

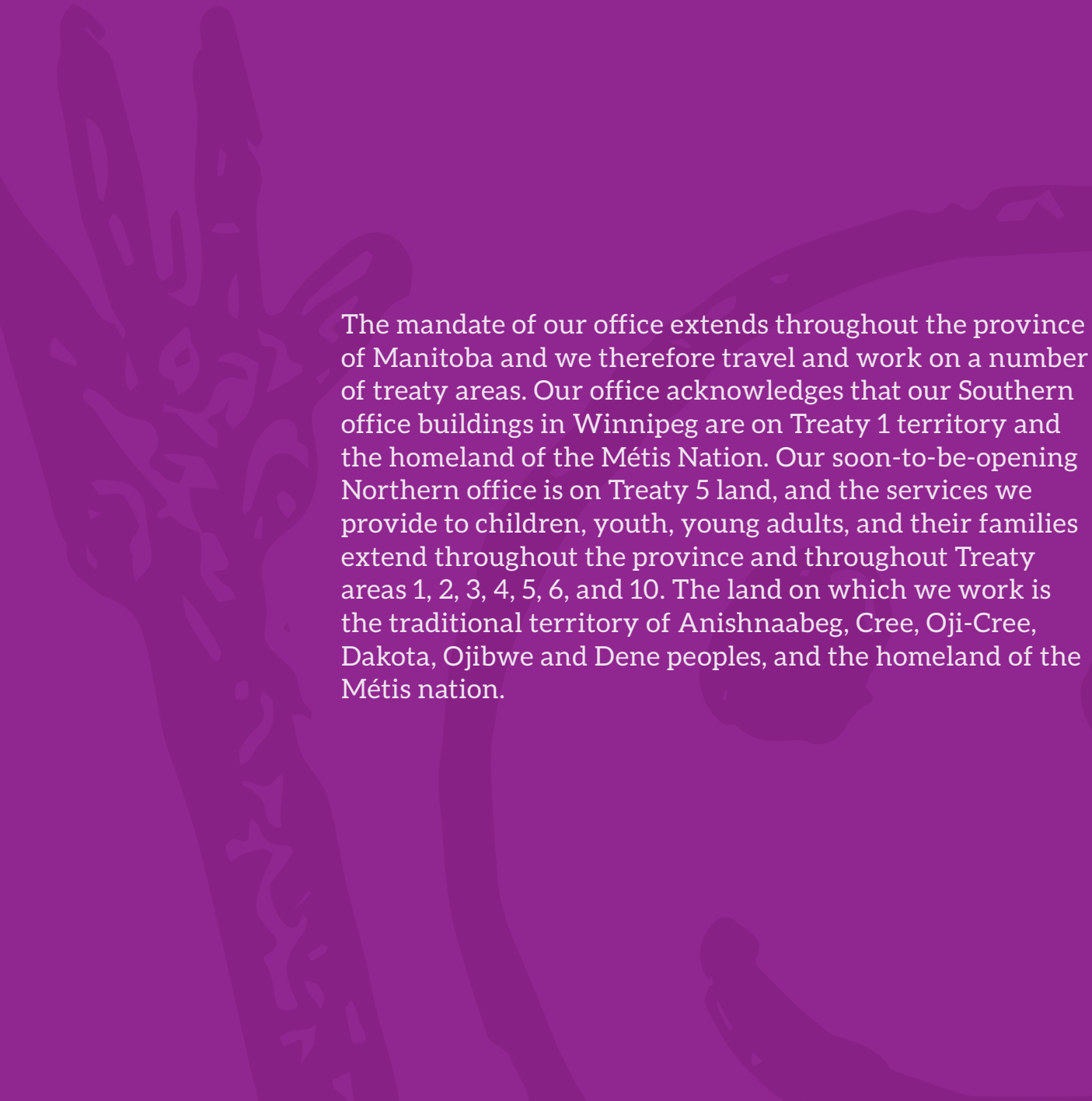
MANITOBA ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

MIAACY



Manitoba
Advocate
STAND UP for children & youth

ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018

The background of the page is a solid purple color. On the left side, there is a large, stylized illustration of a hand holding a branch with leaves. The hand is rendered in a darker purple shade, and the branch and leaves are in a lighter purple shade. The illustration is positioned vertically, with the hand at the bottom and the branch extending upwards. The text is located in the center-right area of the page, overlaid on the purple background.

The mandate of our office extends throughout the province of Manitoba and we therefore travel and work on a number of treaty areas. Our office acknowledges that our Southern office buildings in Winnipeg are on Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Our soon-to-be-opening Northern office is on Treaty 5 land, and the services we provide to children, youth, young adults, and their families extend throughout the province and throughout Treaty areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10. The land on which we work is the traditional territory of Anishnaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Ojibwe and Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Métis nation.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MANITOBA ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Preparing for Change

Effective public systems are responsive to the changing needs of those who rely on them, and excellent public systems work to earn public trust and confidence through accountability and transparency. As the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, a key focus of my team is to ensure that public systems are listening to the voices, ideas, and opinions of children, youth, and young adults, and that public services are accessible and responsive to the needs of those young people, regardless of where they might live in Manitoba. This has been the focus of the Advocate's office since we opened our doors in 1993 and we have continued to grow and evolve with that focus ever since.

On March 15, 2018, our capacity to advocate alongside and on behalf of children, youth, and young adults expanded significantly. As you will read in the pages of this report, while our mandate used to require we focus primarily on young people receiving or eligible to receive services from provincial child welfare and adoption systems, we are no longer limited by those barriers. Since March, we are now empowered to provide advocacy support and conduct investigations involving services that include child welfare, adoption, disabilities, mental health, addictions, education, victim supports, and youth justice. Our mandate has expanded in every area of our office: our advocacy services, our review and investigation services, our research department, our monitoring team, and our outreach and youth engagement functions. Each area has been expanded and strengthened through our new governing legislation, *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act (ACYA)*.

The passing of the ACYA represents a significant and vital commitment by the province to the health and improved outcomes for young people in Manitoba who rely on public services. The ACYA is a special piece of legislation. It received support from all three parties in the provincial legislature, and it demonstrates Manitoba's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The legislation also recognizes the difference a professional advocate can make in a young person's life, and it allows children and families to access assistance while navigating the complex network of public systems in the province.

As professional advocates, we know that well-coordinated networks of support offer the greatest opportunities for quality services that reflect the best interests of families. Robust coordination can reduce duplication of systems and improve outcomes for children, youth, and young adults. With our expanded mandate to provide oversight and review functions for multiple public services, our team is able to promote the best interests of children within and throughout the spectrum of public services operating in Manitoba. There are still limits in our mandate, for example that disabilities is not included in the reviewable services that may trigger a child death review, or that children living in Manitoba but receiving services from federal government departments are not given an equal voice under this legislation. Still, the new legislation, which was a recommendation arising from the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry, takes an important step toward fulfilling the intent of the public inquiry's recommendations for change.

My commitment to private citizens and public systems is that I will strive to ensure the work of my office always reflects my belief that transparency and openness is a cornerstone to excellence in service delivery. I will ensure that at my office:

- Our advocacy team helps individuals understand their rights and which services may be available to them;
- Our investigations team reflects the child's perspective and uncovers any gaps that need to be corrected;
- Our research team defines solutions to critical issues that young people face in our province;
- Our monitoring team tracks and reports back to the public on how systems are changing and improving once recommendations have been issued;
- Our community and youth engagement will be inclusive of the diversity of our province and ensure that wherever a child lives, they can access our office and can be supported as they speak up and share their ideas and opinions; and overall,
- That in all of our activities, my team reflects the commitment to walking the path of Reconciliation and that we always seek to listen to community wisdom, identify injustices, and mobilize our mandate to earn the trust of the children we have the privilege to serve.

Since the introduction of our new mandate, we continue to learn more about key challenges and issues in the broader range of public services within our new scope. We have identified concerns in many of the child-serving public systems, and as Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth, my role is to understand these challenges and then to work with service providers, government departments, and families to identify solutions. For too long, child and family services has been expected to respond to issues that the CFS system was not intended to manage. CFS should be mobilized in cases of child protection; however, in Manitoba, CFS workers are also expected to manage other needs outside of their expertise, including mental health, addictions, disabilities, and more. Underfunding and other service limits in those areas create stress on the child protection system and result in large caseloads, stretched resources, and the evolution of a crisis-focused modality of service delivery.

We can do better. As an office, our vision is of a safe and healthy society that hears, includes, values, and protects all children, youth, and young adults. That vision guides us to promote public education and system literacy and to work with public systems to advocate for changes so the right experts are delivering the right services at the right times. As citizens of the province, we should be able to expect that our public services understand our needs and are responsive to them as they change and evolve through our lifespan. If you are a young person, the family member of a young person, or if you hold service responsibilities within child-serving public systems in Manitoba, I invite you to join us as we amplify the voices and champion the rights of all children, youth, and young adults across Manitoba.

Daphne Penrose, MSW, RSW
Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth



Manitoba Advocate
STAND UP for children & youth

le Défenseur au Manitoba
DE LA CAUSE des enfants et des jeunes

Manitoba Natatwéstamákéw
NIPAWISTAWISTÁK ókik awásisak éko oskátisak

Manitoba Ogiigidootamaage
NIIBAWIN ABINOOJIIYAG zhiqwa oshki-ayaag onji

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year’s report is all about preparing for change, what we did to get ready for our new mandate that came into effect March 15, 2018.

As you will see in this report, the new mandate expanded and strengthened all of the areas of our office and the services we offer to children, youth, young adults, and to their families throughout Manitoba. These changes included a new name for our office – The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, and a new piece of legislation that governs our activity, *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*. Under this mandate, we are able to advocate, review, investigate, research, examine, and analyze numerous child-serving systems in Manitoba which allows us to advocate for better networks of coordinated services anywhere in the province.

SERVICE STATS

Advocacy Services

206 cases carried forward from last year
2,434 cases opened
2,618 cases closed
22 cases carried forward to the next year

Special Investigations Review Services

44 reviews carried forward from last year
70 reviews opened
41 reviews closed
73 reviews carried forward to the next year

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHT

As our mandate extends throughout the province of Manitoba,

we are always looking for ways to improve our accessibility and the ways in which young people and their supports can reach out to us. To achieve this, our staff are frequent travelers outside of our office and we focus resources on ensuring our services, materials, and messages are available anywhere in the province. Three of the ways we did this were:

- We moved closer to being able to open up our Northern office in Thompson, which is planned for the winter of 2018.
- We offered 88 public education presentations and outreach events in the community about children’s rights, the support services we offer, our investigation process, and what is new under our new mandate.
- Our staff also made 99 trips outside of Winnipeg, primarily for work related to our individual advocacy services or investigative cases.

SOMMAIRE

Le rapport de cette année porte essentiellement sur la préparation au changement, c'est-à-dire sur ce que nous avons fait pour nous préparer en vue de notre nouveau mandat, qui est devenu officiel le 15 mars 2018.

Comme vous le verrez dans ce rapport, ce nouveau mandat a élargi et renforcé l'ensemble des responsabilités de notre bureau et les services que nous offrons aux enfants, aux adolescents et aux jeunes adultes, ainsi qu'à leurs familles partout au Manitoba. Parmi les changements, mentionnons le nouveau nom de notre bureau – qui est devenu le Protecteur des enfants et des jeunes du Manitoba – et une nouvelle loi régissant nos activités, soit la Loi sur le protecteur des enfants et des jeunes. En vertu de ce mandat, nous pouvons offrir des services de défense, enquêter, effectuer des recherches, examiner et étudier les nombreux systèmes oeuvrant pour les enfants au Manitoba, ce qui nous permet de plaider pour de meilleurs réseaux de services coordonnés partout dans la province.

TATISTIQUES SUR LES SERVICES

Services de défense des droits

206	dossiers reportés de l'an dernier
2,434	dossiers ouverts
2,618	dossiers fermés
22	dossiers reportés à l'année prochaine

Services d'examen des enquêtes spéciales

44	examens reportés de l'an dernier
70	examens entamés
41	examens terminés
73	examens reportés à l'année prochaine

POINTS SAILLANTS DES ACTIVITÉS

Étant donné que notre mandat s'étend à l'ensemble de la province du Manitoba, nous sommes constamment à la recherche de façons d'améliorer notre accessibilité et de moyens permettant aux jeunes et à leurs réseaux de soutien de faire appel à nous. Pour y parvenir, les membres de notre personnel partent souvent en déplacement et nous faisons en sorte d'orienter nos ressources pour que nos services, nos documents et nos messages soient disponibles partout dans la province. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que :

- Nous nous sommes rapprochés de l'objectif d'ouvrir notre bureau à Thompson, qui devrait se réaliser à l'hiver de 2018.
- Nous avons fait 88 exposés d'éducation publique et activités d'action communautaire sur les droits des enfants, les services de soutien que nous offrons, notre processus d'enquête et les nouveaux aspects de notre mandat.
- Les membres de notre personnel se sont également déplacés 99 fois à l'extérieur de Winnipeg, essentiellement pour des questions particulières liées à nos services de défense ou à nos enquêtes.

WE ARE MACY

While we began the reporting year as the Office of the Children’s Advocate, we finished as a new entity with a greatly increased scope to support children, youth, and young adults across Manitoba.

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth – or, MACY, for short – is now able to provide advocacy, review, and investigation services through a wider and stronger scope of work. While we used to be limited to working on behalf of young people involved in child welfare and adoption only, our new mandate has added several additional service areas. Now, our staff work with and on behalf of any child, youth, or young adult up to age 21, who is involved with (or who is entitled to receive services from): child welfare, adoption, disability, addiction, mental health, education, victim support, and youth justice.

FINANCIAL REPORT

All numbers below reported in thousands

\$1,046 Operating
\$3,165 Salaries
\$4,211 Total

VISION

A safe and healthy society that hears, includes, values, and protects all children, youth, and young adults.

MISSION

We amplify the voices and champion the rights of children, youth, and young adults.

VALUES



Child-centred



Equity



Respect



Accountability



Independence



Independent. Caring. Evolving.

We amplify the voices of children and youth.

They have a voice, but sometimes it's hard to get people to listen.

Our experiences speaking with children and youth reveal that while they have a lot to say, they sometimes feel no one listens to their thoughts, ideas, and opinions about things that are happening in their lives.

We're here to make sure these children and youth understand what is happening when public systems are involved in their lives, that they feel heard in decisions that affect them, and we help ensure that someone is working with their best interests in mind. The safety of children and youth and their best interests are our top considerations throughout all of our activities and services.

We are – and continue to be – an *independent office* of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. We are separate and apart from both the provincial government and each public system that delivers services to young people; the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth does not report to any government department or Minister. This independent status is vital. It allows the Manitoba Advocate to speak openly and to freely challenge the system and work for change when practices, policy, or legislation do not meet the best interests of children, youth, and young adults.

Our expanded and stronger mandate also allows us to do more for young people in Manitoba.

We started 2017-2018 with the limited scope in our advocacy and investigation programs of representing the rights, interests, and viewpoints of Manitoba children and youth involved with the child welfare system, particularly those entitled to services under *the Child and Family Service Act* and *the Adoption Act*. We worked hard to advocate

directly with and on behalf of children and youth, liaising with caregivers and other stakeholders and reviewing, investigating, and providing recommendations on matters relating to the welfare and interests of any child or youth who died within a year of being involved with those two systems.

We are proud to have ended the fiscal year on March 31, 2018, implementing our new mandate, which legislates us to represent children, youth, and young adults to 21 involved in a number of publicly funded services.

WHO WE NOW SUPPORT

Children and youth, from birth to 17 years old involved in, or *entitled to be involved* in any of the following services, anywhere in Manitoba:

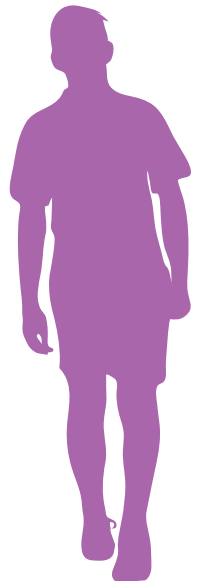
- Child welfare
- Adoption
- Disability*
- Education**
- Mental health
- Addiction
- Victim supports***
- Youth justice



YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

We are also able to provide services to young adults up to age 21 who:

- Are former permanent wards receiving CFS support beyond termination of guardianship (formerly known as extensions of care)
- Were involved with CFS prior to turning 18, and who are now eligible for adult disability services
- Were involved with CFS prior to turning 18, and who, as a young adult, requires an individual education plan (IEP)



If you are unsure if your situation qualifies, give us a call and we will help you figure it out.



*anywhere within health, education, justice or community services

**that includes an Individual Education Plan

***including victims of crime, witnesses in criminal proceedings, those impacted by domestic violence and those who are – or are at risk of being – sexually exploited

Our Special Investigations Review Program formerly reviewed services and provided recommendations after a child died, if that child or their family had been involved with child welfare or adoption services within 12 months of the child's death.

Now, our investigative mandate has also expanded significantly. The Manitoba Advocate continues to be officially notified of all deaths of all young people in Manitoba, and is now empowered to assess all deaths of young people to age 21 and may review and investigate public systems (child welfare, adoption, disabilities, addictions, mental health, education, victim supports, and youth justice) if the child or their family was involved in any manner with the child welfare system in the 12 months before the date of death of the child. We also can investigate the death of a young adult (up to age 21) who was part of the child welfare or adoption systems and was receiving transition support services. In the future, this area of our work will also be expanded.

We have also expanded our research and public education efforts, and our mandate now includes:

- Conducting research on provincial public services to make recommendations for improvements
- Raising public awareness of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- Publishing an annual report, service plan, and goals and objectives for the office
- Analyzing information arising in our work and creating special reports to provide information to the public

In addition, we have also added another vital component to that work – the responsibility to follow up on recommendations we make in our advocacy, investigative, and research work. Under our new mandate, the Manitoba Advocate has the responsibility to monitor, assess, and may report publicly on the levels of compliance that public systems demonstrate on the changes that emerge from our work. The intent with this new element of our mandate is to ensure that reports and recommendations, which emerge from the voices and stories of children, do not just sit on a shelf to be forgotten, but that the changes recommended by our office are made to improve public services in Manitoba.

In the near future, we will also become the central reporting point for serious injuries to children, youth, and young adults receiving reviewable provincial services. A significant current gap in our province is that while most individual public systems track injuries that occur within their own system, those data are not centralized so they can be tracked and analyzed. When this piece of our new legislation comes into force, reviewable public systems including child welfare, adoptions, mental health, addictions, and youth justice will be required to report to the Manitoba Advocate regarding serious injuries to children, and our investigations into those matters will have the central objective of improving systems to keep young people safer.

Brian's Story

Brian (19) was incarcerated at a youth detention facility and his social worker had promised to arrange a visit with his younger siblings. After waiting almost six months, Brian called MACY and explained that he had not seen his siblings in almost two years.

Brian expressed significant remorse for his crimes and did not want his siblings to make the same mistakes. When he was younger, he provided child care and guidance to them and he worried their sibling bond would be broken by the extended absence caused by his incarceration and the resulting lack of contact. While in custody, Brian excelled at his grade 12 classes, he planned to graduate high school and one day attend college or university and he was determined to make his time in custody as productive as possible.

The MACY Advocacy Officer advocated for this sibling group to have meaningful contact and worked closely with Child and Family Services (CFS) workers and Department of Justice officials to arrange a sibling visit. The logistics were complex and involved several CFS workers from different Northern communities where the siblings were in care. MACY acknowledges the commitment of these workers and officials who worked so hard to make the visit a success for Brian and his siblings.

While working with Brian, the MACY Advocacy Officer developed a good relationship with him. At the time his file was closed, Brian was provided with information on scholarships, as well as many additional resources he can access upon his release and confirmed that the agency was committed to arranging another sibling visit.

WHAT WE DID TO PREPARE

Our 2017-2018 year was full of advocacy initiatives and activities that centred on amplifying the voices of children, youth, and young adults under the current and future mandates.

In the 2017-2018 year we gave 88 presentations and attended outreach events in communities throughout Manitoba, with most presentation requests to our office focusing on the new mandate and the expansion of support services available through our office.

Through this preparation project we looked at each domain area for data, key contacts, what issues to anticipate, and what information to listen for. We studied the additional provincial Acts that make up the new domain areas where we now hold responsibilities, and hosted presentations from service groups and department personnel in the various areas of public child-serving systems.

We developed a new and expanded database to help us collect information,

and analyze concerns and trends emerging from the additional service domains.

We secured a location for our new Northern office in Thompson and continued making plans to open that office and hire local staff.

We continued to review child deaths and created new processes for our investigations and the other changes under the new mandate, including studying legislation, policies, and processes that govern how young people access and receive public services in Manitoba. We consulted with system experts and hosted internal trainings for our staff to ensure our team was well positioned to respond to issues as our legislated scope expanded.

We analyzed our internal processes to ensure that new staff were well oriented and that existing staff were prepared for the broadened knowledge base to which they would have to respond.

As we always do, we bolstered our own continuous quality improvement processes and considered how to improve our service model, practices, and procedures to be inclusive and helpful to everyone we serve.

WHERE WE TRAVELLED IN 2017-18



Our mandate regularly takes us across Manitoba's nearly 650,000 square kilometres. It is important to us to provide our advocacy services throughout the entire province, including in northern, rural, and remote communities. Service equity is an issue to which we hold other systems accountable, and it is important that we also demonstrate our own commitment to this ideal.

This year, we travelled to every region of the province, making a total of 99 trips outside of Winnipeg.

Purpose of Travel Outside of Winnipeg

- 74** Case-related matters involving children
- 18** Community events & engagement
 - 8** Conferences/training
 - 6** Presentation requests
 - 4** Youth engagement
- 3** National meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)
- 2** Facility visits

Communities Visited



REVIEW OF SERVICES

ADVOCACY SERVICES

Advocacy is at the heart of what we do. In all the forms our advocacy takes, it is what allows us to help protect kids and youth, in individual cases and on the larger, systemic scale.

We promote system education and self-advocacy and wherever possible provide tools and information that help individuals become their own advocates.

Calls that are more complex or that may take additional time are opened as cases. Many of these calls require multiple advocacy activities including:

- Reviewing the involvement of public systems
- Establishing contact with service providers and asking questions to gather information
- Meeting directly with children, youth, young adults, and sometimes their family or other caregivers to help them be heard by service providers and understand decisions made by those involved in their care plan
- Arranging or attending meetings to provide direct advocacy support for a young person

SERVICE PROVISION BY THE NUMBERS

2,926

Requests for service received in 2017-18

492

General questions about public systems or our services

2,434

Cases opened in 2017-18*

356

Cases resolved within 90 days

153

More complex cases that required ongoing advocacy intervention services

1,903

Cases resolved through supporting a caller to be a self-advocate

206

Cases carried over from 2016-17

22

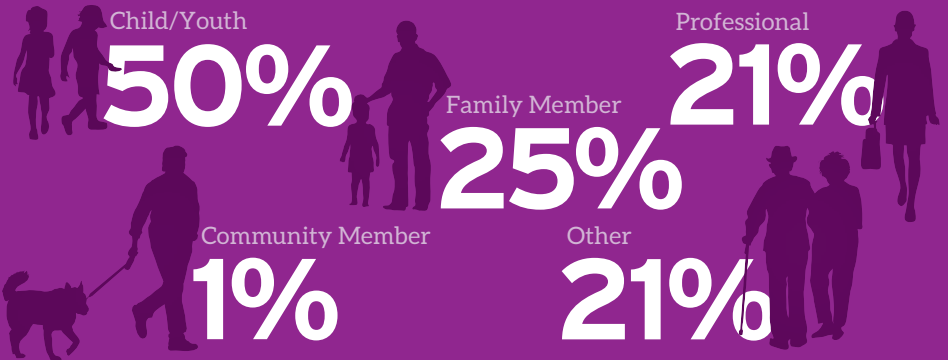
Cases carried over to 2018-19

*The number of cases opened does not equal the number of children served. Contact with a sibling group results in a single open file under the name of the oldest sibling, even though we may provide advocacy services to all the children.



REFERRAL SOURCE

Half of all calls that result in a case opening are youth contacting us on their own behalf.



THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH WE SERVE



Top CFS-Related Concerns

Future Change! In next year's annual report, this chart will include concerns from all service domain areas, including child welfare, adoption, disabilities, addiction, mental health, education, victim supports, and youth justice services.

Case Planning

44%

- Disagree/Refusal of/with CFS
- Lack of case planning
- Lack of child participation
- Lack of worker contact
- Lack of parental/family participation
- Lack of planning for family
- Change of worker
- Lack of permanency planning
- Poor reunification planning
- Lack of appropriate protection plan
- Lack of service standards

Quality of Care (applies to children in care only)

22%

- Access/visitation
- Lack of appropriate care resources
- Mental health intervention/treatment
- Lack of education program
- Lack of clothing
- Lack of health care
- Too many placement moves
- Inappropriate use of intrusive measures
- Inappropriate discipline acts
- Child AWOL
- Lack of food
- Other

Rights (provision, prevention, protection, participation)

9%

- Lack of consideration
- Lack of information
- Lack of participation
- Lack of knowledge of advocacy
- Lack of legal advocacy

Response/Timeliness

8%

- Unresponsive
- Service delays
- Administrative delays
- Over response

Transitional Planning

6%

- Lack of transitional plan
- Lack of concrete resources
- Lack of support services
- Ineligible for adult services
- Ineligible for EIA
- Other

Accessibility

3%

- Lack of information
- Lack of service/resource
- Resource limitation
- Refusal of services
- Ineligibility

Special/Complex Needs

3%

- Lack of diagnostic assessment
- Lack of resources
- Poor coordination
- Funding issue
- Jurisdictional issue (government)
- Other

Child Maltreatment

3%

- Suspected child abuse - child in care
- Suspected child abuse - community
- Suspected child neglect - child in care
- Suspected child neglect - community

Accountability

2%

- Worker conduct
- Inadequate review process
- Fear of retribution

Abuse Investigations

1%

- Response
- Interviews
- Resolution
- Breadth
- Time frame
- Collaboration
- Child Abuse Committees

The Roots of Overrepresentation

In 2017-2018, 72% of our advocacy support services was with Indigenous children and youth. Indigenous peoples have experienced deep-rooted trauma over multiple generations, and this results in a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in need of advocacy support.

Three years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report, Canadians are still struggling to understand the tragic legacy of government policies designed to eradicate Indigenous knowledges and ways of life. This legacy continues today.

These policies included the residential school system, in which children were forcibly separated from their families and communities only to suffer tragic cultural degradation

and physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse. The 60's Scoop was yet another dark era where Indigenous children were taken from their families and communities and moved to foster homes or put up for adoption.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families in Manitoba continue to experience higher rates of suicide, family violence, substance abuse, mental health issues and parenting challenges. Indigenous children comprise 26% of our province's child population, but nearly 90% of children in care.

However, Indigenous peoples continue to demonstrate incredible resilience despite the systems and practices that have and continue to impact them.

WHAT WE'RE DOING IN 2018/19: PROGRAM WORK PLAN



Continuing to expand our knowledge in new service areas



Increasing advocacy staffing



More community outreach and engagement



Increasing feedback opportunities from the public



Updating practices and procedures to reflect our expansion

Hailey's Story

Last fall, Hailey (19) contacted our office out of concern for her two younger sisters' foster home. One of her siblings was being isolated for not participating in the foster parent's religion and Hailey was concerned that her other sibling was also expected to participate in being "brainwashed" by the care provider's strict religious beliefs.

There had been a plan for Hailey to become the primary caregiver to her younger siblings, who were, at that time, residing in an agency foster home, but this change had not yet happened. Our office arranged for Hailey to participate in a meeting with the foster family and family service workers. We supported Hailey in that meeting as she shared her concerns for the well-being of her siblings.

The agency came to the decision that Hailey's siblings needed to move from their foster home that day; however, the agency also decided that all three of the girls, including Hailey, needed some additional time and support to heal because of their particular circumstances. Hailey's siblings were placed in a neighbouring home to Hailey, with a more experienced care provider who was known to all of them.

Hailey now has daily and unlimited access to her siblings. The long-term plan is for Hailey to care for her siblings once she is established in adulthood. In the meantime, all agreed this plan was in the best interests of all three siblings.

Hailey has since been offered a job with the CFS agency as a support worker. The agency, being impressed with her self-advocacy skills and the strength of character she displayed, hired Hailey to attend foster parent training sessions to speak to foster parents about the impact of being a child in care. Way to go, Hailey!

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REVIEWS

When any child, youth, or young adult to age 21 dies in Manitoba, we are officially notified by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME).

The OCME determines the official manner of death (according to an established protocol) that goes on the child's death certificate; however, if the child or their family has an open file with a child welfare agency (or has had one in the previous year), we may undertake a review of public services received by that child or their family to determine whether any external factors contributed to the child's death and if there are gaps in public systems that must be addressed.

These Special Investigation Reviews (SIRs) aim to identify whether programs and services that were or should have been provided can be improved to enhance the safety and wellbeing of all children and youth and to reduce the likelihood of a future death in similar circumstances. During an SIR, a Special Investigator from our office begins by collecting and analyzing information from service systems that may have provided services to the family, including child welfare,

adoption, education, disabilities, mental health, addiction, education, victim support, and youth justice. In addition, we may collect information from other relevant sources such as, police reports, fire commissioner reports, medical records, school records and more.

The investigative process includes opportunities for feedback, dialogue, and collaboration with various stakeholders, including professionals who provide services to children and families. Our reports examine public service delivery to Manitoba families through the eyes of the child and we invite and encourage family and community participation. Whenever possible, our investigators travel to the home community of the child, youth, or young adult, to speak with people who knew and loved the child and to gain a better understanding of how services are delivered within a local community context.

Future Change!

WHERE WE CAN SHARE OUR CHILD DEATH REPORTS

Under our previous mandate, once the final report was completed, we would submit it to the Minister of Families, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Manitoba Ombudsman, who was responsible for following the progress on any recommendations that our office made. Our new legislation, since March 15, 2018, means the Manitoba Advocate provides a final report to any service that was investigated or which is the subject of recommendations. Further, the new mandate allows the Manitoba Advocate to complete a “Special Report” which may or may not identify the child and the specific service organizations which were involved, and release that report to the public. As our primary concerns are the best interests of young people and their families, the Manitoba Advocate may also provide a summary of an investigation to a child or to the child’s family.

Under the new legislation, the Manitoba Advocate is also responsible to monitor and report publicly on the levels of compliance that public systems demonstrate with the recommendations made by our office.

Future Change!

WHAT IS CONSIDERED “IN SCOPE” FOR REVIEW AND INVESTIGATION

Deaths of individuals are currently reviewable by the Manitoba Advocate if there has been Child and Family Services (CFS) involvement in the year leading up to the date of death; those deaths with CFS involvement are assessed by our team as “in scope” for a review. In the future, deaths will be “in scope” not only when CFS has been involved, but also initiated when a young person has died and they or their family have received child welfare, mental health, addiction, or youth justice services in the year preceding the date of death. Once an review has been initiated by the Manitoba Advocate, the review may look at any public service, such as: child welfare, adoption, disabilities, mental health, addiction, education, victim supports, and youth justice, if relevant to the life of the child, youth, or young adult who has died.

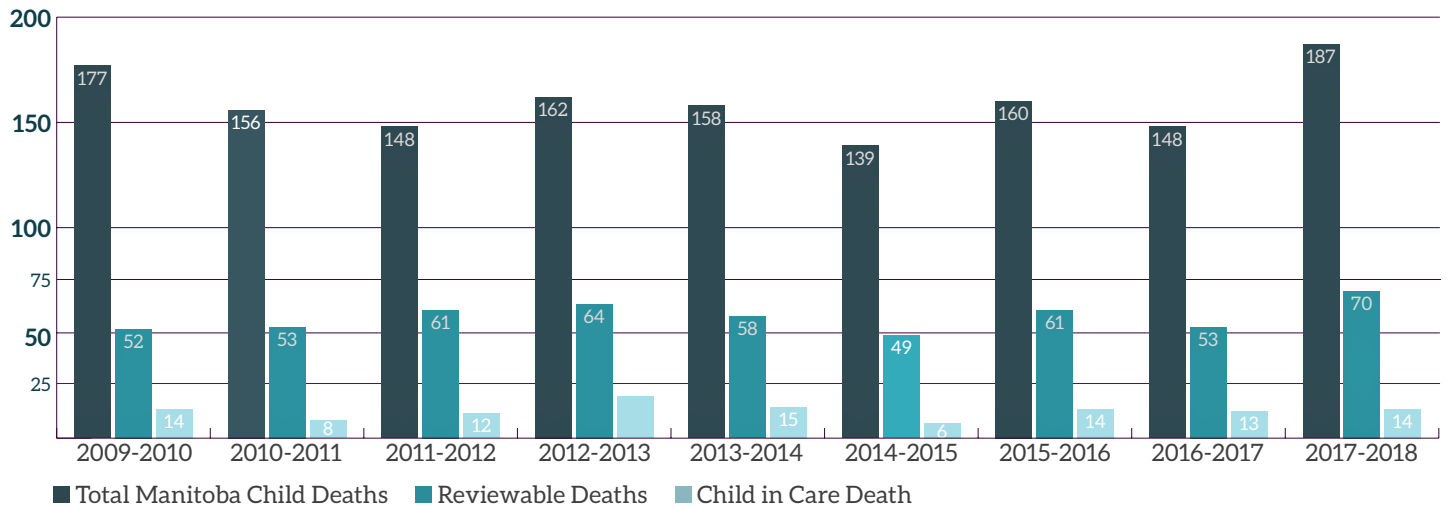


A faint, light blue illustration of a child's face is visible in the background, centered behind the text. The child's eyes are closed, and the expression is neutral. The illustration is semi-transparent and blends into the teal background.

CHILD DEATHS IN MANITOBA

In 2017-2018, a total of 187 children died in Manitoba. We have already completed, or will be reviewing 70 of these deaths, of which 20 were suicides, 2 were homicides, and 30 were without a conclusive manner of death, as determined by the Chief Medical Examiner.

Year Over Year Comparison



Manners of Child Deaths

Manner of Death	Manitoba Deaths		Reviewable Deaths		Child in Care Deaths	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Natural	114	61%	28	40%	3	21%
Disease	26		10		1	
Medically Fragile	34		12		1	
Prematurity	49		6		1	
Termination	4		0		0	
Other	51		0		0	
Accidental	21	11%	11	16%	1	7%
Drowning	6		3		1	
In the Home	1		0		0	
Motor Vehicle	9		4		0	
Other	5		4		0	
Suicide	20	11%	11	16%	4	29%
Homicide	2	1%	1	1%	0	0%
Undetermined	30	16%	19	27%	6	43%
Total Deaths	187	100%	70	100%	14	100%

*Numbers may not total 100% due to rounding to the closest whole number.

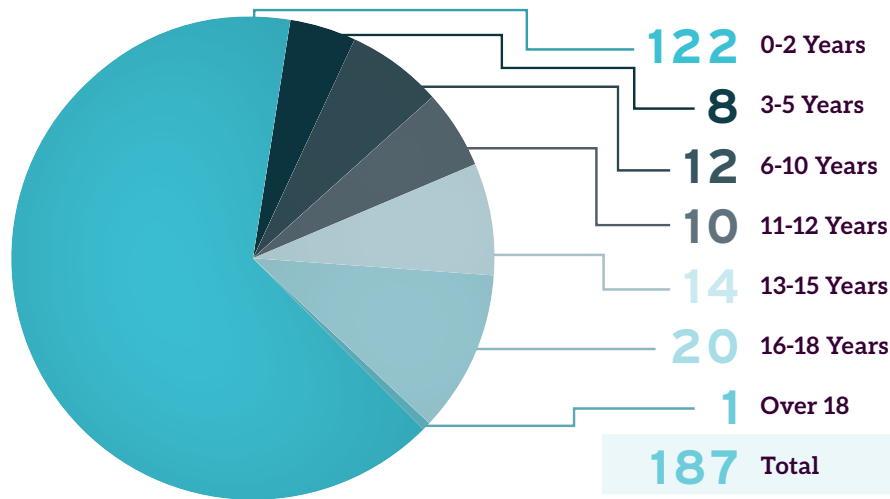
WHAT IS AN "UNDETERMINED DEATH?"

"Undetermined" is the label the Chief Medical Examiner gives when they cannot conclusively determine how the death occurred, even if the physical cause may be

known. This category includes sudden unexplained infant death (SUID) and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

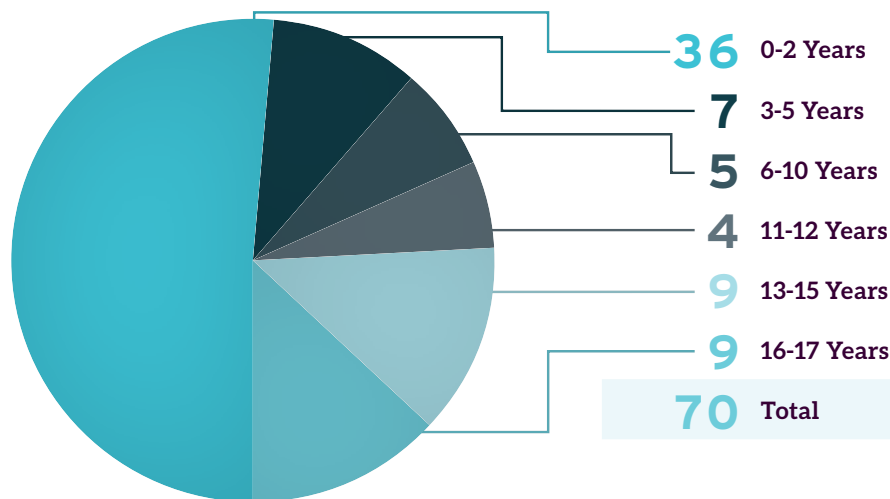
Death by Age

ALL MANITOBA CHILD DEATHS



Child Deaths Reviewable

BY THE MANITOBA ADVOCATE



While most child deaths in Manitoba involve young children under the age of two, most of these deaths are natural and occur as a result of the child being medically fragile or premature.



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our findings are sometimes positive, and sometimes identify service gaps that result in recommendations that when implemented, could improve situations for children, youth, and young adults involved in public systems.

This year, our reviews included 18 formal recommendations in 41 investigations, which we shared with the Minister of Families, the Manitoba Ombudsman, the Chief Medical Examiner and relevant child welfare authorities, agencies, and organizations, since under our previous mandate, we were prohibited from speaking about these publicly. As noted, under our new mandate, we are empowered to share our reports and recommendations more broadly, and we are able to release these to the public if the Manitoba Advocate determines that to do so would be in the public's best interest.

Throughout our investigations, a number of common themes emerged regarding areas that must be improved.

Top Concerns Identified

IDENTIFIED IN OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Case Management

21%

Legal status
Quality of response
Response time
Intake process
Risk assessment

Case planning
Service delivery
Evaluation
Family visits

Training

28%

Trauma informed care
Family conferencing
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Suicide awareness/prevention
Critical incident stress debriefing
Family violence

Accountability

14%

Supervision
File recording

Reporting practices

Abuse Investigations

10%

Response
Timeframe
Collaboration

Interviews
Resolution

Safety Risks

10%

Water safety
Child sexual exploitation
Firearm safety
Suicidality

Domestic violence
Unsafe sleeping environment
Client engagement

Placements

10%

Other Service Providers

3%

Mental health
Addictions
Employment and Income Assistance

Justice
Education
Publicly funded social services

Other Concerns

3%

RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW THEY ARE MADE

When the Special Investigations Review team investigates services that were received by a young person prior to their death, recommendations may be made. These recommendations begin with a comprehensive investigation, analysis comparing the family's needs with which public services were provided, and an identification of any gaps in services or things that could be improved. In the final report on the matter, the Manitoba Advocate will consider all relevant information, make a formal finding regarding what happened, then provide analysis to support that finding based on the evidence, and may conclude with a carefully crafted recommendation for a change to a practice, process, policy, or legislation. As part of the recommendation development process, the Manitoba Advocate and members of our investigations team meet with service providers

and government departments to discuss the results of our investigation and seek any additional information needed so the Manitoba Advocate can ensure recommendations target system gaps and are written in a way that is both achievable and measurable. Recommendations are written in a way so that an individual, organization, or department is responsible to initiate and complete the changes. The recommendation may include a timeline for completion indicated by the Manitoba Advocate.

Under *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act (ACYA)*, the Manitoba Advocate is also responsible to monitor progress of recommendations and may also report to the public on the levels of compliance with recommendations made under the ACYA.

Matt's Story

In the summer of 2017, Matt learned about MACY from a former foster parent and came to our office for assistance.

Matt had to leave his former placement where he felt comfortable and attached to his caregivers. He was moved to a group home in which he was not thriving and there was no prospect of returning to his previous placement.

Matt knew of an alternate placement where he had a good relationship with the caregiver. He talked about the importance of structure, good communication, relationship, and safety at any placement. Matt expressed that he required support with developing life skills, and his spiritual and mental growth, and to prepare for adulthood and he felt sure that he would have all of these at the placement he identified.

Matt requested assistance to ensure the agency would take his perspective into consideration and to advocate for placement with the caregiver whom he had identified. Our advocacy officer spoke to Matt about self-advocacy, particularly how empowering it is to be able to identify and speak about one's own needs with those who have the mandate to make changes.

After meeting with Matt, it was evident that he possessed good communication skills and he was able to speak about his needs clearly and with solid rationale. With the help of the advocacy officer and the program manager, the youth was able to participate in a call to the agency and speak with the worker about his request for an alternate placement.

The agency worker took Matt's perspective into consideration and ultimately honoured his request to be placed with his identified caregiver. With the assistance of our advocacy team, Matt was able to engage in self-advocacy and be a participant in the plan to move his life forward in a positive and safe manner.

thrival kits™

At MACY we believe that mental health and wellness is key to growing up resilient, being able to face challenges, and to enjoying a life full of purpose and meaning. We want all children to be able to feel supported and have the skills they need to not only survive childhood, but to thrive in their younger years and on through the lifespan.

Thrival Kits™ is a project we created to promote mental wellbeing for children. The Thrival Kits™ project is delivered in school classrooms and shows youth how to develop positive coping strategies that help them understand what makes them special and unique, and helps them develop tools to deal with life events and emotions.

Thrival Kits™ are shoebox-sized kits that students fill with small, meaningful items as they complete classroom challenges and activities throughout the school year. The Thrival Kits™ activities are focused on mental health promotion: daily practices that protect and promote our mental wellness.

Perhaps you have heard of upstream investments in healthcare—the idea of looking for the root causes of illness and preventing these illnesses through early interventions. Mental health promotion is even more upstream than that.

Mental health promotion is not about “preventing” mental illness, though that is certainly a key goal. More so, mental health promotion is about going beyond illness prevention. Its goal is to foster safe and supportive environments that encourage mental health and wellness. It is about individual behaviour—showing youth a variety of positive coping strategies for handling stress in their lives. However, it is also about the environment and the classroom culture. It is about creating a stigma-free world. It is about fostering empathy and empowering youth to take care of one another and look out for one another.

Thrival Kits™ actually started back in 2012, when our office developed a presentation on some of the data we regularly collect and analyze related to suicide deaths. We heard a clear message from communities that people were interested in what is happening specifically here in Manitoba, and so we launched a multiyear suicide research study. We wanted to understand what was happening for youth most at risk of suicide, and we wanted to see if there were community resources we could create from the data.

Phase 1 (released in 2015) and Phase 2 (released in 2016) of our study examined 50 youth who died by suicide between 2009 and 2013 and then compared those youth to a control group of 100 other youth. We learned a number of lessons from that study and one key finding was that our province, much like other provinces, still relies heavily on the public school system to deliver suicide prevention information to youth, but also that the youth who were most at risk for suicide struggled with school attendance after age 12 and may likely not be receiving that critical information when they most need it.

We decided that for Phase 3 of the project we wanted to create resources for youth aged 8-12 since it appears to be the final years where nearly all children are connected in some way to a daily education program. We also knew that we wanted to work with the community to develop a resource that made sense for their needs. We approached the Canadian

Mental Health Association (Manitoba and Winnipeg office) and asked if they wanted to work together. We researched best practices and emerging theories in mental health promotion within school settings and worked with clinicians and educators to help refine the contents of Thrival Kits™.

In fall 2017, we launched the Thrival Kits™ pilot project and tested the kits in 19 classrooms in the Winnipeg area, involving 450 students.

The success of Thrival Kits™ is built on the evidence-informed understanding that classroom teachers are best positioned to lead daily practices of mental health promotion in school-settings. While mental health experts bring important skills and knowledge to schools, it is classroom teachers who best establish the positive and supportive classroom cultures required for healthy children’s outcomes. Thrival Kits™ is also about cultivating empathy. Youth are taught that it is normal to have a bad day, and they learn techniques that they can use with their peer groups to help others who might be struggling. In this way, Thrival Kits™ eliminates stigma and creates safe and supportive classroom cultures.

For more information on our multiyear suicide study, see the Phase 1 and 2 reports at:

PHASE 1:

<https://tinyurl.com/ThrivalKitsPhase1>

PHASE 2:

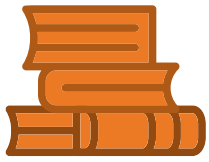
<https://tinyurl.com/ThrivalKitsPhase2>

To learn more about Thrival Kits™, we invite you to watch a mini video we created during the pilot year: tinyurl.com/ThrivalKits

Are you an educator interested in bringing the project to your elementary school? Contact the Thrival team thrival@manitobaadvocate.ca



2017 Thrival Kits™ By the Numbers



1 exciting
pilot program



6 pilot schools



19 grade
4-6 classrooms



450 students

Child and Youth Mental Health Snapshot¹

3.2 MILLION

Canadians aged 12-19
are at risk of depression

18%

of hospitalized children are being
treated for a mental disorder

17%

of Canadians aged 15-19 report
having a mental health care
need in the past year

75%

of children with mental disorders
do not receive specialized care

1 Mental Illness and Addiction: Facts and Statistics, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

A Growing Body of Evidence-Based Knowledge

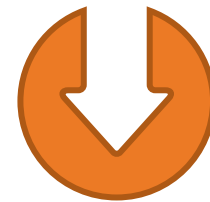
LINKS MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION TO:



Increased help-seeking
behaviour



Decreased stigma



Decreased stress levels



Improved resilience and
positive coping strategies



Decreased thoughts of self-
harm and suicidal thoughts

OUR TEAM

Executive Team

Daphne Penrose	Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (since April 2017)
Darlene MacDonald	Children's Advocate (retired April 2017)
Ainsley Krone	Deputy Manitoba Advocate (since May 2017)
Corey La Berge	Deputy Children's Advocate (until May 2017)
Sherry Gott	Deputy Manitoba Advocate (since May 2018)

Management

Ainsley Krone	Manager, Communications, Research, and Public Education (until September 2018)
Angie Balan	Manager, Quality Assurance
Carolyn Burton	Manager, Finance & Administration
Denise Wadsworth	Manager, Special Investigations Review Program (Acting since spring 2018)
Dorothy McLoughlin	Manager, Special Investigations Review Program (retired July 2018)
Karlee Sapoznik Evans	Manager, Research, Special Reports & Youth Engagement (since October 2018)
Kirstin Magnusson	Manager, Advocacy Services Program
Michelle Kowalchuk	Manager, Advocacy Services Program (since September 2018)
Patty Sansregret	Manager, Special Projects

Administration

Erin Ryan	Administrative Secretary
Laurie Freund	Senior Clerk
Reji Thomas	Senior Clerk

Youth Engagement

Jonathan Skrypnyk	Youth Engagement Coordinator (since September 2018)
Cathy Cook	Youth Engagement Coordinator (since October 2018)

Special Investigation Reviews and Special Reports

Ada Uddoh	Special Investigator
Anna Los	Special Investigator (since July 2018)
Joanne Lysak	Special Investigator
Justine Grain	Special Investigator (until April 2018)
Leigh Enns	Special Investigator
Lynda Schellenberg	Special Investigator
Maria Godoy	Special Investigator, Special Reports (since August 2018)
Ryan Begley	Special Investigator
Sandra McKelvey	Special Investigator
Tanis Hudson	Special Investigator
Terra Johnston	Special Investigator, Special Reports (since September 2018)

Advocacy

Dawn Gair	Advocacy Officer
Debra De Silva	Advocacy Officer
Doug Ingram	Advocacy Officer
Erin Leonzio	Advocacy Officer
Gerald Krosney	Advocacy Officer
Jennifer Meixner	Advocacy Officer (since September 2018)
Kelsey VanOsch	Advocacy Officer (since September 2018)
Krista Rey	Advocacy Officer
Mae Choo-Mah	Advocacy Officer
Naomi Evans	Advocacy Officer
Paula Zimrose	Advocacy Officer
Sarah Arnal	Advocacy Officer
Thelma Morrissette	Advocacy Officer (retired November 2017)

Quality Assurance

Janine Bramadat	Policy Analyst
Alison Carrey	Policy Analyst

Students

Corina Chung
Heather Peterson

THE TEAM THAT SUPPORTS THE ADVOCATE

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth now has two Deputy Advocates who support the Manitoba Advocate in the expanded mandate of the office. Here are some fast facts about the people that fill these critical roles.

5 FAST FACTS ABOUT AINSLEY KRONE - NEWLY-APPOINTED DEPUTY ADVOCATE, INVESTIGATIONS & RESEARCH

1. Worked as an advocate for children and youth in various roles in British Columbia and then Manitoba since 1998
2. Joined MACY in 2009 as a special investigator on the child death review unit
3. Values research through storytelling as an effective way to engage the public and advocate for improved public services for children and youth
4. Created MACY's research and public education department in 2012
5. Was a driving force behind recent legislated changes to the MACY mandate

5 FAST FACTS ABOUT SHERRY GOTT - NEWLY-APPOINTED DEPUTY ADVOCATE, ADVOCACY SERVICES

1. Is focused on Indigenous outreach and culture preservation, relying on ceremonies, Elders and Knowledge Keepers to guide her work
2. Has worked in the social service system since 1993 in various roles from Intake, Front line, Outreach, Support, Program Development, and Supervisor
3. Is passionate about ensuring children receive the best services from all systems
4. Wants to advocate for children and youth in a respectful way and help kids feel comfortable with service providers
5. Is a proud wife, mother and grandmother, and member of Sapotewayak Cree Nation Treaty Territory #4



2018-2019 SERVICE PLAN

For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we will measure our performance using key performance indicators in the areas of impact, responsiveness, and accountability.

IMPACT

How MACY is improving:

- Services to all children, youth and young adults to be more responsive to their needs
- Services provided to Indigenous children, youth, young adults, and their families
- Public policies related to services provided to children, youth, and young adults
- Public awareness of issues affecting children, youth, and young adults
- Public awareness and understanding of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

RESPONSIVENESS

How MACY addresses:

- Requests for service from all children, youth, young adults, and their families
- Requests for service from Indigenous children, youth, young adults, and their families
- Notification of the death of a child, youth, or young adult from the Chief Medical Examiner
- The implementation of recommendations issued by MACY
- The needs of children, youth, and young adults across Manitoba through public education and outreach strategies

ACCOUNTABILITY

How MACY maintains:

- Access to the services and knowledge of the office for all Manitobans
- Its commitment to Reconciliation
- Transparency of its work to children, youth, and young adults, to the public, to service systems, and to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, by releasing:
 - Annual reports
 - Service plans
 - Status reports of systems' compliance with recommendations
 - Special reports





Advocacy office

346 Portage Ave., Unit 100,
Winnipeg, MB, R3C 0C3

Call: (204) 988-7440 in Winnipeg
Toll Free: 1-800-263-7146 (Manitoba only)
Fax: (204) 988-7472

Twitter: @MB_Advocate
Facebook: fb.me/ManitobaAdvocate
YouTube: youtube.com/ManitobaAdvocate
Instagram: @manitobaadvocate

Manitoba
Advocate
STAND UP for children & youth

le **D**éfenseur
au Manitoba
DE LA CAUSE des enfants et des jeunes

Manitoba
Natatwéstamákéw
NIPAWISTAWISTÁK ókik awásisak éko oskátisak

Manitoba
Ogiigidootamaage
NIIBAWIN ABINOOJIIYAG zhígwa oshki-ayaag onji

