
2025/2026 ANNUAL REPORT
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, TAKING FLIGHT
Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office

Territorial Acknowledgement

The Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office (YCAO) respectfully acknowledges that we work and live on the traditional territories of the 14 Yukon First Nations. Colonial government policies have caused long-lasting impacts to Indigenous children and youth, and we commit ourselves to working alongside Yukon First Nations by integrating traditional knowledge and culture for the safety and wellbeing of children throughout the territory.

Mission

We commit to upholding the rights and amplifying the voices of children and youth throughout the Yukon.

Vision

The vision of YCAO is for a safe and healthy society that hears, includes, values, and protects the rights and voices of children and youth.

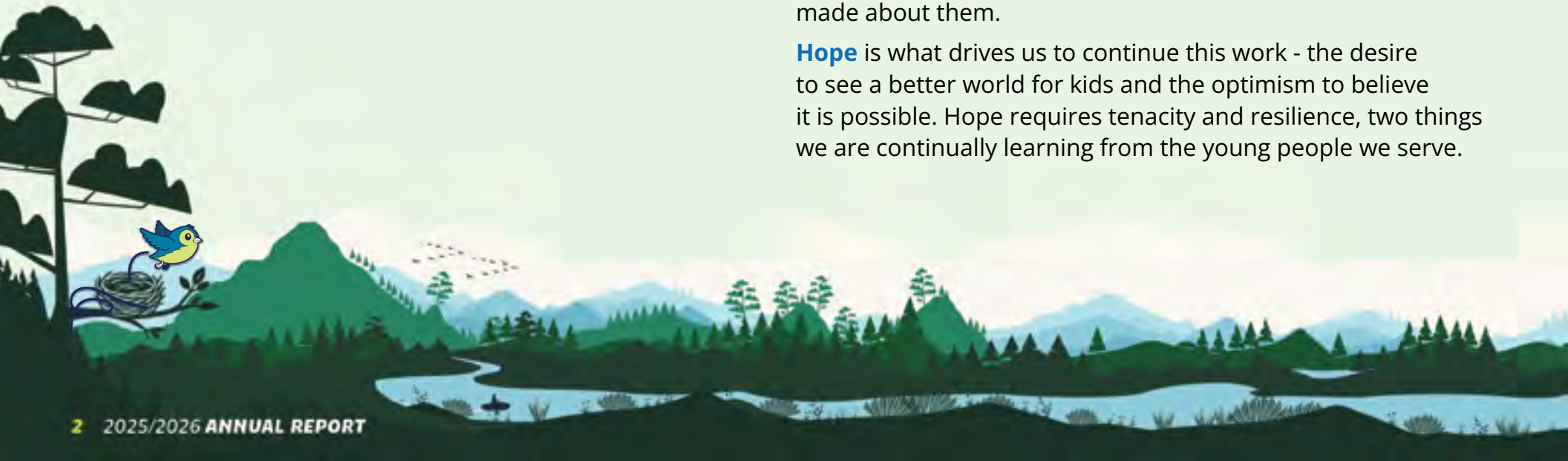
Values

Respect is the most important value in how we approach our interactions with children, families, caregivers, First Nations, and professionals. It reminds us that relationships lead to results, not the other way around.

Integrity is essential to ensuring our reputation is as solid as our work. We seek to operate with honesty, dedication, and professionalism in every interaction.

Empowerment is where our heart lies. We believe unreservedly in the potential of young people to share their opinions and play an active role in decisions being made about them.

Hope is what drives us to continue this work - the desire to see a better world for kids and the optimism to believe it is possible. Hope requires tenacity and resilience, two things we are continually learning from the young people we serve.



OFFICE OF THE CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCATE
2070 - 2nd Avenue,
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1B1
PH: 456-5575, ycao.ca

October 21, 2026

The Honourable Yvonne Clarke
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Box 2703
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 2C6

Re: Child and Youth Advocate Office 2025-2026 Annual Report

Dear Speaker,

Under my authority as set out in Section 24 of the *Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Act*, I am pleased to present you with *Children's Rights, Taking Flight: YCAO 2025/26 Annual Report*. The document reports on the activities of the Child and Youth Advocate Office during the period April 1st, 2025 – March 31st, 2026. I am looking forward to meeting with the Members' Services Board to discuss the experiences and priorities of the Child and Youth Advocate Office.

Respectfully,

Annette King,
Yukon Child and Youth Advocate





Message From the Advocate

As we reflect on the past year, we are inspired by the remarkable birds that call the Yukon home. From epic migrations spanning thousands of kilometres to the steadfast species that thrive here year-round, each follows its own path with resilience and purpose. They adapt to changing seasons, navigate unexpected challenges, and always find their way forward. ***A powerful reminder of perseverance, connection, and the strength found in staying true to their course.***

This year brought change, including a new government and the opportunities that come with renewed priorities and perspectives. **While the landscape around us has shifted, our course remains steady.** Our mandate is grounded in the rights of children and youth and our commitment to ensuring those rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled does not change with the seasons.

Every child and young person deserves to be heard. Like the many distinct bird calls that fill the Yukon skies, each voice carries its own story, experience, and wisdom. Some voices are bold and unmistakable, while others are quieter and require us to listen with greater intention. Our role is to ensure those voices are not only heard, but meaningfully considered in the decisions that shape young people's lives.

Steady does not mean standing still. As an office, we continue to look ahead with a vision for transformation. One where systems work better for children, where Indigenous ways of knowing and being are honoured, where collaboration replaces silos and where children's rights are woven into the fabric of every policy, service, and decision. Like a well-planned migration, meaningful change requires patience, persistence, and a shared sense of direction.

Throughout this report you will meet some of the birds of the Yukon. Each species plays an important role in the health of its environment, reminding us that strong communities are built when everyone has a place to belong and the opportunity to soar. Children and youth deserve nothing less.

I am deeply grateful to the children and youth who have shared their experiences with us, to the families and caregivers who continue to advocate alongside them, and to the organizations across the Yukon who are committed to improving outcomes for young people. Together we will continue our flight path - steady in our purpose, ambitious in our vision, and hopeful about the future we are building with, and for, the next generation.

YCAO 2026-2027 Priorities:

- Prioritize advocacy for children and youth who do not have others who can assist them to advocate for their rights, preferences, and interests.
- Coordinate advocacy actions with First Nations governments and visit Yukon communities to promote the views and rights of children and youth.
- Recruit a Manager of Systemic Advocacy to oversee communications, policies and reviews.
- Provide a submission to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and follow up with systemic advocacy related to the 2026 findings of the Office of the Auditor General for Yukon Family and Children's Services.
- Work with HSS to create a protocol for mandatory referrals to YCAO for serious and critical incidents. Conduct a review regarding the death of a child.
- Launch a formal systemic review about youth homelessness ("youth on their own").
- Provide advice to the departments of Health & Social Services (HSS) and Justice about high conflict family court matters. Continue tracking Yukon government progress made on recommendations from past reviews.
- Level up Child Rights Impact Assessment implementation by developing a peer-to-peer mentoring group, deliver annual training, and continue the monthly Community of Practice, and engage with youth through the Territorial Youth Collective.
- Continue to promote knowledge of children's rights and advocacy by creating a new website. Continue to provide presentations and share resources about children's rights.

What YCAO Does

At YCAO, our role is to stand beside young people and make sure they have the opportunity to be heard. We believe children and youth should be active participants in their own lives, and that their voices matter.

Individual Advocacy

YCAO helps young people effectively access Yukon government services and have their views heard and rights meaningfully considered in the decision-making of government service providers.

What does an individual advocacy representative do?

- Helps ensure a child or youth's views are heard
- Makes sure their rights are considered in decisions
- Contacts Yukon government departments to understand what supports are being provided
- Follows up with departments, which are required to respond

Systemic Advocacy

YCAO may review and provide advice regarding systemic or policy issues that arise in the course of individual advocacy and raise a substantial question of public interest. The Legislative Assembly or a Minister may refer relevant matters to YCAO for review.

Public Education

YCAO provides information about the role of the Advocate and children's rights. YCAO hosts or participates in activities and events that engage youth and the community.

Who We Are



Julia Milnes
Deputy Child and Youth Advocate



McKenzie Amundson
Client Services Administrator



Shauna Kewin
Individual Advocacy Representative



Torin Haslam
Individual Advocacy Representative



Ian Cooper
Individual Advocacy Representative



Anya Braeuner
Systemic Advocacy Representative



Christopher Tse
Systemic Advocacy Representative



Rachel Veinott
Systemic Advocacy Representative

Financial Information

In 2025, YCAO raised significant concerns regarding the budget approval process for Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly. Together with the Ombudsman, the Child and Youth Advocate sought judicial clarification regarding the respective roles of the Legislative Assembly and the executive in approving the budgets of Independent Officers.

In its March 3, 2025 decision, the Supreme Court of Yukon confirmed that the governing legislation assigns responsibility for reviewing and approving the budgets of Independent Officers to the Members' Services Board (MSB). The Court also identified a conflict between those statutes and the *Financial Administration Act*, noting that it is for the Legislative Assembly to resolve.

The independence of Officers of the Legislative Assembly is fundamental to maintaining public confidence in legislative oversight. A budget approval process that permits executive involvement in funding decisions has the potential to undermine both the independence of these offices and public confidence in their work.

In February 2026, YCAO wrote to the Legislative Assembly requesting urgent consideration of legislative amendments to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* to address the conflict identified by the Court. YCAO recommended measures such as a paramountcy provision or an exemption from the *Financial Administration Act* for estimates and supply processes affecting Independent Officers. Legislative clarification will help strengthen the independence of Officers of the Legislative Assembly and establish a consistent framework for all independent oversight offices.

As an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, the Advocate submits an annual budget and quarterly updates to the MSB, an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly. After MSB reviews the estimate, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly must transmit the estimate to the Minister of Finance for recommendation to the Legislative Assembly.



YCAO Total Expenditures:
$1,354,876



Personnel:
$1,083,823

Operations & Maintenance:
$271,053



Capital:
$3,941

About the Yukon *Child and Youth Advocate Act*

YCAO is guided by the Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA) and exists to promote the rights and views of young people eligible to receive Yukon government (YG) services. The legislation, enacted in 2009, is now ten years overdue for review by YG and requires modernization of its existing frameworks to better align with the current needs of Yukon children and youth. YCAO has provided several submissions to MSB. In 2024, MSB supported the development of a draft bill outlining proposed recommendations.

The themes that continue to emerge in feedback YCAO has collected include:

- Provisions for public reporting and compliance
- Information sharing
- The implementation of child death reviews
- Legal representation for children and youth
- Outdated definitions in the CYAA

YCAO has requested repeatedly that MSB:

- Commit, in writing, to establishing a defined process and timeline for the statutory review and potential amendment of the CYAA; and
- Inform YCAO of the specific Member of the Legislative Assembly who will be responsible for leading the review.

As of March 31, 2026, no further steps toward amending the CYAA have been identified to YCAO. Any decisions about legislative changes rest with the Government and the Legislative Assembly.





Did you know?

Section 30 of the CYAA states that within 5 years of the CYAA coming into force the MSB must establish a process, including terms of reference for the review of the operation of the Advocate Office.



Did you know?

On April 1, 2026, YG was questioned in the Legislative Assembly about whether they were committed to reviewing the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.

Individual Advocacy

What Happens When You Call YCAO?

YCAO's intake and referral process involves information gathering, usually in the form of an email, phone call or in-person conversation. During intake we want to understand what your concerns are and receive relevant information about the child or youth's needs.

The information shared during intake is brought to the YCAO team for review and a mandate check. If the referral meets our mandate for individual advocacy, we will assign an Advocacy Representative for the child or youth.

Unless the referral comes directly from a youth, YCAO cannot report back or update our referrers on the information shared with us in the process of advocacy, but after the intake information is reviewed by the YCAO team, we can let you know if there is a role within our mandate and that it has been assigned to a member of our team.

YCAO is not an investigative body, and we cannot overturn decisions made by YG. As an oversight body, we can ask departments for information or records of decisions and clarify how these uphold children's rights, views and interests.

New Advocacy Issues in 2025-26



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# of New Individual Advocacy Issues

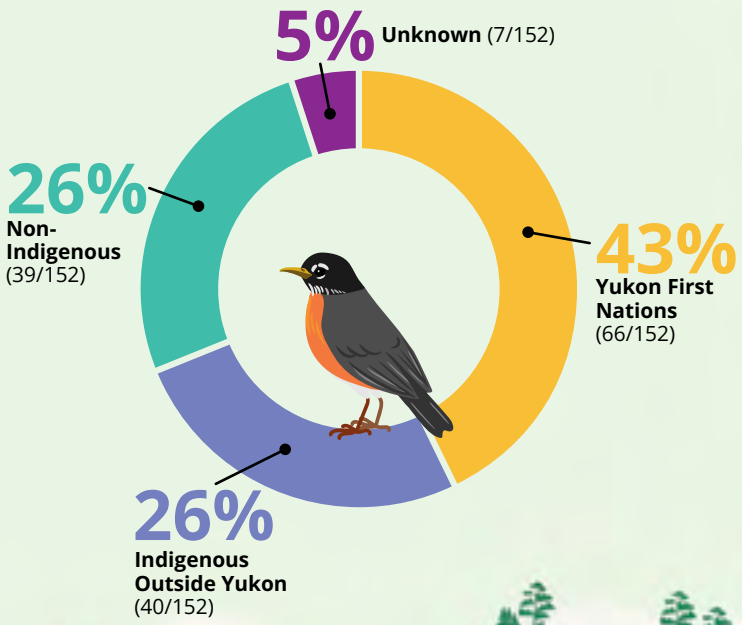


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# of New Clients

YCAO also continued to work on individual advocacy cases that were opened in previous years but remain unresolved.

How many New Advocacy Issues are for Indigenous Children and Youth?





Did you know?

UNCRC Article 42 states that everyone should know children's rights. YCAO offers rights conversations to children and youth when a referral is made to our office.



Did you know?

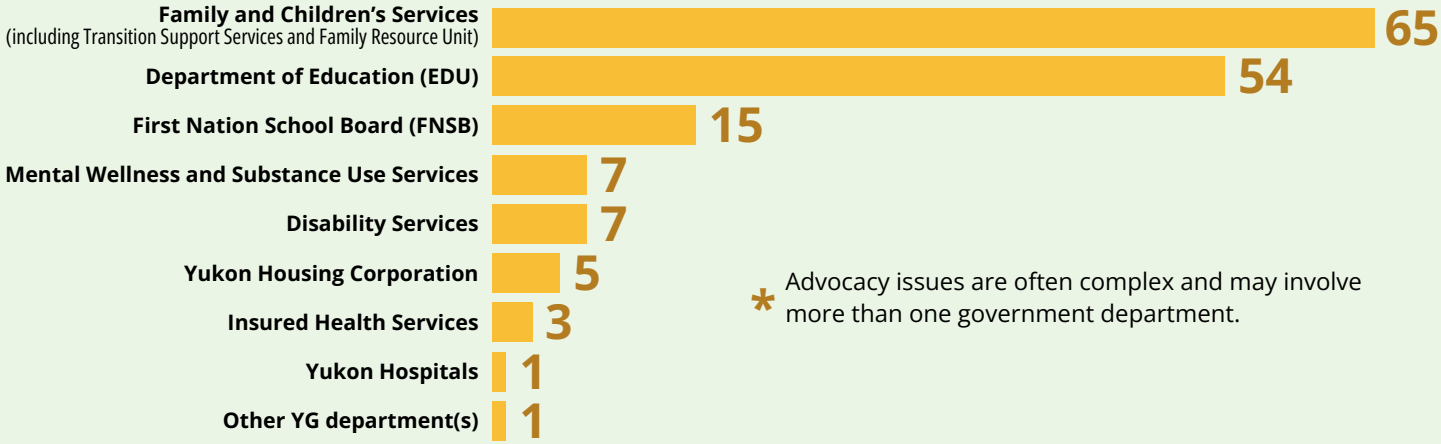
This is the first year that YCAO has tracked the number of issues with the First Nation School Board separately from the Department of Education.



Did you know?

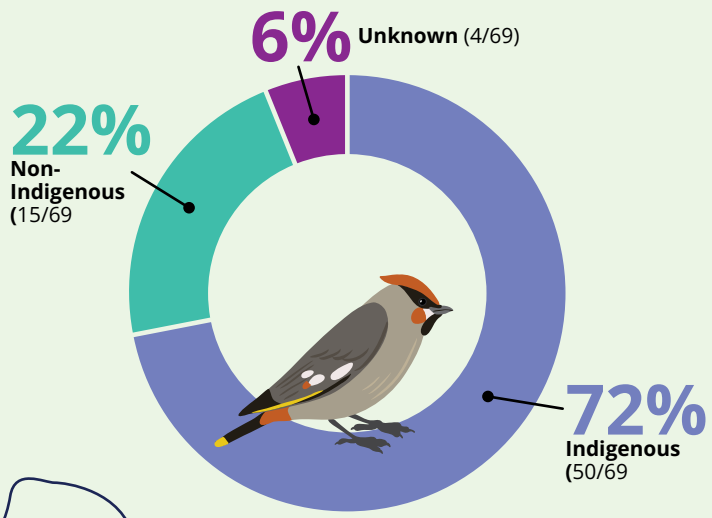
98% of children in care in the Yukon are Indigenous, but only 75% of YCAO clients receiving services from Family and Children's Services are Indigenous.

Which Government Departments Had New Advocacy Issues?

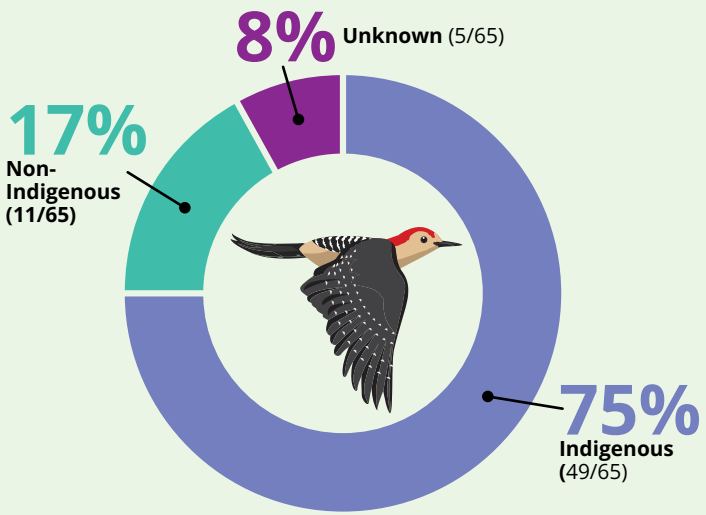


* Advocacy issues are often complex and may involve more than one government department.

How Many New Advocacy Issues are for Indigenous Children and Youth in EDU & FNSB?



How Many New Advocacy Issues are for Indigenous Children and Youth in Family and Children's Services?



* Some Indigenous children have issues with both Education and Family and Children's Services.

What Types of Issues Did YCAO Address?

Access to Supports and Services











YCAO has been seeing increased collaboration between the Department of Education and Disability Services.

Individual Advocacy Case Examples

YCAO receives referrals for a wide-range of issues that can be quite complex and that require interagency coordination. Although we see many successful outcomes, it is sometimes challenging to get to a place of resolution for the identified issue as the end result is not always aligned with the views, rights, and interests of the child or youth.

Advocacy Issue: **Access to Education**

Carly is a 9-year-old with a complex medical diagnosis, which can sometimes manifest as violent outbursts. Due to Carly's complex needs it is not reasonable to expect them to attend school full-time and so they must continue their education at home for the safety of themself and others. Carly is in need of financial aid to accommodate their learning outside of school so they can receive a full education.

Child's View: In this case the child had limited verbal ability and so YCAO deferred to UNCRC Articles 23, 28 & 29 - children have the right to an education, and the education should be directed to the development of the child.

Advocacy Action/Resolution: The school accommodated a reduced schedule as full-time school was not in the client's best interest. They also provided a one-on-one education assistant to provide support to the student in the classroom. The Department of Education collaborated with Disability Services to provide additional funding to support the client while they were at home during school hours.



Individual Advocacy Case Examples

Advocacy Issue: **Accessible Youth Agreements**

Following an altercation with a family member, a 17 year old, Amanda, was kicked out of their family home and did not have a stable place to live or supports to assist with living on their own.

Youth's View: "I feel scared to walk alone at night without a phone. I have nowhere to go and I can't afford a phone."

Advocacy Action/Resolution: YCAO advocated to Family and Children's Services to access supports. FCS explored the option of a Youth Agreement which was initially granted for a six month period; however, the agreement was not renewed. Amanda continued to struggle with unemployment, unstable housing, isolation from family and access to adult support services. YCAO worked with Amanda to connect to supports in the community. YCAO has identified a trend in difficulty accessing Youth Agreements and youth homelessness and has launched a systemic review of Youth on Their Own.

Advocacy Issue: **FCS Screening Out Protection & Safety Cases Due to the Involvement of One Protective Caregiver**

Sixteen-year-old Jericho and fourteen-year-old Jayden were referred to YCAO by their mother who has joint custody, and shares equal parenting time with their father. Jericho and Jayden's mother expressed to YCAO that she is concerned the youth are experiencing emotional harm when they are at their father's house. She has reported these concerns to Family and Children's Services (FCS). FCS has said that they will not open a file or investigate the reports of harm because the mother is a protective parent and can make the decision about what is safe for the youth. FCS did not interview the children and stated it was not required. The youth's mother doesn't know what to do because the custody arrangement is court ordered. She does not have the financial resources to pursue changing the custody arrangement through the courts, and she is worried that taking legal action will escalate the conflict with Jericho and Jayden's father further.

Child's View: "I don't feel safe at that other house."; "I am not going there anymore, I don't care."

Advocacy Action/Resolution: YCAO notified FCS, who confirmed they would not open a file to investigate the harm, or provide support to the father to help with parenting skills. FCS' stance is that the issue will need to return to court if the mother thinks the custody agreement needs to be amended. Ultimately, the youth refused to return to their father's house. In this case the youth were able to vocalize their views and needs.

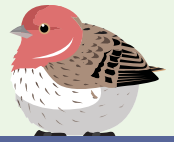


Did you know?

When YCAO notices trends in individual advocacy we can pursue a systemic review. YCAO is continuing to analyze high-conflict parenting after separation and we are planning a systemic review on youth homelessness - Youth on Their Own.



Informal Advocacy



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# of New Informal Advocacy Issues

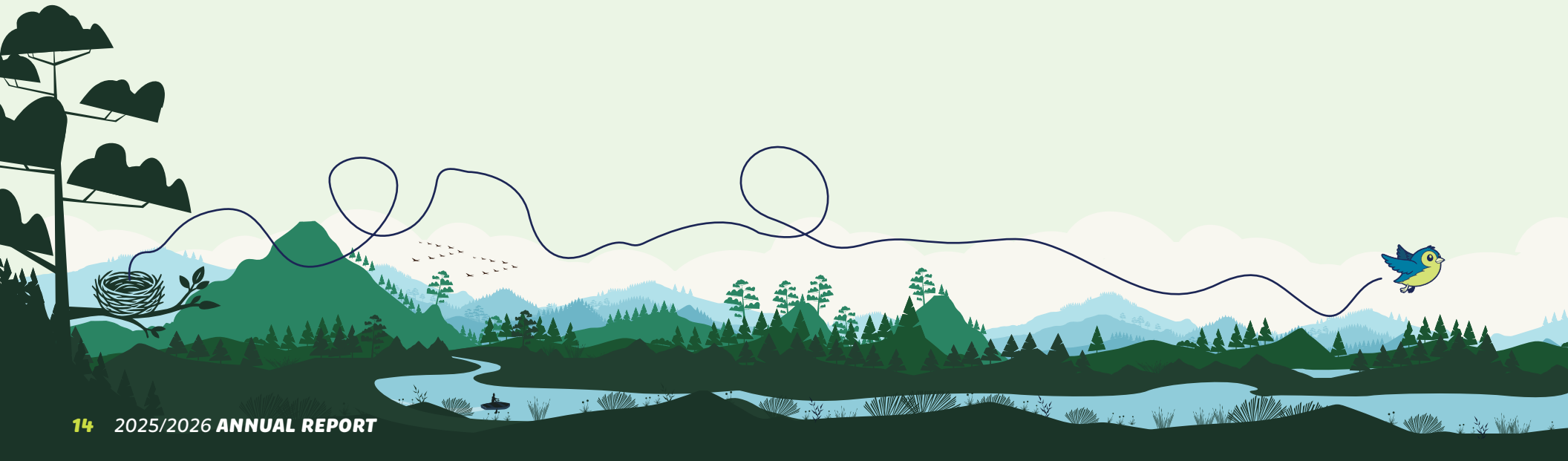
YCAO gets numerous calls about issues and concerns that do not fall within the mandate of YCAO but are still concerns that may need to be addressed. Here are just a few examples:

- YCAO is asked to provide a Voice of the Child report to be presented in court as part of amending a custody and access arrangement between parents (not within mandate).
- A parent is concerned that a government policy change will have a negative impact on a large group of children, and could pose a danger. E.g. school buses will no longer operate if the temperature is below -35 degrees (no specific child).
- A youth who is living on their own is having issues with their landlord. The concerns have been reported to the landlord. (no YG department).
- A First Nation has denied funding to a youth who is a Citizen for participation in a sports event. (not in mandate unless First Nation has a formal agreement with YCAO).

In these cases, YCAO:

- Records the concern as an "informal advocacy issue".
- May notify a YG department of the concern and of YCAO's "decision not to act".
- May provide information about children's rights.
- May review trends and include the informal advocacy themes in systemic advocacy.

When there is not an individual child that needs direct support, but there are concerns that are impacting or have the potential to impact children or youth, YCAO may provide Informal Advocacy by sharing information with YG. This communication is usually done at a higher level between the Advocate or Deputy Advocate and the relevant YG Managers, Directors, Assistant Deputy Ministers or equivalent. In these cases, YCAO cannot direct YG to act, but we can make sure that there is attention brought to the issue(s) and that the information and concerns are shared with the appropriate people. In order to advocate directly for a child, referrals must identify a specific child, a designated service (department), and an advocacy issue. YCAO must be able to advocate without interfering or impeding in a court process. YCAO often clarifies issues by meeting with children and youth and their natural advocates.



Systemic Advocacy

Office of the Auditor General

In February 2026, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) released a report: *2026 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly—Child and Family Services in Yukon*.

YCAO was aware the OAG was conducting this review and had been eagerly awaiting its release, as we knew it would help inform our assessment of Family and Children's Service's progress in implementing the recommendations from our systemic reports. The report showcased departmental failures in the care provided for Yukon children. In our experience, these have been persistent and ongoing concerns, once again highlighting the need for independent oversight to support system transformation.

The voices of children and youth are too often missing from public conversations, particularly because many children in care are very young. This report provides a rare opportunity to highlight long standing issues and the lived realities of children and youth who are frequently disempowered and unable to advocate for themselves. It underscores the critical importance of strong, independent oversight.

YCAO remains most concerned about inadequate responses to reports of harm, insufficient check-ins with children in care, the handling of critical incidents, access to post-care supports, supports for caregivers, and the recruitment and retention of staff.

We will continue advocating to see changes in these areas, and it is our hope that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will follow up with HSS on an ongoing basis to ensure the issues are addressed.









Did you know?

The OAG report found alarming concerns about the care of Yukon children:

- Over a third of children living in group care were under six years of age, often in an attempt to keep siblings placed together.
- In more than half of the serious and critical incidents for children and youth living in out-of-home placements, there was no evidence that families were informed of the incident.
- FCS has improved collaborations with Indigenous governing bodies but that cultural plans were not developed for most children living in out-of- home placements.
- Required visits and regular contact between social workers and children in care were not completed.

Did you know?

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is an all-party committee of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, usually chaired by the leader of the Official Opposition. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the Public Accounts and all reports the Auditor General provides to the Yukon. They requested a submission from YCAO to be included in a public hearing in May 2026.



Quotes for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

UNDERCURRENTS: Implementation of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy in Yukon Education

In June 2024, YCAO launched a review of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy implementation in Yukon schools. Requested by the Minister of Education under section 15 of the CYAA, the review sought to assess the implementation and the effectiveness of the policy in fostering inclusive school environments. The final report, *UNDERCURRENTS: Implementation of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy in Yukon Education* was provided to the Department of Education and released publicly in the spring of 2026. YCAO is currently translating the report in French.

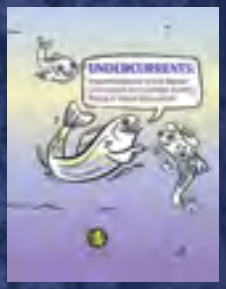


Children of all sexual orientations and gender identities have a right to an education that helps them achieve their goals and reach their potential. They have a right to access this education in an environment that respects and affirms their identity. The review found that the mere existence of a policy does not guarantee protections and safety if the policy is not implemented with intention and care, recognizing the diverse portrayal of 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences in school environments and curriculum. Lack of consistent communication, training, and clarity around roles and responsibilities has led to ineffective policy implementation. Ambiguity concerning the governance frameworks and relationships that inform EDU's operations has contributed to tension surrounding both the SOGI policy's implementation, and the policy itself. 2SLGBTQIA+ students continue to be at risk of bullying, harassment, violence, negative mental health impacts, and other factors that contribute to poor educational outcomes.

The Advocate advised recommendations in five themes for strategies to respond to incidents; implementing and standardizing procedures for schools and school councils; creating spaces for respectful dialogue; improving training; and investing in student well-being and safe school contacts.

Did you know?

After YCAO's report was tabled in the Yukon Legislative Assembly on March 30, 2026, Members of the Legislative Assembly voted unanimously to support a motion calling for support for trans-inclusive care and SOGI implementation in the Yukon.



Motion No. 79: THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse Yukoners by: (1) continuing to support and fund gender-affirming care and trans health services, including making improvements to these services in consultation with Queer Yukon Society and the transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse communities; (2) continuing to support the implementation of the Department of Education's sexual orientation and gender identity policy; and (3) using public education to fight intolerance, discrimination, and violence against transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse Yukoners.

Progress Tracking

On June 30, 2025, and January 13, 2026, the Department of Education provided its preliminary and one-year progress updates, respectively, on the recommendations made in the three education reports tabled by YCAO during the Spring 2025 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

YCAO is continuing to monitor and respond to ongoing issues involving Family and Children's Services, education, mental health, children in care, youth homelessness, community safety, and more.



- *For Our Children: A Review of Systemic Racism in Yukon Education*



- *Close to Home: A Yukon Approach to Supporting Children with Complex Needs: Summary of Findings*





- *I Am Not Okay, It's Not Okay: A review of the Yukon government's response to the use of restraints and isolation spaces at Jack Hulland Elementary School*



In March 2026, the Department of Education launched an independent review to examine how the department supports learners, families, and educators across Yukon's three school authorities from Kindergarten to Grade 12, as well as Yukoners accessing post secondary and adult learning supports.

Child Death Review

The Yukon is currently the only jurisdiction with a Child and Youth Advocate Office that does not have a legislated mandate to be notified of and to conduct child death reviews. However, under section 15 of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* the Legislative Assembly or a Minister can refer the death of a child to YCAO for review.

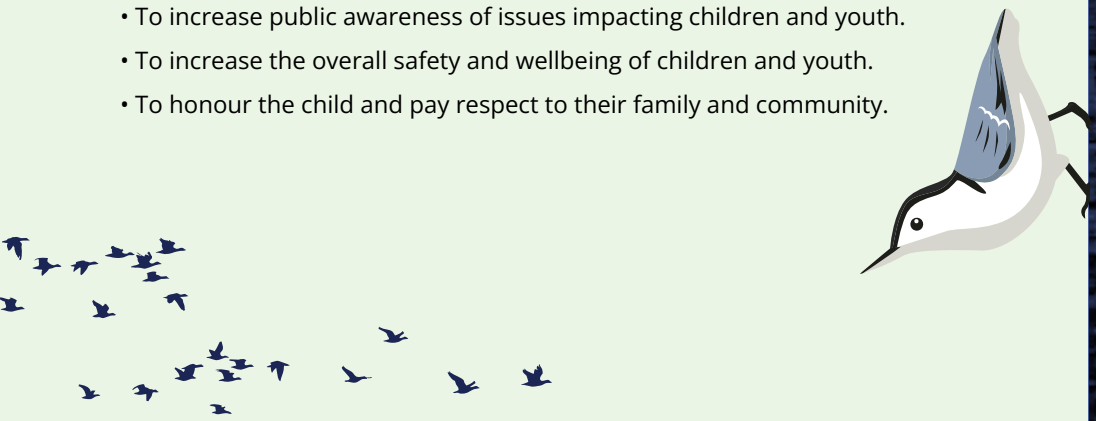
Given the mandate for individual, informal and systemic advocacy, YCAO has a unique understanding of child and youth service systems, including the scope of services provided by Yukon government departments. This provides YCAO with a lens that would be beneficial in leading child and youth death reviews in the Yukon, including the planning and implementation of a new model.

The objectives of a child and youth death review are:

- To review child and youth deaths with a child rights lens using a respectful, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed approach that meaningfully engages family, community and service providers.
- To maintain a flexible, child-centered model that allows for each review to be tailored to the unique circumstances of each child or youth.
- To identify specific barriers, child rights violations, and systemic gaps that contributed to the death of the child.
- To make recommendations to designated services.
- To identify trends and risk factors in child and youth deaths.
- To increase public awareness of issues impacting children and youth.
- To increase the overall safety and wellbeing of children and youth.
- To honour the child and pay respect to their family and community.

Key Differences Between Coroner's Inquest and Child Death Review

- A coroner's inquest can be held for any death in the Yukon. A child death review may be completed for children and youth up to age 28. A child death review will be completed with a child rights lens with the child at the centre of the review.
- An inquest is a court process, and it is open to the public and media. In a child death review, information gathering from family, community and service providers will be completed in private. The identity of those involved in a review will not be made public, however, the Yukon Government designated services will be public. The final report will be shared publicly, in whole or in part, at the Advocate's discretion.
- Child death reviews will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the child's life and therefore, the process for each review may differ (e.g., cultural considerations, ceremonies, etc.). The proceedings of an inquest are consistently applied.
- YCAO is uniquely equipped to advocate for and monitor changes to legislation, policies and practices by Yukon Government departments serving children and youth and to uphold children's rights.





Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)

What Is the CCCYA and What Do They Do?

Members of the Council are statutory officers of their legislatures in the respective provinces or territories. Each holds a legislative mandate to hold their governments to account for the services provided to children and youth, to uphold their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to do so in accordance with their provincial or territorial legislation.

The CCCYA works collectively to address mutual areas of concern that impact young people nationally.

The Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, Annette King, is the Vice President of the CCCYA.

On National Child Day (November 20th) 2025, YCAO joined the CCCYA in reaffirming Canada's commitment to upholding the rights of children and youth under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through a joint public statement, the Council drew urgent attention to the ongoing barriers faced by Indigenous children in accessing essential services under Jordan's Principle. The release highlighted the devastating impacts of funding changes, service delays, request denials, and growing backlogs, emphasizing that these systemic inequities continue to jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of Indigenous children and youth. The statement called on the Government of Canada to immediately address these barriers and end the discrimination preventing Indigenous children from receiving the supports to which they are entitled. By contributing to this collective advocacy, our office reinforced its commitment to promoting children's rights, amplifying the voices of young people, and advancing equitable access to services for all children.

Read the full statement at cccya.ca.



Annette and Julia at Our Children Our Way Conference. The words of Dr. Cindy Blackstock always inspires us to strive for equity for children!

Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA)



YCAO hosted our annual CRIA training on September 3rd and 4th, 2025. The training was attended by over 20 professionals from the Yukon government, First Nations and youth serving organizations.

What Is a CRIA?

A CRIA is a process used to examine how a law, policy, or decision may affect children and youth. It helps identify potential impacts on children's rights before changes are made and supports more informed and thoughtful decision-making.

YCAO recommends the use of CRIA to strengthen decision-making and ensure children's rights and youth participation are prioritized. YCAO supports learning and capacity-building around CRIA for policymakers, professionals, and organizations.

Using CRIA helps to:

- Assess how laws, policies, and decisions may affect children and youth
- Support governments in meeting their obligations under children's rights frameworks
- Improve accountability and transparency in decision-making
- Identify and address potential concerns early, reducing the need for individual and systemic advocacy

YCAO continues to support CRIA evolution with a monthly Community of Practice, online resources, annual training and the development of peer-to-peer mentoring!

YCAO supports the TYC by promoting the Territorial Youth Strategy and regularly engaging with the partnership table (government and non-government youth serving organizations).



S.L.A.Y

Strong Leaders Are Youth

S.L.A.Y. is a youth-led action and advisory team that drives youth led initiatives aligned with the Territorial Youth Strategy. Members of S.L.A.Y. lead community-based projects, amplify youth voices, and ensure that youth perspectives are meaningfully included in decision-making processes. In addition to carrying out action projects, the team also serves as an advisory group for Collective partners, offering feedback, insight, and lived experience to support more youth-responsive programs, policies, and services.



Did you know?

TYC has Youth Leaders that can be accessed for youth engagement!

TYC Mission: To work collaboratively to ensure all Yukon youth have a sense of belonging throughout the territory. This means that they feel empowered, have a positive sense of self and their futures, have mutually caring and fulfilling relationships, and feel connected to and supported by their family, community, and land.



Did you know?

CRIA helps ensure children's voices and rights are considered early, rather than as an afterthought.



Public Education and Outreach

YCAO provides in person information sessions for children, youth, and professionals about children's rights and the role of YCAO. We offer an online course, attend events, and provide information and resources on our website and social media platforms.





In February 2026 Annette was invited to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories to meet with MLAs and service providers to discuss the role of the Child and Youth Advocate Office in the Yukon and the numbers of NWT children referred to YCAO. NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada without an Advocate office.

Resources

YCAO has many resources to help children learn and understand their rights. You can email info@ycao.ca to request posters, colouring books, playing cards and more!

National Child Day

On November 20th, 2025, YCAO hosted our annual open house for National Child Day





Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the ages of children that YCAO can advocate for?

A: There is no minimum age for advocacy; children's rights apply from the day they are born. YCAO provides services to young people:

- Under 18 years of age under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- Under 19 years of age under the *Child & Family Services Act*.
- Under 21 years of age under the *Education Act*.
- Between the ages of 19 and 26 that are eligible or receiving services under section 17 and 18 of the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Q: Can YCAO provide a lawyer? Can YCAO represent kids in Court?

A: No. YCAO cannot act as legal counsel or interfere with the work of another body, tribunal or court. A family court judge can appoint a children's lawyer to ensure the interests of the child are upheld.

Q: Does YCAO need consent from parents or guardians to provide advocacy?

A: No. At YCAO the child or youth is our client. Referrals can come directly from the child or youth or any person with an interest in the child or youth. Many of our referrals come from a parent or caregiver, but occasionally we need to advocate without parental involvement.

Q: Does YCAO have to meet the child?

A: Yes. YCAO strives to meet with the child to get their view. Occasionally, we won't meet with the child if it isn't in their best interest. When we are not able to obtain the view of the child, we defer to the rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Q: Can YCAO compel YG to implement recommendations?

A: YG departments are responsible to advise YCAO of steps taken to implement recommendations. YCAO tracks progress made annually.

Q: What information am I allowed to share?

A: Anyone can make a referral and share information with YCAO for the purposes of advocacy. YCAO will not share the source of a referral with anyone. The information YCAO may ask for can include the name of the child, date of birth or other demographic information, and details about the advocacy issue(s). YG departments are legislatively required to share information requested by YCAO for the purposes of advocacy.

Q: Is YCAO a government department?

A: No. YCAO is an oversight body that exists to promote and uphold the rights and views of Yukon children and youth. YCAO is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly. We report annually to Members' Services Board, an all party committee of the Legislative Assembly.



Did you know?

YCAO promotes artistic growth and mentorship. Some of the artwork presented in this report was illustrated by local youth artist Deniesha Hoffmann. YCAO works with our long term graphic designer Mark Rutledge to support young artists in their career development.







Contact Us

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