach this fiscal year. We responded to 445 requests for services and advocacy assistance. We also engaged in 42 outreach sessions with 27 different organizations reaching over 1,200 children, youth, parents, post-secondary students, professionals, and community groups.

This is the final year for reporting on the 2020-23 Business Plan of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. A new Business Plan for 2023-26 was developed and tabled early in Fiscal Year 2023-24.



Linda Clemens Spurrell
Linda Clemens Spurrell, MSW, RSW
Child and Youth Advocate





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Overview

Mandate

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) is an Independent Statutory Office of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. We 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 legislation 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**, the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** 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, that age range is extended to the age of 21.

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 encourage young people to contact us if they are having an issue accessing services, if they feel their rights are not being respected, or if their viewpoint is not being heard. We also work closely with family members, professionals, other supporters, and champions working on behalf of children and youth.

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 integral to the work we do and guide all of our advocacy efforts.



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 2022-23 was \$1,445,400.

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

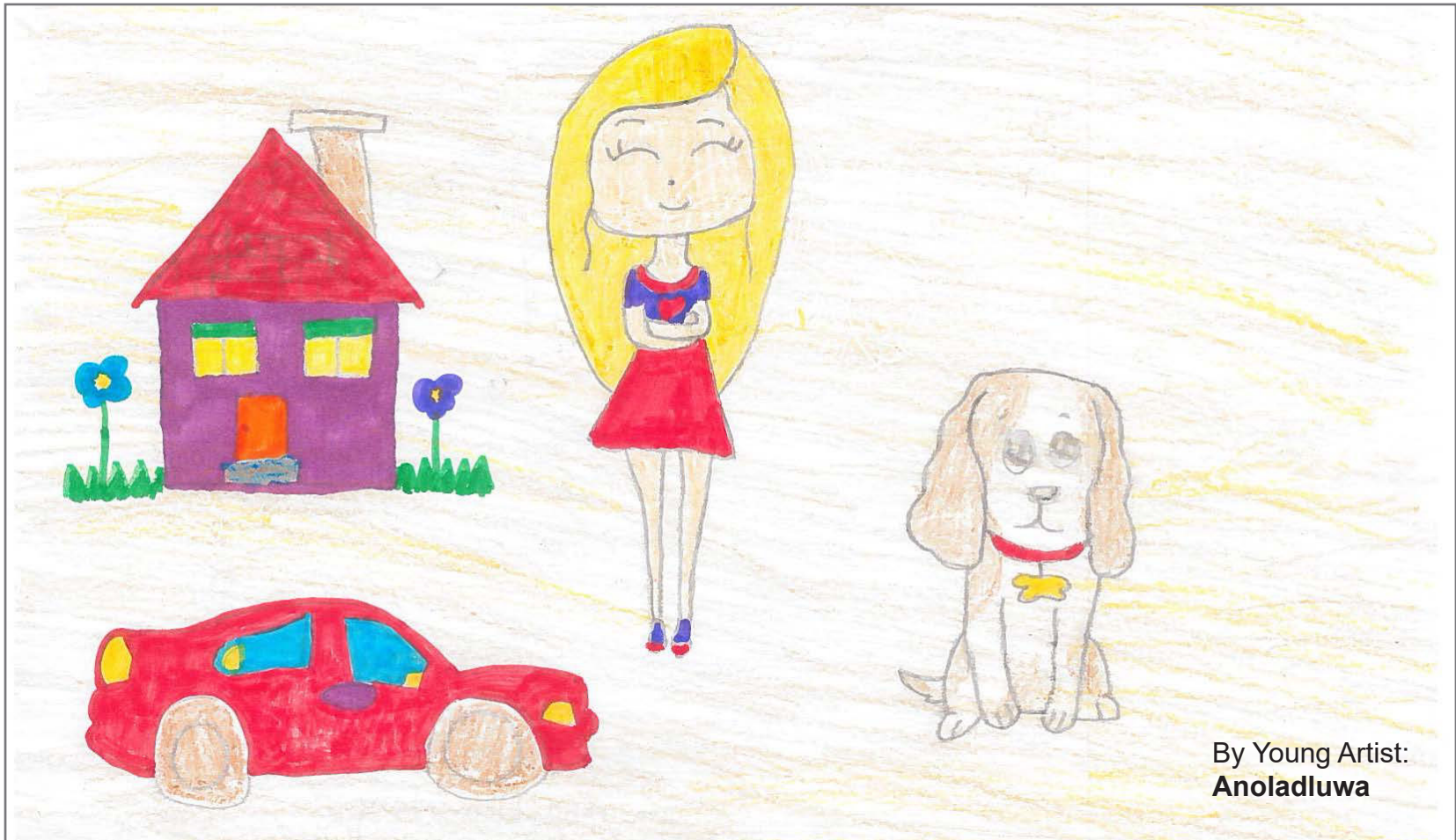
Empowerment:

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

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

Team members have worked in a variety of practice settings including public service, community organizations, and private practice. Our office is located in St. John's, however we provide services throughout the province.



By Young Artist:
Anoladluwa

Highlights and Accomplishments

During fiscal year 2022-23, we responded to over 445 requests for assistance. We advocate for the rights, interests and well-being of all children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. When a young person's rights are not being respected and protected, we advocate on individual and systemic levels.

We are also mandated to provide education on child and youth rights. This past fiscal year we facilitated 42 engagement and outreach sessions for children, youth, and community groups.

Systemic and Investigation Reports

There were two investigations ongoing throughout the year, as well as five reviews. Once finalized, these reports will be released pursuant to section 29(1) of the **Child and Youth Advocate Act**.

Submissions

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate completed the following submissions this fiscal year:

- Submission on the **Mental Health Care and Treatment Act** Evaluation (June 2022)
- Submission to the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development regarding the Social And Economic Well-Being Plan (October 2022)

Engagement and Outreach

During 2022-23, we engaged in 42 outreach sessions with 27 different organizations reaching over 1,200 children, youth, parents, post-secondary students, professionals and community groups.

School Outreach

During 2022-23 we visited and held outreach sessions with:

- 40 Grade 6 students attending All Hallows Elementary
- 32 Grade 2 and Grade 3 students attending St. Francis of Assisi School
- 75 Kindergarten and Grade 2 students attending Morris Academy

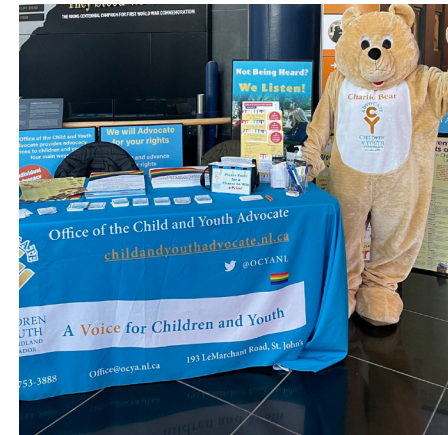
We also helped to prepare and distribute breakfast to students attending all grades at St. Andrews Elementary.



Community Outreach

We visited, met with and delivered sessions throughout the community. Specifically, we engaged with:

- Status of Women's Council, Stephenville
- NL Aboriginal Womens Network, Stephenville
- Splash Centre, Harbour Grace
- Communities Against Violence, Harbour Grace
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Sharing Our Cultures
- Allied Youth Provincial Conference
- Association for New Canadians summer camps
- X-cellent Leader, City St. John's
- Choices for Youth Family Fun Day
- Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Justice Camp
- Franco Jeune
- Quadrangle Data and Engagement Summit
- Amal Youth and Family Centre
- City of St. John's Move It Event
- Daybreak
- Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
- Trinity Conception Family Resource Centre
- Community Education Network, Stephenville



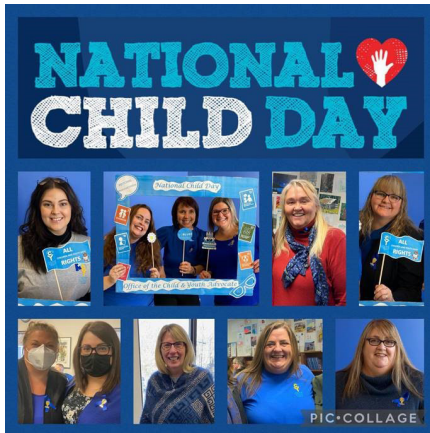
Professionals and Post-Secondary Students

We connected with and presented to over 400 professionals and post-secondary students at:

- Eastern Academy
- Faculty of Education, Memorial University
- Bachelor of Social Work students, Memorial University
- College of the North Atlantic, Stephenville
- Inter professional Education, Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education, MUN
- Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development
- Victim Services Program, Department of Justice and Public Safety
- Mental Health and Addictions, Eastern Health

National Child Day

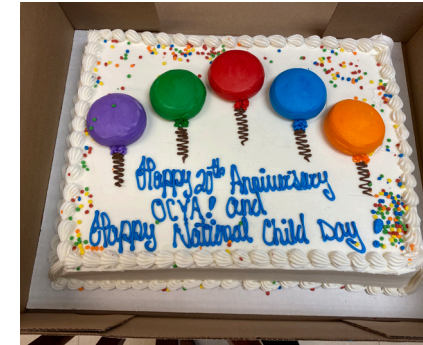
National Child Day is celebrated in Canada on November 20th each year. It is a recognition of our country's commitment to upholding the rights of children, as well as two historic events: the 1959 signing of the **UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child** and the adoption of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** in 1989. National Child Day is a very special time in our Office and we try to recognize the day all week long. In recognition of National Child Day 2022, we broadcasted Radio ads, created posters, tweeted, and shared a collage of staff wearing blue. We were delighted to attend the St. John's "Move It" event. We were also excited to host some very special visitors from Daybreak Parent Child Centre.



Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Celebrates 20 years

In November 2022, during National Child Day celebrations, we also took the opportunity to acknowledge the 20th anniversary of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. We held an “Open House” to mark the special occasion. We were so pleased to welcome a variety of guests, from the community, post-secondary institutions, and child and youth serving agencies. We were humbled by the presence of youth from Ukraine who shared their musical talents with us. Their presence certainly was a significant highlight for all in attendance.

We have seen many changes over the past 20 years, however, the one constant is our commitment to the promotion and protection of young people’s rights. Each day, we work to advance the rights of children and youth through investigations, recommendations, individual and systemic advocacy as well as education. We listen to all young people and believe that young people are the experts of their own lives. We look forward to influencing positive changes in the protection of their rights for many years to come.



Supporting Initiatives Important to Young People

During each year, our Office participates in activities that support issues of importance to young people. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this included attending events in the community. This past year, staff wore orange on September 30, 2022 to support the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day), wore green for Mental Health Week in May 2023, and wore pink on February 23, 2023 in recognition of Pink Shirt Day to support the anti-bullying movement.

National Child Day 2022

You Have Rights

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
(709) 753-3888 | 1-877-753-3888 | Office@ocya.nl.ca

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation ◦ September 30, 2022 ◦ Every Child Matters

Remembering the Children

September 30, 2022 ◦ Every Child Matters ◦ National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

PIC-COLLAGE

Mental Health Week 2022

#GetReal

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate | 1-877-753-3888 | office@ocya.nl.ca

Every Child Matters

THIS IS A POSITIVE SPACE THAT WELCOMES AND SUPPORTS EVERYONE

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.





Young Artist Program



We would love to showcase your original artwork!

Who can participate?
Anyone under the age of 21

How will my art be used?
It will appear on our website, on social media, on our wall of fame and in our various print materials

How do I submit my artwork?

Online by visiting: <https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/YoungArtistProgram.htm>

Send by mail to:
Young Artist Program
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
193 LeMarchant Road
St. John's, NL A1C 2H5

Call us to find out more: 1-877-753-3888 

Follow Us on Twitter  @OCYANL

We are interested in:

- Drawings
- Paintings
- Pictures
- Poetry



Office of the Child and Youth Advocate



ADVOCATE
CY
CHILDREN & YOUTH
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Continuous Learning and Information Sharing

We are committed to lifelong learning and are continually seeking and participating in professional development opportunities as we strive to advocate for the rights of children and youth. This fiscal year we participated in a variety of learning opportunities regarding child and youth related topics, including:

- Childhood trauma
- Gender Diversity
- Early Childhood Education
- Cultural humility
- Child sexual exploitation
- FASD
- Harm Reduction
- Indigenous matters
- Mental health
- Neurodiversity
- Vicarious trauma
- Violence prevention

Courses, Webinars, and Presentations

Examples of these specific learning opportunities are as follows:

- R2 Resilience Expert Training Course - Presented by Dr Michael Ungar
- Understanding Coercive Control Against Children: Impacts and Supportive Responses
- Understanding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Asking about Gender: Confronting Assumptions and Challenging Transphobia
- Gender Diversity in Health Care
- Introduction to Gender Diversity
- Fostering a Connection with LGBTQ2+
- Understanding the Realities of Gender Diverse Peoples to Strengthen our Care System
- Indigenous Perspectives of Healing from PTSD
- Placing Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health Promotion at the Forefront
- Changing the Narrative around Suicide Prevention
- Healthy Discussions: The Social Determinants of Health
- Combatting Online Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sextortion and Emerging Trends in Combatting Online Child Sexual Exploitation
- Rethinking Child Welfare Services; Trauma Informed Approaches
- Understanding Trauma-Informed Practice and Engagement
- Vicarious Trauma
- Introduction to Trauma and the Link to Addiction
- Intentionally marginalized communities: The violence we see in relationships, families and systems in Canada
- Spotlight on Youth - Alcohol, Gambling and Cannabis Use

Conferences

We attended three conferences during the fiscal year:

- North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) Adoption & Foster Care Conference
- Embracing Neurodiversity Conference - Autism Society of NL
- Child and Youth Trauma Symposium

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) 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, addresses issues at a national level, and shares research and best practices. The Council's vision is that the rights, interests, and well-being of all children and youth are valued and respected in Canadian communities and in government legislation, policy, programs and practices.

In May 2022, Lisa Broda, President of the CCCYA, attended the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** proceedings on behalf of CCCYA, as Canada appeared before the UN Committee to respond to its progress on implementing the rights of children. As a State Party to the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, every five years Canada is required to report its progress towards implementing the **UNCRC** to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Council also submitted reports to the UN Committee detailing the status of child rights in Canada from the perspective of its members and participated in meetings with the Committee and Canadian Government officials. During these meetings the CCCYA raised its concerns and identified areas in which improvements are needed with respect to child rights.

In June 2022, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child released its 2022 Concluding Observations for Canada following the May proceedings. Again, the CCCYA issued a media statement commenting on Canada's progress.

All reports and submissions can be found on the CCCYA website <https://www.cccya.ca/>.

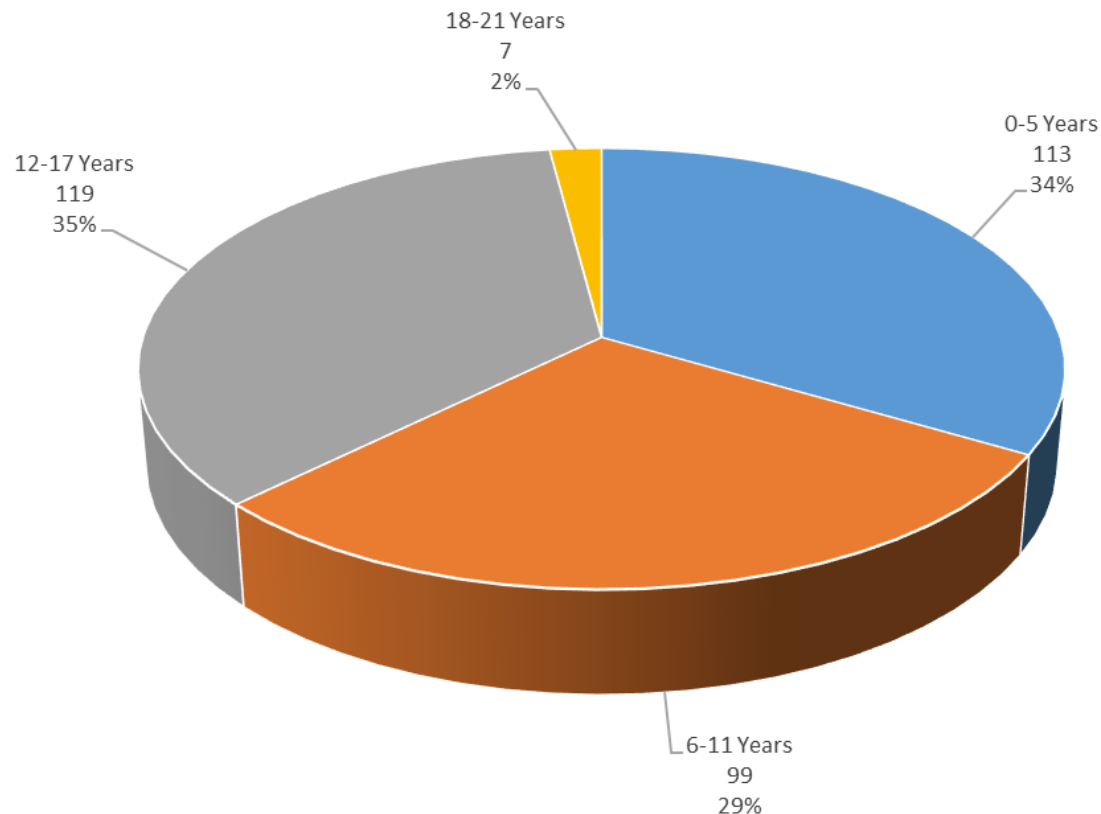
OCYA Statistical Highlights

Service Delivery and Performance

We responded to 445 requests for services and advocacy assistance. This includes 107 shorter-term requests for information, as well as assistance with navigating various systems of government and its agencies.

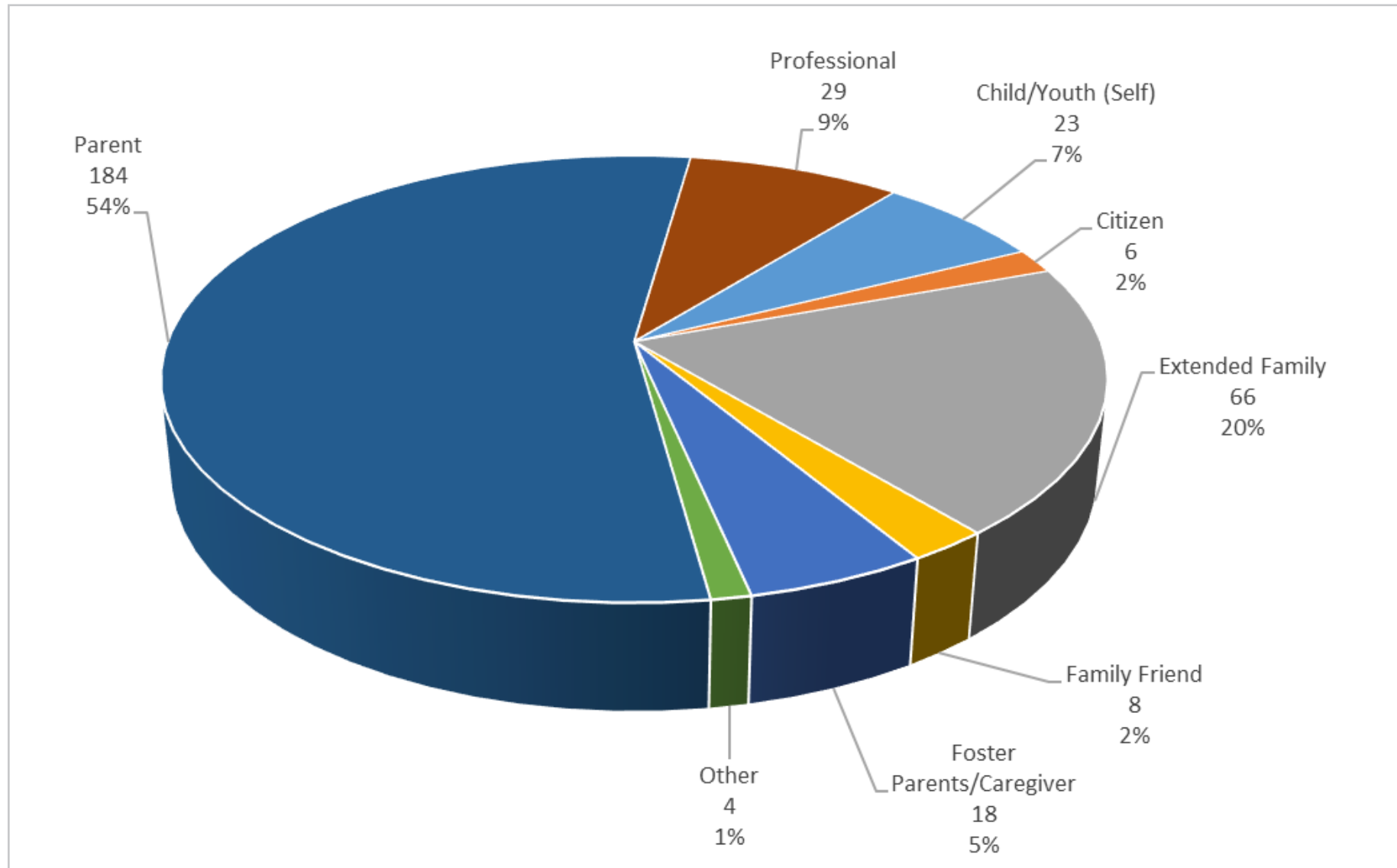
Age of Client

This chart identifies the ages of clients who were the subject of the requests for advocacy assistance. This fiscal year, young people aged 12-17 years were the focus of the most requests for advocacy at 35%. In past years, children aged 6-11 years have been the focus of most advocacy requests.



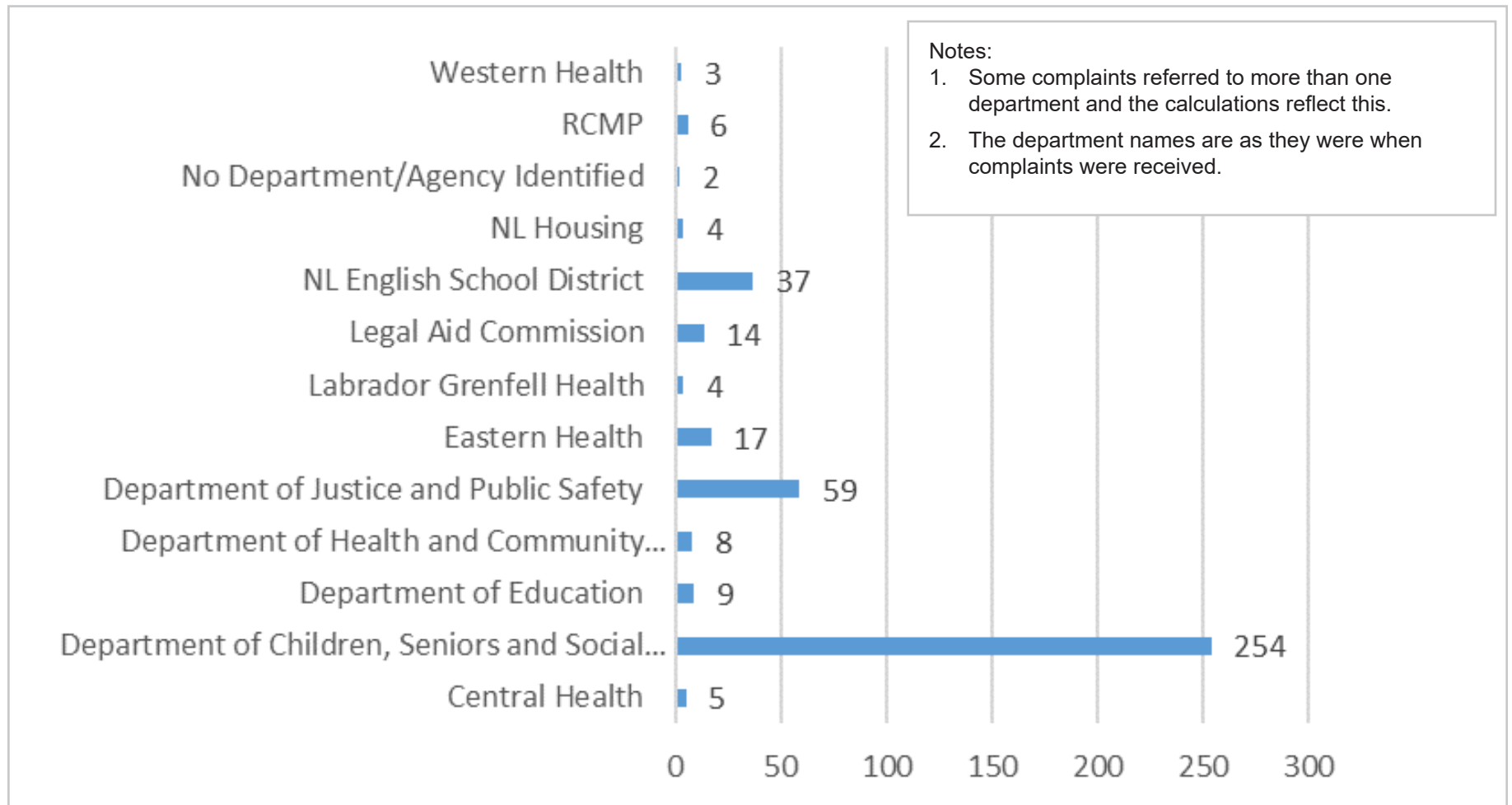
Person Requesting Advocacy for Child/Youth

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 (54%) followed by extended family (20%).



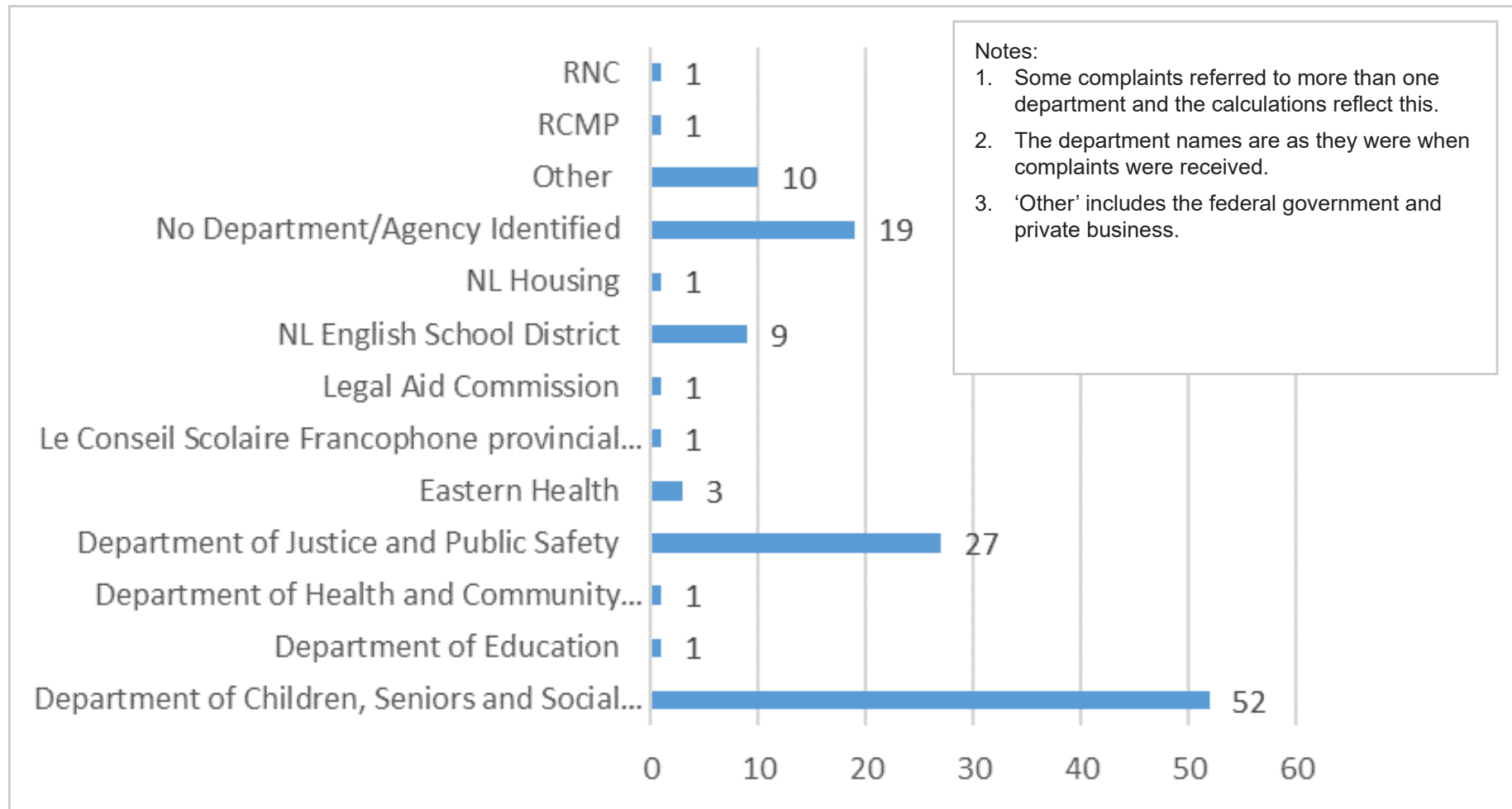
Requests for Advocacy Assistance by Department or Agency Involved (2022-23)

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.



Requests for Short-Term Advocacy Assistance by Department or Agency Involved (2022-23)

This graph below represents the department or agency which was the focus of the 107 shorter-term requests for information, as well as assistance with navigating various systems of government and its agencies. The Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development is the highest department or agency of focus.



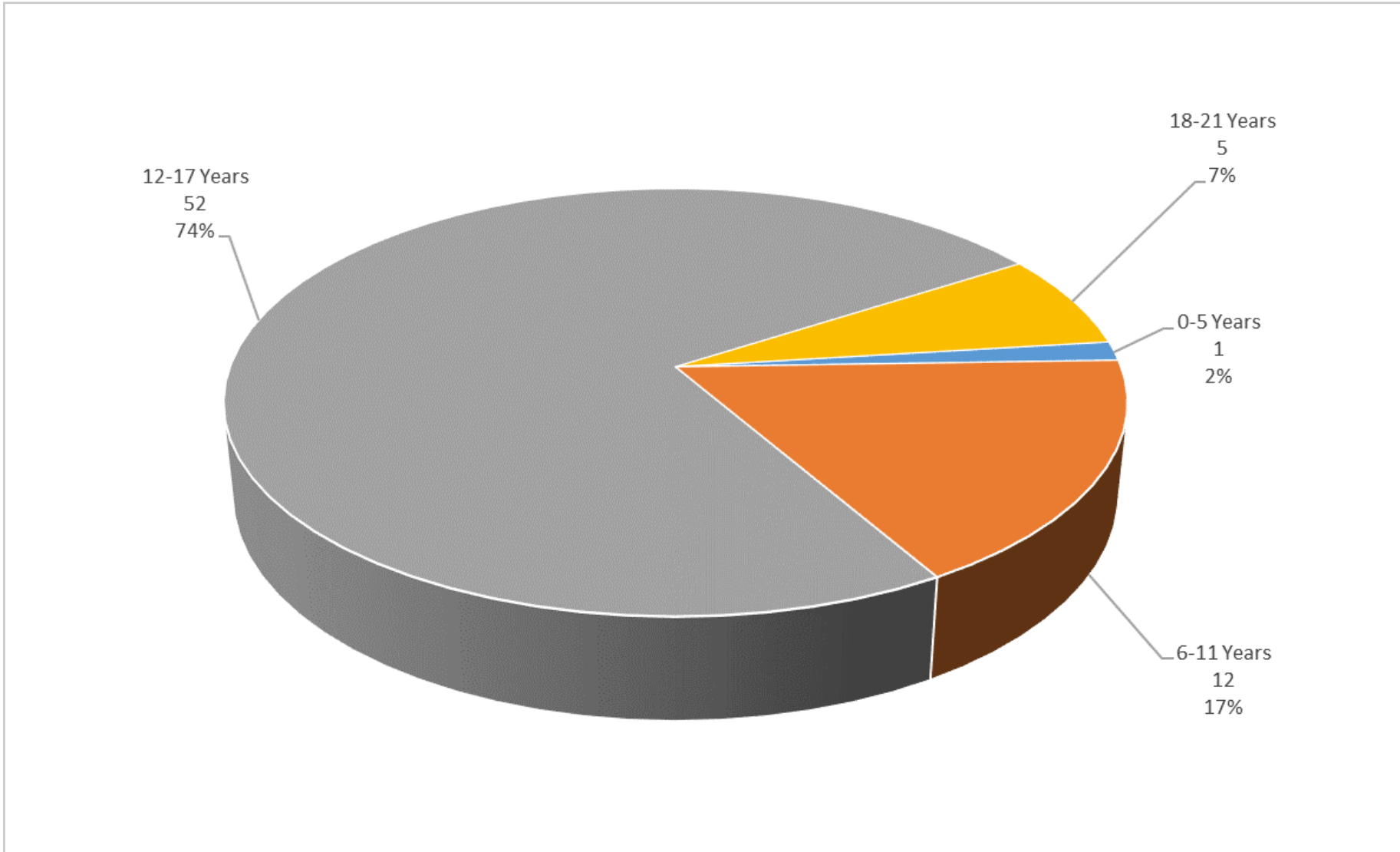
Mandatory Reporting of Deaths and Critical Injuries

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, 2022 to March 31, 2023, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development reported 70 critical injuries and 4 deaths. All 4 deaths were due to medical reasons. The Department of Justice and Public Safety reported no deaths or critical injuries.

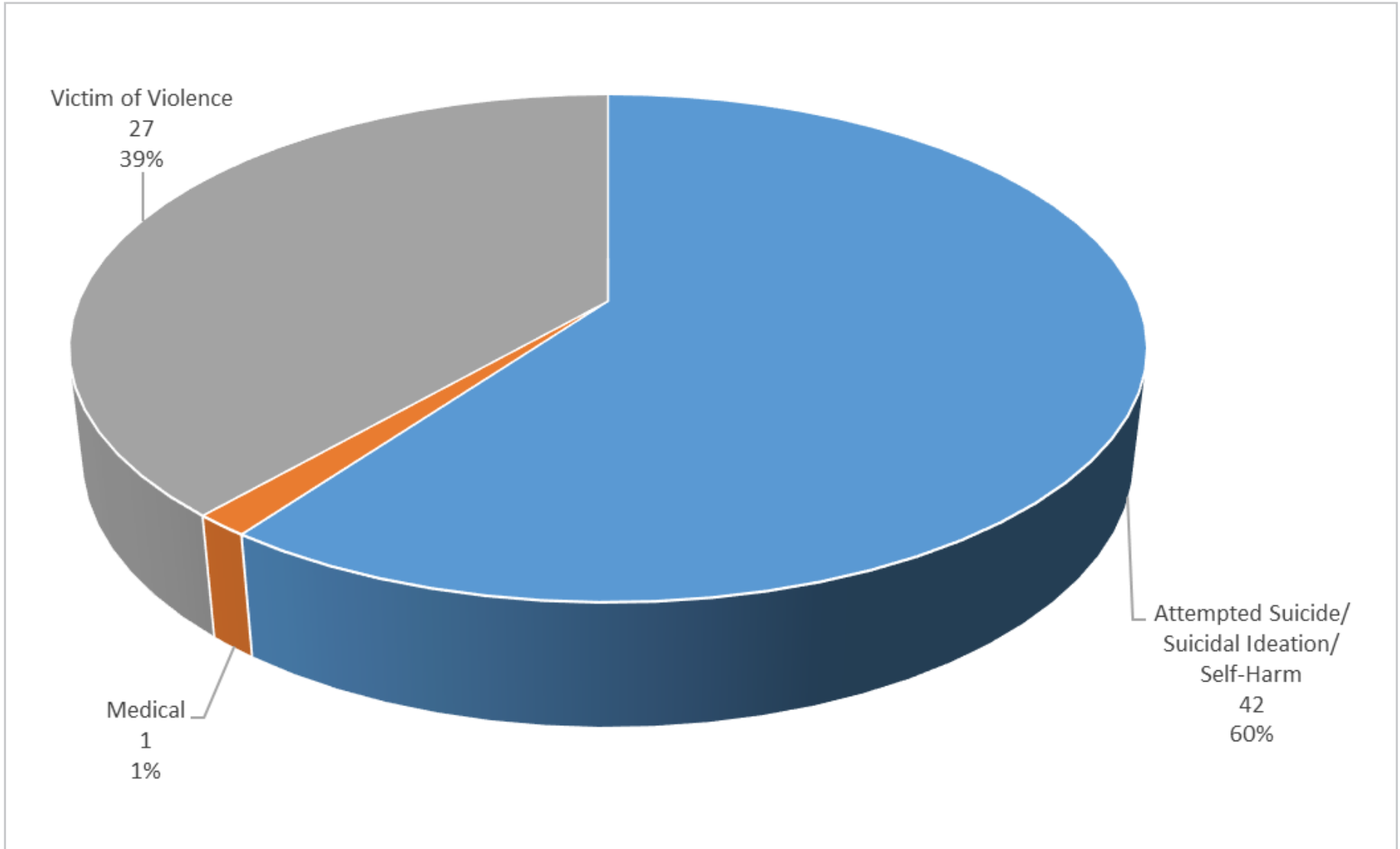
Critical Injury by Age Group

Consistent with previous years the 12-17 year age group is the highest subject of mandatory reporting of critical injuries at 74%.



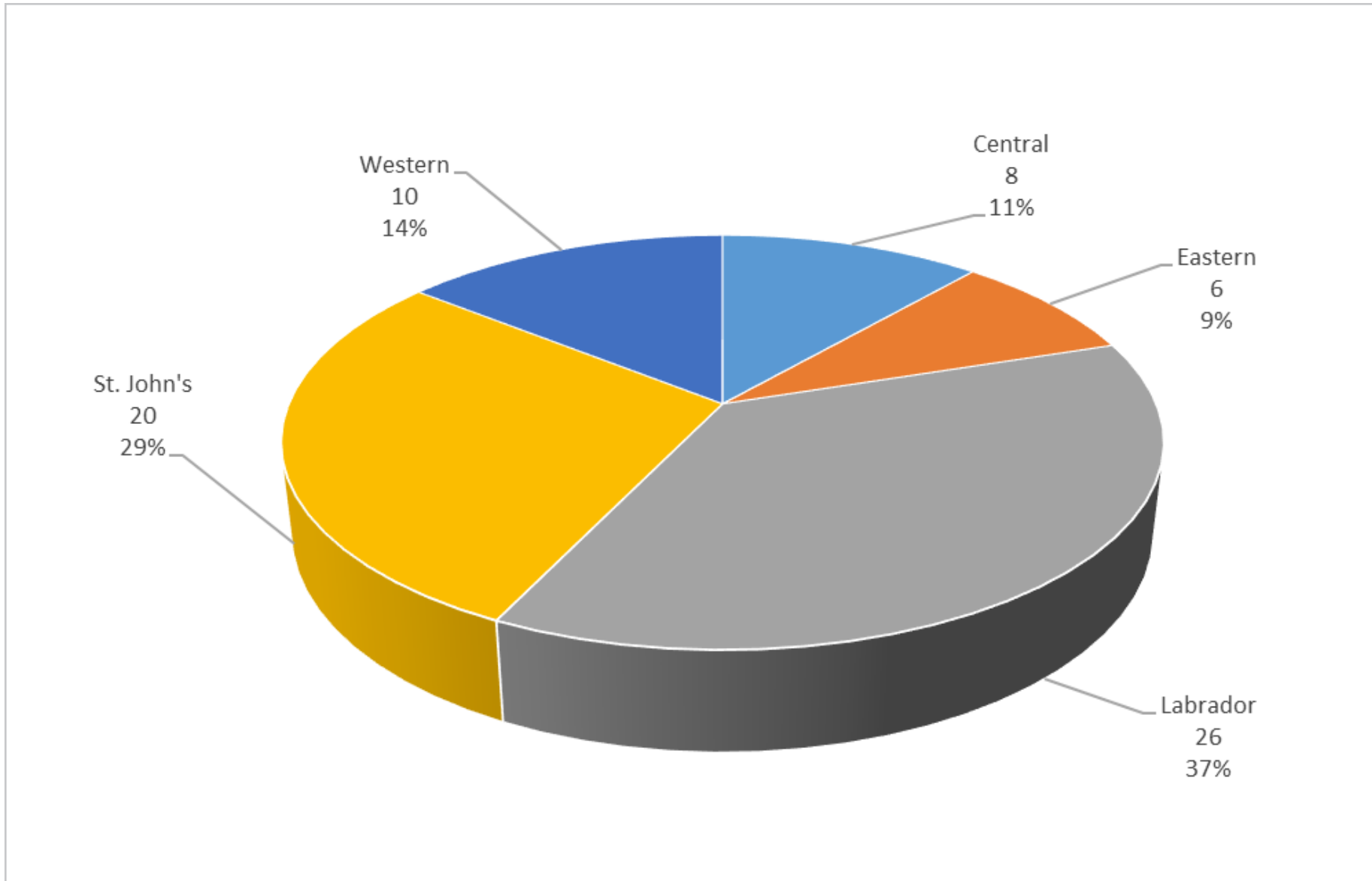
Critical Injury by Type

Consistent with last year, mental health related issues (attempted suicide, suicidal ideation, self-harm) are the highest type of critical injuries reported. While slightly lower than last year, we remain concerned with the Victim of Violence category as it remains high at 39% of all reports received.



Critical Injury by Region

This fiscal year, 38% of critical injuries were in the Eastern Region (including St. John's), 37% were in Labrador-Grenfell Region, 14% were in the Western Region, and 11% were in the Central Region.



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 third, and final, year of the plan, so we will report on the goals, objectives and indicators for 2022-23.

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: Promote Awareness of Children's Rights

One of the duties of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is to inform the public about the needs and rights of children and youth, as well as its mandate. It is paramount that the office promote awareness of rights, especially to young people. Engaging young people is essential to our advocacy work. We are continually looking for new and creative ways to build awareness of children's rights.

In the context of the global pandemic we explored virtual engagement opportunities to connect with children and youth, implemented these virtual opportunities, and assessed how they worked.

Goal 1: By March 31, 2023 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have promoted alternative approaches to children's rights awareness

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identified alternate engagement opportunities to connect with young people 	<p>Alternate engagement opportunities to connect with young people were identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We used Google Meet to connect with classrooms in Labrador City, Lumsden, and Lawn. ▶ We used Zoom to connect with young people participating in Sparks, Embers, Guides, Pathfinders, and Rangers. These young people were located in Paradise, Mount Pearl, Torbay and Corner Brook. ▶ Staff were provided with materials from the OCIO pertaining to general video conferencing platforms and Skype for Business. ▶ Staff availed of professional development opportunities which gave them exposure to a multitude of technological platforms including Google Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, WebX, and Skype.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implemented alternate engagement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alternate engagement opportunities were implemented. ▶ We used virtual platforms to connect with students in primary, elementary, junior high and high school levels. These students were located in Labrador City, Lumsden, Lawn, Codroy Valley, Nain, Cartyville, and Natuashish. ▶ We met with groups of Sparks, Embers, Guides, Pathfinders, and Rangers. These young people were in Paradise, Mount Pearl, Torbay, Corner Brook, Burin, Portugal Cove - St. Phillips, and St. John's.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessed alternate activities 	<p>Alternate activities were assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We asked children and youth directly during virtual and in-person sessions. ▶ We asked our staff about their experiences using online platforms and in-person sessions. ▶ We also asked professionals working in youth serving organizations about our various engagement activities.
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Objective 1.3: By March 31, 2023 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have assessed virtual engagement activities.

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback requested from young people attending virtual engagement sessions 	<p>Feedback was requested from young people attending virtual engagement sessions. Young people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ They were very comfortable with virtual sessions, given the extensive exposure to virtual schooling during the pandemic. ▶ They enjoyed the interactive games used virtually by staff and felt it helped them learn about their rights. ▶ It would be beneficial if information about their rights was included in the curriculum in early grades. ▶ Social media platforms are used regularly, specifically TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback requested from professionals/adults regarding virtual sessions 	<p>Feedback requested from professionals/adults regarding virtual sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ They were comfortable with receiving information and interacting virtually. ▶ They spoke of the need for everyone to be familiar with child and youth rights and the benefit of the education provided by the OCYA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback requested from OCYA staff facilitating virtual sessions 	<p>Feedback was requested from OCYA staff facilitating virtual sessions. Staff reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The use of virtual sessions enabled access to a greater number of participants, in a greater variety of locations. ▶ Virtual sessions saved staff time and the cost of travel. ▶ That audiences appeared to be quite comfortable with virtual technology. ▶ They feel that virtual sessions are an additional outreach and education tool.

■ All feedback assessed	All feedback was assessed. ▶ All feedback was reviewed and assessed. The insights and learning acquired has enhanced the OCYA education and outreach process.
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Discussion of Results

- Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, only in-person educational sessions were offered by the OCYA. The pandemic required creativity and problem solving. Virtual technology provided the means to connect with young people and to deliver our outreach and education services. While in-person activities seem to be a preferred option, it was acknowledged that virtual options have benefits, also. There is always room to learn new things and to expand how we deliver outreach, including the use of social media platforms to effectively connect with young persons and promote child and youth rights.

Issue 2: Promote Youth Engagement

Children and youth are the experts in their own lives. Our Office is adamant that it is essential to constantly engage youth in matters that affect them and this engagement must be done in new and meaningful ways. The voices of young people need to be heard and amplified. This is why during this past fiscal year we have engaged directly in sessions with about 350 elementary and high school age students, as well as approximately 270 post-secondary students. It is through this interaction that we can hear the ideas, issues, and needs of young people. Essentially as we learn from them we can further develop our youth engagement plans to target young people more effectively.

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

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Researched best practices in youth engagement 	<p>Best practices in youth engagement were researched.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We regularly connect with other child and youth advocate offices across the country and participated in several formal discussions focused on youth engagement. In January 2021, this group of advocates' offices formed a Youth Engagement Community of Practice. Meetings continued quarterly to discuss best practices in meaningful, effective, and sustainable youth engagement strategies. ▶ We held meetings with youth servicing organizations to discuss their approaches to engagement. Specifically, we met with the Association for New Canadians, Sexual Health Exchange Labrador District (S.H.I.E.L.D.), Trans Support NL Inc., Thrive, and Community Centre Alliance. ▶ We also conducted online research regarding best practices for youth engagement.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engaged children and youth to inform engagement practices and identify issues of importance to them 	<p>Children and youth were engaged to inform engagement practices and identify issues of importance to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We asked young people directly how they preferred to be engaged. Most young people indicated that they preferred to be engaged in a school setting to learn about their rights, either virtually or in-person. They were also asked about emerging issues as they relate to children’s rights. This input informs our systemic advocacy work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Amplified children and youth voices and perspectives 	<p>Children and youth voices and perspectives were amplified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We launched the “Children and Youth are our Experts” campaign. We created and distributed posters and ads that were displayed on Metro Busses. ▶ We launched the ‘30 for 30’ campaign for young people who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We tweeted 30 messages from these young people on each of the 30 days of November 2020. ▶ As part of National Child Day we developed and distributed posters, and a rights booklet (translated in multiple languages) ▶ We presented on youth rights and issues to the Health Accord. ▶ We facilitated information sessions for professionals and groups such as CSSD, MUN, and RNC Recruits. ▶ Joint calendar project with Mushuau Innu Natuashish School that showcased students creativity and culture. ▶ Made numerous submissions to various initiatives, including: the Adoption Act 2013 Review, the Ministerial Committee on Anti Racism, Teacher Training Act, Mental Health Care and Treatment Act, and Social and Economic Well-being Plan. ▶ We released six investigative reports between 2020 and 2023. These reports all amplified the voices, issues, and perspectives of young people in our province. These reports were entitled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sounds of Silence ▶ A Soft Place to Land ▶ Handle with Care ▶ No Time to Spare ▶ Blanket of Insecurity ▶ A Special Kind of Care



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessed children and youth engagement activities 	<p>Alternate activities were assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We asked children and youth directly during virtual and in-person sessions. ▶ We asked our staff about their experiences using online platforms and in-person sessions. ▶ We also asked professionals working in youth serving organizations about our various engagement activities.
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Objective 2.3: By March 31, 2023 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will seek feedback from children and youth regarding its engagement activities.

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback requested from young people attending in-person engagement sessions 	<p>Feedback was requested from young people attending in-person engagement sessions. Young people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ They liked the rights based sessions and learning about their rights in an interactive manner. They felt in-person sessions enhanced the learning and connection with the presenter. ▶ Presentations while in school were preferred (whether virtual or in-person) as opposed to reading about such concepts individually or via social media platforms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback requested from professionals/adults regarding in-person engagement sessions 	<p>Feedback requested from professionals/adults regarding in-person sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ They preferred in-person sessions as opposed to virtual sessions. They felt it enhanced connections with the presenter and with others attending the session. Some referenced the ‘virtual fatigue’ with the increased usage during the pandemic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback requested from OCYA staff facilitating in-person engagement sessions 	<p>Feedback was requested from OCYA staff facilitating in-person sessions. Staff reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ They feel that in-person sessions were preferred, however, virtual sessions are an additional, beneficial outreach and education tool.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All feedback assessed 	<p>All feedback was assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All feedback was reviewed and assessed. The insights and learning acquired has enhanced the OCYA education and outreach process.

Discussion of Results

Connecting directly with young people is essential to our role and mandate. It is important that we educate everyone, especially young people, about child and youth rights. It is equally important that we do so in a manner that is effective and respectful to young people. Interactive games that enhanced rights-based learning were positively received by all audiences, especially young people. Using this feedback is integral as we continue to focus on child and youth rights education.

The global pandemic required creativity for continued outreach. Virtual technology provided the means to connect with young people and to deliver our outreach services when it would not have been possible otherwise. Having such a hybrid model available is an asset when needed. While virtual outreach has benefits, most young people, professionals, and staff all preferred in-person sessions.

Opportunities and Challenges

We are committed to the work that we do each day to advance and champion the rights of children and youth here in the province. We have been doing this work for over 20 years and there still remains work to be done.

The only thing constant is change. With a changing world comes new opportunities and challenges for all of us, including children and youth. Staff are committed to lifelong learning to remain current regarding the opportunities and challenges facing young people, as well as the issues that are of importance to them.

In FY 2023, we will begin implementation of our Business Plan 2023-26. This plan will see us focusing specifically on key systemic issues affecting children and youth in this province. As we do so, we will be actively listening to and learning directly from the voices of young people and the individuals and organizations who support them. We continue to seek opportunities to hear directly from young people. We are committed to this work and look forward to activities in the upcoming fiscal year.



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 2023** (<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/tbs/files/ReportOnProgramExpendituresAndRevenueOfTheConsolidatedRevenueFund2023.pdf>).

2022-23



April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

	Estimates		
	Actual \$	Amended \$	Original \$
01. Salaries	1,132,209	1,196,600	1,196,600
Operating Accounts			
Employee Benefits	804	3,500	3,3500
Transportation and Communications	22,703	49,900	55,400
Supplies	5,813	6,000	6,000
Professional Services	5,670	19,000	19,000
Purchased Services	138,964	160,900	160,900
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	9,458	9,500	4,000
02. Operating Accounts	183,412	248,800	248,800
Total:	1,315,621	1,445,400	1,445,400



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