



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

*Child and Youth*  
**ADVOCATE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2022-2023**



## Our Logo

Symbols matter. The Founding Members of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate created the vision for the logo of the Office, its shape, elements, and colours:

**The Ribbon Human** - a ribbon is a symbol known around the world as a sign of advocacy, of support for a cause. It also transforms into a human shape. The Ribbon Human could be anyone - an infant, a child, a youth, an adult ally, an advocate. It is a radiant gold, shining our shared light and passion as it reaches for every opportunity.

**The Leaves** - trees and leaves are synonymous with growth. Every small seed unlocks the ability to reach the skies, seeks nurturing and an environment that supports its needs. Children and youth can grow in any direction, reach momentous heights, and have great strength.

**The Colours** - a community is strong when we are all included in it. Diversity matters. Differences are celebrated. There is a place for all of us. Having vibrant and unique colours reflect our respect for all children and youth. Each colour has varying tones within it - a nod to the fact that we all have shades within us as we grow and learn.

**The Words** - 'Prince Edward Island' in blue represent both the sky and sea. We adore our Island and all that it gives us. It is solid. It stands to show that decisions made here are guided by recognizing where and who we are. 'Child and Youth' is an action-oriented forest green. Growth and development and action are reflected in the text. 'Advocate' is fuchsia, a colour of passion. The text is sound, solid, and rooted. Advocacy takes both a fueled commitment and an underpinned knowledge.





## Letter of Transmittal

November 15, 2023

The Honourable Darlene Compton  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
197 Richmond Street  
P.O. Box 2000  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7K7

Dear Madam Speaker,

In accordance with Section 30(1) of the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, it is my duty and privilege to submit to you and the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

Respectfully,

Marvin Bernstein, B.A., J.D., LL.M. (ADR)  
Child and Youth Advocate  
Province of Prince Edward Island



We acknowledge we are working on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people who have occupied this land for thousands of years.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is committed to working collaboratively with all Indigenous children, youth and their families.

We acknowledge the harms of our colonial past and we are committed to improving relationships in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on these traditional lands in mutual respect and peace.





## Message from the Advocate

It is my privilege to present to the Legislative Assembly the third Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate covering the period from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

Over three years ago, on July 15, 2020, the Legislative Assembly enacted the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, our independent Office was created, and I was sworn in as Prince Edward Island's first independent Child and Youth Advocate. We started with many challenges. We had to hire staff, establish a vision for the Office, set a path forward, and focus on building an Office that children and youth would trust and see as 'theirs'.

In the past three years, we have grown as an Office and are better able to provide strong advocacy support to children and youth in a variety of circumstances, as illustrated in the individual advocacy case examples described in this Annual Report. Having said that, the issues facing children and youth have become more layered and complex with the passage of time. The needs of children and youth were high prior to the pandemic and have only worsened since then. We still don't know the long-term effects of COVID-19 on children's mental health, potential for educational success and capacity to form enduring social relationships.

Every day, children and youth seek the support of our Office in having their voices heard and their rights respected. As we listen to what they have to say and work with them to develop advocacy strategies, we see the gap between the kind and well-intentioned words contained in strategic plans, frameworks, policies, and even legislation - and the reality of children's lived experiences, including the drifting timelines that cry out for more immediate action.

On a positive note, over this past reporting period, we have seen a growing understanding of the role of our Office by senior management and front-line staff working in reviewable services, and their willingness to engage in difficult, but respectful conversations with our Office. While we attempt to work collaboratively with all reviewable services, there is a natural tension in our oversight role, which encompasses holding government accountable for a standard of service delivery and programs that advance the rights, interests and well-being of Island children and youth.

Notwithstanding the improvement in relationship-building and respect for the work of our Office, we have over this past reporting period seen a continuation of many layers of challenges at a systemic level, negatively impacting the lives of our youngest citizens. These challenges include: an absence, in many cases, of embedded children's rights in provincial legislation and regulations; an absence of accessible, transparent and child-friendly complaints processes across all government child-serving sectors; an inability on the part of children and youth to access and privately communicate, at times, with our Office; an inability by children and youth to participate directly in reviewable service decisions affecting them; an inability on the part of children and youth to access independent legal counsel and have a voice in child protection proceedings; and a lack of a whole-of-government



approach to the implementation of a transparent and self-standing Child Rights Impact Assessment process, even though a motion was unanimously passed to that effect in a prior session of the Legislative Assembly. None of these matters are new and have been raised by our Office for many months, if not years. The children and youth of this province deserve a heightened sense of urgency and more immediate action on all these matters. They should not have to age out of childhood before corrective action is taken. As Anne Frank once said, “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

I want to end my Message with a few expressions of appreciation. First, I wish to thank the many children and youth who have been engaged with our Office over the past year, including the members of this Office’s Child and Youth Advisory Committee. Your courage and willingness to trust and engage with us is what gives meaning to our work. We are privileged to have gotten to know you and to advocate for, and with you.

I next want to take this opportunity to thank all those professionals who work tirelessly in their service of children and youth across all government departments and in our communities, particularly those on the front-line. Your work is rewarding, but also difficult and challenging, especially during times of family crises when children may be at heightened risk. I applaud your commitment and dedication.

I also want to express my gratitude to our staff for their ongoing passion, dedication and service to the children and youth of Prince Edward Island. You have each embraced the values embedded in our Office’s vision and mission statements. You have influenced positive change for the children and youth we serve and set a child rights-respecting blueprint for the future.

Finally, as a province, it is vital that we continue to work together to prioritize and invest in government and community services and programs required to support Island children and youth. We may be a small province, but when we come together with strong resolve and a common purpose, we can set an example for others and lead the country in raising the bar on children’s rights and well-being.

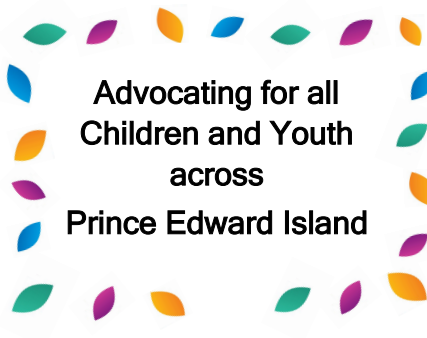
Respectfully submitted,

*Marvin M. Bernstein*

Marvin Bernstein, B.A., J.D., LL.M. (ADR)  
Child and Youth Advocate  
Province of Prince Edward Island



APPIN ROAD MONT-CARMEL YORK GREENWICH ST PETERS ABRAM-VILLAGE HAMPSHIRE FORT AUGUSTUS MILL RIVER EAST SPRINGFIELD WEST WARREN GROVE BELLEVUE  
SPRINGFIELD BURTON STANCHIEL LOWER MONTAGUE ARLINGTON MOUNT MELICK MOUNT TRYON WELLINGTON CENTRE  
PARK CORNER STANACHEL SOUTH FREETOWN EAST POINT GAIROLOCH HERMITAGE ST PATRICKS PISQUID WEST TENMILE HOUSE  
GEORGETOWN ROYALTY BAIE-EGMONT HEAD OF MONTAGUE TIGNISH SHORE POPLAR GROVE RIVERTON RICE POINT  
BRACKLEY ROXBURY PLEASANT GROVE ST MARYS ROAD CARLETON MILO MURRAY HARBOUR NORTH GREEN MEADOWS MAYFIELD  
NEWTOWN CROSS SEACOW POND WHIM ROAD DEGROS MARSH KINROSS EAST BALTIC ALLISTON BELMONT LOT 16 RENNIES ROAD DUNBLANE SPRING VALLEY STANLEY BRIDGE  
GLENFANNING HARRINGTON INVERNESS GLENWILLIAM PETERVILLE DUVAR BRACKLEY BEACH CLERMONT FREELAND BROOKVALE EMYVALE HAMILTON  
DERBY NORTH CARLETON CHARLOTTETOWN DARNLEY INDIAN RIVER WOODSTOCK BRACKLEY BEACH EMERALD COVEHEAD ROAD RICHMOND  
CRAPAUD MERMAID WEST ST PETERS ALBION MISCOUCHE MIMINEGASH NORTHAM WEST POINT KINGSBORO GLENGARRY  
WEST COVEHEAD TIGNISH DARLINGTON BURTON ST-NICHOLAS GLENMARTIN GUERNSEY COVE BROOKFIELD ALBERTON SEA VIEW STRATHCONA  
SOUTH GRANVILLE FRENCH RIVER ST MARGARETS BAY FORTUNE CHERRY VALLEY NORBORO ST ROCH PEMBROKE LAKEVILLE AUBURN  
ANGLO TIGNISH IRIS MURRAY RIVER SOUTH FREETOWN VERNON RIVER ST ANN TRAVELLERS REST AVONDALE MILLVIEW LADY FANE  
DONALDSTON SELKIRK GREENMOUNT STANHOPE HAZELBROOK DUNSTAFFNAGE AVONDALE NORWAY BRUDENELL ANNANDALE LORNE VALLEY  
LAUNCHING MARIE WATERFORD HAMPTON EAST BIDEFORD WATERSIDE VALLEY VICTORIA BIRCH HILL NORWAY ROSEBANK BRIDGETOWN  
GRANDVIEW NORTHPORT KILDARE CAPES KINKORA BELLE RIVER NAIL POND LAKE VERDE MOUNT HERBERT MAPLE PLAINS GRAND TRACADIE  
NINE MILE CREEK BEAR RIVER NORTH NORTH MILTON OYSTER BED BRIDGE ST ANN SOURIS ROCK BARRA HARPER SOUTHWEST LOT 16  
MOUNT PLEASANT OLEARY HUNTER RIVER KELLYS CROSS FRENCHFORT CAPE WOLFE IRISHTOWN WEST DEVON JOHNSTONS RIVER  
AFTON ROAD ROLLO BAY WEST BROCKTON ELLIOTVALE MOUNT ALBION JOHNSTONS RIVER KENSINGTON  
LONG RIVER ST ANDREWS ELDON CUMBERLAND SOUTH LAKE PALMER ROAD MAPLE HILL ST TERESA ROLLO BAY ELMWOOD UIGG  
EBBSFLEET HUNTLEY HAMMONY HOPE RIVER WILMOT VALLEY ST TERESA ROLLO BAY SOUTH MELVILLE MURRAY HARBOUR UNION ROAD  
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TARANTUM BEACH POINT HEAD OF MONTAGUE CENTRAL BEDEQUE MARSHFIELD IONA WINSLOE SOUTH FOXLEY RIVER BORDEN-CARLETON PETERS ROAD BURLINGTON MOUNT STEWART GREENFIELD LEUVILLE BALDWIN ROAD  
NORTH LAKE LONG RIVER GEORGETOWN PORTAGE MARGATE GOWANBRAE ST LAWRENCE SHERBROOKE GLEN VALLEY GOOSE RIVER AUGUSTINE COVE ST CATHERINES WEBSTERS CORNER PANMURE ISLAND DINGWELLS MILLS MORELL OCEAN VIEW  
ELMSDALE FORTUNE COVE VALLEYFIELD BRAE LOWER FREETOWN ST-PHILIPPE ASCENSION NEW HAVEN MILTON STATION GLENWOOD TRACADIE CROSS CHELTON ALMA COLEMAN DESABLE MONTROSE  
CAMBRIDGE WEST CAPE MARIE SPRINGTON ALASKA NEW GLASGOW CONWAY MILLTOWN CROSS EGLINGTON GRANVILLE HEATHERDALE GRAHAMS ROAD CAMPBELLTON  
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BONSHAW CHEPSTOW NEWTON HAZEL GROVE POPLAR POINT ST-PHILIPPE ASCENSION NEW HAVEN MILTON STATION GLENWOOD TRACADIE CROSS CHELTON ALMA COLEMAN DESABLE MONTROSE  
WATERVALE ALBANY NEW ZEALAND CENTRAL LOT 16 ROSE VALLEY SOUTH PINETTE NEW GLASGOW CONWAY MILLTOWN CROSS EGLINGTON GRANVILLE HEATHERDALE GRAHAMS ROAD CAMPBELLTON  
FLAT RIVER ST PETER AND ST PAUL MEADOWBANK ROSEVILLE HOWE BAY GLENCOE URBAINVILLE UNIONVILLE ENMORE UNION CORNER LITTLE POND BAYVIEW NEW DOMINION  
ARGYLE SHORE ST PETER AND ST PAUL MEADOWBANK ROSEVILLE HOWE BAY GLENCOE URBAINVILLE UNIONVILLE ENMORE UNION CORNER LITTLE POND BAYVIEW NEW DOMINION  
CHRISTOPHER CROSS PEAKES KINGSTON MELVILLE FREETOWN BLOOMFIELD ROCKY POINT PLEASANT VIEW GLENFINNAN VERNON BRIDGE MORELL EAST HEAD OF HILLSBOROUGH  
GREEN BAY NORTH TRYON CENTRAL KILDARE ST GEORGES CHERRY HILL CABLE HEAD WEST UNIONVILLE ENMORE UNION CORNER LITTLE POND BAYVIEW NEW DOMINION  
ST FELIX BETHEL WHEATLEY RIVER ST-HUBERT PLEASANT VIEW GLENFINNAN VERNON BRIDGE MORELL EAST HEAD OF HILLSBOROUGH  
BLOOMFIELD CORNER MONTICELLO CALEDONIA SKINNERS POND MOUNT BUCHANAN MONTAGUE WOODVALE HEARON LITTLE SANDS PORT HILL MIDDELL TRYON  
MOUNT VERNON LOWER BEDEQUE LENNOX ISLAND SKINNERS POND MOUNT BUCHANAN MONTAGUE WOODVALE HEARON LITTLE SANDS PORT HILL MIDDELL TRYON



**Advocating for all  
Children and Youth  
across  
Prince Edward Island**







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# Background

On July 15, 2020, Marvin Bernstein was sworn in as an independent officer of the PEI Legislative Assembly and the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* was proclaimed law following decades of public calls for an independent office to protect the rights of PEI children and youth. On the same day, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was officially opened.

## Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

The PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* (the “*Act*”) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (referred to in the *Act’s* Preamble) combine to serve as the guiding legal framework for the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

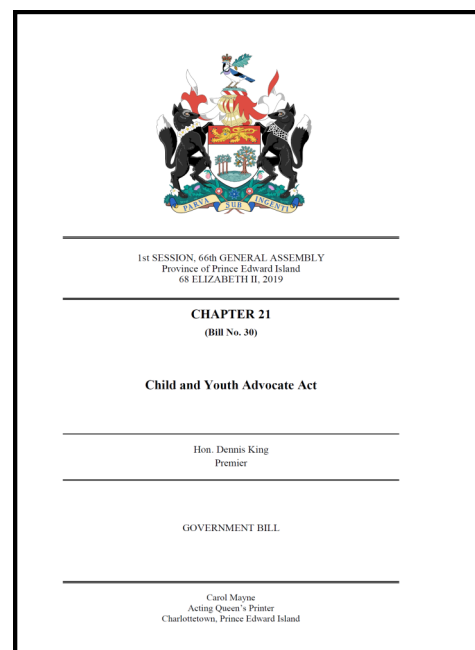
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) applies to every child in the world from birth to age 18 years. It is the most ratified of all United Nations Human Rights Treaties in the world. It has been ratified by 196 nations globally, with Canada ratifying it on December 13, 1991.

The Convention consists of 54 inter-related and inter-dependent articles on children’s human rights. There are three categories of children’s rights in the Convention, often referred to as “the 3 Ps”:

- **Protection** from all forms of harm and exploitation
- **Provision** of resources needed for healthy development and survival such as food, health, shelter, and education
- **Participation** by being active participants in their own lives and in society

The Convention contains four categories of guiding or general principles for all children and youth:

- **Right to non-discrimination** in the provision and exercise of all Convention rights (Article 2)
- **Right to have the best interests of the child treated as a primary consideration** in all actions concerning children (Article 3)
- **Right to life, survival and maximum possible development** (Article 6)
- **Right to express views freely and have those views respected** in all matters affecting children (Article 12)



# Vision ~ Mission ~ Mandate



## VISION

A province where every child and youth experiences the realization of all their human rights and have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

## MISSION

To raise awareness and uphold the child rights principles expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, while amplifying the voices of children and youth, modelling dignity and respect for children, youth and their families in all aspects of our work.




## MANDATE

To empower and promote the human rights of all PEI children and youth through advocacy, reviews, investigations, public education, research and child/youth engagement in accordance with the authority and responsibilities set out in the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.






# Office of the Child and Youth Advocate



Child and Youth  
Advocate  
Marvin Bernstein



Deputy Child and  
Youth Advocate  
Rona Smith



Office Manager -  
Executive Assistant  
Penny Woodgate



Investigation/Research  
Representative  
Kathleen MacNabb



Advocacy  
Representative  
Erica Evans



Systemic  
Investigation/Research  
Representative  
Simone Waller



Advocacy  
Representative  
Merissa Mitchell





# Canadian Council of Child & Youth Advocates

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) is an association of Children's Advocates, Representatives and Ombudspersons from across Canada. Members of the CCCYA are independent officers of the legislatures in their respective jurisdictions with legislated mandates to promote and protect children's human rights through complaint resolution, advice to government, amplification of child and youth voices, and public education functions.

## CCCYA Vision

*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.*

Members of the CCCYA work to do this by:

- Encouraging the fullest possible implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Supporting collective advocacy for children's rights.
- Sharing information, approaches and strategies.
- Working with governments, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments, and others with child and youth-serving roles.
- Promoting the development of effective independent offices for children.
- Engaging/cooperating with other child and youth-serving organizations nationally and internationally to contribute to advancing the rights of children world-wide.

## CCCYA Activities

During this past reporting period, the CCCYA met on three occasions and issued the following four media statements, which can be found at <https://www.cccya.ca/reports-and-statements/>

- November 17, 2022: *National Council for Children and Youth Seeks Progress on Health and Welfare in Recognition of National Child Day*
- June 14, 2022: *Committee on the Rights of the Child Releases its 2022 Concluding Observations for Canada*
- May 17, 2022: *Canada Appears Before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. CCCYA Calls for Concrete Action on Improving Respect for Children's Rights*
- April (n.d.) 2022: *Additional Information submitted in advance of Canada's Plenary Session*

# What Does the Child and Youth Advocate Do?



# YEAR IN REVIEW

Below is a summary of activities undertaken by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and results achieved during the reporting period April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. The activities are reported in alignment with the statutory role and responsibilities of the Child and Youth Advocate as mandated by the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, s. 12 (1) and (2).

## PROMOTE AND EDUCATE

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has responsibility to:

- Promote the rights, interests and well-being of children and youth.
- Advocate for children, youth and their families respecting reviewable services.
- Promote and provide education on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it affects children and youth.
- Promote the rights of children and youth in relation to Government legislation, regulations, policies, protocols, procedures, practices and reviewable services to children and youth.
- Receive and review any matter in relation to a reviewable service with respect to a child or youth or a group of children and youth.



Over the past year, staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Received, reviewed, researched, and provided written submissions on government proposed legislative amendments and policies to include:
  - Presentation and submission to the PEI Legislature Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth entitled *Children's Rights and Education in Prince Edward Island*.
  - Presentation and submission to the PEI Legislature Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth entitled *Bill 129 an Act to Amend the Early Learning and Childcare Act*.
- Promoted knowledge about children's rights through group presentations and individual advocacy interactions with children and youth, including the distribution of child rights-based resources and materials.
- Issued correspondence to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Social Development and Housing to request the Deputy Minister's direct support and facilitation for recruitment of children and youth in care to fill vacancies on the Child and Youth Advisory Committee to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and to request that, on a monthly basis, an updated and de-identified data report be sent to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to include the total number of children in care, by age, including the number of children in care placed in group care and the number of children in care placed in foster care.
- Conducted a successful public recruitment campaign for appointment of four new child and youth members to the Child and Youth Advisory Committee to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to include representation from Prince County, Queens County and Kings County.
- Facilitated monthly meetings of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.





- Promoted awareness of the role and function of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and children’s rights through presentations, individual advocacy meetings, community partner meetings and media interviews to include:
  - Posted submissions, special reports, correspondence, Op Eds and links to Child and Youth Advocate media interviews on the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate website at [www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca).
  - Submitted an Op Ed to print media entitled *Violence Against Children in Never Justifiable*.
  - Issued a media Press Release entitled *Raising the Bar on Children’s Rights on PEI* in recognition of National Child Day.
  - Participated in a video prepared by the Early Childhood Development Association of PEI for National Child Day.
  - Participated and presented at the International Summer Course on Children’s Rights.
  - Provided presentations to Public Service Commission government employees, students and staff of the Public Schools Branch, Student Well Being Teams, and Pediatric Health Care Providers
  - Participated in joint meeting with staff of the Office of the Children’s Lawyer and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to promote shared learning on roles and responsibilities.
  - Participated in joint meeting with staff of the PEI Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to promote shared learning on roles and responsibilities.
  - Participated in joint meeting with the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to promote shared learning on roles and responsibilities.
  - Participated in monthly meetings of the IWK/Dalhousie Department of Pediatrics Advocacy & Action Committee, representing the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/PEI.
  - Participated in National and Provincial Child and Youth Law Sections of the Canadian Bar Association meetings, representing the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/PEI.
- Provided media interviews, as requested, in response to:
  - Proposed changes to the PEI *Early Learning and Child Care Act*.
  - Vulnerable Sector Checks in Early Child Care Centres.
  - Supreme Court of Canada decision involving a child removed from the care of his grandmother by PEI Child Protection Services.
  - Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island decision involving vaccine-hesitant parent.
  - Office of the Child and Youth Advocate press release notification of decision to investigate the 2020 death of a child.
  - Office of the Child and Youth Advocate press release in recognition of National Child Day.

*“You’ve been an excellent help. Thank you so much.”*  
- Parent



- Provided consultation, as requested, on proposed government legislation and policies to include:
  - Draft PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*
  - Bill No. 129 - PEI *Early Learning and Child Care Act*
  - Public Schools Branch - Safe and Caring Learning Environments Policy - Draft *Guidelines for School Attire and Dress Code Development*
  - Public Schools Branch - Safe and Caring Learning Environments Policy - Student Complaint Policy - discussions
  - PEI Climate Action Plan
- Requested, received, reviewed, researched and consulted with child serving reviewable services to promote and embed appropriate child-rights based complaint mechanisms for programs and services delivered to children, youth and their families, to include:
  - Continued to advocate and recommend that child-rights based complaint resolution processes be embedded in provincial statutes and regulations to include PEI *Education Act*, PEI *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, PEI *Child Protection Act* with specific focus on proposed amendments to draft bill entitled PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*.
  - Continued to advocate and recommend that child-rights based complaint resolution processes be embedded in child friendly stand-alone policies and procedures to include Public Schools Branch Safe and Caring Learning Environments Policies and Procedures.
- Participated in meetings with Clerk of Executive Council, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and senior officials of child serving government departments.
- Corresponded with the Deputy Minister of the Department of Social Development and Housing to provide an overview of the position of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate on the increasing pervasiveness of the issue of educational neglect/chronic school absenteeism impacting the rights of PEI children and youth. This correspondence highlighted a required collaborative approach involving direct participation of children, youth and their families, in collaboration with multiple child serving government and community organizations working together, with support available by the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. The correspondence further noted legislative and policy reform as a corner-stone requirement to effect sustainable and meaningful change to ensure the realization of every child's right to an education in PEI.
- Conducted a cross jurisdictional scan of child protection legislation in Canada to inform additional recommendations to strengthen the rights of children in care and the rights of children in receipt of Child Protection Services as provided to the Department of Social Development and Housing to inform continued discussions on draft bill PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. This brought the total number of recommendations for the draft bill, as submitted by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, from 20 previously submitted in 2021, to a new total of 23 to include the addition of the following 3 recommendations submitted to the Department in 2022:
  - Include educational neglect in the definition of emotional harm
  - Include child's right to access own personal information
  - Amend proposed exceptions to rights of Director of Child Protection to not apply to information in the possession of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate or Ombudsperson

- Continued to participate in discussions with the Department of Social Development and Housing on proposed amendments to draft bill PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* to include:
  - Development of a Table of Concordance - noting full consensus between the Department of Social Development and Housing and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was reached on only one of 20 recommendations, as of August 2022, with the remaining 19 recommendations considered to have either partial or no compliance. The last joint meeting with department representatives was in November 2022 at which time the Department expressed verbal intention to be in compliance with all recommendations of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate before tabling the bill in the PEI Legislature. Compliance with the additional three recommendations is to be determined.
- Corresponded with the Ministers and Deputy Ministers responsible for the Departments of Social Development and Housing, Education and Lifelong Learning and Health and Wellness to highlight increasing trend in calls to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate specific to children and youth not attending school and to encourage a collaborative process informed by data and research, in consultation with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, to realize the human right of every PEI child and youth to go to school and benefit from an education that helps them fully develop their talents and abilities.
- Corresponded in writing on multiple occasions, to the three elected political party Leaders on issues relevant to the rights of PEI children and youth, to include having provided:
  - An electronic copy of a PowerPoint slide deck as presented by the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate at the International Summer Institute on the Rights of the Child held in Moncton and as posted to the office website at [www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca).
  - An electronic copy of a plain language summary of the 20 recommendations advanced by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate in response to the proposed draft *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* entitled “A Necessary Paradigm Shift in Child Protection Legislation for PEI: *Plain Language Summary of the 20 OCYA Recommendations in response to the draft Child, Youth and Family Services Act*.”
  - Electronic copies of Supplementary Alternative Submissions to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) and the CCCYA, noting the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was a contributor to both reports which are published to the UN website, highlighting Prince Edward Island’s presence on the international child rights stage.
  - Electronic copy of the CCCYA Media Statement concerning Canada’s hybrid appearance before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on May 17 and 18, 2022, with a request that each political caucus consider how PEI as a province can encourage Canada to take a more active role in addressing long-standing national children’s rights issues and how PEI can promote and protect the human rights of all children and youth in PEI by implementing recommendations delivered to Canada that fall under provincial jurisdiction.
  - Email correspondence to the three political party Leaders in response to statements made in the PEI Legislature related to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate regarding the description of a meeting held with representatives of the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, noting the meeting was an information-sharing session only and as a statutory office, reference to a consultation signifies more than simply having a conversation and sharing information. In this correspondence, the Child and Youth Advocate expressed serious reservations about the elimination of Vulnerable Sector Checks for any employee of an early learning and childcare centre.



- Corresponded with PEI Members of Parliament, as copied to the federal Ministers of Public Safety and Justice and Attorney General, three PEI political party Leaders, Chair and Clerk of the PEI Legislature Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth, outlining concerns for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) interpretation of the federal *Criminal Records Act* specific to vulnerable sector checks and implications for PEI young children with regard to proposed provincial amendments to the PEI *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and Regulations.

The purpose of the Child and Youth Advocate’s correspondence was to request the following actions for the PEI Members of Parliament individual and collective consideration:

- Advise and recommend that the Federal Minister of Public Safety intercede with the RCMP and direct them to apply a more liberal and child-centred interpretation of the *Criminal Records Act* specific to vulnerable records check requirements for all persons employed or volunteering with early learning and childcare centres. In this regard, section 12 of the federal *Interpretation Act* states that “*Every enactment is deemed to be remedial, and shall be given such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation as best ensures the attainment of its objects.*”
- Advise and recommend that the Federal Minister of Public Safety and the Federal Minister of Justice apply a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) to the relevant provisions of the *Criminal Records Act*, having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Child (UNCRC) articles that are potentially impacted and identified in the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate’s written submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth, dated January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the tools being developed by the federal Department of Justice.
- Co-Chaired the CCCYA Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) Working Group.
- Advocated to, and participated in meetings with, Executive Council Office to promote a whole-of-government implementation of Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) pursuant to Motion 70 entitled *Calling on government to use a Childs’ Rights Impact Assessment on all policy and legislative development*, as amended to be in consultation with the Child and Youth Advocate, and previously passed unanimously in the PEI Legislature available at:

[https://www.assembly.pe.ca/index.php/legislativebusiness/houserecords/motions#/service/LegislativeAssemblyMotions/LegislativeAssemblyMotionView;e=LegislativeAssemblyMotionView;id=95ea0158-8b3c-46e6-af7f-caac52aab18c;motion\\_number=70;general\\_assembly=66;session=2](https://www.assembly.pe.ca/index.php/legislativebusiness/houserecords/motions#/service/LegislativeAssemblyMotions/LegislativeAssemblyMotionView;e=LegislativeAssemblyMotionView;id=95ea0158-8b3c-46e6-af7f-caac52aab18c;motion_number=70;general_assembly=66;session=2)

## ADVOCATE

The Child and Youth Advocate has responsibility to advocate and promote the rights of children, youth and their families receiving or eligible to receive reviewable services. This includes direct engagement, with and on behalf of, children, youth and their families to include providing information and advice; representing the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth; and assisting children and youth to initiate and participate in processes in which reviewable service decisions are made about them.

Advocacy comes from the Latin word ‘advocare’ and often involves a method or an approach to change laws, policies, practices, attitudes, and power imbalances in relationships and behaviors. Child and youth advocates work to promote and protect the human rights of children and youth. Everyone can be an advocate - children, youth, parents, families, professionals, politicians and members of the public.

Advocacy involves actively listening to the views of another person and providing information to help people make informed decisions. Advocates do not add their personal opinions, solve problems or make decisions or judgements. Advocates listen and, through exploration of the person's views and identified priorities, assist the person in identifying a range of options for consideration and action by the person.

The PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* provides a roadmap for the different types of advocacy designed to promote and protect the human rights of all PEI children and youth, to include individual advocacy and systemic advocacy.

The four elements of individual advocacy are:

- Individual Advocacy is voluntary.
- Individual Advocacy is confidential.
- Individual Advocacy is child/youth led.
- Individual Advocacy is rooted in children's rights, as set out in the UNCRC.



The four elements of systemic advocacy are:

- Systemic Advocacy involves a group of children/youth receiving or eligible to receive a reviewable service
- Systemic Advocacy involves reviewing and/or investigating laws, regulations, policies, protocols, procedures and/or practices inherent to reviewable programs and services delivered to children, youth and their families.
- Systemic Advocacy recommendations are informed by research, evidence and a child rights analysis.
- Systemic Advocacy recommendations are intended to make improvements to reviewable services to advance the human rights of children/youth consistent with the UNCRC.

Individual and systemic advocacy activities of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate are in compliance with the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* and consistent with the UNCRC. The provision of individual advocacy support directly with children and youth is further fostered by research, to include Laura Lundy's model (2007, *British Educational Research Journal*), as a way to conceptualize, in particular, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- **Space:** Children must be given the opportunity to express a view.
- **Voice:** Children must be facilitated to express their views.
- **Audience:** The view must be listened to.
- **Influence:** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

Over the past year, staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Received and assessed 227 individual advocacy requests involving 273 children and youth.
- Received, reviewed and provided advocacy support in relation to a reviewable service involving groups of children and youth including:
  - Groups of children/youth experiencing bullying in schools.
  - Groups of children/youth expressing personal safety concerns in schools.



- Groups of children/youth feeling that their views did not matter and they had no recourse to a child-friendly complaint process. It is important to note that this is an identified trend of concerns reported to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate involving more than one reviewable service sector.
- Groups of children/youth experiencing transphobia, including ‘dead-naming’ by reviewable service providers. It is important to note that this is an identified trend of concerns reported to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate involving more than one reviewable service sector.
- Provided navigational support for inquiries assessed to be outside the scope and mandate of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, by providing contact information for programs and services available across the province to include Government departments and community-based organizations. Most calls assessed to be outside the mandate of the Office are related to legal issues, noting the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate does not provide legal advice to any person.
- Provided individual navigational and informational advocacy to adult family members and professionals concerned about the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth engaged with reviewable services. Most navigation and information calls to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate involve an Advocacy Representative providing contact information for government and/or community organizations so the adult family member or professional can continue their own advocacy efforts on behalf of a child or youth. Often, these calls involve providing information on how to make a complaint within a reviewable service in response to callers expressing frustration in being able to mediate or find an effective problem-solving remedy to a reviewable service delivery issue on behalf of a child or youth.
- Provided direct one-to-one individual advocacy support to children and youth, noting most calls received by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate involve concerns about the rights of children in care and children, youth and families receiving Child Protection Services.
- Initiated and participated in case conferences with reviewable service providers on behalf of children and youth. Most child and youth-led requests for an Advocacy Representative to initiate a case conference with a reviewable service involve Child Protection Services, Public Schools Branch, Social Programs, Health and Mental Health programs and services.
- Identified emerging systemic trends impacting the rights of children and youth to include, but not limited to, the following examples:
  - Children in care placed in group homes reporting a range of issues impacting their rights, to include but not limited to, children and youth being denied access to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.
  - Access to timely and appropriate mental health services for children and youth.
  - Absence of children’s rights provisions embedded in provincial statutes and regulations responsible for the delivery of reviewable programs and services to PEI children, youth and their families.
  - Lack of transparent child-rights based policies and complaint mechanisms across all reviewable service sectors.

**“The work you are doing is so important. This is so great for PEI. Your presentation and work is wonderful.”**

**- Professional**





## REVIEW AND INVESTIGATE

The Child and Youth Advocate has mandatory and discretionary authority for individual, systemic and child and youth serious injury and death reviews and investigations.

The mandatory role and responsibility of the Child and Youth Advocate is defined pursuant to the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, s. 12 (1), to include, but not limited to:

- Advocating for children, youth and their families respecting reviewable services.
- Receiving and reviewing any matter in relation to a reviewable service.
- Promoting and providing public education and advocacy on child rights.
- Monitoring implementation of recommendations made by the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Promoting children's rights in relation to Government legislation, policies, protocols, practices and reviewable services.
- Working with others to support child well-being.
- Initiating or collaborating in research to improve reviewable services.

The discretionary authority of the Child and Youth Advocate is defined pursuant to the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, s. 12 (2), to include, but not limited to:

- Receiving and investigating any matter than comes to the Advocate's attention from any source concerning:
  - a child or youth who receives or is eligible to receive a reviewable service.
  - a group of children or youth who receive or are eligible to receive a reviewable service.
  - a reviewable service for children and youth.
- On the Child and Youth Advocate's own initiative, or at the request of a child or youth, assist in appealing or reviewing a decision relating to a reviewable service.
- Review, investigate and report on the serious injury or death of a child or youth.

Pursuant to the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, s. 15, the Child and Youth Advocate may require a reviewable service to provide any information considered necessary by the Child and Youth Advocate to carry out both mandatory and discretionary functions of the *Act*.

Individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, and child and youth serious injury and death reviews and investigations by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate are confidential processes that involve:

- Review of reviewable service records, policies and procedures.
- Interviews with children, youth, groups of children and youth, family members, representatives of reviewable services and any other person or group of persons deemed appropriate, to gather additional context for information obtained from the record review, noting names of persons interviewed are kept confidential.
- Research on evidence-based/best-promising practices.
- Application of a child rights focus consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Consultation with subject-matter experts to inform recommendations.
- Public reporting of investigation results.



Over the past year, staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Received, reviewed and documented reports identifying individual advocacy trends and systemic issues impacting the rights of PEI children and youth for review and investigation consideration by the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Conducted a jurisdictional scan of child and youth advocacy offices across the country specific to systemic advocacy policies and procedures.
- Conducted research on child welfare legislation to inform additional recommendations to strengthen amendments to the draft bill entitled PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*.
- Reviewed proposed student dress code guideline document entitled *Guidelines for School Attire and Dress Code Development for the Education Authorities* as forwarded to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate on behalf of the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and as drafted by the Interministerial Women's Secretariat:
  - Conducted research on school-based dress codes through application of a rights lens.
  - Provided feedback to the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and Public Schools Branch specific to concerns identified by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to include the importance:
    - for children and youth to see final draft.
    - to seriously consider the potential negative impact of having a variety of dress codes in individual schools (even with standardized guidelines).
    - consider how the guidelines will be administered and enforced and how the guidelines are linked into a student complaints policy.
    - to consider the role of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate when a student is identified as having violated a school dress code or the guidelines generally.
- Issued a Press Release to give public notification of the Child and Youth Advocate's decision to conduct an independent investigation into reviewable services provided to a PEI child at the centre of the Supreme Court of Canada decision *B.J.T. v. J.T.* <https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/19412/index.do>.



## CHILD AND YOUTH SERIOUS INJURY AND DEATH

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is responsible to receive reports of all child and youth serious injuries and deaths. There is a public reporting duty requiring any person who has knowledge of a serious injury or death of a child or youth to report the information to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

There is also a specific duty for all reviewable services and every government program or community organization that provides a reviewable service to a child or youth, or their families, to report the serious injury or death if the child, youth or their family, has received services within the previous two years.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has authority to review child and youth serious injuries and deaths, where one or more reviewable services were provided to the child, youth, or their family within a two year period immediately preceding either the serious injury or death. There are specific criteria the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate must consider when determining to move from a review to an investigation.

Child and youth serious injury and death reviews and investigations conducted under the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* seek to:

- Identify systemic issues that may arise from a review of the child or youth's serious injury or death circumstances.
- Identify potential enhancements to reviewable legislation, regulations, policies, programs or services that could benefit children or youth who receive reviewable services in the future.
- Make recommendations for systemic improvements to reviewable programs or services provided to children, youth and their families.
- Where possible, make recommendations about how similar child or youth serious injury or death may be prevented in the future.

Over the past year, staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Participated in the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocate's Community of Practice for Child and Youth Serious Injury and Death Investigators Working Group.
- Continued to receive reports of child and youth serious injuries and deaths.
- Completed one child death review and issued notifications to family members and reviewable services of decision to investigate the child's death.
- Issued a Press Release to notify the public of the Child and Youth Advocate's decision to investigate the death of a child as reported in 2020.
- Completed acquisition of records from reviewable services for one reported child death and continued to review the child's death.
- Continued to participate on the Health PEI Working Group established to ensure health system compliance with the PEI Child and Youth Advocate Act mandatory reporting requirement for child and youth serious injuries and deaths.
- Completed drafting Child and Youth Serious Injury and Death policies for the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Finalized the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) Child and Youth Serious Injury and Death Classification table.
- Continued consultation with child and youth advocate offices across Canada to determine policies, protocols and practices implemented by various offices for the conduct of child and youth serious injury and death reviews and investigations, development of recommendations for prevention, and reporting of findings.

***All serious injuries and deaths of PEI children and youth, regardless of the cause and manner of the serious injury or death, are required by law to be reported to the Child and Youth Advocate.***

## MONITOR

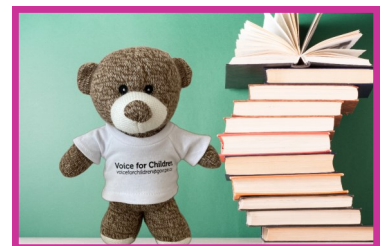
The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is responsible to monitor implementation of and compliance with recommendations included in reports made by the Child and Youth Advocate.

Over the past year, staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Continued discussions with the Department of Social Development and Housing on proposed amendments to the draft PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* to include the status of 20 previously submitted recommendations and three additional new recommendations submitted by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate for a total of 23 recommendations.
- Prepared a plain language version of the recommendations for amendments to the draft PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* and posted to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate website [www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca).
- Issued correspondence to the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, Public Schools Branch and Commission scolaire de langue française to monitor implementation of recommendations by the Child and Youth Advocate as submitted to the PEI Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth.
- Reviewed the PEI Legislature Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth Fourth Report of the Second Session, Sixty-sixth General Assembly, Committee Activities, recommendations on the topic of the rights of children and youth #9, #10, and #11 recommendations that government consult with the Child and Youth Advocate on proposed amendments to the *Education Act* to include a comprehensive child rights section for students; develop and implement operational student complaint/reporting policy and review school dress codes.
- Conducted a jurisdictional scan of child and youth advocacy offices across Canada regarding methods used to monitor and track implementation of recommendations to inform development of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate processes to monitor and track implementation of Child and Youth Advocate's recommendations.
- Continued to document and monitor systemic trends identified through individual advocacy to inform prioritization of systemic reviews and investigations pending successful permanent staffing of Systemic Investigation/Research Representative position.

## RESEARCH

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is responsible to undertake or collaborate in research related to improving reviewable services. The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate may conduct or contract for research for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of a reviewable service.



Over the past year, staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Conducted ongoing jurisprudence reviews and analysis along with literature reviews to inform individual advocacy and systemic advocacy issues impacting the rights of PEI children and youth.
- Conducted reviews of academic and grey literature to identify risk factors for child death as well as review of best/promising practices to identify potential opportunities for improvements in reviewable services to prevent child and youth serious injuries and deaths in the future.

## ADMINISTRATION

The role and function of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is to employ persons necessary to assist the Child and Youth Advocate in carrying out the statutory functions of the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.

Over the past year, the following administrative activities of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate were actioned:

- Completed a successful staffing recruitment process for an Advocacy Representative position
- Supported staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to participate in professional development, to include:
  - Supporting Equitable Transitions to Adulthood
  - Canada's Dialogue with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
  - Domestic Violence and Children Caught in the Middle
  - How to Advance Children's Rights Through the Sustainable Development Goals
  - Mental Health and Addictions - Suicide Prevention
  - Rethinking Child Welfare Services: Trauma-Informed Approaches
  - Raising Canada 2022: When Kids Thrive, Canada Thrives
  - PEI Alliance for Mental Well Being Conference
  - Lessons from a Rural Inquest
  - Understanding Coercive Control Against Children: Impacts and Supportive Responses
  - National Guidelines - Medical Evaluation and Treatment
  - Children Bereaved by Domestic Homicide
  - Combatting Online Child Sexual Exploitation
  - Understanding Outputs vs. Outcomes
  - Off-Reserve Indigenous Children's Rights
  - Living with Coercive Control: Youth Perspectives
  - Child Youth Advocacy Centers - Child Focused Settings
  - Online Trauma Course
  - Intentionally Marginalized Communities: The Violence we see in relationships, families and systems in Canada
  - Gender-based Violence in Schools and the Intersectional Experience of Black-Canadian Girls
  - Impact of Trauma
  - Surviving Post-Separation Abuse: Supporting Survivors After Escaping Domestic Violence
  - Considerations for Meaningful Collaboration with Indigenous Elders
  - Understanding the Realities of Gender Diverse Peoples
- Participated in the Candle Lighting Ceremony at the Montreal Massacre Memorial Service hosted by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Implemented an electronic case management system
- Finalized the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Strategic Plan 2022-2023 and posted to the office website at [www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca)
- Finalized Individual Advocacy policy of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

- Finalized the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Consultation Policy and posted to the office website at [www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca)
- Continued administration of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate website [www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca)
- Appointed a Deputy Child and Youth Advocate
- Promoted the Executive Administrative Assistant to Office Manager - Executive Assistant
- Conducted ongoing literature reviews to inform individual advocacy issues impacting the rights of children and youth
- Conducted jurisdictional scans to inform advice and recommendations to include:
  - Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks
  - School dress codes
  - Bullying in schools
  - Transphobia and child and youth gender diversity
  - Educational neglect / chronic school absenteeism
  - Child friendly complaint policies and procedures
  - Children's rights embedded in child protection laws in Canada

## REPORTS

The Child and Youth Advocate is required to report the results of an investigation to the reviewable service subject to the investigation and any other person the Advocate considers appropriate.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate may compile and analyze information received for reviews of child and youth serious injury or death and from investigations conducted to produce a report of the compiled and analyzed information that does not contain information in individually identifiable form.

In order to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of reviewable services, the Child and Youth Advocate may make a special report that includes recommendations respecting reviewable services.

The Child and Youth Advocate shall prepare an annual report that may contain information the Child and Youth Advocate considers appropriate but shall contain, at a minimum, a report on the activities of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, the outcomes expected in the fiscal year in which the report is made, and the results achieved in the previous fiscal year.

Over the past year, the Child and Youth Advocate:

- Submitted an Annual Report for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on March 21, 2023, in fulfillment of the legislative requirement of the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.





# STATISTICS—OVERVIEW

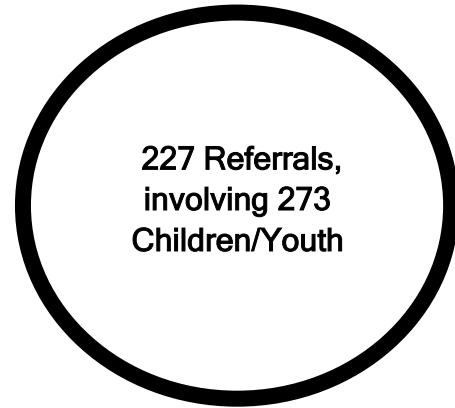
Over the past year, PEI children and youth have continued to bravely share their lived experiences with staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate with the hope of having their voices heard and their views considered when reviewable service providers are making decisions that impact their lives.

Actively listening to the lived experiences of children and youth is often very challenging for most adults. Over the past year, Advocacy Representatives have been privileged to be physically and emotionally present with children and youth as they identify their priorities for reviewable service providers in helping them address significant complexities in their young lives. We remain grateful and privileged to serve PEI children and youth and to bear witness to their pursuit in having their human rights actualized.

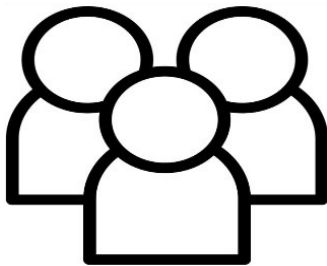
The following non-identifying data is presented with the understanding that data alone does not reflect the lived experiences of children, youth and their families. Each data point represents a child or youth seeking help to have their human rights realized while in receipt of a reviewable service, or a concerned adult contacting the Office on behalf of the rights of a child or youth or a group of children or youths.



## Individual Advocacy Referrals



## Callers



52% Parents                      6% Child/Youth  
31% Professionals            11% Family/Friends/Public

## Primary Reason for Call



38% Child Safety / Protection  
12% Custody / Access  
18% Education  
17% Mental Health  
11% Health / Legal / Other

## Ages of Children and Youth Involved



50% Birth - 11 years  
44% 11 - 17 years  
\* 6% age unknown



# Children's Rights Issues in Prince Edward Island

## Top Rights Issues Requiring Protection and Promotion by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

Every child and youth in Prince Edward Island has inherent human rights. These rights are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the most ratified of all United Nations Human Rights Treaties in the world. The Convention guarantees and sets minimum standards for protecting the human rights of all children from birth to age 18 years.

The PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* sets out the statutory responsibilities of the Child and Youth Advocate as supported by staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. All activities of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate are guided by the UNCRC. During the reporting period April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, the following children's rights issues impacting PEI children and youth were consistently reported to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Article 9 – Right to contact with family



Article 12 – Right to be heard

Article 24 – Right to physical and mental health care



Article 25 – Right to have government monitor the individual care of children & youth when being cared for away from their home

Article 28 – Right to a good quality education



Article 29 – Right to education that helps develop talents and abilities





# INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

Individual advocacy supports are provided directly to children and youth. All advocacy is child and youth led, meaning Advocacy Representatives take instruction directly from the child or youth. The Advocacy Representative provides safe space for the child or youth to express their views about reviewable service decisions impacting them. Advocacy Representatives are not decision makers, rather, their role is to be a conduit for a child or youth to participate and have their views considered by reviewable service providers who are the decision makers.

Individual advocacy, through a child rights lens, involves developing a trusting relationship with a child or youth, actively listening to the views of the child or youth and empowering the child or youth with information about how reviewable service decisions are made about the child or youth. When reviewable service decision makers are making a determination of the best interests of the child or youth, Advocacy Representatives encourage adults to provide children and youth with information about *how* the decision was made. This does not mean that children and youth always get the outcome they had hoped for, rather, the important factor is that the adults have listened to the child or youth's views and taken the child or youth's views seriously and adults have explained their decision making to the child or youth. Information sharing and transparent communication are helpful processes for all children, youth and adults.

Advocacy Representatives often use a jigsaw puzzle analogy when providing advocacy support to children and youth. It is the job of reviewable service providers to put all of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together when making a decision about the best interests of the child or youth. The Advocacy Representative explains that a very important piece of the jigsaw puzzle for the reviewable service providers is to consider the child's perspective by ensuring the child's participation in the decision making process.



# INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY – OVERVIEWS

Staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate receive requests for individual child and youth advocacy support from across the province ranging from requests for information and navigational support to direct assistance to children and youth.

Most calls received are from adults. Staff will always ask the caller's relationship to a child or youth. When a child or youth calls the Office directly, staff provide a same business day response.

\*Please note that the names provided in the case examples that follow are pseudonyms.



## The Right to Express Views and for Those Views to be Given Due Weight – John's Story

### Context

John, a 14-year-old youth, made a call to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate from school. John had made a disclosure to school staff and was awaiting the arrival of a social worker from Child Protection Services (CPS) to interview him at school. John requested advocacy supports during the interview with CPS. John had previously made disclosures of physical and emotional harm and he had been interviewed by CPS. John wanted to ensure that he was given the opportunity to explain his perspective, be listened to by CPS, and for adults to take his views seriously.

### Process

This advocacy case was time sensitive as John was calling regarding a CPS interview that was due to take place that day. John was concerned about talking with CPS social workers. The Advocacy Representative asked if John would like to have an Advocacy Representative present at the meeting. John asked, "*Can you do that? Can you come now?*" The Advocacy Representative explained that all children and youth have the right to communicate with an Advocacy Representative in private and in confidence, and the right to have assistance from an Advocacy Representative when meeting with reviewable service providers when decisions are being made about them, per the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. The Advocacy Representative contacted the school Principal to confirm that the Advocacy Representative would be coming to the school to provide individual advocacy supports to a student meeting with CPS.

Upon arrival at school, the Advocacy Representative met with John in the School Counsellor's office. John was noticeably experiencing stress and the Advocacy Representative spent time building trust through sensitive and gentle interactions, ensuring that John could fully exercise his rights to decline advocacy support should he so wish. Time was taken to explain to John that Advocacy Representatives are not decision makers, but they have a role to ensure that children and youth have the opportunity to express their views when communicating with adult decision makers. John had multiple questions about what would happen during the interview and what decisions could be made. The Advocacy Representative took time to record John's priorities and questions for the CPS social workers in preparation for the interview.

*"I'm glad you are with me. I have someone here to make sure I have my voice heard this time"*

- John

## John's Story (Continued)

When the CPS social workers arrived at the school, the Advocacy Representative introduced herself and took time to explain her role. Individual advocacy is becoming increasingly visible for professionals working in reviewable services, and it is part of the role of the Advocacy Representative to provide education about children's rights, the mandate of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, and the role of the Advocacy Representative. John was then interviewed by the two CPS social workers at the school about the disclosure he had made before being transported for two additional interviews at the CPS office. John's Advocacy Representative was present at all three interviews, providing support for John to talk through his list of points that he wanted to communicate to CPS and to ask the questions he had about what would happen next. The Advocacy Representative took time to check in with John during the interviews to ensure he understood responses from the CPS social workers and to clarify if he had further questions.

During the CPS interviews, John had questions that the social workers were unable to answer. The social workers explained to John that these questions would be best directed to police services. The Advocacy Representative took direction from John who asked for support to meet with police and ask his questions. There was an existing conflict of interest identified, as a family member worked for police and John was concerned that confidentiality may not be maintained if he proceeded to talk with the police. The Advocacy Representative liaised with a senior official for the police service to seek clarification about confidentiality and the process to follow to ensure John was provided with a safe space to talk with police. John requested advocacy supports for the meeting with police and was supported by the Advocacy Representative to meet with a police officer to ask his questions and to understand police responses.

## Outcome

Through individual advocacy, John was able to exercise his rights to have his voice heard. John was able to express his views to professionals in CPS and Police Services and he was supported to ask questions and receive information from the adult service providers. CPS staff worked with John and his family members to create a safety plan. Individual advocacy is underpinned by an understanding that a child's 'best interests' always involves consideration of the child's views. John was empowered through individual advocacy to express his views, have his views taken seriously, and to be fully informed about how and why actions are taken by adult decision makers.



## The Right to Education - Rohan's Story

### Context

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate received a referral from a health professional, highlighting concerns over the safety, wellbeing and mental health of 17-year-old Rohan, who had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Advocacy is always directed by the child or youth and often initial concerns raised by adults can differ from the priorities identified by the child or youth through the process of advocacy. In this case, after discussion with Rohan, the primary concern identified was access to education. The Advocacy Representative subsequently worked with Rohan on additional priorities, however, this case example will focus on education.

An initial advocacy meeting provided opportunity to share information about children's rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Knowledge about rights was new to Rohan, who said, "*I didn't know I had any rights*". Key components of advocacy were explained to Rohan to ensure he understood that individual advocacy is confidential, voluntary, youth led and rights based. The Advocacy Representative used OCYA materials to support Rohan with his understanding of rights, and through discussion, he requested more information about Articles 28 (Right of the Child to Education) and 29 (Aims of Education) of the UNCRC.



## Rohan's Story (continued)

Rohan had experienced disruption to his education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This extended beyond the mandated lockdowns in PEI as Rohan was living with a medically vulnerable family member and the decision was made, as a family, for Rohan to continue with homeschooling. Whilst homeschooling was a positive experience for Rohan's siblings, he struggled with this, both in terms of his learning and his mental health. Rohan attempted to return to school halfway through the year, however, he was informed by the Public Schools Branch that he would have to wait until the start of the next school year to return to in-person schooling. Rohan reports that this led to a loss of motivation and increased depression for him. By the start of the next school year, Rohan's mental health had further declined, and he felt he had been out of school too long to return. Ultimately, his mental health deteriorated to such an extent that he required hospitalization. Rohan was connected with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate after having missed over two years of schooling.

### Process

During the initial call to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, an Advocacy Representative explained to the adult reviewable service provider that child and youth advocacy is always voluntary and child and youth led. Information from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) website was shared with the professional, including links to the Advocacy Representative's personal bio available on the website and information about individual advocacy. The Advocacy Representative encouraged the professional to share these details with Rohan so that he could decide for himself if he wanted to meet with the Advocacy Representative and find out more about the supports available through individual advocacy. The professional facilitated this initial introduction to the idea of advocacy, and subsequently Rohan made direct contact with the Advocacy Representative, during which time a face to face meeting was arranged.

Through advocacy, Rohan shared his aspirations for his future and his goal to attend university. He wanted to return to a school environment as homeschooling had not been successful for him. Rohan wondered if there were avenues to fast track his education, alongside normal schooling, through evening classes, summer school or online options, to enable him to graduate earlier as he was concerned about being an adult and still in school. The Advocacy Representative was given direction from the youth to research his educational options. This involved the Advocacy Representative initiating communication with education professionals both in the public school system and at the college level, and the gathering of information to support Rohan's decision making regarding next steps for his education. Using the information provided, Rohan planned to return to school in the fall. He was encouraged by his Advocacy Representative to contact the school counsellor to arrange a time to visit and register for the following year. Rohan requested support with this visit and the Advocacy Representative helped to facilitate this, additionally ensuring that Rohan was connected with the Vice Principal, Youth Worker and School Counsellor. During the visit to school, the Advocacy Representative supported Rohan to ask questions he had about courses, summer school options and additional supports in school. Following the registration meeting, the Advocacy Representative liaised with Rohan's parents to ensure the necessary paperwork was completed, signed and returned to school administrators.

### Outcome

Rohan returned to school at the beginning of the next school year with a clear sense of options available to him to complete his school credits, and attend summer school with the possibility of ultimately completing his secondary education at the college level. Whilst Rohan had other priorities to work through with his Advocacy Representative, advocacy had helped to clear the pathway for him to return to in-person education. Individual advocacy had also provided Rohan the opportunity to learn more about the wide range of supports available to him through the public school system, which in turn, supported his confidence to engage with these supports.

"I'm finally back at school and every day I'm one step closer to my dream! I cannot thank you enough for your support and encouragement in my journey" - Rohan



## A Safe Place to Live - Jackson's Story

### Context

This was a complex individual advocacy case involving multiple reviewable services. This case example will focus on the priorities relating to Jackson's right to have access to food, clothing and a safe place to live.

Jackson, a 16-year-old youth, made a call to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, seeking advocacy supports in relation to his living situation. He had previously made a referral to the OCYA for his younger sister whom he had concerns about as she was not attending school, was using illegal drugs and was not being cared for adequately at home.

Jackson had made the decision to leave home as he did not feel home provided the safe, predictable and nurturing environment he needed in order to successfully complete his education. Whilst living at home, Jackson had developed a drug dependence and was often unable to attend school or focus on his own education as he took on parenting responsibilities for his younger siblings. Although Child Protection Services had been involved with the family, the children had not been taken into care due to an inability to gather sufficient evidence to meet the threshold for apprehension and an unwillingness of the parent to sign a Voluntary Agreement for Temporary Custody and Guardianship. A wide range of professionals from Education, Health, and Child Protection Services were in agreement that home was not a safe place for Jackson.

Jackson was able to find alternative housing with his girlfriend's mother, Susan. However, he faced challenges in terms of funding for his basic human needs, including vital and costly prescriptions. Jackson had fallen between the cracks of two divisions within the Department of Social Development and Housing; Child and Family Services and Social Programs. Susan had been supporting Jackson to receive supports for his basic human needs and had applied for support from Social Assistance on Jackson's behalf, however, that application was rejected, and they were working through an appeal process, having just filed appeal paperwork. Alongside this, Jackson was continuing to seek supports from Child and Family Services (CFS) but was told by workers within CFS that Social Assistance was the only avenue for financial supports.

### Process

There is no blueprint for the process of advocacy as each individual youth has their own set of priorities and provides direction about how Individual Advocacy should proceed. Jackson's initial priority was reaching a successful outcome at the Social Assistance appeal hearing. Prior to the appeal hearing, the Advocacy Representative sought information from the Social Assistance Case Worker about how best to prepare for the appeal, and what Jackson should expect from the appeal process. This information was shared with Jackson and a plan was developed with the Advocacy Representative to prepare for the hearing. The Advocacy Representative accompanied Jackson and Susan to the hearing, during which time she explained her role to the Board members and Social Assistance representatives and provided supports for Jackson to express his views.

Jackson argued that he qualified for assistance under the '*Minors Living Apart From Parents*' policy, as per section 4 ("*Assistance may be paid on behalf of minors living apart from their parents if it is determined that the parental home is unavailable or unsuitable for the applicants care, training and development*"). However, the appeal was rejected on the grounds that Child and Family Services is the avenue for support in cases such as Jackson's, and that the policy precluded Jackson as it states that both the parent and child must agree to live separately. Jackson did not have agreement from his parent.

## Jackson's Story (continued)

Following communication confirming the rejection of the appeal, the Advocacy Representative worked with Jackson to identify possible next steps in seeking a resolution. Jackson opted to invite case workers and managers from both Child and Family Services and Social Assistance Programs to a case conference at the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, to present his case and ask for help in finding a solution that would enable him to continue living away from home. Jackson opened the case conference with a simple question, *"You guys say that they have to help me, and they say that you have to help me. Who will help me?"* The service providers listened respectfully as Jackson bravely told his story about the dangers he faced at home and the concerns he had about his prospects if he was made to stay in that unsafe environment. Commitments were made by representatives from Social Assistance Programs and Child and Family Services to work collaboratively to address the gaps in service highlighted through Jackson's case, and some short-term supports were identified whilst a longer-term plan could be developed.

Jackson received support for medication costs and other temporary supports to enable him to pay for some basic human needs. However, this did not provide a long term, sustainable solution that would enable Jackson to have his needs met. The Advocacy Representative revisited the options for advocacy that had been developed earlier and Jackson made the decision to escalate his case by writing a letter directly to the Minister of Social Development and Housing. The Advocacy Representative worked with Jackson, scribing his ideas and helping him to organize his thoughts into a letter format. This letter was then sent from the Child and Youth Advocate, on behalf of Jackson. In his letter, Jackson summarized the challenges faced when policies do not appreciate the nuance of individual circumstances, *"I am a person and I don't fit perfectly into a box of a policy. Policies need to support children and youth like me"*.

## Outcome

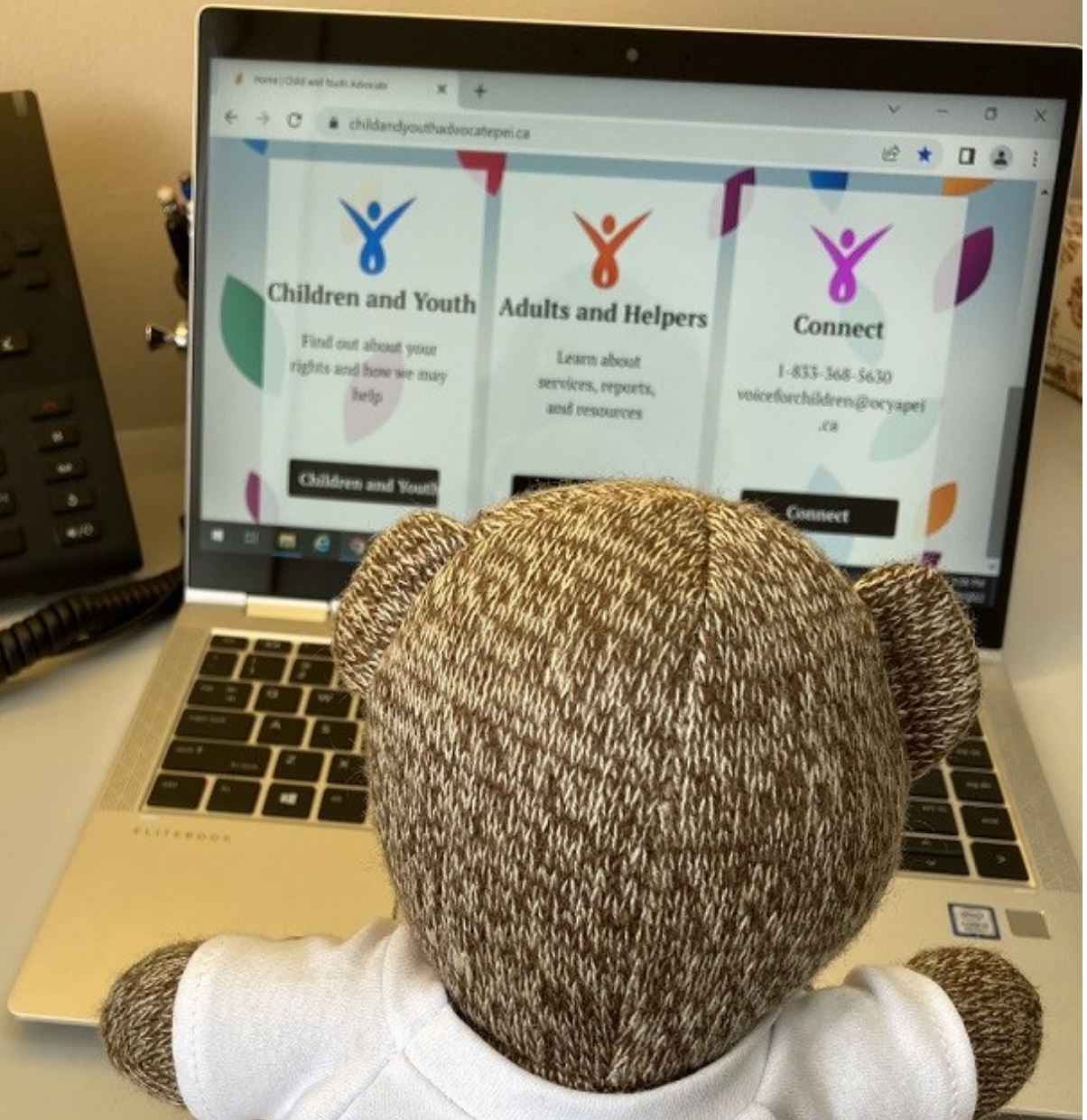
Advocacy is a process and can often take a significant amount of time as adults work through priorities at the direction and pace of the child or youth. Three months after the initial Individual Advocacy meeting, Jackson received a reply from the Minister of Social Development and Housing to confirm that a review had been undertaken and the Director of Social Programs had determined that Jackson was a person in need and qualified for supports as a minor living apart from their parents. This decision provided the financial security for Jackson to remain in a place of safety, have his basic needs met, and continue on his pathway to post-secondary education. Advocacy paved the way for decision makers to understand Jackson's unique story and provide appropriate supports in response.

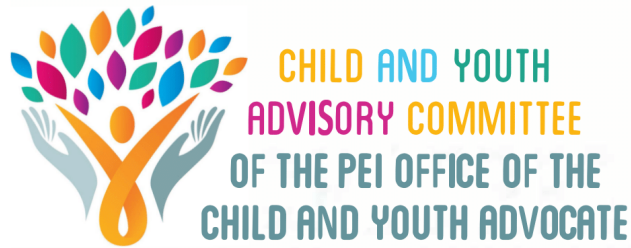
*"Thank you so much for all of your help! Jackson is over the moon right now with the news. We went to UPEI to the open house and Jackson has applied there. Thanks again and I will keep you in the loop of Jackson's progress! Thanks again!"*

- Susan









The Child and Youth Advisory Committee is an inclusive group of children and youth who work in collaboration with the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to amplify youth perspectives and promote the rights of children and youth. Including representation from across PEI, and from diverse backgrounds, members share insights about the lived experiences of children and youth to inform the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

### Objectives

- Advance the rights, interests and well-being of all PEI children and youth through the amplification of their voices.
- Amplify priorities identified by children and youth to inform the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Identify and advise on areas of concern relating to reviewable services for PEI children and youth, through internal and external consultation processes.
- Sustain a balanced constituency approach to incorporate representation of wide-ranging perspectives.
- Advise on supportive processes for child and youth participation to ensure their voices are heard and considered in matters impacting them.
- Promote community-based peer-to-peer education and learning about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it affects children and youth.

### Overview of the Year

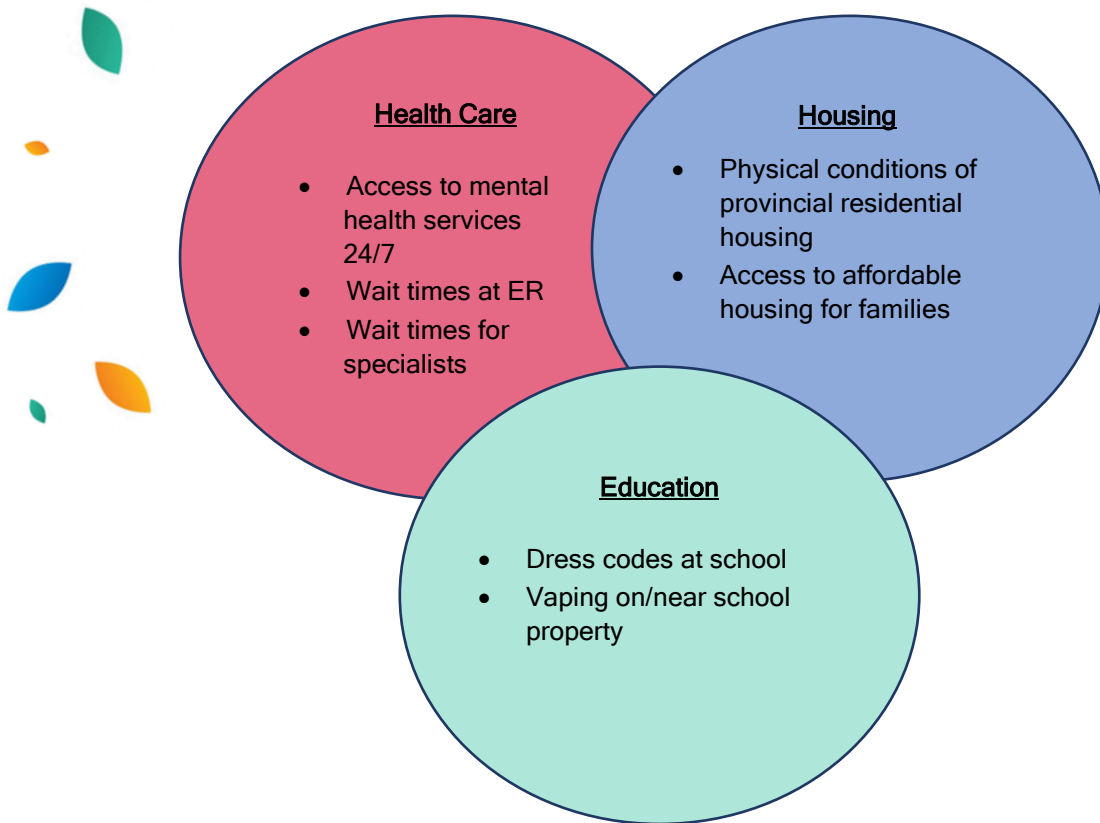
During this reporting period the Child and Youth Advisory Committee went through a period of transition as many founding members reached the end of their two-year term. Recruitment became a focus, with a commitment to welcoming children and youth from a broad range of cultural and social backgrounds. Diverse youth perspectives enrich the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, providing opportunities for greater understanding of the breadth of issues facing children and youth across PEI.

*"Thank you so much for everything you continue to do for us. I am not sure where I would be without the support from your office!"*

- Parent

# Child and Youth Identified Priority Issues

Child and Youth Advisory Committee to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate



UNCRC  
Article 24



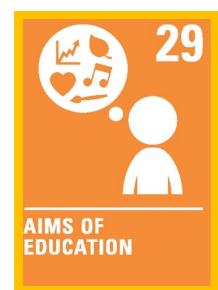
Right to the Highest  
Standard of Healthcare

UNCRC  
Article 27



Right to Adequate  
Housing

UNCRC  
Article 29



Right to Aims of  
Education





# LOOKING FORWARD

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES for FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

### Promote and Educate

- Respond to media inquiries and requests for interviews
- Present to Standing Committees of the PEI Legislature as requested
- Participate in regularly scheduled meetings with Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the primary child-serving government departments
- Participate in meetings with the Clerk of Executive Council
- Participate in monthly meetings with the Deputy Minister responsible for child protection programs and services to children, youth and their families
- Correspond with leaders of the three Political parties on matters impacting children's rights in PEI
- Participate, as a member in good standing, on the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates representing Prince Edward Island
- Host training sessions on Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA), in partnership, with UNICEF Canada
- Promote priority that government embed children's rights in provincial legislation, in consultation with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Promote priority that government action child-friendly complaint mechanisms in all reviewable programs and services, in consultation with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Promote priority that government provide identified reviewable program and service data to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Participate in meetings with Department of Education and Early Learning and Education Authorities senior officials on issues impacting rights of children and youth in PEI schools
- Receive, review, research and provide written submissions on government proposed legislative amendments and policies
- Promote implementation of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued to Canada on June 23, 2033
- Promote government, community organization and public knowledge of the two streams of consultation with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate: staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and membership of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/ PEI
- Continue to advance the 23 recommendations of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate specific to the proposed draft bill entitled PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*
- Distribute resources on children's rights and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Translate Office of the Child and Youth Advocate resource materials into French, Mandarin, Mongolian, and Korean
- Promote awareness of the role and function of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and children's rights
- Provide educational sessions on the role and function of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

- Promote child right to give consent to treatment, including immunizations, unless the contrary is shown pursuant to the PEI *Consent to Treatment and Health Care Directives Act*
- Promote information sharing and engagement opportunities with community organizations serving children, youth and families to include PEERS Alliance, BIPOC-USHR, PRIDE PEI
- Participate in meetings of the National and Provincial Child and Youth Law Sections of the Canadian Bar Association, representing the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/PEI
- Participate in monthly meetings of the IWK/Dalhousie University Pediatric Advocacy Committee, representing Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/PEI
- Facilitate monthly meetings of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Provide information on role and function of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate with elected members of the PEI Legislature

### **Advocate**

- Receive and assess individual advocacy requests involving children and youth
- Provide individual navigational and informational advocacy to adult family members, professionals and members of the public concerned about the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth engaged with reviewable services
- Provide direct one-on-one individual advocacy support to children and youth
- Initiate and/or participate in case conferences with reviewable service providers with and/or on behalf of children and youth
- Assist children and youth to initiate and participate in service review decisions
- Support professionals, family members and concerned citizens with information to assist navigation and promotion of the rights of children and youth in matters that affect them
- Identify emerging systemic trends impacting the rights of children and youth
- Work with individuals, families, communities, public bodies and community organizations to support and create opportunities for the well-being of children and youth

### **Review and Investigate**

- Receive, review and document reports identifying individual advocacy trends and systemic issues impacting the rights of PEI children and youth for review and investigation consideration by the Child and Youth Advocate
- Review reports of child and youth serious injuries and deaths
- Conduct a jurisdictional scan of systemic reviews and investigations by Child and Youth Advocacy offices across the country
- Draft policies and procedures for systemic reviews and investigations
- Review individual advocacy and/or systemic advocacy priorities for review and/or investigation
- Provide reviewable service notification for systemic reviews and investigations
- Provide public notification for systemic reviews and investigations
- Complete an independent investigation involving a Supreme Court of Canada decision of a child removed from the care of his grandmother by PEI Child Protection Services

## Serious Injury and Death

- Complete investigation of one reported child death
- Complete a detailed analytical review of records received for one child death and draft a Comprehensive Review Report for the Child and Youth Advocate's consideration of whether or not to investigate
- Continue to receive reports of child and youth serious injury and deaths for review to:
  - Determine whether or not to investigate
  - Identify and analyze recurring circumstances or trends to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of a reviewable service
- Continue to participate on the Health PEI Working Group established to ensure health system compliance with the PEI Child and Youth Advocate Act mandatory reporting requirement for child and youth serious injuries and deaths
- Continue to update a comprehensive cross-jurisdictional scan of legislation, policies, protocols and practices for child and youth serious injury and death reviews and investigations
- Participate in the CCCYA's Community of Practice Working Group on Child and Youth Serious Injury and Death reviews and investigations

## Monitor

- Conduct a jurisdictional scan of child and youth advocacy offices across Canada regarding methods used to monitor and assess implementation of recommendations to inform development of PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate processes to monitor and assess implementation of Child and Youth Advocate's recommendations.
- Monitor status of recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate specific to draft amendments to the proposed draft PEI *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*
- Monitor status of recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate specific to the Department of Education and Early Learning on Vulnerable Sector Checks in Early Child Care Centres
- Monitor status of recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate specific to the Department of Education and Early Learning and Educational Authorities to include proposed amendments to the PEI *Education Act* and implementation of a child rights model for inclusion of children and youth as active participants in education-related matters
- Document and monitor systemic advocacy trends identified through individual advocacy
- Monitor provincial, national and international jurisprudence reviews
- Monitor provincial, national and international media issues impacting rights of children and youth
- Monitor status of proposed amendments to the PEI *Vital Statistics Act* and the PEI *Change of Name Act*
- Monitor status of recommendations to PEI Government for a detailed action plan in response to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's Concluding Observations to Canada by November 20, 2023



## Research

- Conduct reviews of academic and grey literature to identify risk factors for child death as well as review of best/promising practices to identify potential opportunities for improvements in reviewable services to prevent child and youth serious injuries and deaths in future
- Conduct ongoing literature reviews and jurisprudence reviews to inform individual advocacy issues impacting the rights of children and youth
- Conduct ongoing literature reviews and jurisprudence reviews to inform system advocacy issues impacting the rights of children and youth
- Conduct jurisdictional scans to inform advice and recommendation

## Reports

- Prepare Annual Report for the 2023-2024 fiscal year
- Prepare special reports as required
- Complete the report of an investigation of a child death and bring the report to the attention of the public





# RESOURCES

The following resources are available through the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate:

## Child and Youth Friendly Rack Card

This colourful resource is designed to directly inform children and youth about advocacy services available to them through the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

## Adult Brochure

This resource provides a brief overview of the roles and functions of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and it provides information on what happens when someone contacts the Office.

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Poster

This resource is a child-friendly presentation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in image and graphic form designed to increase awareness and understanding of all articles of the Convention.

## Know Your Rights Booklet

This resource provides a child-friendly detailed understanding of each article of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. While designed for children and youth, this resource is useful for everyone.

## Presentations

To learn more about the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, the role and functions of the Office, and an overview of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, please contact the Office.

## Website

Please visit our website to learn more about the work of the office at: [www.childand youthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childand youthadvocatepei.ca)





## With Appreciation




We thank the children and youth of Prince Edward Island for sharing with us the privilege to serve them and trusting us to bear witness to their lived experiences.

We appreciate, with sincerity, everyone from across the province, who worked tirelessly over many years, to advocate for the creation of this Office. We thank the citizens of Prince Edward Island for their continued advocacy on behalf of PEI children and youth. Advocacy requires, at its very nature, everyone working together in the spirit of collaboration.

Over the course of this past year, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the following persons who assisted in advancing our work on behalf of all PEI children and youth:

- The many brave and courageous children and youth who reached out to our Office and took the risk to engage with us as strangers with the hope of having their voices heard - we thank each and every one of you - your bravery, courage and willingness to trust us by sharing your pain and your expertise has been a shining light as we move forward to advance your rights and the rights of other children and youth - **THANK YOU**
- To the child and youth members retiring after completing their term and to the new members joining the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate for the first time, our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your valued expertise and contribution to promoting the rights of children and youth - **THANK YOU**
- Elected Members of the Legislative Assembly, Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly and staff of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island for their ongoing support, engagement and commitment to advancing the rights of all PEI children and youth
- Ministers and Deputy Ministers of child-serving government departments who continue to meet with the Child and Youth Advocate and Deputy Child and Youth Advocate with a willingness to work collaboratively with a shared vision to advance the rights of children and youth across government reviewable programs and services
- Employees of provincial Government and community organizations providing programs and services to children, youth and their families each and every day across the province
- Provincial photographer Katherine Drake for her kind and professional staff photo session
- Ongoing guidance, resources, mentorship, consultation and information sharing provided by Offices of Child and Youth Advocates/Representatives/Ombudspersons across the country
- Ongoing support provided by the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates
- Ongoing support provided by UNICEF Canada in sharing expertise and promoting Child Rights Impact Assessments



<p>1</p>  <p>DEFINITION OF A CHILD</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>NO DISCRIMINATION</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>MAKING RIGHTS REAL</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>FAMILY GUIDANCE AS CHILDREN DEVELOP</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>NAME AND NATIONALITY</p>
<p>8</p>  <p>IDENTITY</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS</p>	<p>13</p>  <p>SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION</p>
<p>15</p>  <p>SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS</p>	<p>16</p>  <p>PROTECTION OF PRIVACY</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED</p>
<p>22</p>  <p>REFUGEE CHILDREN</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT</p>	<p>26</p>  <p>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p>
<p>29</p>  <p>AIMS OF EDUCATION</p>	<p>30</p>  <p>MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p>	<p>32</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p>	<p>33</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS</p>	<p>34</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	<p>35</p>  <p>PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING</p>
<p>36</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p>	<p>37</p>  <p>CHILDREN IN DETENTION</p>	<p>38</p>  <p>PROTECTION IN WAR</p>	<p>39</p>  <p>RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION</p>	<p>40</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW</p>	<p>41</p>  <p>BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES</p>	<p>42</p>  <p>EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</p>

43-54



HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS

# CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

*Child and Youth*  
**ADVOCATE**

119 Kent Street, BDC Place - Suite 500  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 1N3

Telephone: (902)368-5630

Toll-free: 1-833-368-5630

Email: [voiceforchildren@ocyapei.ca](mailto:voiceforchildren@ocyapei.ca)

For more information, visit  
[www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocatepei.ca)

