



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE **Director of Child and Family Services**

2016-2017

{including years 2007-2008 to 2016-2017}

RAPPORT ANNUEL DU DIRECTEUR DES **Services à l'enfance et à la famille**

2016-2017

{Y compris les exercices allant de 2007-2008 à 2016-2017}

Le présent document contient un résumé en français

Government of Northwest Territories
Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

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English

Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspin ki nitawih̄tīn ē nīhīyawih̄k ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tł̄chq̄ yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq̄ dè, gots'ō gonede.

Tł̄chq̄

ʔerih̄tł'is Dēne Sųh̄né yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔą ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yółtı.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ıe zhatıé k'éé edatł'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahłı.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ıne xədə k'é hederı ʔedıhtł'é yerınwę nıde dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinothtan jı', diits'at ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Ċ'bdĊ NN^{sb}bdĊ^c ʌrlLJΔr^c Δ^obNĊc^{sb}γLĊN^b, ɗ^oq^cN^oɗ^c ɗ^ob^cl^oq^o ʔ^oĊN^c.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

1-855-846-9601

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR, CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

October 1, 2017

The Honourable Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services
Government of the Northwest Territories

Dear Mr. Minister,

I am pleased to provide you with the 2016-2017 Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services, as required under section 51(2)(g) the *Child and Family Services Act*.

It has been an inspiring year working on enhancing the delivery and quality of Child and Family Services; a continuous process. We are constantly learning, adapting and growing to best meet the needs of the children, youth and families we serve. It is truly exceptional to see the relationships forged and the contributions made by all child and family services staff from across the Northwest Territories. Their dedication, teamwork, and flexibility during this time of transition and change has been, and will continue to be, key in the work towards transforming child prevention and protection services.

I want to thank you and your Deputy Minister for your support and encouragement throughout the year. There are some very positive statistics and achievements within this report. These accomplishments would not be realized without your leadership and guidance.

As we move forward in 2017-2018, I look forward to continuing to serve children, youth and their families across the Northwest Territories in my statutory role as Director, Child and Family Services.

Sincerely,

Patricia Kyle
Director, Child and Family Services

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DATA SOURCES AND INTERPRETATION

This report presents a summary of child protection and prevention services data from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2017, extracted from the Department of Health and Social Services Child and Family Information System. This system is currently used in daily child protection and prevention practice, and is continuously updated to improve the completeness of the data. As a result the numbers presented in each annual report may change slightly from year to year. This report presents the most accurate iteration of the information to date.

In each figure, the unit of analysis is presented in the vertical axis. Data is presented for children aged 0 to 18 years¹ in the form of raw counts, rates by 1,000 child population, and rates by 1,000 child protection statuses². Raw counts are used to review the overall number of children involved in the Child and Family Services System whereas rates are used to compare an indicator across different populations. This is necessary when the denominator (child population or child protection and prevention statuses) changes from year to year. Rates by child protection and prevention statuses are used to account for the fact that a child may hold more than one child protection and/or prevention status per year, which complicates population-based analysis of child protection and prevention statuses.

The statistical significance of change in rates over time was calculated using Poisson regression with a p-value of 0.05³. In other words, statistical testing was done to see if the data has increased or decreased significantly over the ten year period. If the change was statistically significant, a trend line is added to the figure to demonstrate the direction of the trend. If there is no trend line, the data has not changed significantly over time, or trend analysis is not appropriate given the format of the data presented (i.e. raw counts).

A trend line demonstrates that the data has statistically increased or decreased. Depending on the indicator, that can be a positive change or a negative change. If there is no statistically significant change, this can also be viewed as positive (or negative) depending on the situation. The information provided in this report describes the basic features of the data, however it is not possible to interpret the data or draw conclusions as to why these changes are being seen.

¹ For the purposes of this report, the term 'child' refers to both children and youth ages 0-18.

² "Status" refers to the arrangement under which services are provided. The major division is between voluntary status (e.g., Voluntary Service Agreement) and Court-ordered status (e.g., Temporary Custody Order).

³ Poisson regression is a form of statistical analysis for examining the number of events and determining the likelihood that a change in the number of events over time is due to random variation. If it is extremely unlikely that the change observed could have occurred by chance, the conclusion is that this represents a true ("statistically significant") change over time.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual report of the Director of Child and Family Services presents data on the delivery of services under the *Child and Family Services Act* during the ten-year period between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2017. This 2016-2017 report meets the requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act* to provide an annual report to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Table 1 highlights the major trends described in this ten-year retrospective report.

Table 1
Major Trends

Indicator	10-Year Trend (2007 – 2017)		
	Increasing	No Change	Decreasing
Rate of Children Receiving Services (0-15 years)		✓	
Rate of Children Receiving Services (16-18 years)	✓		
Proportion of Children Receiving Services at Home	✓		
Proportion of Children Removed from Home and Community			✓
Proportion of First Nations Children Receiving Services	✓		
Rate of Voluntary Support Agreements		✓	
Rate of Support Service Agreements		✓	
Rate of Apprehensions Less Than 72 Hours		✓	
Rate of Apprehensions Greater Than 72 Hours			✓
Rate of Plan of Care Agreements		✓	
Rate of Supervision Orders			✓
Rate of Interim Custody Orders		✓	
Rate of Temporary Custody Orders			✓
Rate of Permanent Custody Orders			✓
Rate of Children in-Out of Territory Placements		✓	
Rate of Children in Permanent Care			✓

There are a number of Child and Family Services statuses under which a child may receive services. These include service statuses that are established *by agreement* with parents or youth (Voluntary Service Agreements, Support Service Agreements, and Plan of Care Agreements), and *court-ordered* service statuses (Supervision Orders, and Interim, Temporary and Permanent Custody Orders). The 2016-2017 data shows an increasing trend over the past ten years in statuses by agreement, and a decreasing trend in those statuses that are court-ordered.

In some circumstances when children are receiving services a child may be placed outside of the family home. Placement of children is discussed in this report. Over the past ten years there has been an increase in children able to remain in their home while they and their family receive services and the number of children being removed from their home community has decreased. The integrity of the family and the possibilities for positive outcomes are increased when children are able to remain within their family home.

This annual report identifies a number of accomplishments achieved in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The report also outlines next steps to continue to improve the services offered to children, youth and their families in the Northwest Territories.

1. RÉSUMÉ

Ce rapport annuel du directeur des Services à l'enfance et à la famille présente les données sur la prestation des services en vertu de la *Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille* au cours de la décennie allant du 1^{er} avril 2007 au 31 mars 2017. Le rapport 2016-2017 répond aux exigences de la *Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille* qui prévoit qu'un rapport annuel soit présenté au ministre de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

Le tableau 1 souligne les tendances principales décrites dans ce rapport rétrospectif sur dix ans.

Tableau 1
Tendances principales

Indicateur	Tendance des 10 dernières années (de 2007 à 2017)		
	Augmentation	Aucun changement	Baisse
Nombre d'enfants bénéficiant des services (de la naissance à 15 ans)		✓	
Nombre d'enfants bénéficiant des services (de 16 à 18 ans)	✓		
Part des enfants recevant des services à la maison	✓		
Part des enfants retirés de leur foyer et de leur collectivité			✓
Part des enfants autochtones bénéficiant des services	✓		
Part des accords de soutien volontaires		✓	
Part des accords de services de soutien		✓	
Part des appréhensions de moins de 72 heures		✓	
Part des appréhensions de plus de 72 heures			✓
Part des accords concernant les projets de prise en charge		✓	
Part des ordonnances de surveillance			✓
Part des ordonnances de garde provisoire		✓	
Part des ordonnances de garde temporaire			✓
Part des ordonnances de garde permanente			✓
Part des placements d'enfants dans un établissement à l'extérieur des TNO		✓	
Part des placements d'enfants sous garde permanente			✓

Un enfant peut recevoir des services en fonction d'un certain nombre de statuts des services à l'enfance et à la famille. Il s'agit de services prévus par des ententes avec les parents ou avec les jeunes (services de soutien volontaires, accords de services de soutien et accords concernant les projets de prise en charge), et des services ordonnés par le tribunal (ordonnances de surveillance, et de garde provisoire, temporaire et permanente). Les données pour 2016-2017 indiquent une

tendance à la hausse au cours des dix dernières années dans les services prévus par des ententes, et une baisse dans les services faisant l'objet d'une ordonnance du tribunal.

Il peut arriver qu'un enfant soit placé en dehors de son domicile pour recevoir des services. Le présent rapport aborde le placement des enfants. Au cours des dix dernières années, on a constaté une hausse du nombre d'enfants qui ont pu rester dans leur foyer pour recevoir des services, et une baisse du nombre d'enfants retirés de leur collectivité d'origine. L'intégrité de la famille et les perspectives de résultats positifs augmentent quand les enfants peuvent rester chez eux.

Le présent rapport annuel souligne un certain nombre des réalisations de l'exercice 2016-2017. Il expose également les grandes lignes à suivre pour continuer d'améliorer les services offerts aux familles ténoises.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Director of Child and Family Services report for 2016-2017 provides a summary of services delivered under the Northwest Territories *Child and Family Services Act* over the ten year period from April 2007 to March 2017.

There are a number of principles on which the *Child and Family Services Act* is built including promoting and protecting the best interest and well-being of the child, and protecting children from harm and abuse. Assessing the best interest of the child includes consideration of differing cultural values and practices and the child and family's capacity to participate in the planning and decision making process. Promoting the integrity and continuity of the family is an essential measure when considering the best interest of the child.

Prior to August 1, 2016, the Department, in collaboration with the six Health and Social Services Authorities and the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency, were responsible for the administration of Child and Family Services in the NWT. This collaboration continued after August 1, 2016 with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency. The Director of Child and Family Services is appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Services and has delegated duties and powers under the *Child and Family Services Act*. The Director's duties are supported by the appointment of regional representatives as Assistant Directors of Child and Family Services. Assistant Directors are able to act on behalf of the Director at the regional level, bringing decision making closer to the delivery of services. All Assistant Directors, as well as social services staff, receive specialized training to become appointed as Child Protection Workers. This appointment affords the staff the authority, in compliance with the *Child and Family Services Act*, to provide services to children and families for voluntary access to services and for when child protection concerns are identified.

As of April 11, 2017, there were 78 individuals across the territory with a child protection appointment. This includes Child Protection Workers, Supervisors, Directors, Assistant Directors, and Departmental Specialists.

Table 2
Child Protection Appointments by Authority/Region

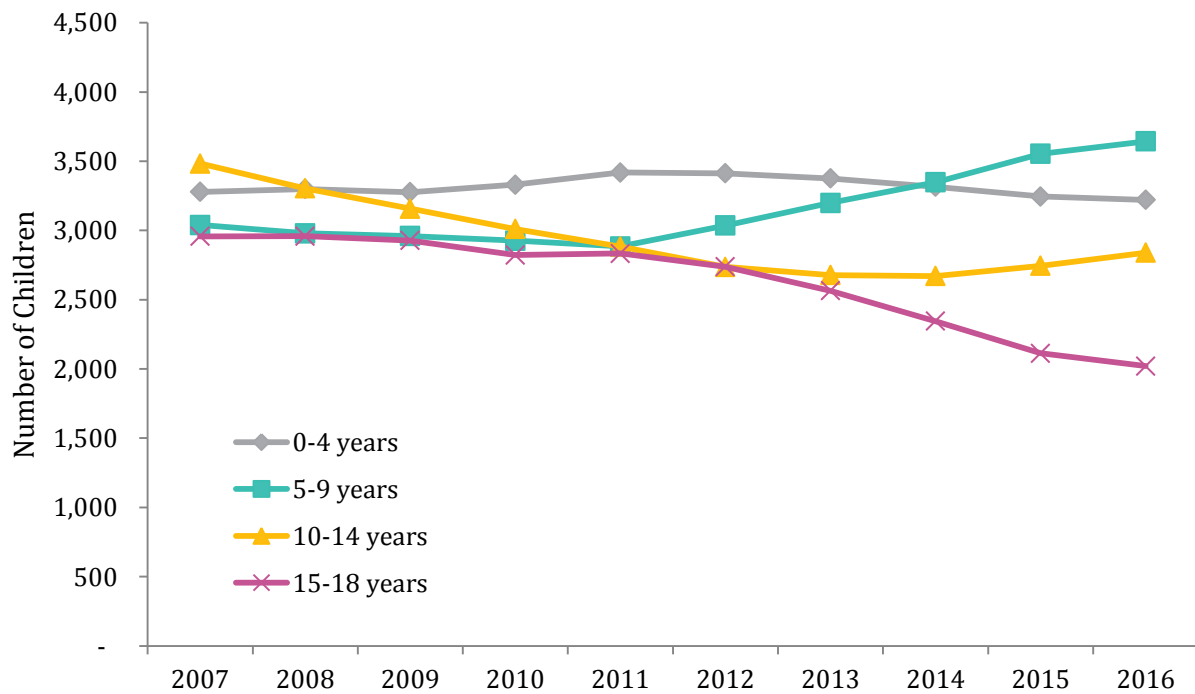
Authority/Region	Number of individuals with a child protection appointment
Beaufort-Delta	19
Sahtu	8
Deh Cho	4
Tłchq	9
Yellowknife	19
Hay River	5
Fort Smith	8
Headquarters	6
Total	78

The work of a child protection worker is very challenging as well as rewarding. Child Protection Workers have a complex role in the provision of services to children and families. They are responsible for assessing risk factors that can impact and effect a child’s safety and wellbeing. They make decisions based on a number of factors and a variety of information, all while keeping the best interest of the child first and foremost in their mind. The responsibilities and tasks of a Child Protection Worker require specialized skills including strong leadership and teamwork abilities. Child Protection Workers are required to work with the child, family, and community in preventing and mitigating child protection issues by supporting and assisting care for the child whenever possible. Collaborative processes with parents, family members and caregivers are key to addressing conflicts and seeking the most appropriate solution while ensuring consideration is given to cultural and socio-economic influences.

Child Population

According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics population estimates, between 2007 and 2016 the overall population in the Territories grew by 2.5% (from 43,374 to 44,469). However, in that same ten year time period, the population aged 0 to 18 years of age decreased by 8.1%, dropping from 12,759 in 2007 to 11,725 in 2016. An overall decrease in the child population aged 10 to 18 was observed between 2007 and 2016, with a decrease of 18.5% in children aged 10-14 and 31.7% in children aged 15-18. The change in child population has not been consistent across all age groups; this can be observed in Figure 1.

Figure 1
NWT Child Population by Age Group



3. REPORTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Children and families become involved with Child and Family Services in one of two ways. Some parents or caregivers come to Child and Family Services to ask about assistance, while others may be brought to the attention of Child Protection Workers by a third party report of suspected child maltreatment. In situations where families are seeking assistance, this could be provided through a number of ways such as; financial assistance sought for food or child care, or respite care while a caregiver attends addictions treatments. Those seeking assistance are assessed to ascertain needs. An assessment may include meeting with the parents and/or child(ren) to identify resources within the household, resources required and referrals needed to best meet long and short term needs of the family.

When a report of suspected child maltreatment is received, a Child Protection Worker will investigate. Child maltreatment is any situation where a child is found to be in need of protection according to the conditions that are set out in Section 7 (3) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, (Appendix A). An investigation includes a visit to the family home, interviews with children, family members, community members (eg. teachers, nurses), and observation of the child's living situation in order to determine whether the child is, or children are, in need of protection.

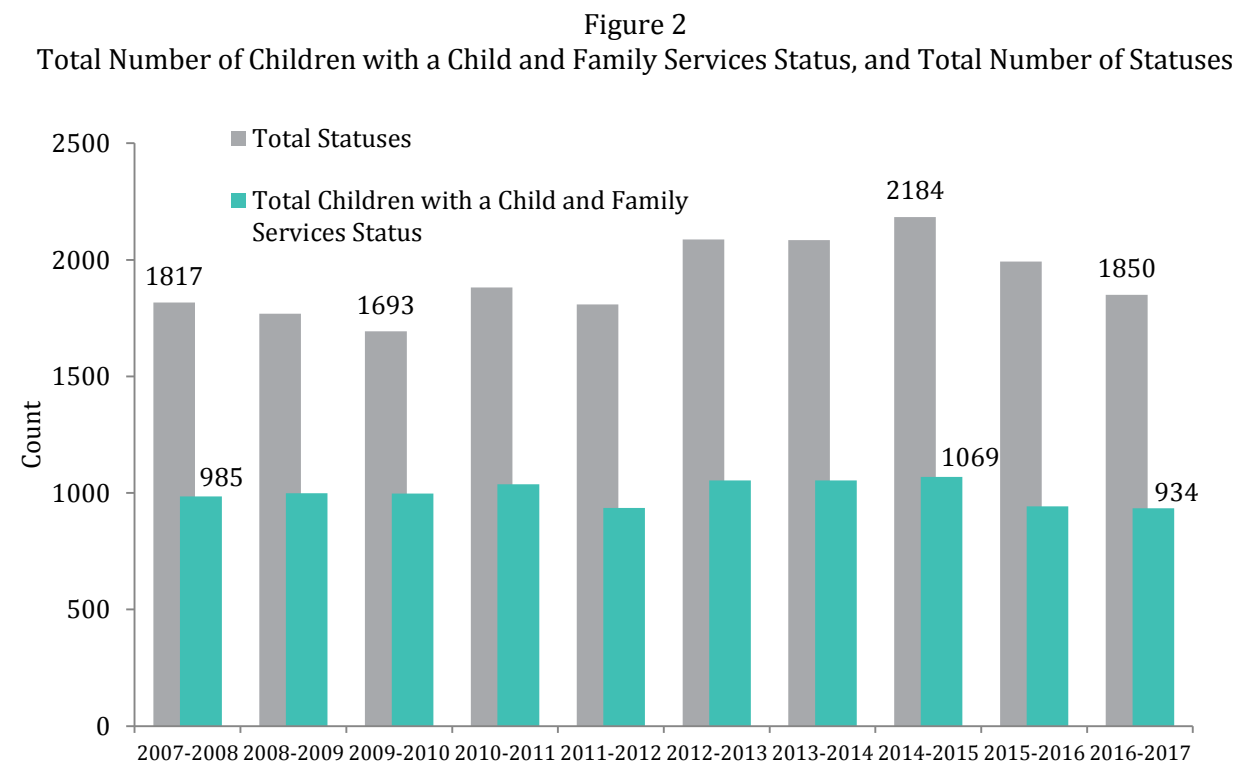
The current Child and Family Services Information System, implemented in 2001-2002, does not have a mechanism to distinguish between requests for assistance and reports of suspected child maltreatment. Although reasons for referral are captured and categorized, it does not adequately differentiate how children and families come into contact with Child and Family Services. Two ongoing activities will help address this. First, with the introduction of Structured Decision Making® (SDM®) assessment tools in 2016-2017, Child Protection Workers are now able to capture and differentiate these two separate types of investigations. Secondly, improvements for data collection are being addressed through the configuration process of the new information system for Child and Family Services, Matrix NT. Due to these ongoing developments some investigation data, such as reasons for referral, may not be available over the next few years. Ultimately, these changes will improve the quality of future data by accurately reflecting the distinction between families requesting prevention services and children who may be in need of protection.

4. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Number of Children Receiving Services

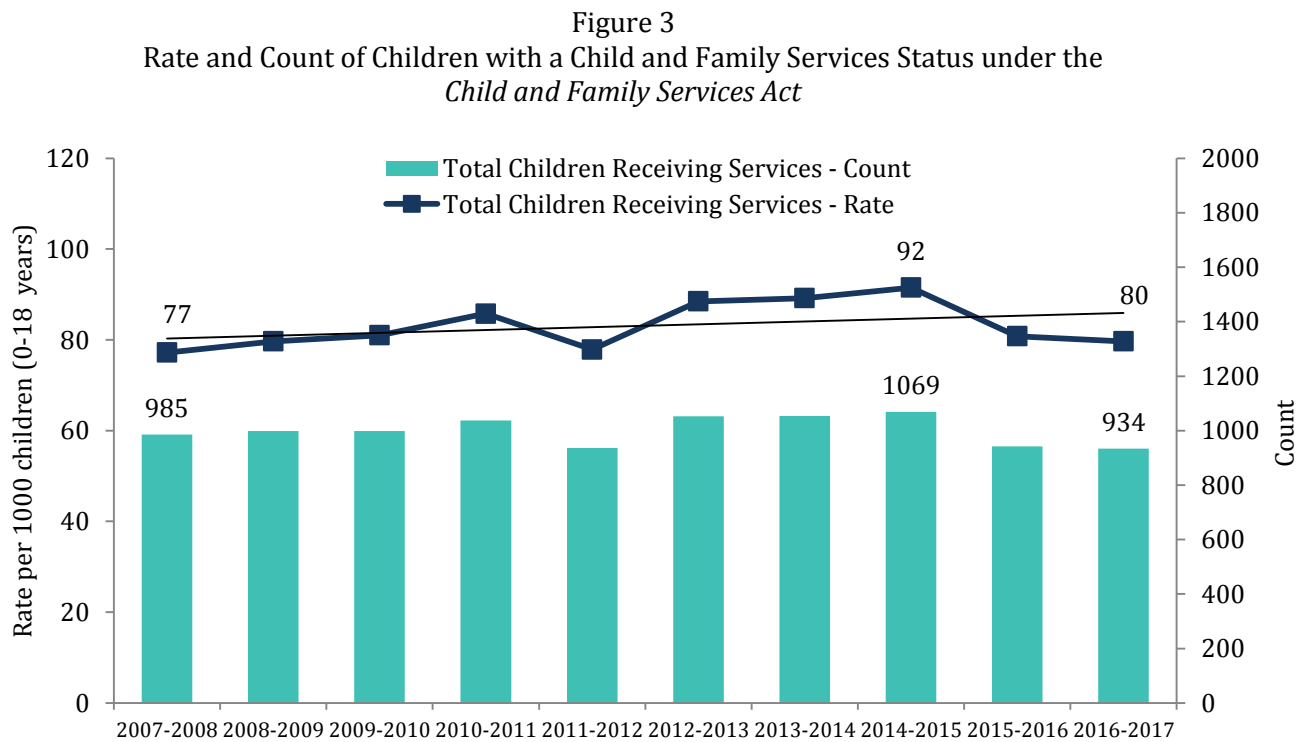
When a family has requested support services, or a child is found to be in need of protection, the child is given a type of Child and Family Services status. A service status is required to enable Child and Family Services to provide support or services. The status is identified through the *Child and Family Services Act* which entitles the provision of the child and family to services, and outlines the legal structure under which these services will occur (i.e. the type of support available, whether the parents retain care and custody of the child and the duration of the service status). Three things identify the type of status; age of the child; whether the child is determined to be in need of prevention or protection services; and whether the parents are willing and able to work with the Child Protection Worker on a plan of action. (Status types will be described in more detail later in this section.)

Figure 2 shows the number of Child and Family Services statuses each fiscal year, as well as the number of children who had a status during that fiscal year. As it is possible for each child to have more than one status within one fiscal year, the number of statuses is considerably higher than the number of children who had one or more statuses during the same fiscal year.



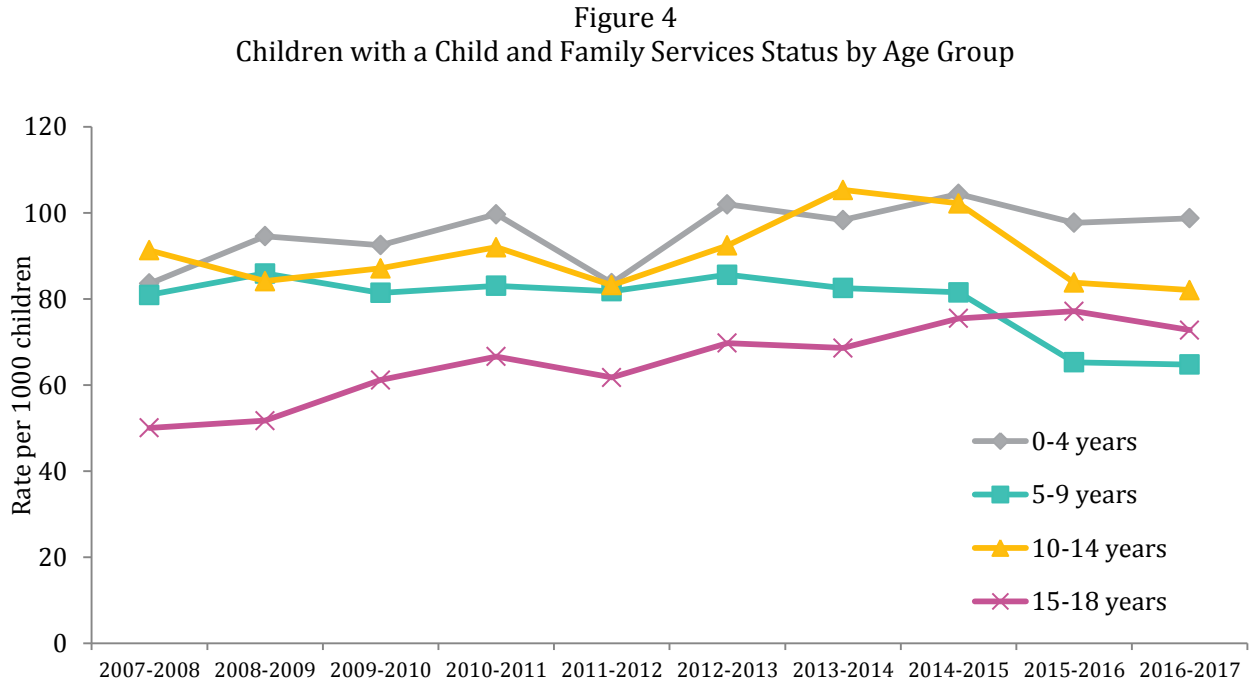
Over the past ten years, the number of children with a Child and Family Services status has remained stable, with an average of 1,000 children having a Child and Family Services status each year. There has been a significant increase in the number of statuses over the past ten years (trend line not shown).

Figure 3 shows the total number of children with a Child and Family Services status during each fiscal year, along with the rate of children with a Child and Family Services status per 1,000 children.



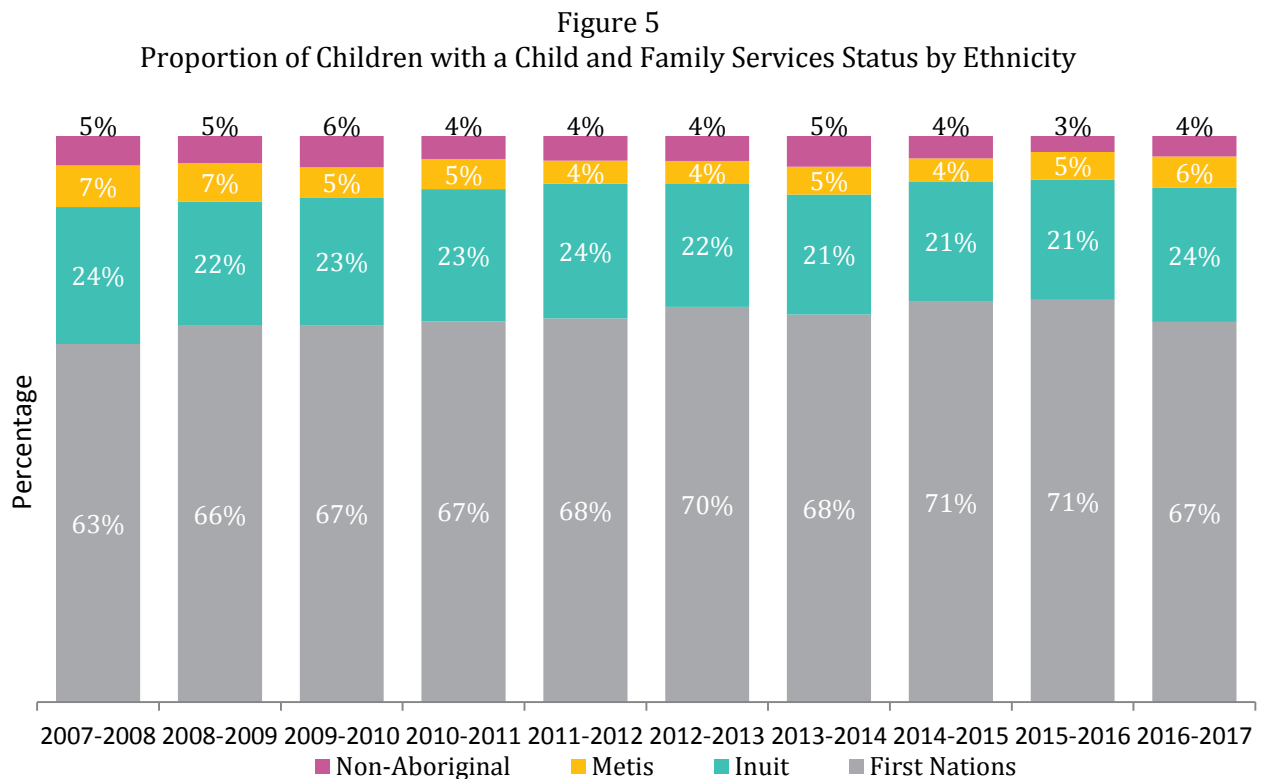
While the *number* of children with one or more status has remained relatively stable over the past ten years, there has been a statistically significant increase in the population-based *rate* of children with a Child and Family Services status. This is a result of the declining child population, particularly in the 15-18 year age group.

Figure 4 shows the rate of children with a Child and Family Services status, divided into four age groups.



There was a statistically significant increase in the rate of children with a status in both the youngest age group, 0-4 years, and the oldest age group, 15-18 years (trend lines not shown). There was a significant decrease in the rate of children with a status in the 5-9 year age group and no significant change of the rate in the 10-14 year age group.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of children with a Child and Family Services status by ethnicity.



As shown in Figure 5, there has been a statistically significant increase in the number of First Nations children among children with a Child and Family Services status, and a statistically significant decrease in the number of Metis and Non-Aboriginal children in the same group. The number of Inuit children has remained relatively stable over the same time period.

Types of Child and Family Services Statuses

The *Child and Family Services Act*, identifies that services can be offered to children and families either by agreement between the Child Protection Worker and the family, or via court order. Services by agreement allow families to access supports and services to strengthen families and address or prevent child protection concerns. When child protection concerns cannot be adequately addressed in this way, a child protection order may be sought from the court to ensure the safety of the child.

Services by Agreement

The three types of services by agreement that are included in the analysis are Voluntary Services Agreements, Plan of Care Agreements for children aged 0 to 15, and Support Services Agreements for youth aged 16 to 18. Voluntary Service Agreements are used when no child protection concerns are found to exist, but the child and family have the potential to benefit from services that may

reduce and prevent the risk of child protection concerns in the future. Plan of Care Agreements are used when child protection concerns are present, but the family and Child Protection Worker can develop and agree upon a collaborative plan to address these concerns. Examples of services provided under both Voluntary Services Agreements and Plan of Care Agreements include counselling, addictions treatment, temporary foster or respite care, and financial or material assistance such as food or rent. Support Services Agreements address the needs of youth, who are not in need of protection, but nevertheless require supportive services such as counselling, housing supports or addictions treatment.

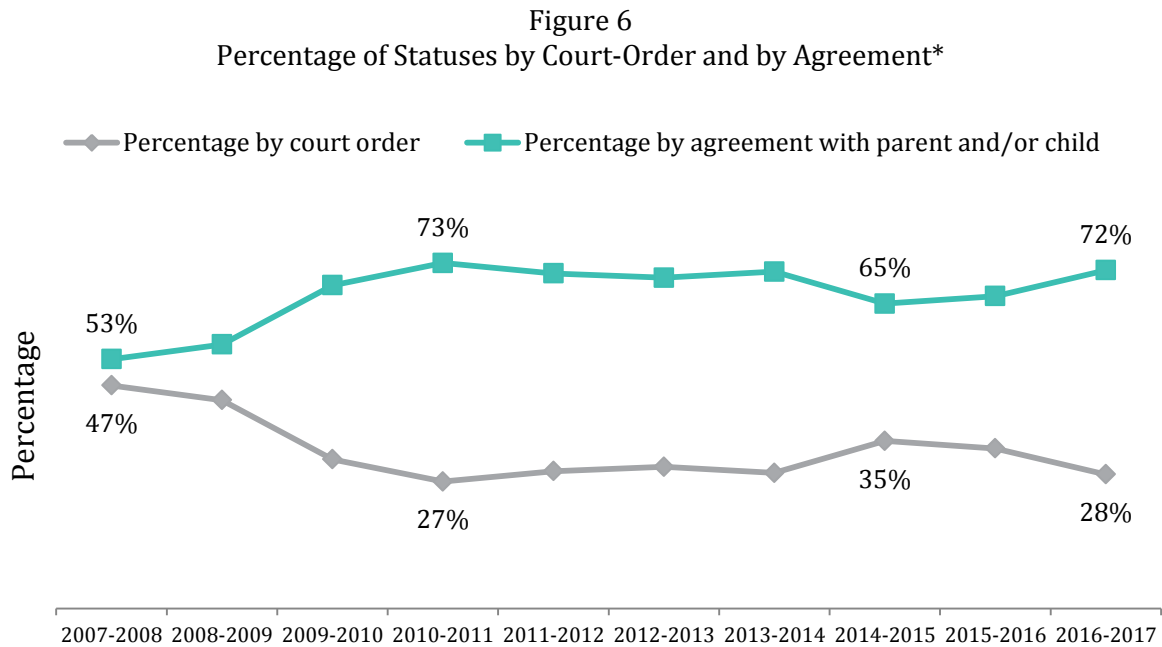
On April 1, 2016, amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act* came into force which included Extended Support Services Agreements. These agreements are for any young adult who is in the permanent custody of the Director before their 19th birthday and wishes to enter into voluntary extended services up until their 23rd birthday. Since 2016-2017 was the first fiscal year that this occurred, youth with an Extended Support Services Agreement were not included in the analysis for the ten year period. There were a total of 17 young adults who participated in this type of voluntary agreement.

Court-Ordered Services

In circumstances where child protection concerns cannot be resolved to ensure the safety of the child, a court order may be sought. Court-ordered actions include Supervision Orders (under which the child remains in the home) and Interim, Temporary, and Permanent Custody Orders (under which the child is removed from the home).

Under the recent amendments of the *Child and Family Services Act*, youth (age 16-18) can now be found in need of protection. When this occurs, a Child Protection Worker must apply to the court for either temporary custody or permanent custody.

Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of children with a status by court order or by agreement.



*For analysis beginning in the 2014-2015, apprehensions have been removed from the statuses considered in this table. This is due to the fact that apprehensions can be a precursor to both statuses by court order and statuses by agreement, and therefore including them in the analysis as a “court ordered status” was inaccurate.

The majority of statuses are by agreement with the parent and/or child/youth. The percentage of statuses by agreement peaked at 73.2% in 2010-2011, and had fallen in recent years, however it is slowly climbing again, reaching 71.6% of statuses in 2016-2017. Statuses by court-order represented 28.4% of all statuses during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Figure 7 presents the percentage of statuses by type for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Figure 7
Percentage of Status (Court-Ordered and by Agreement) by Type, fiscal 2016-2017

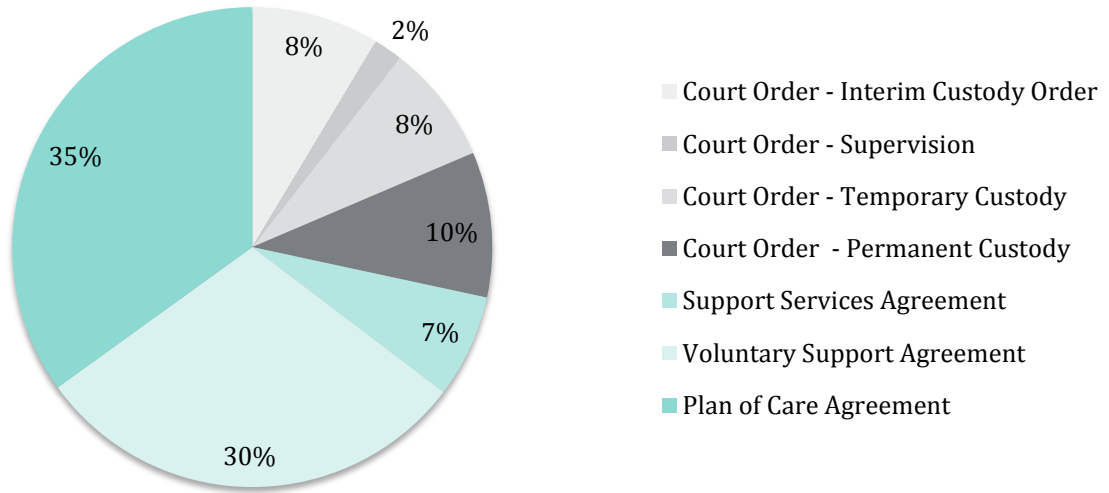
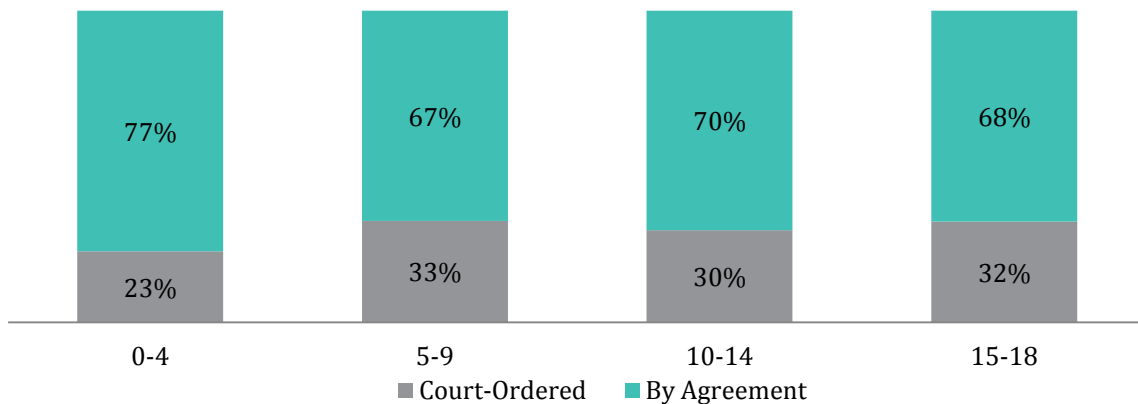


Figure 8 shows the percentage of statuses that are by agreement or by court-order, by age of the child.

Figure 8
Type of Status (Court-Ordered or By Agreement) by Age Group, fiscal 2016-2017

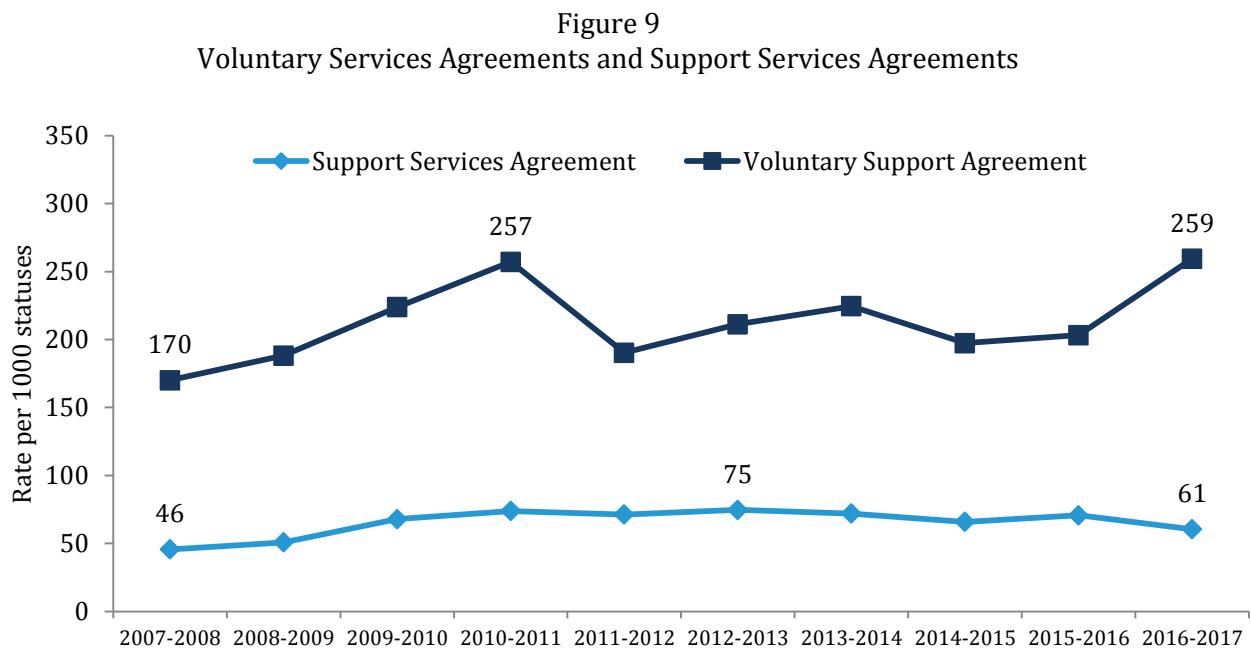


As can be seen in Figure 8, the proportion of statuses by agreement is higher in the youngest age group than in the older age groups, with 77% of statuses by agreement in the 0-4 age group, and between 67% and 70% of statuses by agreement in ages 5-18.

5. VOLUNTARY SERVICES AGREEMENTS AND SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT

Voluntary Services Agreements and Support Services Agreements are designed to strengthen families and support youth. Under a Voluntary Services Agreement, the care and custody of the child remains with the parents and, as the service is voluntary, families may elect to end the Voluntary Services Agreement at any time. Youth aged 16 to 18 who cannot live with their parents can similarly access assistance on a voluntary basis through a Support Services Agreement, under which the youth may be provided with supports such as housing, financial support and/or addictions treatment. These supports are also available to young adults age 19-23 through the newly established Extended Support Services Agreement if they were in permanent custody of the Director before their 19th birthday. These agreements are not included in the below figure.

The rate of both Voluntary Services Agreements and Support Services Agreements per 1,000 statuses is displayed in Figure 9.



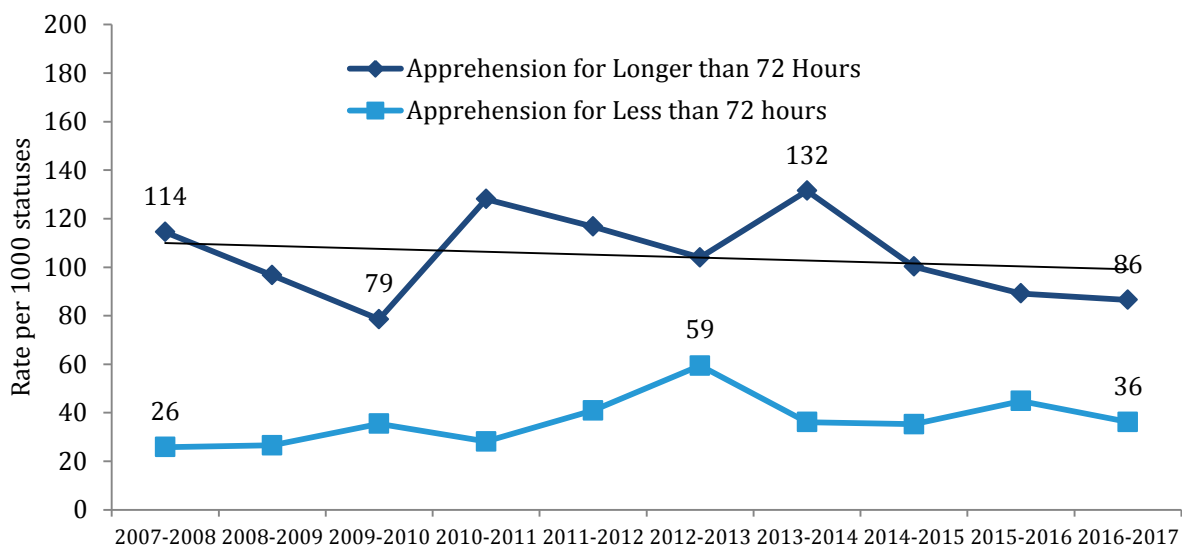
Despite showing a significant increase in past reports, the proportion of statuses that are Support Services Agreements appears to have become stable, and there is now no statistically significant trend over the past ten years. There has been no significant change to the proportion of Voluntary Support Agreements over the same time period.

6. APPREHENSIONS

Apprehensions occur when, following a Child Protection Worker’s initial investigation, it is deemed that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the safety or wellbeing of a child is in danger. The Child Protection Worker may decide to apprehend the child, removing them from the care of their parents or caregivers and placing them in the care and custody of the Director of Child and Family Services. This only occurs after all other alternative options have been considered. The child may be returned to the parents or the caregiver at the time of apprehension within 72 hours if the safety concerns have been resolved; otherwise, the Child Protection Worker must apply to the court for a confirmation order within 14 days of the apprehension. If the court does not confirm the apprehension, the child must be returned to the person who has lawful custody. If the apprehension is confirmed, the child can remain in the care of the Director for up to 45 days. At any point following the apprehension, the Child Protection Worker may decide either to pursue a court order to obtain a custodial status, or to begin working with the family and to develop a plan in order to return the child to the home under a Plan of Care Agreement.

The annual rates for apprehensions longer than 72 hours and less than 72 hours are presented below in Figure 10.

Figure 10
Apprehensions

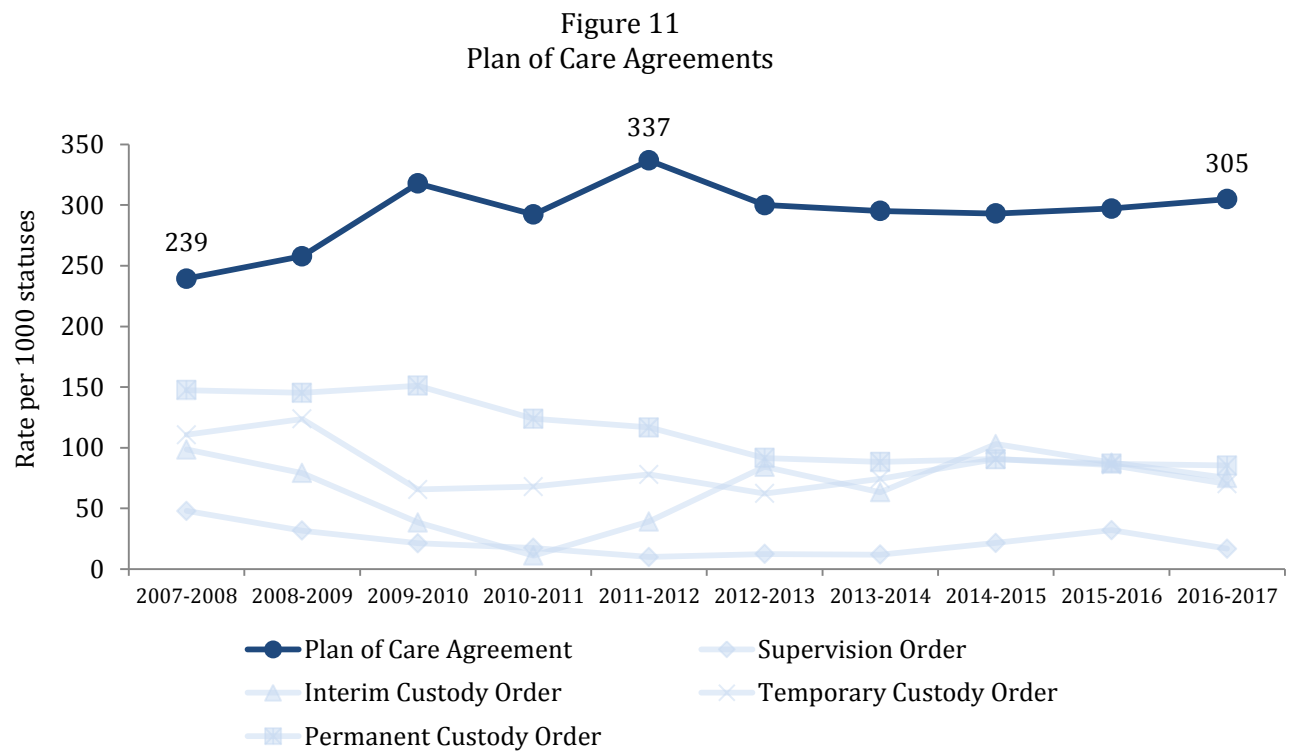


Contrary to previous reports, the proportion of apprehensions for longer than 72 hours now shows a significant decrease over the past ten years, while the proportion of apprehensions for less than 72 hours no longer shows a significant change over the same ten year period.

7. PLAN OF CARE AGREEMENTS

Plan of Care Agreements enable parents to retain care and custody of their children while they work on the family issues that led to child protection concerns and to mitigate future risks. Child Protection Workers work collaboratively with the family to identify the strengths and needs of the family and create a plan of action to address the child protection concerns in the home.

Figure 11 presents the rate of Plan of Care Agreements per 1,000 statuses.

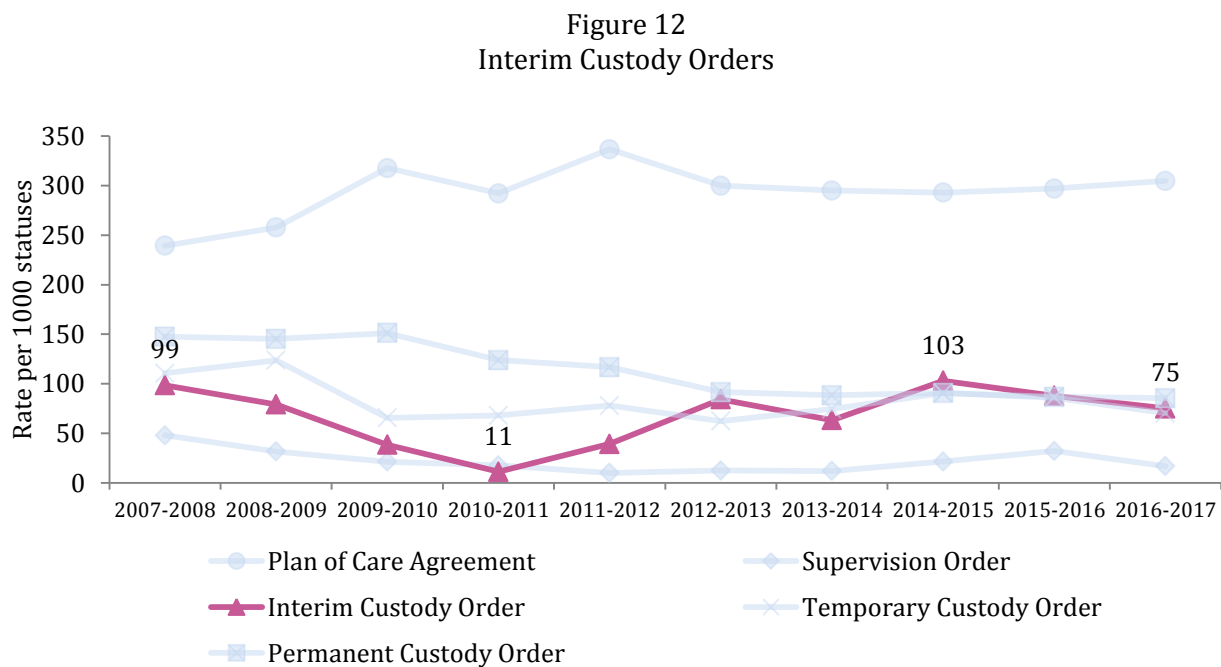


Despite showing a statistically significant increase in past reports, the proportion of statuses that are Plan of Care Agreements appears to have become stable, and there is now no statistically significant trend showing over the past ten years.

8. COURT ORDERS

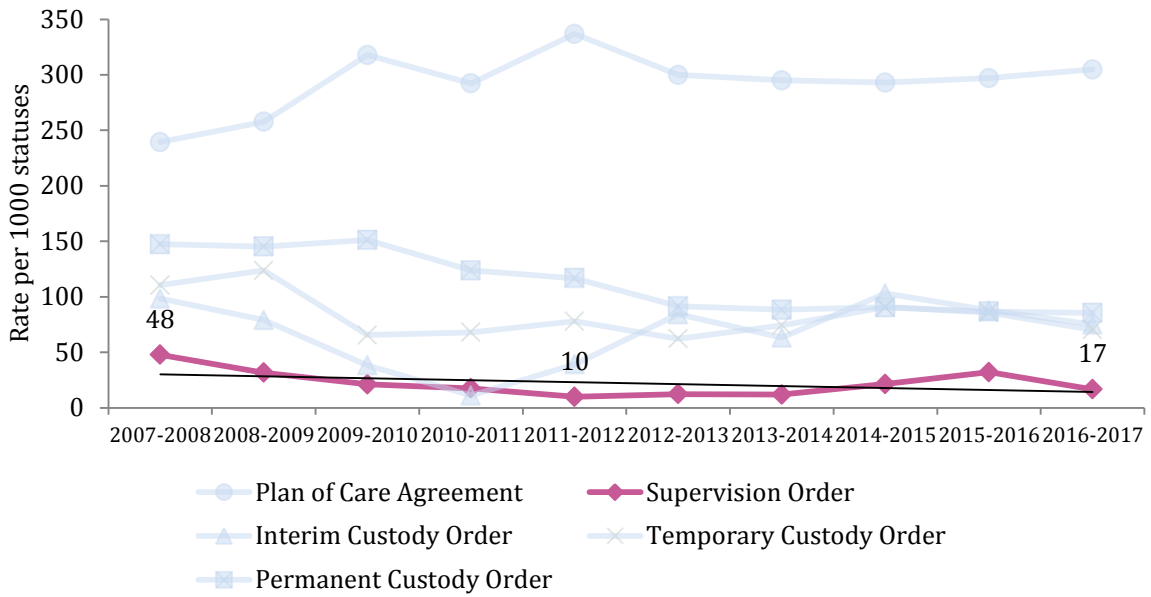
In situations where a Plan of Care Agreement is not able to resolve and mitigate child protection concerns the matter may be referred to Territorial Court. Under the *Child and Family Services Act*, there are four different types of orders that may be sought; an Interim Custody Order, a Supervision Order, a Temporary Custody Order, or a Permanent Custody Order. An Interim Custody Order is used to extend the allowable time period prior to a child protection hearing, for example to give the parents more time to consult with legal counsel. A Supervision Order allows the child to return home while remaining under the supervision of the Director of Child and Family Services, so that Child Protection Workers can continue to monitor child protection concerns in the home and act accordingly. A Temporary Custody Order allows for the Director to retain care and custody of the child for a period of up to two years, at which point the child may be returned to the custody of their parents, or the Director may seek permanent custody. A Permanent Custody Order places the child in the custody of the Director until they reach the age of 16, though this may be extended until the child's 19th birthday.

Figures 12 through 15 present the rates per 1,000 statuses for all Court Orders. A description of the following Court Orders is available in the Glossary.



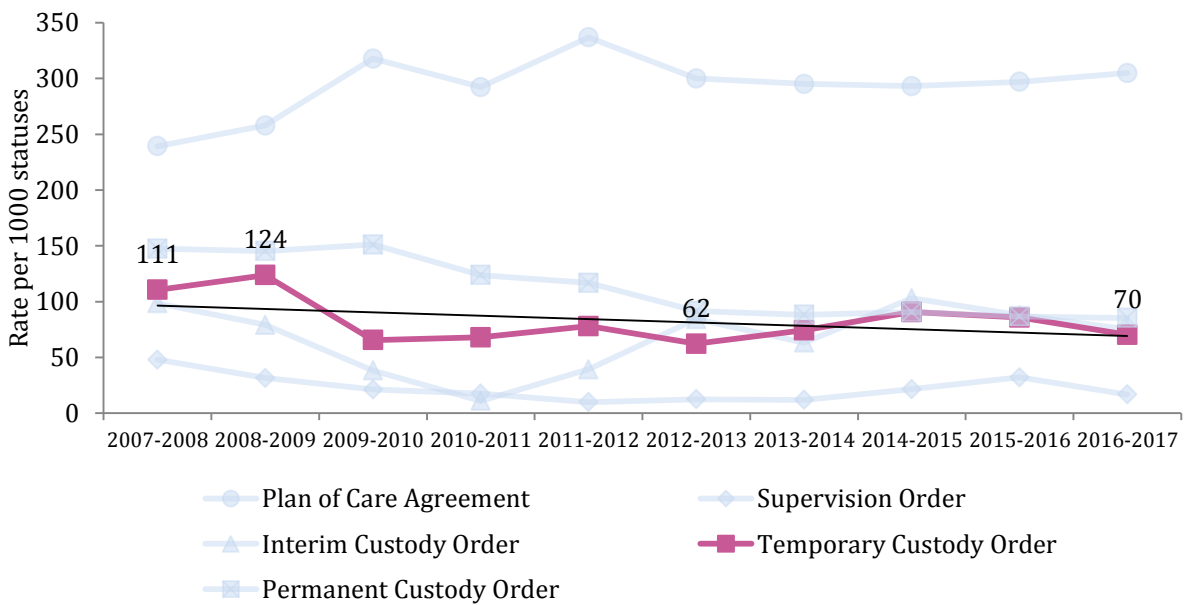
While the rate of Interim Custody Orders can be seen to fluctuate over the past ten years, there is no statistical increase or decrease trend in the use of this status.

Figure 13
Supervision Orders



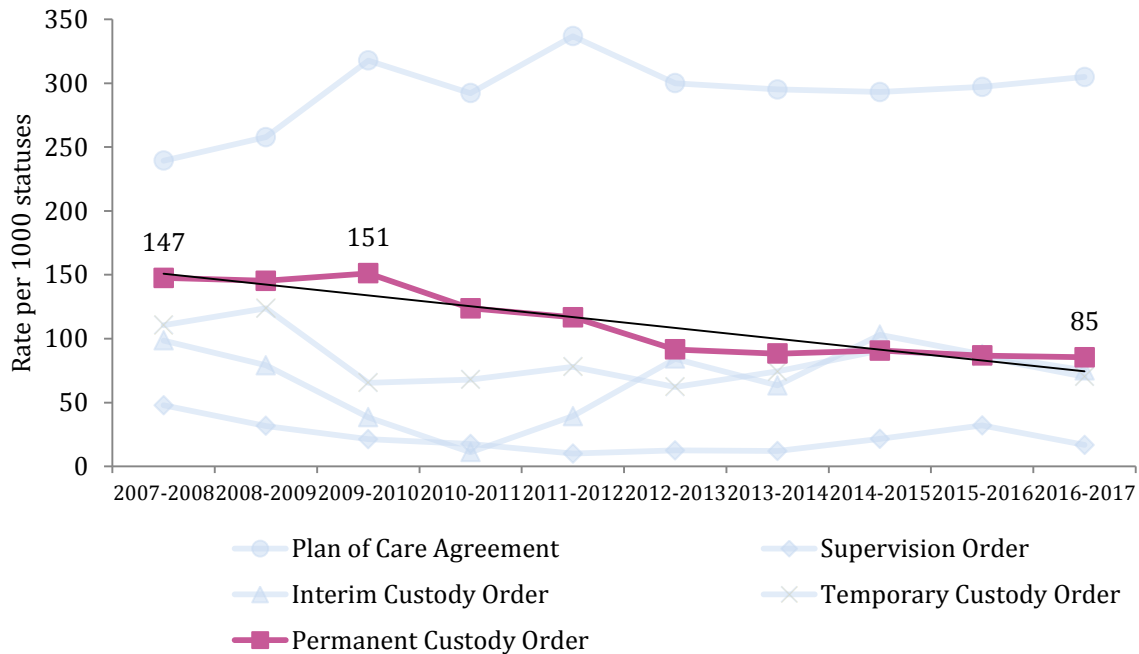
The rate of Supervision Orders has significantly decreased over the past ten years, as can be seen in Figure 13. Supervision Orders are the least commonly sought court orders.

Figure 14
Temporary Custody Orders



The rate of Temporary Custody Orders has also significantly decreased over the past 10 years.

Figure 15
Permanent Custody Orders



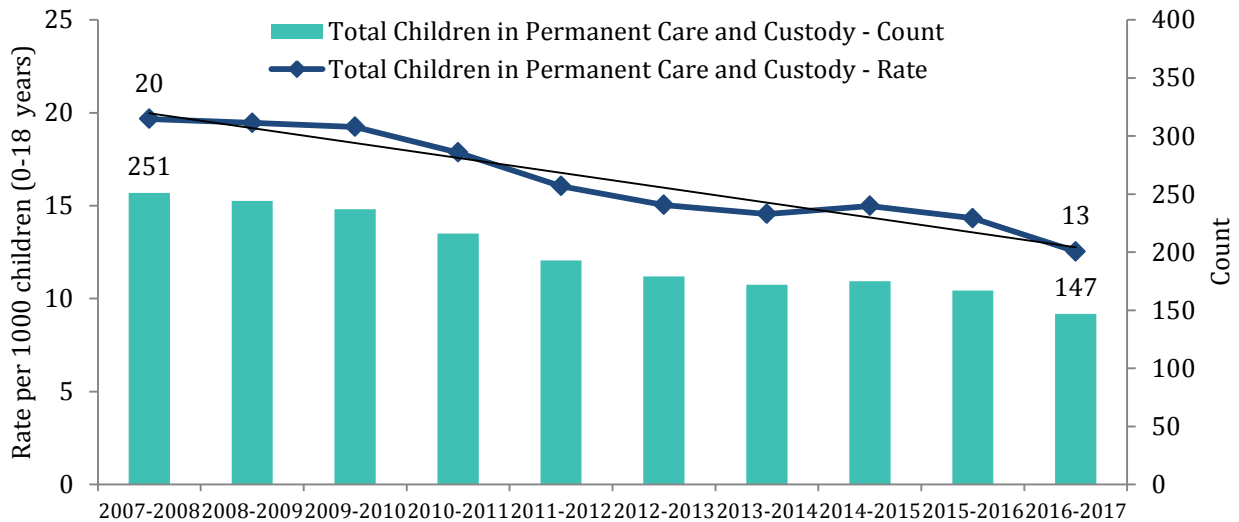
There is a statistically significant decreasing trend in Permanent Custody Orders between 2007-2008 and 2016-2017, as can be seen in Figure 15.

Permanent Custody Orders may be rescinded by a court if the parent’s circumstances change significantly or of the youth makes an application to the court with a viable plan in place for themselves. Information on children in care under a Permanent Custody Order will be presented in the next section.

9. CHILDREN IN PERMANENT CARE AND CUSTODY

Figure 16 shows the total number of children as well as the rate of children who are in permanent care and custody of the Director of Child and Family Services

Figure 16
Total Children in Permanent Care and Custody



Over the past ten years, there has been a statistically significant decrease in the population-based rate of children in permanent care and custody.

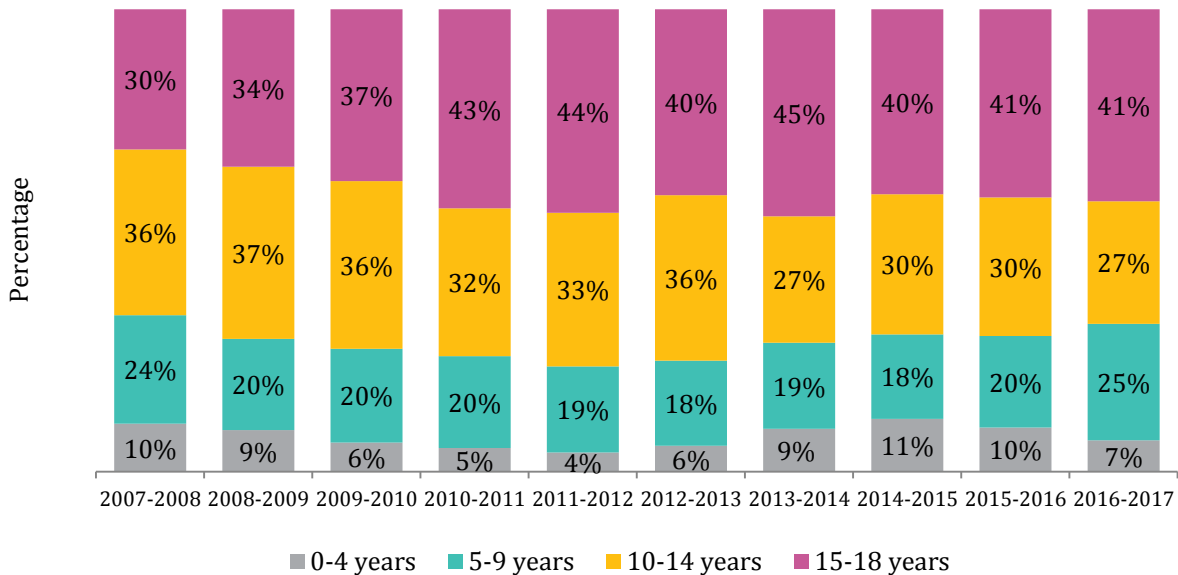
Table 3 and Figure 17 show the age distribution of children with Permanent Custody Orders.

Table 3
Children in Permanent Care and Custody by Age Group

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
0-4 years	26	22	15	11	8	10	16	20	16	10
5-9 years	59	48	48	43	36	33	32	32	33	37
10-14 years	90	91	86	69	64	64	47	53	50	39
15-18 years	76	83	88	93	85	72	77	70	68	61
Total	251	244	237	216	193	179	172	175	167	147

The proportion of children in the 15-18 age group has increased significantly over the 10 year period. During the same time period, the proportion of children in the 10-14 age group has decreased significantly, while the proportion of children in the younger age groups has not changed significantly.

Figure 17
Distribution of Children in Permanent Care and Custody by Age Group



Though there were 147 children receiving services under a Permanent Custody Order in 2016-2017 fiscal year, many of these children were placed in the permanent custody of the Director in previous fiscal years with only 15 new Permanent Custody Orders issued during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The majority of children and youth in permanent care and custody are ten years or older, making up 68% of the children and youth in permanent custody in 2016-2017.

10. LOCATION OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SERVICES

Services are provided to children and families while the children are still residing in the parental home, whenever possible. However, children may require services outside of their parental home for a variety of reasons, including voluntary placement in care due to a temporary emergency, or non-voluntary placement due to an apprehension. When a child receives services outside of the parental home, the first placement option is extended family. Additionally, it is important for the child to reside within their home community, when possible. Children who remain in their home community have reduced disruption to their lives as their social activities, friends, extended family, and cultural activities and traditions are less likely to change. Along with keeping their community supports, these children can be served by Child Protection Workers who are familiar with the community.

Figure 18 shows the distribution of children receiving services by location.

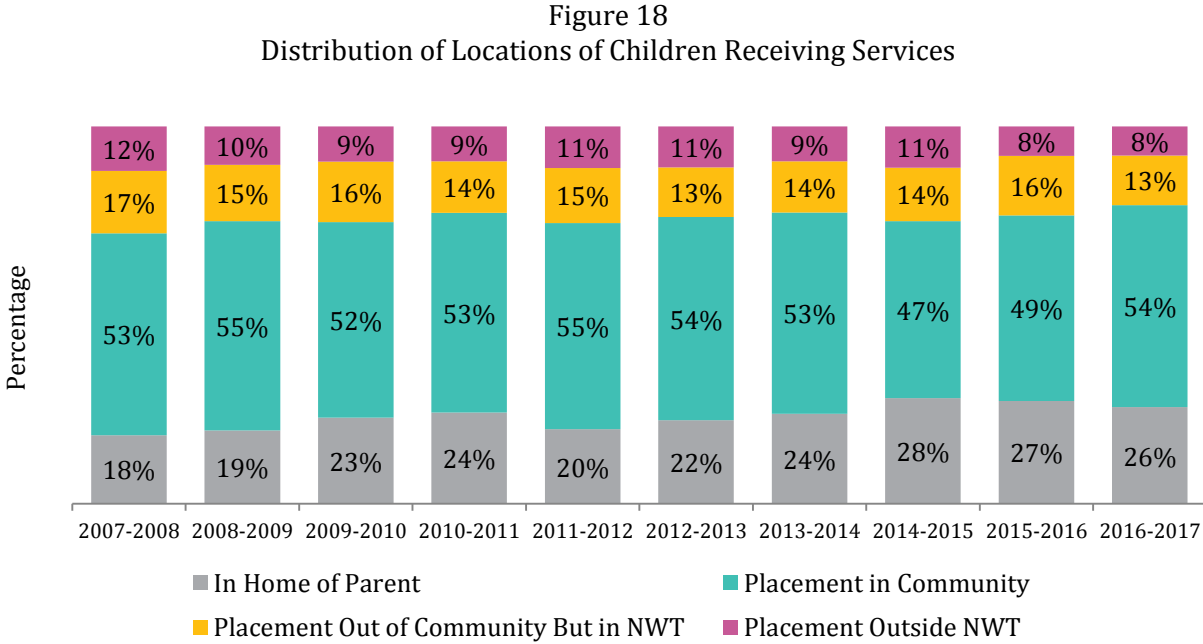


Figure 18 shows that over the past ten years, the percentage of children receiving services in the home of their parents has increased by 8%, from 18% in 2006-2007 to 26% in 2016-2017. Consistently, about half of placements were outside the parent’s home, but in the community (47%-55% across the ten year period). Combined, 79% of child placements were within the home community in 2016-2017. In the past fiscal year, the percentage of placements outside of the NWT stayed consistent at 8%, and the number of placements outside of the home community, but within the NWT, fell from 16% to 13%.

Placement Resources

Foster Homes

Foster homes provide care for children who are unable to live in their family home. There are three types of foster homes in the NWT: regular, extended family, and provisional. Regular foster homes are able to provide care to any child or youth that is placed in foster care. Extended family and provisional foster homes, on the other hand, are extended family members or community members who are known to the child or youth, and are available specifically to accommodate that child, until that child no longer needs foster care.

Group Homes

Group homes are sites where multiple children or youth live in a home-like setting, cared for by either house parents, or a staff of trained caregivers. There are three group homes that operate in the NWT: Polar Crescent Group Home, in Fort Smith; Inuvik Youth Group Home in Inuvik; and the Rycon Foster Family Shelter Home in Yellowknife. Polar Crescent Group Home and the Rycon Foster Family Shelter Home provide family-modeled care to between four and six children, while the Inuvik Youth Group Home concentrates on life skill development for up to six youth as they prepare to transition out of care and into the community.

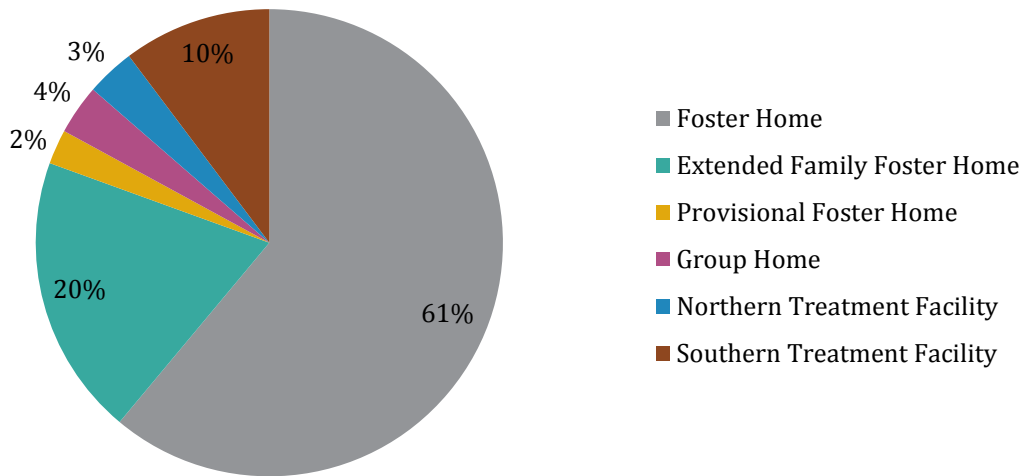
Northern Specialized Treatment Resources

The Territorial Treatment Centre in Yellowknife provides treatment for up to eight children aged 8 to 12 years and Trailcross, in Fort Smith, provides treatment for up to nine youth aged 12 to 18 years. These two residential treatment resources in the Northwest Territories provide services for children or youth with behavioural, emotional, psychological or psychiatric issues.

Southern Specialized Treatment Resources

Southern treatment resources are used to provide children and youth with specialized residential treatment services that are not available in the NWT. The length of time that children or youth are in southern placements depends on the individual needs of the child or youth, and whether the child's or youth's needs may be met within the home community after their stay in a southern placement.

Figure 19
Placement Resource Use, 2016-2017*



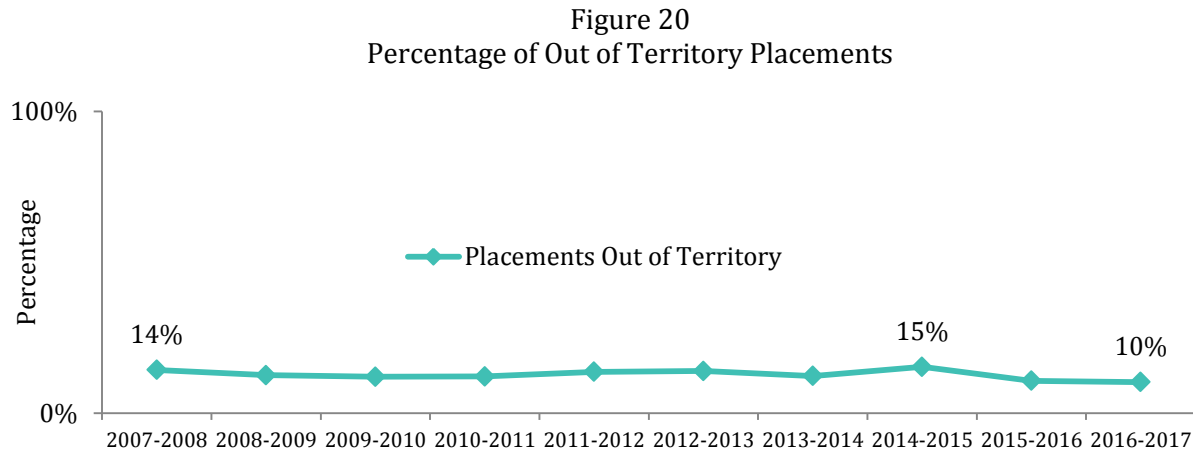
*Following the 2015-2016 report, numbers presented have been modified to include all placements throughout the fiscal year, rather than just the last placement of the child.

The percentage of individual children placed in each resource is represented in figure 19. This figure does not account for children receiving services within the family home, which is the most common placement site. As shown, 61% of out of home placements were in regular foster homes, 20% were in extended family foster homes, and 2% were in provisional foster homes. Group home placements were 4% of all placements. Northern Treatment Facilities were used for 3% of placements and 10% of placements were in Southern Treatment Facilities.

Out of Territory Placements

Out of territory placements include both Southern Treatment Facility placements, and foster home placements outside of the Northwest Territories (usually with extended family).

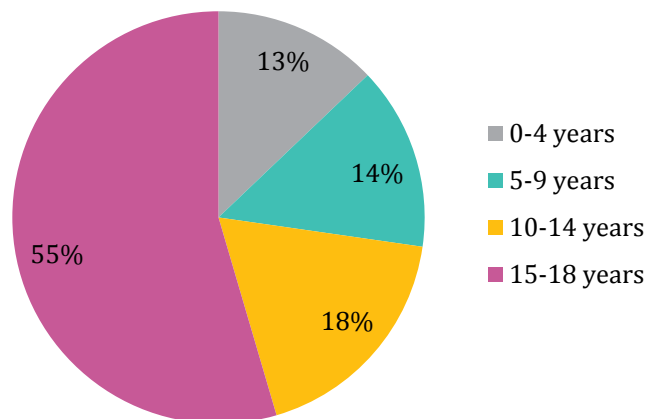
Figure 20 shows the percentage of placements in which children were placed outside of the NWT.



Over the past ten years there has been no significant change in the number of children placed outside of the NWT.

Figure 21 shows the ages of the children who were in Out of Territory Placements in 2016-2017.

Figure 21
Proportion of Children in Out of Territory Placements by Age Group, 2016-2017



The proportion of children in out of territory placements is represented in figure 21. The majority (55%) of children in out of territory placements are in the 15-18 age group. As shown, 18% of children in out of territory placements are in the 10-14 age group, 14% are in the 5-9 age group and 13% are in the 0-4 age group.

11. ADOPTION

As part the Child and Family Services program, the Adoption program coordinates and manages registries of children available for adoption, approved adopted families, completed adoptions, and responds to information requests regarding adoptions records.

In the Northwest Territories, there are four different types of adoptions: departmental, private, step-parent, and Aboriginal custom adoption. The first three types of adoptions are governed by the Adoption Act, while the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act supports a simple administrative process to recognize a custom adoption. Children can also be adopted out of country through departmental or private adoptions.

Children may be surrendered by their parents for the purpose of adoption. From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2017 there were six children voluntarily surrendered for purposes of adoption.

Figure 22 identifies the annual distribution of adoptions over the past ten years. The average number of adoptions per year was 58, with 41 adoptions taking place during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Figure 22
Total Adoption Orders Granted

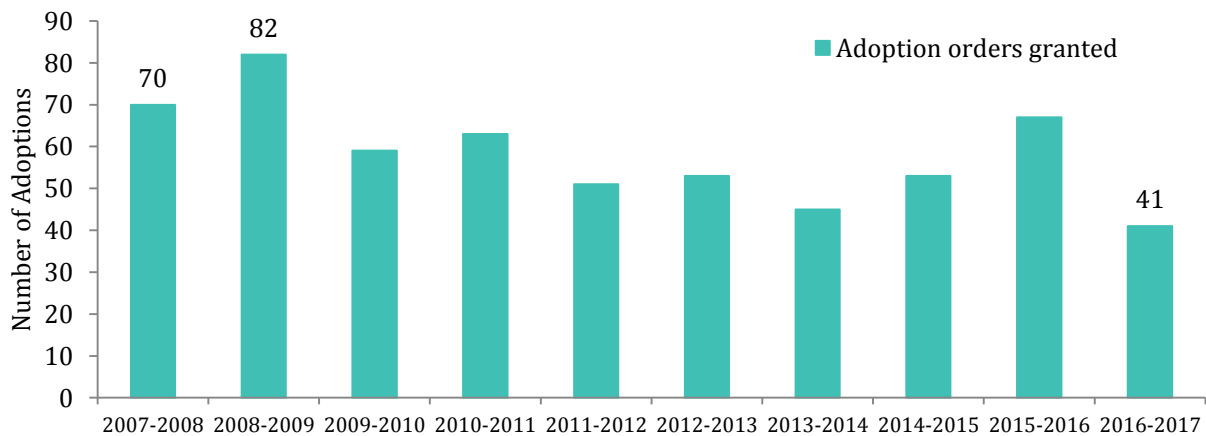
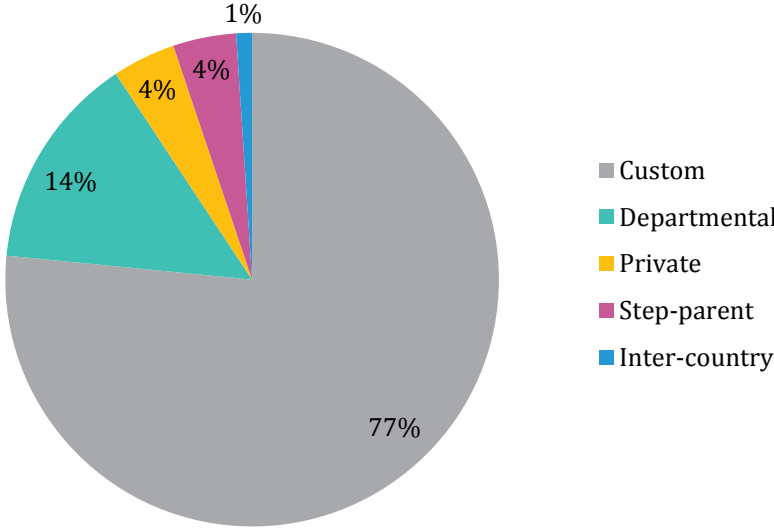


Figure 23 shows the percentage of adoptions between 2007-2008 and 2016-2017, by type of adoption.

Figure 23
Percentage of Adoptions by Adoption Type, 2007-2008 to 2016-2017



Between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2017, 580 children were adopted in the NWT. The majority of adoptions were custom adoptions at 77%, while 14% were departmental adoptions, 4% were step-parent adoptions, 4% were private adoptions and 1% was inter-country adoptions.

12. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The number of children under 16 years of age who were receiving services under the *Child and Family Services Act* remained relatively stable, while the number of children aged 16-18 years increased over the past ten years. The 15-18 year age group saw a statistically significant increase in population-based rates of youth receiving services, as did the 0-4 year age group, with a statistically significant decrease in the number of children aged 5-9 receiving services. The proportion of First Nations children receiving services has continued to increase, with the proportion of Inuit children receiving services remaining stable, and a decreasing proportion of Metis and Non-Aboriginal children receiving services under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

In 2016-2017, less than one-third of children receiving services had court-ordered statuses, and over two-thirds of children receiving services did so through an agreement with the parent and/or child. This has been stable or higher since 2009-2010, prior to which court-ordered statuses made up just under half of all statuses every year.

Over the past ten years, the rates of Voluntary Support Agreements, Support Services Agreements, Plan of Care Agreements, and Interim Custody Orders have experienced no significant change. The rates of Permanent Custody Orders, Supervision Orders, and Temporary Custody Orders have experienced a statistically significant decrease.

An increasing percentage of children receiving services remain in the home of their parent(s), and 79% of children receiving services remain in their home community. The percentage of children who receive services in NWT communities other than their home community has decreased, as has the number of children receiving services who are placed outside of the NWT (often in specialized treatment centres).

The number of children in permanent care and custody has also significantly decreased over the past ten years. This is largely due to the significant decrease of children in the 0-14 age groups. Of the 147 children in permanent care and custody, only 15 new Permanent Custody Orders were issued in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

13. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM AUDITS

The Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency are jointly responsible for annually reviewing the compliance of child protection and prevention practice with the *Child and Family Services Act* and the NWT Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual⁴. Building on the lessons learned from the 2015-2016 audits, as well as the 2014 Report of the Auditor General of Canada⁵, the 2016-2017 file audit will focus on creating a standardized sampling methodology and audit tool that will be relevant and replicable in future years. This will allow for annual comparability of data, eventually resulting in trend analysis. Ultimately, the purpose of the audit is to improve the quality of the Child and Family Services System in order to achieve better outcomes for children and their families when they require or request services under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Methodology and Audit Tool

Using a stratified sampling technique⁶ with 95% confidence level⁷ and 5% margin of error⁸, a sample of Child Protection Services, Child Prevention Services, and Foster Care Services will be reviewed. The Audit Tool has been created based on the legislative requirements outlined in the *Child and Family Services Act* and selected service requirements described in the NWT Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual. All Audit processes have been standardized and documented with the Audit Tool having been field tested twice to ensure its accuracy as a measuring instrument.

Future Reporting

The data collected in the 2016-2017 file audits of the Child and Family Services System will undergo rigorous reliability and validity testing. Moving forward, this baseline information will be used for future trend analysis as data continues to be collected using a standardized and replicable methodology. The audit findings, along with the qualitative feedback from Child and Family Services Staff, will be used with confidence to guide future reporting, program planning and decision-making on how to maintain and improve the quality of Child and Family Services.

⁴ Department of Health and Social Services, Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual, Standard 10.6 – Annual Audit of Child and Family Services Files (2015)

⁵ Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly – 2014

⁶ With **stratified sampling**, the population is divided into groups, based on some characteristic. Then, within each group, a probability sample (often a simple random sample) is selected. The audit sample was stratified by authorities and the regions within the NTHSSA.

⁷ The **margin of error** is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in statistical results. For example, if you use a margin of error of 5% and 85% percent of your audit sample was compliant on a particular measure, you can be "sure" that if you had audited all the files, between 80% (85-5) and 90% (85+5) would have been compliant for that particular measure (Creative Research Systems 2012).

⁸ The **confidence level** refers to the percentage of all possible samples that can be expected to include the true population parameter. For example, a 95% confidence level means that you can be 95% certain that the results for the sample of audits are reliable.

14. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The 2016–2017 fiscal year was the third year of the implementation of Building Stronger Families: An Action Plan to Transform Child and Family Services, during which substantive improvements and enhancements were made to the delivery and management of services provided under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Service Delivery and Child Protection and Prevention Practice

To support case management in child protection and prevention services interventions, senior leadership has continued with the deployment of Structured Decision Making® (SDM®) assessment tools. It is anticipated that through the use of these tools, continued enhancements will be made in evidence-based child prevention and protection practice, including increased objectivity and consistency, as well as supporting the work of Child Protection Workers to focus on cooperation and collaboration with children and their families.

There are six assessment protocols in the SDM® system:

1. *Screening and Response Priority Assessment*
Assists the Child Protection Worker in determining whether a report of concern for a child should be investigated as a child protection matter, and if so, how urgently it needs to be responded to.
2. *Safety Assessment*
Assesses the nature and extent of a child's immediate safety needs, and assists the Child Protection Worker to determine whether an apprehension is necessary to protect the child.
3. *Risk of Future Harm Assessment*
Assesses the nature and magnitude of a child's risk of abuse or neglect in the short to medium term, and assists the Child Protection Worker in determining the type of services the family needs.
4. *Household Strengths and Needs Assessment*
Assists the Child Protection Worker in developing a strength-based plan, in collaboration with a child's caregivers, to alleviate any safety risks and to reduce any risks of future harm.
5. *Reunification Assessment*
Used in situations where a child has been taken into protective custody, this assessment helps the Child Protection Worker make decisions about when and how a child can be safely reunited with his or her primary caregivers.

6. *Risk Reassessment*

Re-assesses the nature and magnitude of a child's risk of abuse or neglect in the short to medium term, and assists the Child Protection Worker in determining when child protection services are no longer required.

By March 31, 2017, the Screening and Response Priority Assessment, the Safety Assessment, and the Risk of Future Harm Assessment SDM® tools were fully adapted to reflect NWT practice, and were implemented across the NWT with initial training provided for over 100 Child Protection Workers. Staff also underwent training on the Household Strengths and Needs Assessment tool; however, until it has been fully validated as an assessment tool, it is used as a guide for case planning purposes.

Other improvements to the Child and Family Services System include the amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act*. The following is a summary of the amendments that came into effect April 1, 2016:

- The Act now addresses the gap in services for youth by defining 'youth' as a person from the age of 16-18 and by allowing the Director of Child and Family Services to apply for a youth protection order.
- Services are also now extended to youth who were in the permanent care of the Director when they reached the age of majority until the age of 23 years.
- Aboriginal organizations are notified of child apprehension hearings and youth protection hearings and can be a party to these hearings.
- The Act requires that persons are advised of their right to be represented by legal counsel and provides for mediation or another alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- The Act also requires a statement of alternatives that a Child Protection Worker considered prior to apprehending a child. This statement must be provided to the Court prior to a Child Apprehension Hearing.
- The criteria for determining when a child or youth needs protection as it relates to domestic violence has been expanded and the amendments introduce prostitution as a child or youth protection concern.
- Time limits for temporary custody orders have been established and are dependent on the child's age.
- A review of the Act and its delivery by the Legislative Assembly is now required every five years.

Finally, a review of 101 child files with a permanent custody orders was completed in October 2016. Relevant information was considered for use in updating the statutory training required for Child Protection Workers, as well as for Supervisors training, and for the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual.

Risk Management and Quality Assurance

Quarterly performance reporting by each region of the NWT continued in 2016-2017. The quarterly reports provide regional managers and senior leadership with regular, comparative utilization statistics, and allow the Director of Child and Family Services to monitor changes and trends in program delivery.

As of March 31, 2017, the configuration work to replace the Child and Family Services Information System with a new information system, Matrix NT, was almost complete. Matrix NT underwent continuous testing to ensure that it will support the complex work being done by Child and Family Services staff at all levels.

The Department continued to provide regular statutory training for new Child Protection Workers. In addition, during December 2016 the second iteration of Supervisor training was offered. Both the Child Protection Worker and the Supervisor trainings have been adapted to reflect ongoing feedback received from staff in order to better address their training needs.

Program Administration and Management

All regional Assistant Directors continue to be trained and appointed as Assistant Directors under the *Child and Family Services Act*. Assistant Directors are delegated all of the Director's statutory duties that the *Act* allows. This permits for executive decision-making to be close to the point of service delivery while promoting accountability.

Regional Directors of Social Programs, Managers and Supervisors meet monthly to strengthen the accountability and program administration of Child and Family Services at the regional and departmental level. Relationships are fostered by connecting and working collaboratively on transforming the delivery of Child and Family Services.

Moving Forward in Fiscal 2017-2018

The Department of Health and Social Services will continue to work collaboratively with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority on initiatives such as SDM®, Matrix NT, the accountability structure, quality assurance, and professional development areas of Child and Family Services. By incorporating feedback and lessons learned through the implementation of various activities, the Child and Family Services System will be flexible to the needs of staff and clients, building on the momentum already achieved and in turn improving the well-being of children and families.

The introduction of SDM® assessment tools is an iterative process. Ongoing feedback and evaluation results from initial training sessions have informed our next steps. In 2017-2018, a sample of completed SDM® tools will be reviewed to gauge where we are at in SDM® execution. Information learned will be used to inform revisions to the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual, statutory training for Child Protection Workers, Supervisor training, and the implementation schedule of the last two SDM® assessment tools.

Continuous change requires on-going training; therefore the Department will advance its work in developing competency-based Child Protection Worker and Supervisor training curriculum that has the potential to be delivered in modules.

In moving forward with Matrix NT, the next step is to provide training for Child Protection Workers, Supervisors, and Managers during fall of 2017. This new information system has been long awaited, and the shift from the Child and Family Information System to the Matrix NT system is also scheduled for fall of 2017. An anticipated feature of the upcoming Matrix NT information system is the statistical reporting component that will allow both supervisors and analysts to easily generate relevant reports. Robust data, including aggregated SDM® results, will be available to help decision makers develop evidence-informed changes at a community, regional and territorial level.

As the Child and Family Services System moves forward, activities outlined in Building Stronger Families: An Action Plan to Transform the Child and Family Services will continue to intersect, influence, and transform our policies, programs and practices across the system.

APPENDIX A: CHILD PROTECTION

Conditions under which a child is considered to be in need of protection, as specified in the *Child and Family Services Act*.

7(3) A child needs protection where:

- (a) the child has suffered physical harm inflicted by the child's parent or caused by the parent's inability to care and provide for or supervise and protect the child adequately;
- (b) there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer physical harm inflicted by the child's parent or caused by the parent's inability to care and provide for or supervise and protect the child adequately;
- (c) the child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited by the child's parent or by another person in circumstances where the child's parent knew or should have known of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and was unwilling or unable to protect the child;
- (d) there is a substantial risk that the child will be sexually molested or sexually exploited by the child's parent or by another person in circumstances where the child's parent knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and is unwilling or unable to protect the child;
- (e) the child has demonstrated severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive behaviour, or aggressive behaviour towards others, or any other severe behaviour that is consistent with the child having suffered emotional harm and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of, services, treatment or healing processes to remedy or alleviate the harm;
- (f) there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer emotional harm of the kind described in paragraph;(e) and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of, services, treatment or healing processes to prevent the harm;
- (g) the child suffers from a mental, emotional or developmental condition that, if not remedied, could seriously impair the child's development, and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of, services, treatment or healing processes to remedy or alleviate the condition;
- (h) the child has been subject to a pattern of neglect that has resulted in physical or emotional harm to the child;
- (i) the child has been subject to a pattern of neglect and there is a substantial risk the pattern of neglect will result in physical or emotional harm to the child;
- (j) the child has been exposed to domestic violence by or towards a parent of the child, the child has suffered physical or emotional harm from that exposure and the child's parent fails or refuses to obtain services, treatment or healing processes to remedy or alleviate the harm;

- (k) the child has been exposed to domestic violence by or towards a parent of the child and there is a substantial risk that the exposure will result in physical or emotional harm to the child and the child's parent fails or refuses to obtain services, treatment or healing processes to prevent the harm;
- (l) the child's health or emotional or mental well-being has been harmed by the child's use of alcohol, drugs, solvents or similar substances, and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of, services, treatment or healing processes to remedy or alleviate the harm;
- (m) there is a substantial risk that the child's health or emotional or mental well-being will be harmed by the child's use of alcohol, drugs, solvents or similar substances, and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of, services, treatment or healing processes to prevent the harm;
- (n) the child requires medical treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate serious physical harm or serious physical suffering, and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of the treatment;
- (o) the child suffers from malnutrition of a degree that, if not immediately remedied, could seriously impair the child's growth or development or result in permanent injury or death;
- (p) the child has been abandoned by the child's parent without the child's parent having made adequate provision for the child's care or custody and the child's extended family has not made adequate provision for the child's care or custody;
- (q) the child's parents have died without making adequate provision for the child's care or custody and the child's extended family has not made adequate provision;
- (r) the child's parent is unavailable or unable or unwilling to properly care for the child and the child's extended family has not made adequate provision for the child's care or custody; or
- (s) the child is less than 12 years of age and has killed or seriously injured another person or has persisted in injuring others or causing damage to the property of others, and services, treatment or healing processes are necessary to prevent a recurrence, and the child's parent does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to the provision of, the services, treatment or healing processes.
- (t) the child is engaging in or attempting to engage in prostitution or prostitution-related activities.

GLOSSARY

1 Voluntary and Support Services Agreements

Voluntary Services Agreement: under Section 5(1) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, "the Director may enter into a written agreement with a person who has lawful custody of a child to provide services or to assist others in providing services, or to assist that person's family in obtaining services, to support and assist that person's family to care for the child." The children may reside in their own home or elsewhere. The initial term of a Voluntary Services Agreement is for six months, with provision for additional six-month renewals until the child reaches the age of 16.

Support Services Agreement: under Section 6(1) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, "the Director may enter into a written agreement with a person who has attained the age of 16 years but has not attained the age of majority and cannot reside with his or her parents to provide services or to assist others in providing services, to support and assist that person to care for himself or herself." Support Services Agreements can be made for six months and can be renewed up until the age of majority.

Extended Support Services Agreement: under Section 6.2 of the *Child and Family Services Act*, "the Director may, in respect of a youth who was in the permanent custody of the Director immediately before attaining the age of majority, continue to provide services or to assist others in providing services, or to assist that person in obtaining services, after that person attains the age of majority until he or she attains 23 years of age".

2 Plan of Care Agreement

A Plan of Care Agreement is a written agreement made between the person(s) with lawful custody of the child and the Plan of Care Committee. The Agreement outlines a case plan for the child and family. The children may reside in their own home or elsewhere. The maximum term of a Plan of Care Agreement (including extensions) is two years. The Plan of Care Agreement is for children considered to be in need of protection as defined in the *Child and Family Services Act*.

3 Apprehension

Apprehension occurs when a child is removed from the care of the person with lawful custody or from the person having care of the child at the time of the apprehension. A community Child Protection Worker, a peace officer or a person authorized by the Director under Section 55(1) of the *Child and Family Services Act* can apprehend a child when he or she believes the child to be "in need of protection." Apprehended children are placed in the care and custody of the Director of Child and Family Services.

4 Apprehension less than 72 hours

After an apprehension, a child can be returned to parental care without the matter going to court when the protection issue is resolved in less than 72 hours.

5 Interim Custody Order

An Interim Court Order is issued by a judge when there is a delay in the court proceedings to another specified court date. This Order will state with whom the child will reside until the time of the next court date.

6 Supervision Order

A Supervision Order is a court order under Section 28(1)(b)(ii) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, which directs a Child Protection Worker to supervise the home of a child according to the terms and conditions of the Order. The Order may be for a period of up to one year.

7 Temporary Custody Order

Custody of a child is temporarily transferred by court order under Section 28(1)(b)(ii) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, to the Director of Child and Family Services. The Temporary Custody Order may be extended to the age of 18; however, under Section 47(3) "the court may not make an order that would result in the child being in the temporary custody of the Director for a continuous period exceeding 24 months".

8 Permanent Custody Order

A Permanent Custody Order under Section 28(1)(b)(ii) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, permanently transfers the custody of a child to the Director of Child and Family Services until the child attains the age of 16. The Director has all of the rights and responsibilities of a parent under Section 48 of the *Child and Family Services Act*. The Permanent Custody Order may be extended to the age of majority if the youth is in agreement.