



**Annual Report
of the Superintendent
of Child Welfare**

1991 - 1992





Annual Report of the Superintendent of Child Welfare

1991 - 1992

Submitted to The Honourable Dennis Patterson
Minister of Social Services
Government of the Northwest Territories

For the period of April 1, 1992 to March 31, 1992



Northwest
Territories Social Services

Message IV

Beliefs and Principals V

Part 1: Children in the Northwest Territories

Demographics 1
Health Issues 2
Children and Education 4
Children and Economic Security 5
The Rights of Children 5

Part 2: Children In Care

Protection of Children 6
Reasons for Coming Into Care 6
Numbers of Children In Care 7
Status of Children In Care 7
Ethnicity of Children in Care 8
Placements of Children In Care 8
Adoptions 9

Part 3: Family and Children's Services - 1991/92

Introduction10
Case Management10
Legal and Court Issues10
Role of Headquarters10
Child Sexual Abuse Program.....11
Reviews11
Training.....11
Southern Institutional Placements11
AIDS/HIV Directive12
Capital Spending12
Foster Parents.....12

Bibliography13

References.....14

This is a continuation from last year's report filed in June of 1991.

It reflects a broad picture of children in the Northwest Territories and the issues that affect them as part of the Territories' population. The current child welfare program is within this broader context.

A number of child welfare measures have been undertaken this past year in order to ensure the growing number of children in care are receiving the best case management possible.

Court and legal issues have been clarified to the satisfaction of both the Department of Social Services and the Department of Justice.

A directive to provide information about the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has been developed to ensure that children who are HIV positive or have AIDS will not be discriminated against while receiving services or while they are in care of the Department of Social Services.

As well the Child Sexual Abuse program has been developed and now the four specialists in the regions and the headquarters co-ordinator offer services in all regions.

Once the work of the Family Law Review is submitted to the Ministers of Social Services and Justice it will help to focus the Department's policy initiatives to the end of this decade.

This report is submitted in anticipation of meeting the challenges ahead.



Cheryl Walker
Superintendent of Child Welfare

17. *Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories*
October 1990
page 49
18. *Canada Youth and Aids Study*
The Northwest Territories Report
page 27
19. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 10
20. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 60
21. *The Northwest Territories Report*
1990
page 61
22. *Sexual Assault and Sentencing*
A Survey of Cases Before the Courts of the Northwest Territories
September 1991
page 2
23. *Sexual Assault and Sentencing*
A Survey of Cases Before the Courts of the Northwest Territories
September 1991
page 21
24. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 15
25. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 15
26. Statistics are provided from the Family and Children's Services Division
Department of Social Services
27. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 59
28. Statistics provided by the Department of Health
29. Statistics provided by the Department of Health

Education

1. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
Department of Health
Government of the Northwest Territories

2. Source: Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories
3. Source: Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories
4. Source: Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories
5. Source: Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories
6. Source: Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories
7. Source: Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories
8. *Government of the Northwest Territories*
1991 Annual Report
page 20

Economic Security

1. *Children of Canada, Children of the World*
Canada's National Paper for the World Summit for Children
page 62, 63
2. *Statistics Quarterly*
Volume 14 # 2
June 1992
page 21
3. *Statistics Quarterly*
Volume 14 # 2
June 1991
page 22
4. Source: Community and Family Support Services
Department of Social Services
5. *1989 NWT Labour Force Survey*
Labour Force Activity, Education and Language
pages 5,6 and 7
6. *1989 NWT Labour Force Survey*
Labour Force Activity, Education and Language
pages 5,6 and 7

Part 2: Children In Care

All statistics in this section are from the Family and Children's Services Division, the Department of Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories.

Part 1: Children in the Northwest Territories

Demographics

1. *A Portrait of Children in Canada*
page 13
also the Bureau of Statistics
Government of the Northwest Territories
2. Bureau of Statistics
Government of the Northwest Territories
3. *A Portrait of Children in Canada*
page 13
also the Bureau of Statistics
Government of the Northwest Territories
4. Bureau of Statistics
Population by Region, Sex and Ethnicity
Northwest Territories
June 1989
5. Bureau of Statistics
Population by region, Sex and Ethnicity
Northwest Territories
June 1989
6. *Statistics Quarterly*
Volume 14, # 2
June 1992
page 3
7. 1991 Federal Census
Bureau of Statistics
Government of the Northwest Territories
8. Population and Dwelling Characteristics
Census Divisions and Subdivisions
Northwest Territories
Part 1
9. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 5
10. *Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories*
October 1990
page 2
11. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 6
12. *Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories*
October 1990
page 22
13. *Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories*
October 1990
page 45
14. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 7
15. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 11
16. *The Northwest Territories Health Report*
1990
page 11
17. *Tobacco use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic*
Health and Welfare Canada
page 1
18. *Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic*
Health and Welfare Canada
page vii
19. *Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic*
Health and Welfare Canada
page vii
20. *Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic*
Health and Welfare Canada
p. vii
21. *Canada Youth and Aids Study*
The Northwest Territories Report
page 27

Health Issues

Family and Children's Services: Beliefs & Principles

The fundamental principles guiding the provision of services to children and families are:

The best interests of children are a fundamental responsibility of society.

The family is the basic unit of society and its well-being should be supported and preserved.

The family is the basic source of care and nurture of children and parents have the primary responsibility to ensure the well-being of their children.

Families and children have the right to the least interference with their affairs to the extent compatible with the best interests of children and the responsibilities of society.

Children have a right to a continuous family environment in which they can grow.

Families and children are entitled to be informed of their rights and to participate in the decision affecting them.

Families are entitled to receive preventive and supportive services directed to preserving the family unit.

Families are entitled to services which respect their cultural heritage.

Decisions to remove or place children should be based on the best interests of the child and not on the basis of the family's status.

Communities have a responsibility to promote the best interests of their children and families and have the right to participate in services to their families and children.

Aboriginal peoples are entitled to the provision of child and family services in a manner which respects their culture, language and traditions.

Government of the Northwest Territories, 1992
Annual Report

Government of the Northwest Territories, 1991
Annual Report

Government of the Northwest Territories, 1989
Annual Report

Thursday's Child, Child of Poverty in Canada:
A Review of the Effects of Poverty on Children
by Catherine Ryerse
National Youth in Care Network

Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories
A Report from the Territorial Hospital Insurance
Services Board and the Department of Health.
October 1990

Children of Canada, Children of the World
Canada's National Paper for the World Summit
for Children 1990

Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic
Health Services and Promotion Branch
Health and Welfare Canada
Government of the Northwest Territories

Canada Youth and Aids Study
Queens University at Kingston
November, 1988

1989 Labour Force Survey
Overall Results and Community Detail
Bureau of Statistics
Government of the Northwest Territories
June 1989

Statistics Quarterly
Volume 14 No.2
June 1992
Bureau of Statistics
Government of the Northwest Territories

Sexual Assault and Sentencing
A Survey of Cases Before The Courts
of the Northwest Territories
September 1991

The Northwest Territories Health Report
1990
The Government of the Northwest Territories

A Portrait of Children in Canada
Target Groups Project
Statistics Canada
September, 1990

Family and Children's Services

Regular progress reports on these children must be submitted. This is a requirement in each contract. Also, special programming suitable for each child's needs is arranged.

In the past two years the Placement Officer has expanded the number of available institutions. She searches for a southern institutional placement which will meet each child's particular needs. An autistic child, for example, or young sex offender is sent to an institution which meets those specific needs.

This past year the Division used a total of nine institutions for eleven children and has been able to remain within budget.

The Child Welfare Division is also using highly specialized programs in small group home settings where both the parent and child participate in a personalized home program.

HIV/AIDS Directive

This past year the Child Welfare Division developed a directive to provide information on HIV/AIDS.

It also specifies what procedures will be in place for the care of children infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS.

There are few reported AIDS cases amongst youth in Canada. This, however, is misleading as statistics are not kept for youth or children who are HIV positive. Health officials believe that the virus has a dormancy period and many people in their twenties contracted the virus in their teens.

In terms of child welfare programs in the Northwest Territories, it is reasonable to assume that at some time there will be children-in-care who are HIV positive or have AIDS.

The "mission statement" of the directive declares that the Northwest Territories Department of Social Services and government funded or contracted agencies must not discriminate against children with HIV infection or AIDS and therefore are expected to provide services to these children. Confidentiality is to be respected.

Capital Spending

The construction of a new children's group home in Baker Lake is taking place. The seven bed facility will provide emergency, long or short term care. This resource will enable some children-in-care from the Keewatin to stay in their region, closer to their community, culture and family.

Foster Parents

The Department recognizes the important service that foster families provide and a review of rates has been undertaken.

Active recruitment of foster parents has taken place in all regions this year.

Children of the Northwest Territories

1

Demographics

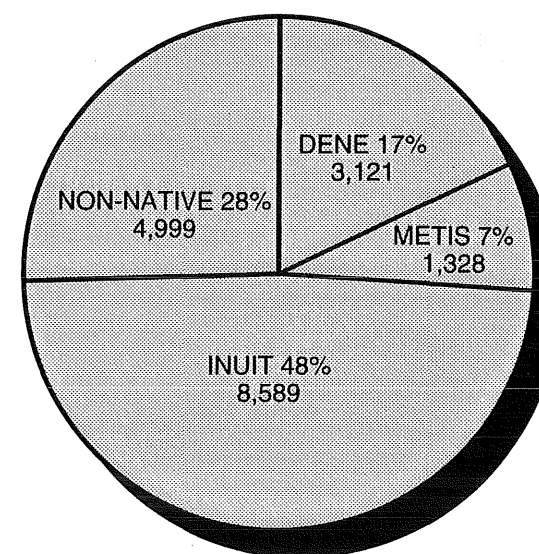
The Northwest Territories has a young population and young people represent a proportion of the population which grows each year. Of all Canadian jurisdictions, the NWT has the highest proportion of children in its population. ^{1*}

In 1991, children under the age of 15 years comprised 22.2% of the Canadian population. In the Northwest Territories that age group accounted for 34.5% of the population. ²

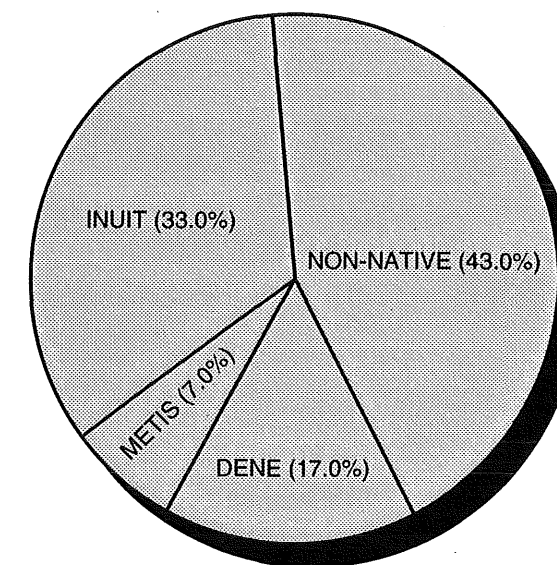
This will continue. According to population projections 33% of the Northwest Territories population will be under the age of 15 by the year 2001 compared to 19% in the rest of Canada. ³

In 1989, a total of 18,017 children were in the 0 to 14 years age group. Native children far outnumber non-Native children. Inuit children account for almost one-half of the children in the NWT at 48%. ⁴

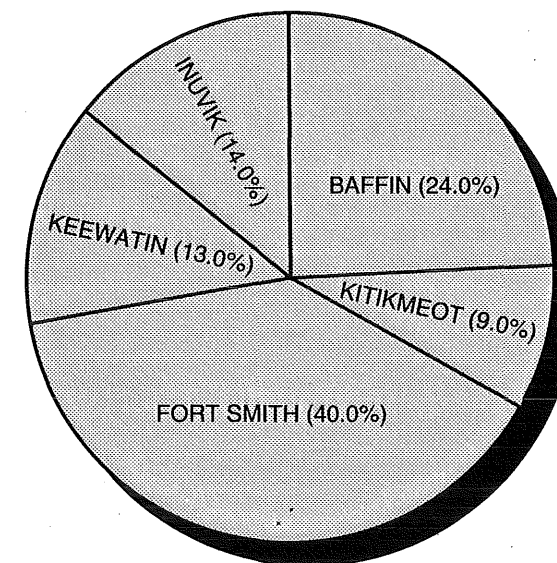
Ethnicity of Children Aged 0 to 14 Years in the NWT 1989 +



Ethnicity of Northwest Territories Population ⁵



Children by Region ⁶



The Northwest Territories has larger households than the rest of Canada. In the 1991 federal census the average census household in Canada has 3.1 people compared with 3.7 in the NWT. ⁷

*The Yukon has the next highest proportion of children in its population at 26%.

+ Ethnic breakdown figures of children from 1991 federal census are not available.

In 1986 the average Census Canadian family had 1.3 children. In the NWT the figure was 2.0. Indeed, in some communities, the figure is considerably higher. The average family in Snare Lakes has 3.7 children. In Gjoa Haven, the average family has 3.6 children.⁸

Health Issues

The report *Children of Canada, Children of the World* says while health is "a matter of physical, mental and social well being," it is the absence of disease and injury which is the true indicator of health.

The World Health Organization defines health as "a resource for daily living, not the objective of living."

The recent report *The Northwest Territories Health Report 1990* says health is all this as well as "a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being...The person who doesn't have enough education and training to get a job, who lives in overcrowded housing, or who is constantly being abused by a spouse — this person has a health problem."

Infant Births and Deaths

The highest birth rate in Canada is in the Northwest Territories.¹

In 1990 there were 28 births for every 1000 people in the Northwest Territories. This means the Northwest Territories birth rate is twice the Canadian birth rate.²

In terms of ethnic groups in the Northwest Territories the Inuit have the highest birth rate.³

Ethnic Breakdown of Live Births 1990⁴

Ethnicity	Births
Dene	225
Inuit	725
Other	515

Infant death rates in the Northwest Territories have improved.

A comparison of the infant death rate between 1970 and 1989 demonstrates the improvement. However, still births and infant deaths are still higher than the rest of Canada.

NWT Infant Mortality Rates In 1970 By Ethnicity Compared To 1989 (Deaths per 1000 Live Births)⁵

	1970	1989
Non-Native	20	5
Dene	50	10
Inuit	104	20

Death Rates, Perinatal and Infant Per 1000 Births⁶

Perinatal:		
NWT	(1990)	10.0
Canada	(1988)	7.6

Infant Death Rate:		
NWT	(1990)	11.4
Canada	(1988)	7.2

Death Due To Injuries, Violence and Suicide

In the NWT the rates of death due to injury and violence are higher than in the rest of Canada, especially for the youngest and oldest children.

Males and females 0 to 5 years are almost four times more likely than children in the rest of Canada to die due to injuries or violence. This is also true for males in the 15 to 24 years age group.⁷

During the 1980's, suicide among the 15 to 24 years age group in the NWT was five times the Canadian rate.⁸

The recently published *The Northwest Territories Health Report 1990* says that for those under 5 years of age there is a "real concern" about the amount of injuries and accidents.⁹

Further it states that for young people under the age of 24 violent deaths, injuries and accidents are "a worrisome issue."¹⁰

A full 39% of deaths in the NWT are caused by injuries, accidents, homicide, suicide and family violence and involve young people under the age of 24.¹¹

The *Northwest Territories Health Report 1990* says that it is not known exactly why these statistics are so high. However, it speculates that abuse, neglect, lack of supervision, alcohol, substance abuse and family conflict are all factors.

Child Sexual Abuse Program

Since the beginning of the Child Sexual Abuse Program in August of 1989 there has been a steady growth of services.

These include the development of an interdisciplinary protocol for reporting and investigation and continued training for Child Welfare Workers, RCMP and medical personnel in the areas of identification and investigation of child sexual abuse cases.

Specialized training for Aboriginal community workers was provided at Arctic College by the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology from Meritt British Columbia. Fourteen men and women from across the Northwest Territories completed the intensive ten week training and graduated in February of 1992. They have returned to their communities to work with the specialists to promote community support groups and counselling for child sexual abuse victims.

Groups of community health representatives, community school counsellors and treatment providers were trained by the Coordinator of Child Sexual Abuse or by contractors with special training and skills in this area.

Consultation, training and staff development for Department of Social Services staff and other professionals has been provided along with community education and awareness including work with and presentations to school children, women's groups, elders groups, hamlet councils and band councils and both professional and lay people.

Training, staff development, community education, school presentations and work with community groups have taken place in 24 communities.

The Child Sexual Abuse Program is staffed by a coordinator located in Yellowknife and four (4) specialists located in Inuvik, Iqaluit, Fort Simpson and Keewatin. All the positions are filled with the exception of the Keewatin.

Reviews

A review has been done on the use of the Custody By Agreements.

The Custody By Agreement process is a voluntary undertaking by the parents and the Department which takes a child into care for a specified period of time in order to achieve a goal. As it is voluntary it can be revoked at any time by the parent. It is not appropriate for cases where the child is in need of

protection due to neglect or abuse.

The review of every child in care revealed occasions when the Custody by Agreement process was used inappropriately.

The Placement Officer and all Community Child Welfare Workers' supervisors continue to review Custody By Agreements to ensure they are used appropriately.

Training

During the last fiscal year more training was provided to Child Welfare Workers by the Child Welfare Division in headquarters. Improved training to Child Welfare Workers and subsequent up grading will lead to improved case planning for children.

How to give evidence in court, how to conduct proper investigations in child welfare matters and how to better understand and assess children's developmental needs once apprehended from their natural family are all issues being included in the training program being developed by the Division.

Training needs are not confined to Child Welfare Workers. Training is also provided to foster parents and child care providers.

The reporting of child sexual abuse is increasing. Therefore foster parents want training to deal with children who have been sexually abused. They also want to know how to protect themselves from false allegations of sexual abuse by a foster child.

Two seminars sponsored by the Department were held this year in cooperation with the Yellowknife Foster Parent's Association. The Department has sent foster parents to conferences which deal with these issues.

Southern Institutional Placements

When a child needs an institutional placement because of special needs the Placement Officer in Headquarters looks first for an appropriate northern placement.

If a child's needs cannot be met in a northern placement then southern institutions such as the Society for the Treatment of Autism are examined by the Placement Officers. If appropriate, she contracts with a southern institution suitable for each child's needs.

Family and Children's Services - From March 1991 to March 1992

Introduction

The number of children coming into care continues to increase.

During the last fiscal year Family and Children's Services made changes to ensure accountability and greater efficiency in the child welfare system. This process is continuing.

Although Child Welfare Workers have larger case loads children are staying in the care of the Department of Social Services for a shorter period of time.

One reason is that the parents ask that a child be in care while they themselves seek treatment or therapy.

Another reason is that the Department responds to parent's requests for early intervention if a child is having emotional/behavioral problems. As well Child Welfare Workers are better trained to intervene sooner.

During this past year much work was done in the area of case management especially in regard to court matters and southern institutional placements.

The Department continues to look toward major changes to the legislative framework for children through its participation in the Family Law Review and the completed legislative review conducted in light of the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child*.

The Family Law Review will be submitted to the Ministers of Social Services and Justice for tabling in the second Legislative Assembly Session for 1992.

Case Management

Good case management means that the stress of being removed from family and placed in care is minimized.

In 1990 a major review of every child-in-care file took place.

The review revealed the need for each child-in-care to have a case plan in place with a review every three months accompanied by a progress report.

Child Welfare Workers are now reviewing cases and reporting the child's progress more frequently.

As well, a system has been developed whereby headquarters in Yellowknife informs the Community Child Welfare Workers when the status of a child-in-care is due to be reviewed in court.

Legal and Court Issues

Child Welfare Workers and the Child Welfare Division have worked very hard this last year to establish a better rapport with lawyers who represent parents in disputed child welfare matters.

Pre-trial conferences are now held with judges, lawyers and Child Welfare Workers to establish what aspects of the case are admitted.

This saves court time dramatically by identifying issues that are not in dispute.

As well the Department now gives all the information it has regarding a child welfare case to involved lawyers. Complete disclosure has increased the credibility of the Department of Social Services in child welfare cases.

Therefore even though there are more investigations and children in care, the percentage of contested cases has been reduced.

Role of Headquarters

The Child Welfare Division in Headquarters has two staff who are to assist community Child Welfare Workers. The two positions created at Headquarters in 1990/91 continue to provide child welfare services across the north.

The Court Liaison Worker helps Community Child Welfare Workers prepare cases for court. The Placement Officer reviews placements of all children in care. This is to ensure that children in care do not get lost in the system.

Community Child Welfare Workers have reported that these positions are a great benefit to them.

In 1991/92 headquarters staff assisted 25 to 30 cases a month in the areas of consultation, file documentation, case planning and court preparation. This ensures that Community Child Welfare Workers are taking cases to court on a timely basis.

Children of the Northwest Territories

Smoking and Drinking

The use of smoking tobacco and non smoked tobacco is among the highest ever reported for a Canadian school age population.¹²

In the total student population (5 to 19) years, 37% of NWT students report that they smoke either on a regular or occasional basis. Even 12% of the age group 5 to 9 years report that they smoke.¹³

More Inuit youth smoke. By the age of 19, 71% of Inuit youth report that they smoke compared to 63% for the Dene/Metis and 43% for non-Native youth. However, among all smoking youth Inuit smoke less per day.¹⁴

Around 21% of the total school population say they have chewed tobacco and 24% say they have tried snuff.¹⁵

Grade 11 students in the NWT drink the same amount as their peers in the rest of Canada. However, they drink more frequently.*

Conversely fewer children in Grade 9 in the NWT drink than their Canadian peers. However, of the ones who do drink, they drink more.¹⁶

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Teenage females in the Northwest Territories between the ages of 15 to 19 years acquire gonorrhoea four times the national rate.¹⁷

These gonorrhoea rates raise genuine concerns about human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, young people and AIDS.

As well in the Northwest Territories teens report being more sexually active than other Canadian youth.

Approximately one-half of Canadian and two-thirds of NWT Grade 11 students say they have had sexual intercourse at least once. Of these one-third of the NWT youth reported having six or more sexual partners.¹⁸

The *Northwest Territories Health Report 1990* says "the AIDS virus, the sexual activity of many teenagers, and the potential long term affects of STD's (for example infertility)—all these make this area one of growing concern."¹⁹

NWT Gonorrhoea Cases, 1990 for Children and Teens by Age²⁰

Age	Total
0 - 4	4
5 - 9	2
10 - 14	16
15 - 19	19
ALL	41

NWT Chlamydia Cases 1990 for Children and Teens by Age²¹

Age	Total
0 - 4	6
5 - 9	1
10 - 14	29
15 - 19	408
ALL	444

Child Sexual Abuse

Records of child sexual abuse were not kept in the Northwest Territories until 1990. Statistics are acquired based upon intake reports filed manually in the Department. They do not include child sexual abuse that is not reported to the Department. Extrafamilial assaults often do not come to the attention of the Department.

The NWT report *Sexual Assault and Sentencing* states that of the sexual assault cases studied for the report those between the ages of 7 and 12 years are in the second highest risk group.²²

Age Distribution of Complaints²³

Age	No. Complainants
0 - 6	30 = 12%
7 - 12	69 = 25%
13 - 18	77 = 28%

These are the complaints that actually go to court. They do not include the assaults that are never reported.

Canadian researchers say the victim of child sexual abuse is between the ages of 4 to 11, that the assault occurs in the child's home and is repeated 88% of the time.²⁴ The 1984 Badgely Report says 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys will be sexually assaulted before the age of 18.²⁵

In 1989 a conference held on child sexual abuse in the NWT took place in Yellowknife and recommendations were made to address the problem. The Department has responded with a number of initiatives underway or in place in the area of child sexual abuse. These include specialized training for child welfare workers and specialists who work with child sexual abuse victims are located in Inuvik, Iqaluit, Fort Simpson and the Keewatin.

* The data was collected as part of the NWT portion of the Canada Youth and Aids Study. Grades 7,9 and 11 students were surveyed in the NWT. The following should be kept in mind when dealing with the NWT data; NWT students tend to be older at each grade level than their Canadian counterparts. Also the grade 11 students may not be representative of children in the NWT because many have dropped out of school.

Children of the Northwest Territories

1991 Child Sexual Abuse Intake Reports.²⁶

Region	Total Victims	Female	Male
Baffin	84	74	10
Fort Simpson	8	8	0
Fort Smith	11	10	1
Inuvik	19	17	2
Keewatin	45	37	8
Kitikmeot	7	6	1
Yellowknife	<u>26</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>8</u>
TOTALS	200	170	30

Teen Pregnancies

Health statistics show that in the NWT, teenage mothers account for a significant percentage of the birth rate. Between the years 1984 and 1990, young mothers account for approximately 19% of the births.

Teenage mothers in 1990 accounted for 16% of the live births in the Northwest Territories. This is more than double the national rate.^{27*}

NWT Teenage Births²⁸

Year	NWT Total Births	15-19 Year Births	NWT %
1984	1472	281	19
1985	1456	275	19
1986	1472	281	19
1987	1493	313	21
1988	1485	323	22
1989	1482	276	19
1990	1495	238	16

Births to NWT Mothers 15 to 19 Years by Ethnicity²⁹

Year	Indian	Inuit	Non-Native	Total
1984	44	194	43	281
1985	51	197	27	275
1986	44	194	43	281
1987	59	212	42	313
1988	59	230	34	323
1989	49	182	45	275

Children and Education in the NWT

In the Northwest Territories, 44% of the population has an education of grade 9 or less. In small communities this figure can be as high as 72%.¹

During 1990/91 there were 14,079 children enrolled in the school system. School enrolment increased by approximately 500 children from the previous year. Enrolment in school is expected to increase in the future.²

Children entering the school system were completely in proportion to their ethnicity with Inuit at 6,660, Dene at 2,347, Metis at 979 and non-Natives at 4,093.*³

While enrolment is in proportion to ethnicity, graduation is not. The percentage of children graduating in the NWT differs by ethnicity. The rate of graduation of non-Native children is far higher than native children in proportion to their numbers. However, it must be also said that the figures are not good for any group.⁴

During 1991/92 there were 203 children who graduated from grade 12 in the NWT. Of these 91 had entrance to university.⁵

Rate of Graduation Among Ethnic Groups in the NWT.⁶

Ethnicity	Graduates	Percentage
Dene	13	6.5%
Metis	17	8.2%
Inuit	27	13.3%
Non-Native	<u>146</u>	<u>72.0%</u>
TOTAL	203	100.0%

Rate of University Entrance Among Groups in the NWT.⁷

Ethnicity	Graduates	Percentage
Dene	2	2%
Metis	7	8%
Inuit	3	3%
Non-Native	<u>79</u>	<u>87%</u>
TOTAL	91	100.0%

In 1982 the NWT Student Financial Program assisted 322 students enrolled in post secondary studies and programs. This year the program funded 1,140 students. Of these 579 were native students. Students attend both northern and southern schools and institutions taking both college and degree programs.⁸

* During 1990, five of the births were to mothers fifteen and under.

* Based on 1989 figures. Statistics for number of children in the NWT based on ethnicity not yet available from the 1991 federal census.

Children In Care

Adoption

Children committed to the permanent care and custody of the Superintendent of Child Welfare are placed for adoption wherever possible. Many children in permanent care have special needs.

Fewer children are placed with the Department for adoption every year. Private adoptions have increased. This allows the natural parent(s) to decide placement of the child.

Native custom adoptions continue to outnumber other kinds of adoptions. In 1991 three (3) adoptions were Departmental, 26 were private and 48 were native custom adoptions. The Department of Social Services assists families to obtain orders from the Court declaring that native custom adoption have occurred.

NWT Adoptions from 1979 to 1991

	A	B	C	D	E
1		Department	Private	Native Customs	Private/Adult
2	1979	107	13	68	0
3	1980	43	30	60	0
4	1981	23	24	40	0
5	1982	9	35	44	0
6	1983	21	26	83	0
7	1984	17	14	66	0
8	1985	9	25	83	1
9	1986	7	27	16	2
10	1987	8	25	52	1
11	1988	7	22	77	0
12	1989	12	15	130	0
13	1990	3	21	55	0
14	1991	3	26	48	0

Children In Care

Seventy-five percent of the other children in care were:

- (a) committed to the temporary care of the Superintendent by court order;
- (b) in care by Custody by Agreement signed by parents or guardians; or
- (c) at home under supervision of the Department by court order.

Number of Children in Care by Legal Status at March 31, 1990 and at March 31, 1991*

Legal Status	March 31, 1990	March 31, 1991
Temporary Ward	67	118
Custody by Agreement	98	117
Permanent	68	70
Apprehension	26	39
Supervision	23	39
Voluntary Care	2	4
TOTAL	284	389

Number of Children in Care By Age As At December 1991

	Age	Total %
O to 6 years	180	42%
7 to 12 years	126	30%
13 to 19 years	120	28%
TOTAL	426	

Ethnicity of Children in Care

Most children in care are Aboriginal children. One reason is because most people in the NWT are Aboriginal. But in proportion to their numbers they may be over-represented.

Ethnicity of Children in Care

	Dec. 1986	Dec. 1987	Dec. 1989	Dec. 1990	Dec. 1991
Metis	28%	17%	13%	13%	9%
Non-Native	7%	8%	8%	6%	4.5%
Inuit	48%	46%	49%	49%	54%
Dene	17%	29%	30%	31%	30%

*A child's legal status may change within a month.

Placement of Children in Care

Foster homes provide the greatest number of child placements in the NWT. The rest of the children live in group homes, adoption placements, non-Departmental institutional homes, parental homes (under supervision) and treatment facilities.

Number of Children in Care by Placement Type, March 1992

Placement Type	Children in Care
Parent's Care	134
Foster Homes	219
Extended Family	90
Group Homes	27
Departmental	
Assessment/Treatment Centres	9
Private Institutions	19
Adoption Homes	6
Own Resource	5
TOTAL	509

Children of the Northwest Territories

Children and Economic Security in the NWT

The *International Convention on the Rights of the Child* says that every child should have "the right ... to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development."

In Canada, one child in every six lives in a low income family and of all groups of children, Aboriginal children are the most likely to be poor.¹

To report on how well children are fed, clothed and cared for almost always requires a look at parental income. The economic security of the parent dictates the economic security of the child.

People in the NWT are reasonably affluent. During 1989 the average income in the NWT was \$27,367 which was higher than the average Canadian income of \$23,840.²

The high income figures are a reflection of some healthy income levels for those employed in mining and government sectors.

Unfortunately, in the Northwest Territories, many Aboriginal people are at the lower end of the economic scale.

The average personal income in the government and mining community of the capital city of Yellowknife in 1989 was \$37,318. In the near-by Dene community of Rae-Edzo, the average income was \$14,759.³

During 1991/92 there was a total of 8,643 families which collected Social Assistance.^{**4}

Low incomes are most often the result of lack of employment. In the Northwest Territories, it is the Aboriginal population that does the worst in the wage economy.

Non-natives are "highly involved in the wage economy as indicated by an 88 per cent labour force participation rate."⁵

Of native groups in the Northwest Territories, the Metis have the highest participation rate at 70%. The Dene have the next highest rate at 54%, the Inuvialuit at 53% and the Inuit at 53%.⁶

*It should be noted that these statistics apply to those with jobs. Family income (which includes social assistance payments) is not yet available from the 1991 federal census.

**This includes single parents and couples with no children and not necessarily for the entire year.

The Rights of Children in the NWT

Constitutional And International Rights

Children in the Northwest Territories are protected by the same human rights guaranteed to all Canadians. Indeed, under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the Charter forbids various forms of discrimination, including age, when it comes to basic freedoms.

The Department of Social Services completed a review of NWT legislation and policy in light of the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*. It concluded that current NWT legislation was not in conflict with the Convention.

The Convention was signed by Canada in May 1990, and is an international declaration that deals with the entire spectrum of children's political, civil, cultural, social and economic rights. The reservation to the Convention, proposed by the Northwest Territories, respects the rights of Aboriginal people to custom adoption.

Responsibilities of Children

The *Young Offenders Act* of the Northwest Territories applies to children between 12 and 18 years of age who offend against Territorial legislation. The Act sets out protections and procedures for youth accused of crimes and for those convicted.

Most Territorial offenses are handled by diversion programs. For federal offenses there is increased utilization of alternative measure programs at the local community level rather than the formal criminal justice process through Youth Court.

In the Northwest Territories young offenders programs are operated by the Department of Justice, Corrections Service Division. Children in care are dealt with through the Department of Social Services Family and Children's Services Division.

"The family is the cornerstone of society and must be protected. However, children as individuals have rights and should have access to adequate care in line with the standards of the community.

They should have the opportunity to be wanted and valued members of society. Their familial, cultural, social and religious heritage should be taken into account when actions are considered which affect them."

-Excerpts from the NWT Family and Children's Services Program Manual

Protection of Children

The Northwest Territories has its own legislation protecting children: the Northwest Territories *Child Welfare Act*. The Act applies to children under 18 years and is intended to "provide for the welfare of children" in the Northwest Territories. In special circumstances care for a child under the *Child Welfare Act* can be extended to 19 years.

The Act deals with responsibilities of the Superintendent of Child Welfare, the protection of children, and the rights of children to parental support and adoption.

In Canada, we believe parents should be responsible for their children's economic support and see to the teaching of values, morals and ethics.

In an imperfect world some children end up in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare.

Reasons for Coming Into Care

Under the provisions of the *Child Welfare Act* children in the Northwest Territories come into care for a variety of reasons. These include abandonment, neglect and abuse or situations where the child is disabled and has special needs which cannot be met by the parents.

The two most common reasons reported for a child being taken into care are parental neglect and emotional/behavioral problems.

It must be stressed that these are the reasons indicated by the workers for taking children into care. Other reasons may emerge when children are in care.

The fact is, most children end up in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare because of a series of interrelated reasons. A child may have an emotional problem because he is neglected and the reason she/he is neglected may be because there is alcohol abuse in the family.

The following are statistics which illustrate why children are taken into care. ¹

Child Welfare Admission Statistics for Month of March for 1990, 1991 and 1992 *

Admission Reasons	Mar 31/90	Mar 31/91	Mar 31/92
-Emotional/ Behavioral Problems	60	59	55
-Child Abuse	29	42	63
-Sexual Abuse	6	9	10
-Neglect	88	130	134
-Physical Handicap	18	23	24
-Mental Handicap	16	12	3
-Parent Unable to Supervise	38	42	56
-Surrender for Adoption	8	11	10
-Alcohol Abuse by Parent	11	10	17
-Death of Parent	5	4	2
-Financial Need/ Inadequate Housing	4	13	15
-Child's Conflict with the Law	5	4	3
-Parents Illness/ Disability	8	9	13
-Parent's Emotional/ Mental Illness	4	7	29
TOTAL	300	375	434

Children in care are very likely to return to care.

Most of these children come from families that are dysfunctional. Often the family needs healing.

The Department has a mandate to provide needed services for children in care and to assist families with counselling and treatment to avoid children coming into care and to allow children in care to be returned to the family.

* The above statistics are as reported by Community Child Welfare Workers at the time of original contact.

Numbers of Children In Care

An average of 484 children a month were in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare during 1991. In 1990 this figure was 340 and in 1989 this figure was 276.

Number of Children in Care by Each Region for 1991 *

Region	Children In Care	% of Total Regional Population
Yellowknife	139	2.5
Fort Smith	30	1.2
Fort Simpson	30	4.9
Inuvik	85	2.7
Baffin	99	1.9
Kitikmeot	61	3.1
Keewatin	38	1.4
TOTAL	484	

Active Cases by Month for 1992 from January to March

Region	January	February	March
Yellowknife	119	118	120
Fort Smith	37	42	44
Fort Simpson	27	25	24
Inuvik	63	64	69
Baffin	85	90	88
Kitikmeot	52	55	56
Keewatin	33	35	39
TOTALS	416	429	440

Status of Children In Care

As of March 1991, approximately 25% of the children in care were committed to the permanent care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare. Of these approximately one-third are in permanent care because they have "special needs" which their parents cannot provide. Access between parents and children is still encouraged and visits arranged and paid for by the Department.

* Each child was only counted once regardless of the number of admissions for a child in that year.

Average Number of Children in Care 1982 to 1991

