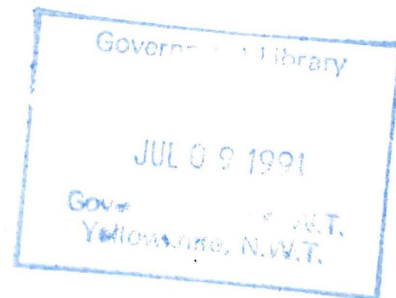


ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
OF CHILD WELFARE  
1990 - 1991



Submitted to  
The Honourable Jeannie Marie-Jewell,  
Minister of Social Services,  
Government of the Northwest Territories.

*For the Period April 1, 1990 to March 31, 1991*

*Pursuant to S.5(1) of the Child Welfare Act*

*R.S.N.W.T., 1974 as amended*



# *Children Have The Right*

*To change their minds*

*To be happy and carefree*

*To dream their dreams*

*To be seen and listened to*

*To have healthy self-esteem*

*To live in the present moment*

*To make mistakes: to err is human*

*To have a healthy body, free from abuse*

*To have healthy, life enhancing relationships*

*To allow people to help them without feeling unworthy*

*Author Unknown*

*Yellowknife,  
June 18, 1991.*

The state of Children and Child Welfare in the NWT could well be a major research project. This report is an attempt to paint a broad picture of children in the NWT in order to put the needs of children and the issues of child welfare in an appropriate context.

Demographics show that there are many children in the Northwest Territories' population and that our birth rate is twice the Canadian rate. The majority of these children are Aboriginal and their numbers are growing. All children share the stresses felt by their parents including the stresses of modern living, alcohol and drug use, and for some, the issues of cultural transition.

Children also share in and thrive on the strengths of their parents and communities, their extended families, the freedoms of growing up in smaller communities, and the values and traditions of their origins.

For these reasons the decade of the 1990s will require increased services to children while demanding increased innovation to meet children's needs in a time of fixed resources.

The ability of our society to respond to the needs of children, the effectiveness of our system of child welfare and what we can do to improve both, are questions which have repercussions throughout our society. Added to the issues we now know are the unknowns of future years: new

policy issues can be anticipated but their impacts are difficult to predict.

The Department knows it must prepare for the needs of HIV positive children and children with AIDS, children with alcohol and drug dependencies, and the many children who are now disclosing sexual abuse.

The Department will be challenged to a wholesale review, of its relationships with communities, and of the foundations of its policies, based on the work of the Family Law Review.

In the interim, we cannot ask children to wait. Decisions affecting the well being of children must be implemented with a minimum of delay. A year or two can represent a very large portion of a child's life, but can seem less than adequate to help parents resolve the many real issues which were the reason for the child's being taken into care.

As a society we are faced with the urgent needs of individual children and the pressing need to understand and support children as a vital part of our communities.

This report is submitted in hope and in anticipation of the challenges and demands that this Territory will face working for children in the 1990s.

Anne Crawford,  
Superintendent of Child Welfare.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Part I Children In The Northwest Territories**

Demographics . . . . .	1
Health Issues . . . . .	3
Infant Births And Deaths . . . . .	3
Death Due To Injuries, Violence, And Suicide . . . . .	4
Smoking And Drinking . . . . .	4
Sexually Transmitted Diseases . . . . .	5
Teen Pregnancies . . . . .	6
Children And Education In The NWT . . . . .	7
Children And Economic Security In The NWT . . . . .	9
The Rights Of Children In The NWT . . . . .	11
Constitutional And International Rights . . . . .	11
Protection Of Children . . . . .	11
Responsibilities Of Children . . . . .	12

## **Part II Children In Care**

Reasons For Coming Into Care . . . . .	13
Numbers Of Children In Care . . . . .	14
Status Of Children In Care . . . . .	16
Ethnicity Of Children In Care . . . . .	18
Placement Of Children In Care . . . . .	18
Adoptions . . . . .	19

**Part III**

**Youth And Perceptions**

Questionnaire Responses From Akaitcho Students . . . . . 21  
NWT Youth: A Survey . . . . . 24

**Part IV**

**Family And Children's Services - 1990/91**

Introduction . . . . . 27  
Child Welfare Review . . . . . 28  
    Case Planning And Management . . . . . 28  
    Custody By Agreement . . . . . 28  
Southern Institutional Placements . . . . . 29  
Child Sexual Abuse Initiatives . . . . . 30  
Legal And Court Issues . . . . . 32  
    Representation Of Children . . . . . 32  
    Adoption . . . . . 32  
    Changes To The *Child Welfare Act* . . . . . 33  
    The Family Law Review . . . . . 33  
    Home Studies For Custody Disputes . . . . . 33  
Deinstitutionalizing Care . . . . . 34  
Capital Spending . . . . . 35

**Bibliography**

**References**

**Appendix**

## PART I CHILDREN IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

### DEMOGRAPHICS

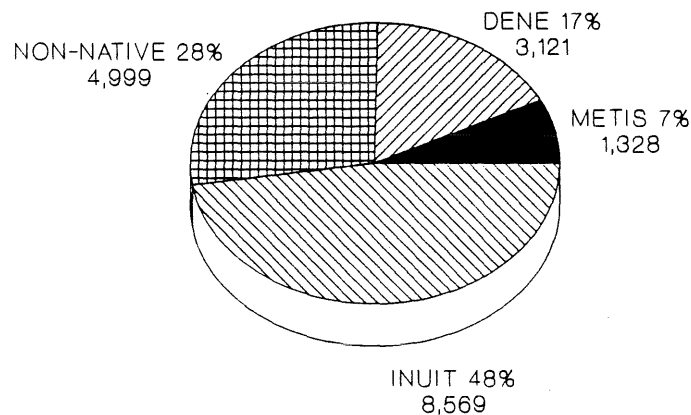
The Northwest Territories has a young population and young people represent a proportion of the population which grows each year. Of all Canadian jurisdictions, the NWT has the highest proportion of children in its population.\*

In 1986, children under the age of 15 years comprised 21.3% of the Canadian population. In the Northwest Territories, however, that age group accounted for 32.8% of its population. <sup>(1)</sup>

By June of 1989, approximately 34% of the population was under 15 years in the Northwest Territories and children 18 years and under made up a full 39%. <sup>(2)</sup>

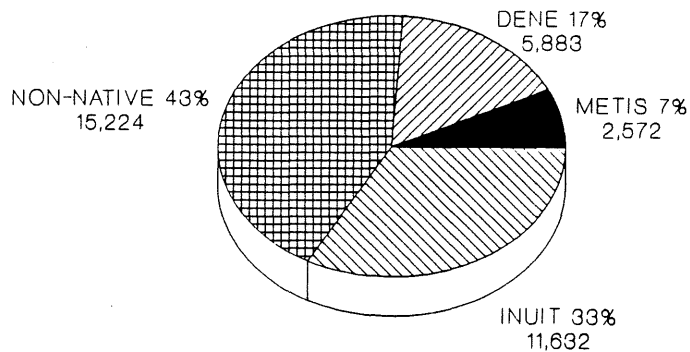
In 1989, a total of 18,017 children were in the 0 to 14 years age group. Native children far outnumber non-Native children. Inuit children account for almost half of the children in the NWT at 48%. <sup>(3)</sup>

**FIGURE 1.1 ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 14 YEARS IN THE NWT**

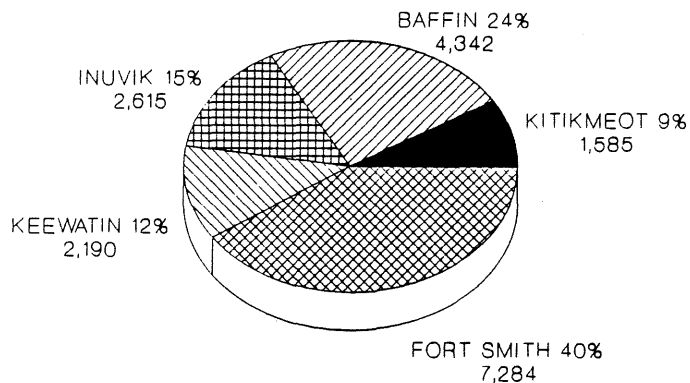


\* The Northwest Territories had the highest proportion at 32.8% followed by Newfoundland at 25.8%.  
- *A Portrait of Children in Canada*

**FIGURE 1.2 ETHNICITY OF POPULATION  
AGED 15 YEARS AND UP**



**FIGURE 1.3 CHILDREN, BY REGION,  
IN THE NWT**



NOTE: FORT SMITH REGION INCLUDES YELLOWKNIFE

The Northwest Territories has larger families than the rest of Canada. In 1986, the average 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. <sup>(4)</sup>

## HEALTH ISSUES

The report *Children of Canada, Children of the World* says that 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 a state of health.

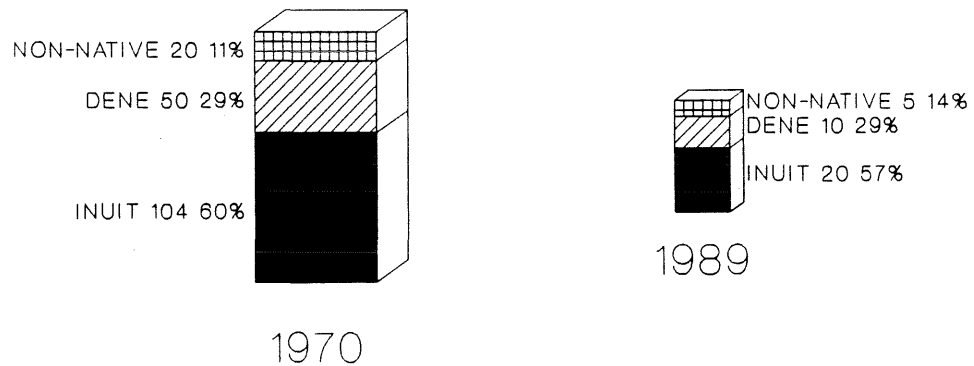
The World Health Organization defines health as "a resource for daily living, not the objective of living."

### Infant Births And Deaths

The birth rate in the NWT is twice the Canadian rate, with Inuit having the highest birth rate.<sup>(1)</sup> Infant death rates in the NWT now compare favourably with the rest of Canada.<sup>(2)</sup>

A comparison of the infant death rate in 1970 and in 1989 demonstrates the improvement.<sup>(3)</sup> In 1989, over 96% of babies in the Northwest Territories were born in hospitals.<sup>(4)</sup>

**FIGURE 1.4 NWT INFANT MORTALITY RATES  
IN 1970 BY ETHNICITY COMPARED TO 1989**



DEATHS PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS: '70 - 174/1000 '89 - 35/1000



**FIGURE 1.5 CANADIAN INFANT MORTALITY RATE,  
CANADA AND THE NWT (DEATHS PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS\* )<sup>(5)</sup>**

	1971	1978	1986
<b>CANADA</b>	17.5	12.0	7.9
<b>NWT</b>	49.0	23.3	18.6

However, there is still a difference between infant death rates in the NWT and the rest of Canada. Death rates for Dene and Inuit children are twice the non-Native Canadian rates.<sup>(6)</sup>

#### **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 the 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.<sup>(8)</sup>

During the 1980s, suicide among the 15 to 24 years age group in the NWT was five times the Canadian rate.<sup>(9)</sup>

#### **Smoking And Drinking**

The levels of smoking tobacco and the use of non-smoked tobacco are among the highest ever reported for a Canadian school age population.<sup>(10)</sup>

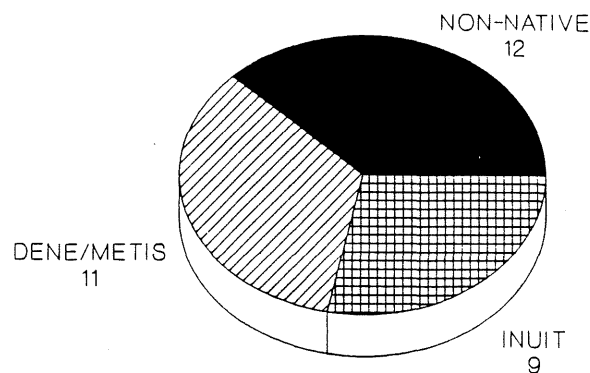
In the total student population (5 to 19 years), 37% of NWT students report they smoke either on a regular or occasional basis. Even 12% of the age group 5 to 9 years old report that they smoke.<sup>(11)</sup>

---

\* It should be noted that the comparison is done by using a rate which in this case is expressed as the number per 1000 population. Because of the small population of the NWT, a single case has a large effect on the rate. Data should be viewed with this in mind.

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 they smoke less per day.<sup>(12)</sup>

**FIGURE 1.6 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CIGARETTES  
SMOKED A DAY BY NWT YOUTH SMOKER**



Around 21% of the total school population say they have chewed tobacco and 24% say they have tried snuff.<sup>(13)</sup>

Grade 11 students in the NWT drink the same amount as their peers in the rest of Canada report drinking. 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.<sup>(14)</sup>

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

Teenage females in the Northwest Territories between the ages of 15 to 19 years acquire gonorrhoea four times the national rate.<sup>(15)</sup>

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

\* 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.

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. <sup>(16)</sup>

### 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 1989, young mothers accounted for approximately 20% of the births. <sup>(17)</sup>

**FIGURE 1.7 NWT 15 TO 19 YEAR OLD BIRTHS**

YEAR	NWT TOTAL BIRTHS	15 - 19 YEAR OLD BIRTHS	NWT %
1984	1472	281	19
1985	1456	275	19
1986	1472	281	19
1987	1493	313	21
1988	1485	323	22
1989	1428	276	19

**FIGURE 1.8 FERTILITY, CANADA AND THE NWT  
15 TO 19 YEAR OLD BIRTHS (PER 1000 POPULATION)**

	1971	1978	1986
<b>CANADA</b>	40.1	29.7	23.5
<b>NWT</b>	119.3	114.2	115.3

**FIGURE 1.9 BIRTHS TO MOTHERS  
15 TO 19 YEARS BY ETHNICITY**

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	276

### Children And Education In The NWT

In Canada, 20% of the population is illiterate. In the Northwest Territories, 44% of the population has a grade education of 9 or less. The figure for Native northerners is much higher. <sup>(1)</sup>

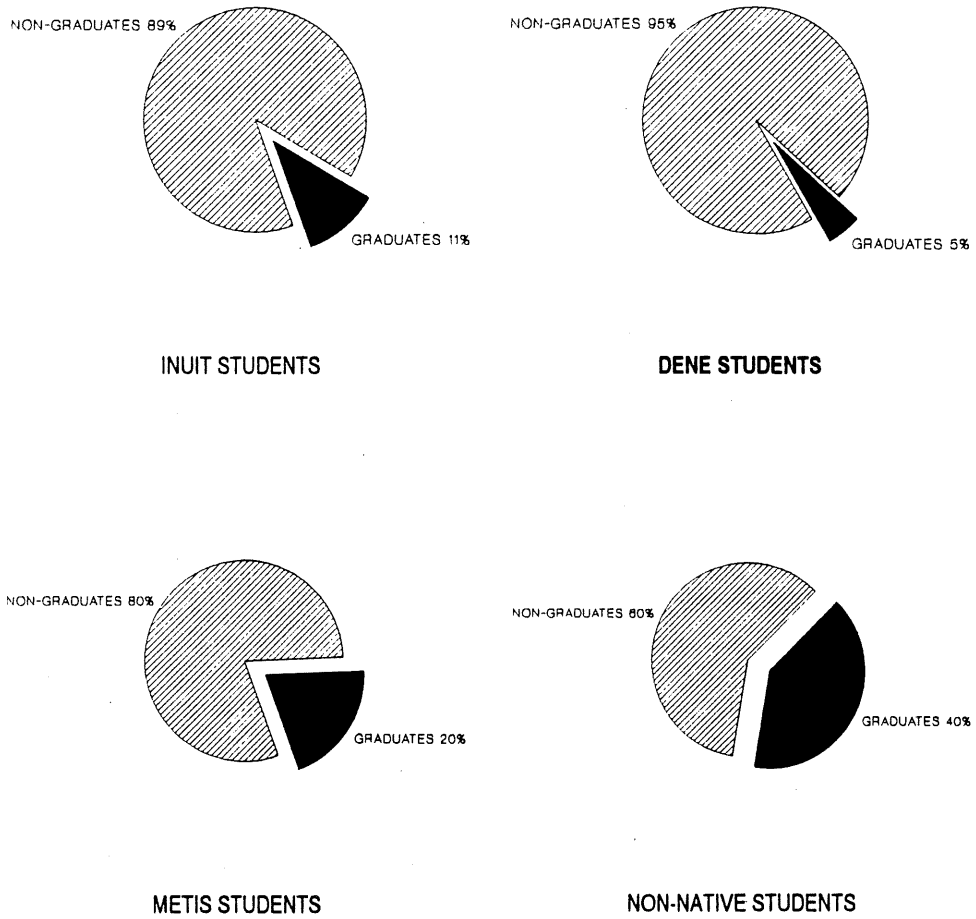
During the 1989/90 year, school enrolment increased by about 350 children from the previous year. Enrolment is expected to increase over the next years due to the increase in the school age population. <sup>(2)</sup>

This school year, there are 13,845 students enrolled in the school system. Their numbers are completely in proportion to their ethnicity; Inuit at 6,453, Dene at 2,397, Metis at 1,096, and non-Natives at 3,899. <sup>(3)</sup>

To date, for every 1000 students who start school, approximately 250 of them will graduate. <sup>(4)</sup>

While enrolment is in proportion to ethnicity, graduation is not. The percentages of children graduating in the NWT differ by ethnicity. It must also be said that the figures are not good for any group. <sup>(5)</sup>

**FIGURE 1.10 THE RATE OF GRADUATION  
AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE NWT**



Among graduates in 1988/89, Aboriginal children are under-represented among students having qualifications for entrance to university. Of those who make it to graduation, Aboriginal children do much better obtaining qualifications for college or trade school entrance, but still not in proportion to their numbers in the NWT. <sup>(6)</sup>

**FIGURE 1.11 1988/89 NWT GRADUATES**

<b>UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE</b>		
<b>Actual # of Students = 79</b>		
	<b>NON-NATIVE</b>	<b>NATIVE</b>
	<b>% of Graduates</b>	<b>% of Graduates</b>
	85%	15%
	<b>% of School Population</b>	<b>% of School Population</b>
	26%	74%
<b>COLLEGE OR TRADE SCHOOL ENTRANCE</b>		
<b>Actual # of Students = 50</b>		
	<b>NON-NATIVE</b>	<b>NATIVE</b>
	<b>% of Graduates</b>	<b>% of Graduates</b>
	49%	51%
	<b>% of School Population</b>	<b>% of School Population</b>
	26%	74%

The NWT Student Loans and Grants Program has seen a very steady increase in utilization. In 1981, there were 332 students pursuing post-secondary education. This year there are 915 students attending post-secondary institutions in both Northern and Southern universities, colleges, and technical schools. Of these, 358 are Native students. <sup>(7)</sup>

### **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 six lives in a low income family and of all groups of children, Aboriginal children are the most likely to be poor. <sup>(1)</sup>

Unfortunately, in the Northwest Territories, many Aboriginal people are poor as well.

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. The last federal Census in 1986 lists the average NWT family income at \$39,972. This is more than the Canadian average of \$37,872. <sup>(2)</sup>

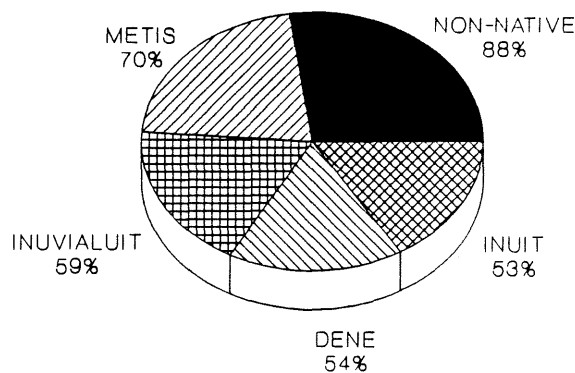
However, these figures are a reflection of some healthy income levels for those employed in mining and government sectors. Individual family incomes tell a different story.

The median family income in the government and mining community of Yellowknife in 1986 was \$52,000. <sup>(3)</sup> In the nearby Dene community of Rae-Edzo, the median family income was \$15,000. <sup>(4)</sup>

In the last federal Census, roughly 13% of all census families in the NWT made \$10,000.00 or less. <sup>(5)</sup>

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.

**FIGURE 1.12 LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION FOR NWT ETHNIC GROUPS <sup>(6)</sup>**



Looking at the number of dependents in families collecting social assistance in the NWT can give a clearer idea of how many children can be considered poor, as social assistance is issued on the basis of need.

According to these criteria, in 1989 and 1990 the dependents of couples and single parents collecting welfare numbered 10,384. In June of 1989, the population count stood at 53,326. Of the total population, around 20% were poor children at some time during the year.<sup>(7)</sup>

### **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 Freedom, the Charter forbids various forms of discrimination, including age, when it comes to basic freedoms.

Currently the territorial government is conducting a review of NWT legislation and policy regarding children in light of the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Canada signed this United Nations Convention in May, 1990, but cannot ratify until reviews are completed of all Canadian laws and policies about children and inconsistencies are resolved.

The Convention is an international declaration that deals with the entire spectrum of children's political, civil, cultural, social, and economic rights.

#### Protection Of Children

The Northwest Territories has its own legislation protecting children: the *Child Welfare Act*. The Act applies to children 18 years and under and is intended to "provide for the welfare of children" in the NWT.

It is made up of 107 provisions which deal with responsibilities of the Superintendent of Child Welfare, the protection of children, the rights of children to parental support, and adoptions.



Responsibilities Of Children

The *Young Offenders Act* applies to any criminal conduct of children between 12 and 18 years of age. The Act sets out protection and procedures for youth accused of crimes and for those convicted.

In the NWT, young offenders and children in care are dealt with through separate institutions and under separate legislation.

## PART II CHILDREN IN CARE

*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 their community.*

*They should have the opportunity to be wanted and valued members of a family and society. Their familiar, 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.*

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

However, 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 cases of abandonment, neglect, and abuse, or situations where the child is disabled and has special needs which cannot be met by the parents.

It must be stressed that these are the reasons given by workers for taking children into care. New reasons may emerge or be confirmed 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 he is neglected may be because there is alcohol abuse in the family.

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

The following are statistics, for the month of December for three years in a row, which illustrate why children are in care.\*

---

\* All the statistics in this section are obtained from the Department of Social Services, Family and Children's Section.

**FIGURE 2.1 CHILD WELFARE ADMISSION STATISTICS**

<b>ADMISSION REASONS</b>	<b>DEC. 1988</b>	<b>DEC. 1989</b>	<b>DEC. 1990</b>
CHILD'S PHYSICAL DISABILITY	14	18	24
CHILD'S MENTAL DISABILITY	16	16	16
CHILD'S EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL PROBLEM	46	65	76
PARENTAL ABUSE OF CHILD	17	22	58
PARENTAL NEGLECT	55	80	119
CHILD SURRENDERED TO ADOPT	9	8	11
ILLNESS TO PARENT	4	15	19
PARENT UNABLE TO SUPERVISE	20	35	40
INADEQUATE HOUSING/FINANCIAL NEED	5	4	19
DEATH OF PARENT	5	4	4
ALCOHOL ABUSE OF PARENT	11	8	13
SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILD	1	6	9

Children in care are very, very likely to return to care.

Most of these children come from families that are unhealthy and chaotic. Unless the family itself is healed, taking children into care only serves to briefly "give them a hand."

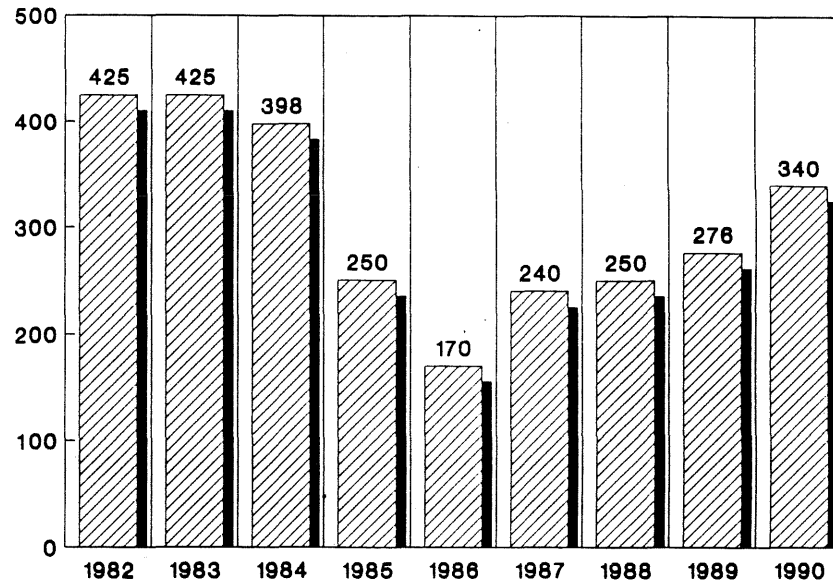
#### **NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN CARE**

An average of 340 children a month were in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare during 1990. These figures are higher than 1989 when the average number of children in care was 276.

---

\* During 1990, the lowest number of children in care on a monthly basis was 289 and the highest was 414.

**FIGURE 2.2 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE  
1982 TO 1990**



**FIGURE 2.3 NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY REGION  
1990 CALENDAR**

REGION	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
YELLOWKNIFE	69	75	73	65	75	73	75	74	80	97	96	99
FORT SMITH	66	71	70	77	81	79	78	80	84	95	102	105
INUVIK	67	73	57	57	58	66	64	64	67	78	63	64
BAFFIN	35	39	34	39	44	50	56	62	62	62	70	70
KEEWATIN	21	24	21	20	21	22	19	23	22	22	23	25
KITIKMEOT	33	36	34	35	39	40	42	41	42	46	48	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>414</b>

There are reasons for the substantial increase in the numbers of children in care. In particular, the Department has made changes which has improved the system of gathering statistics from the Regions.

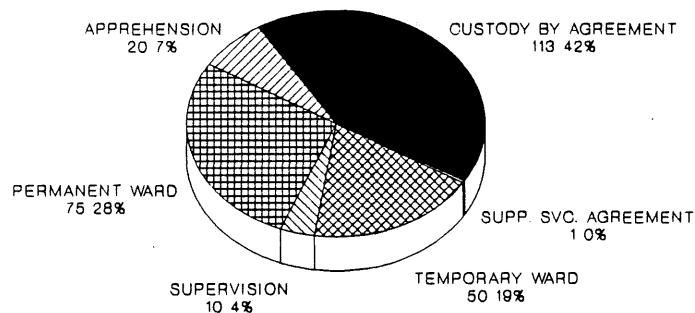
### STATUS OF CHILDREN IN CARE

As of March, 1990, 25% of children in care were permanent wards.\* Of these, approximately one-third (26) are in permanent care because they have "special needs" which their parents cannot meet.

Others are Temporary Wards or Custody By Agreement children. The former are in care by order of the Courts and the latter by voluntary agreement with the parents. The rest are children at home under a supervision order or children who have been apprehended by the Department and are awaiting a Court decision on their status.

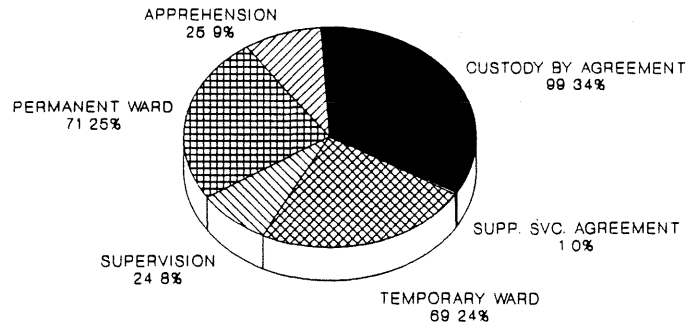
The following graphs illustrate the breakdown of legal status and ages of children in care for the past two years.

**FIGURE 2.4 NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY LEGAL STATUS  
269 CHILDREN AS OF MARCH 31, 1989**

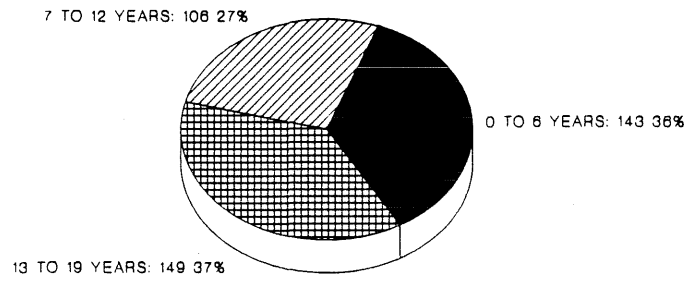


\* It must be kept in mind this figure will not be constant as the statistics for children in care are constantly changing. As well, permanent wards leave care on their 18th birthday. Therefore, there is no one constant statistic for the year or even a month.

**FIGURE 2.5**      **NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY LEGAL STATUS**  
**289 CHILDREN AS OF MARCH 31, 1990**



**FIGURE 2.6**      **NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY AGE**  
**AS OF DECEMBER, 1990**



**ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN IN CARE**

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

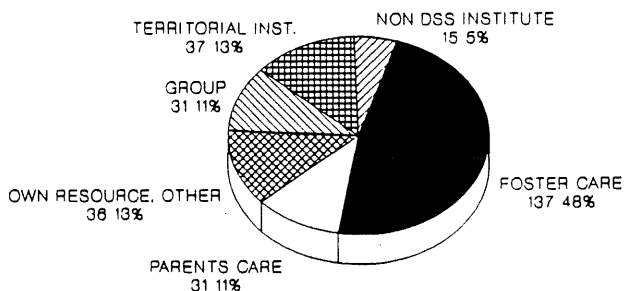
**FIGURE 2.7 NWT CHILDREN IN CARE BY ETHNICITY**

POPULATION OF CHILDREN BY ETHNICITY	ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN IN CARE			
	1988	DEC 1988	DEC 1989	DEC 1990
<b>METIS</b>	7%	17%	13%	13%
<b>NON-NATIVE</b>	28%	8%	8%	6%
<b>INUIT</b>	48%	46%	49%	49%
<b>DENE</b>	17%	29%	30%	31%

**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 homes, non-Departmental institutional homes, parental homes (under supervision), and treatment facilities.

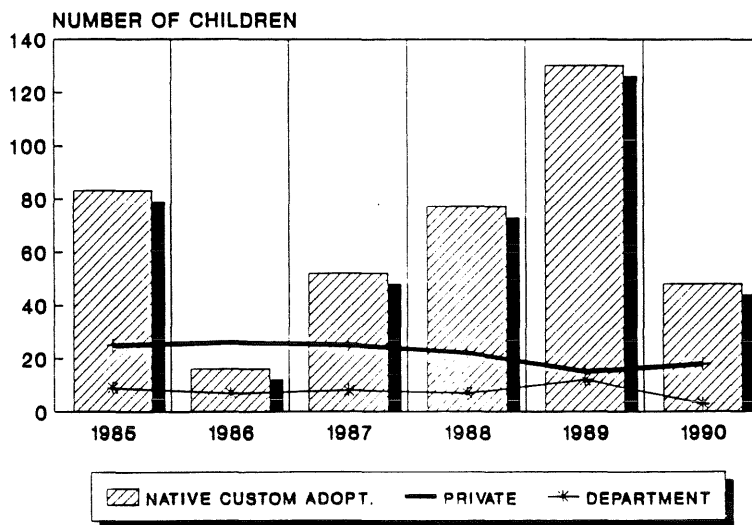
**FIGURE 2.8 NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY PLACEMENT  
289 CHILDREN IN CARE AS OF MARCH 31, 1990**



**ADOPTIONS**

Native custom adoptions continue to outnumber other kinds of adoption. In 1990, three adoptions were Departmental, 18 were private adoptions and 48 were Native custom adoptions.

**FIGURE 2.9 NWT ADOPTIONS 1985-1990**



\*These statistics do not include the number of children adopted out of the Northwest Territories.



## PART III YOUTH AND PERCEPTIONS

In January of 1991 students at Akaitcho Hall Residence were given questionnaires asking them about themselves and their communities. The following are the responses received and are typical of concerns of young people in the Northwest Territories.

### QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FROM AKAITCHO STUDENTS

WHEN I AM GROWN UP, I WOULD LIKE TO BE:

- a mechanic  a plumber  a politician  a businessman
- a pilot or an engineer  an electrician  a mechanic
- a top fuel eliminator drag racer  a volleyball beach bum
- a counsellor or something with computers  wishing to be the best
- an artist and sell my paintings  a multi-millionaire

WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY IS:

- fun with my friends  people  being with my friends
- when my mother gives me money  when I go home
- listening to music, reading, watching movies  playing sports
- seeing my family after a long time, sports, and holidays
- seeing children happy, bringing good to people who need help
- hanging out with friends, playing sports  girls and volleyball
- playing volleyball  playing volleyball and going out with my girl friend

WHAT MAKES ME SAD IS:

- being alone on a Friday  drunk people  losing a friend
- when I have no money  when someone dies or is hurt
- when I plan something and it does not turn out  alcohol
- when people get mad at me  when people tease me
- moving away from family, losing a relative  booze  no women
- seeing children or other people being beaten up by people or family
- when I get drunk and do something wrong to a person

WHAT MAKES ME MAD IS:

- when people bug me  people bugging me  fighting
- when a person steals from me  when someone bugs me
- when someone is a disturbance  no women at a party
- getting blamed for something I did not do  booze and women
- people talking about me behind my back  my friends
- when other people pick on other people
- when people use you or do something really bad

THE THINGS I LIKE TO DO BEST:

- going to the Arcade  sports  playing hockey, baseball, etc.
- collecting hockey cards  playing sports, reading  sports
- watching movies, walking around  playing sports
- math, hunting, sports, playing my guitar  playing volleyball, hockey
- making my friends laugh, helping them write poems or collecting them
- learning new things, dances, and parties  volleyball
- volleyball and hockey  volleyball and sports

THE THINGS I LIKE TO DO LEAST:

- fighting  play basketball and clean up  do my homework
- working, homework  community service  schoolwork
- drinking, being with drunks  doing homework  hockey
- drinking, pressure by friends, people not trusting me and bullies
- school work  school work  fight

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MY COMMUNITY IS:

- I know everyone  Inuit people  the youth club
- all my friends are there and my family  the family circle
- its nice and small, know everyone there
- hunting, gym  no drinking  drinking
- they throw perfect teen dances, hunting trips, and cadets
- going to the AA Meetings and sharing your feelings
- going on picnics, boat riding and camping
- clean air and being with friends and family; its nice and quiet

WHAT I DISLIKE ABOUT MY HOME COMMUNITY IS:

- too much drinking  drinking  all the drinking
- alcoholism  its too small  nothing  drinking
- the drinking, the trouble that goes on  too boring
- when people drink almost every weekend and its sometimes boring
- all the drinking  boozing  drinking  people drink
- too boring

THE THINGS I WORRY ABOUT ARE:

- failing my grades  sick, home and family  war
- my friends that might get in trouble  someone is using my ski-doo
- my granny  my family  my family  family
- my sister's children and my father's drinking and my mother's health
- AA Meetings  my brother  all my family  brother

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE IS:

- being happy  family  friends and family  education
- having fun  job, family, education  education  my family
- watching over the people in my home town  getting education
- women  is my family  your job  brother

THE PERSON I LIKE TO TALK THE MOST TO IS:

- my mother  Pastor Tom  Mr. Clauson  my parents
- a friend  anyone  friends  my mom and dad
- my close friends, my sister, or an adult I can really trust
- my parents  women  Frank Lafferty  brother
- my mother and my girl friend

### **NWT YOUTH: A SURVEY**

Youth in the Northwest Territories may feel less positive about various aspects of their life than their peers in the rest of Canada.

A survey of 38,000 youth reports the "majority" of children in Canada feel they have a positive relationship with their parents.

---

*\*Canada Youth and AIDS Study.* The subject of the report was the attitudes and behaviours of youth in Canada with respect to sexually transmitted diseases. The focus was AIDS and how to implement programs to prevent AIDS among youth.

However, according to the study, youth in the Northwest Territories feel less positive about various aspects of their life than their peers in the rest of Canada.

Specifically, less said they were happy and less said they had a happy home life. More of them say they would like to leave home and more reported they would raise their children differently.

The following are some of the published results of the NWT portion of the study.\*

**FIGURE 3.1      NWT GRADE 7s  
SAMPLE = 443**

	<b>NWT %</b>	<b>CANADA %</b>
<b>My Parents Understand Me</b>	63%	70%
<b>There Are Times When I Would Like To Leave Home</b>	55%	46%
<b>I Would Raise My Children Differently</b>	44%	31%
<b>I Have A Happy Home Life</b>	68%	80%
<b>I Am A Happy Person</b>	66%	81%
<b>I Often Feel Depressed</b>	32%	31%
<b>I Cannot Sleep Worrying About Things</b>	41%	41%
<b>I Sometimes Have Thoughts About Committing Suicide</b>	33%	23%
<b>The Future Looks Good To Me</b>	68%	73%

\*It will be noted that the Grade 11 students tended to be more positive. This could be attributed to them being a little older and so, better able to cope. As well, the study says that the 84 Grade 11s who responded may not be typical because by Grade 11, many students are no longer in school.

**FIGURE 3.2 NWT GRADE 9s  
SAMPLE = 253**

	<b>NWT %</b>	<b>CANADA %</b>
My Parents Understand Me	63%	58%
There Are Times When I Would Like To Leave Home	72%	56%
I Would Raise My Children Differently	42%	35%
I Have A Happy Home Life	70%	76%
I Am A Happy Person	88%	84%
I Often Feel Depressed	30%	32%
I Cannot Sleep Worrying About Things	45%	41%
I Sometimes Have Thoughts About Committing Suicide	35%	26%
The Future Looks Good To Me	74%	71%

**FIGURE 3.3 NWT GRADE 11s  
SAMPLE = 84**

	<b>NWT %</b>	<b>CANADA %</b>
My Parents Understand Me	56%	58%
There Are Times When I Would Like To Leave Home	58%	48%
I Would Raise My Children Differently	44%	36%
I Have A Happy Home Life	70%	76%
I Am A Happy Person	79%	84%
I Often Feel Depressed	40%	34%
I Cannot Sleep Worrying About Things	42%	38%
I Sometimes Have Thoughts About Committing Suicide	36%	27%
The Future Looks Good To Me	66%	74%

## Part IV FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - 1990/91

### INTRODUCTION

The number of children coming into care is showing a marked increase. (See Figures 2.3 - 2.5) Therefore, it is appropriate this past year that the Family and Children's Services Division made changes to ensure accountability and greater efficiency in the child welfare system.

Both the decisions made to take children into care and the care given afterwards need to be regularly reviewed in order to distinguish patterns and to improve the Department's understanding of children and their needs.

One way this was accomplished was by initiatives to assist the Community Social Services Workers. Another was to make changes to the way southern institutional placements are handled.

During this past year, there was much work done in the area of fighting child sexual abuse. Two years ago the first 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.

Several issues have risen this year in the area of child welfare which involve court. The Department is in the process of sorting out problems which involve adoption agreements, court costs, and custody disputes.

The Department has made changes to its budgets which move away from institutional care and toward foster care and preventative support for families.

Finally, the Department continues to look towards major changes to the legislative framework for children through its participation in the Family Law Review, changes to the *Child Welfare Act* and through a legislation review conducted in light of the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*.

## **CHILD WELFARE REVIEW**

During 1990, the Family and Children's Services Division undertook a file review of every child in care in order to review the way the child welfare system is currently functioning, identify problem areas, and develop ways to improve the system.

This review was discussed with Regional Superintendents. As a result, a schedule of annual visits by Child Welfare Staff to each Region has been arranged. These visits will promote training, the exchange of information, and identification of problems for regional and Headquarters staff.

When the review identified problems, they tended to involve case planning and management and the Custody by Agreement process.

### **Case Planning And Management**

Three areas needing improvement were identified:

- A. The need for each child in care to have a case plan in place with a review every three months and a progress report. Appropriate planning for children from apprehension to discharge relies heavily on regular case reviews.
- B. The need to prevent the return of a temporary ward to an unhealthy family thereby guaranteeing the child's return to care. This is an ongoing problem for all child welfare agencies, but improvement in case planning and more contact with families can improve success rates for reunions.
- C. The amount of time taken to get the proper documentation together once a permanent ward is considered a likely candidate for adoption. The necessary documentation and studies should be done quickly for the benefit of the child and parents.

### **Custody By Agreement**

In the review, there were occasions when the Custody By Agreement (CBA) process was being used inappropriately.



The CBA process is a voluntary undertaking by the parents and the Department in order to take a child into care for a period of time. There should be a definite goal in mind which involves the child and the family.

Care By Agreement is appropriate when the family is prepared to take an active role in a child's care. However, the use of a CBA for sexual abuse, parental neglect, and parental abuse cases is rarely appropriate.

It is important that parents be involved in the agreement and be active in the case in order to resolve the problems that led to the CBA. This includes the need for a financial contribution by parents when they can afford to do so.

### **SOUTHERN INSTITUTIONAL PLACEMENTS**

Family and Children's Services now deals with southern institutional placements in a number of different ways. Funds are designated for children with unique or exceptional needs for which there are no resources in the North. Placements are approved and documented at Headquarters.

There are several advantages to this. They are:

- Children's needs are assessed on a territorial wide basis and those needing help the most get it.
- Children's "progress reports" come directly from the southern institutions to a Placement Officer who ensures regular reports are made to case workers. Prior, the community Social Worker was responsible for getting the information on a child's progress and then submitting a report to Headquarters. Distance and staff changes in communities make it difficult for workers from many communities to put persistent pressure on institutions for regular reporting, while a Placement Officer is in regular contact and can promote regular written reports.
- When a child needs an institutional placement, the Division makes very sure there is no appropriate northern placement and assists with information on various southern placements.

The Division looks for a southern institutional placement which will meet the child's particular needs. An autistic child or young sex offender is sent to an institution which meets those specific needs.

During the Annual Meeting of the Directors of Child Welfare last May, the Superintendent of Child Welfare visited southern institutions that the Division has used extensively.

Some institutions provide treatment in a very polished institutional setting that is a world away from the child's home community. Children have access to all the recreation and advantages that a city can offer.

This may be an unrealistic approach. The question to be asked is whether upon return to the Northwest Territories any skills from this experience will work for the child in his own community setting and homelife.

While "good" behaviour learned in the facility may earn attention or a reward, a child will not find those similar reward systems in a small northern community. This could be part of the reason that "treatment" often appears to have failed when children return home.

Other institutions provide a basic style of living where an Inuit or Dene child will experience less change from his ordinary environment. In these locations, children will more likely take home lessons which translate to their communities.

However, all these placements are very expensive, at up to \$250 per day or \$90,000 per year. The value of services, including psychological support, should be substantial at such rates, but in more basic services institutions that value can be questioned.

While there are children with specific needs which may require specialized care only available in the South, the general feeling is that the greatest number of children would benefit more from care provided in the North and that funds should be channelled in that direction.

### **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INITIATIVES**

This year there have been a number of initiatives in the area of child sexual abuse. They are:

- The preliminary work was done to get two child abuse specialists in place. They are currently being hired to work in the Keewatin and Inuvik Regions.

As well, funding has been recently approved to employ two more Specialists who will be put in the Deh Cho and Baffin Regions.

These four positions will provide support, treatment, training, and community development to the people and professionals of communities.

- The Department of Social Services has worked with the Roman Catholic Church who have started up a special treatment program in Baker Lake for child sexual abuse victims.

The Church has hired a therapist who is now working with the community of Baker Lake seeking to heal some of the wounds caused by a priest who sexually assaulted many children in Baker Lake and is also working with a trainee who is planning to remain in the Community.

- A child sexual abuse protocol was drawn up. There now is a clearly defined process when abuse is reported and the roles of the Crown, RCMP, workers and Social Workers are clear. This ensures that separate agencies are not duplicating efforts. It also means a child is spared having to endlessly repeat a disclosure. The protocol emphasizes how the RCMP and Social Workers will work together on the investigation.
- A book is now available for child sexual abuse victims who are going to court. Large pictures and easily understood print explain to the child what to expect in court. The book (much like a colouring book) is designed to lessen the trauma of court.
- An inter-agency committee on child abuse has been struck in Fort Smith. A proposal is now due from them. Their aim is to develop treatment for children who have been abused. Fort Smith was chosen as the best community to run such a program from because the community has an array of resources such as the Thebacha Campus of Arctic College, the Territorial Correctional Center for Women, Trailcross Treatment Centre, and the Riverridge Secure Facility among others.

Similar community work was sponsored in Fort Simpson and initial discussions occurred in Iqaluit.

## **LEGAL AND COURT ISSUES**

Besides undertaking a number of measures to make the child welfare system as viable as possible the Family and Children's Services Division has also had a busy year with legal and court issues.

Child advocates in court, costs associated with child welfare court, and problems with the adoption process are all issues the Division is currently untangling. Changes to the *Child Welfare Act* and studies in custody disputes are also issues which have been dealt with.

### **Representation Of Children**

Towards this end a committee was created to consist of Legal Aid, the Superintendent of Child Welfare, the legal division of the Department of Justice and Court Services Administration.

The business of the committee is to define under what circumstances a child should have its own advocate or legal representative, who should request it and who will pay for it.

Family and Children's Services is also in the process of sorting out and identifying the expenses with child welfare cases.

Child welfare cases use a lot of legal services. Thus far the costs of paying witnesses, the costs of travel for lawyers and Social Workers and other costs have not been approached in any consistent manner.

### **Adoption**

This year there have been complaints from biological families that promises made to them are not being kept on the part of the adoptive parents.

It would appear that when some people adopt they agree to provisions, such as permitting visits or sending photographs of the child, which they later fail to carry through.

In Family and Children's Services we are working with the Department of Justice in order to review the nature of adoption orders so that they may be able to reflect the real agreements which lead to the adoption.

### **Changes To The *Child Welfare Act***

There were several changes to the *Child Welfare Act* passed in 1990. One change was to more clearly define the circumstances under which apprehension of children in need of protection can occur. A second set standards for liability of Child Welfare Workers. The new legislation protects individual workers from liability when they do child protection work in good faith.

(The complete text of the amendments can be found in the Appendix.)

### **The Family Law Review**

It is generally agreed that family law legislation in the Northwest Territories is in need of extensive review and revision.

Because much of the proposed legislation will fall within mandate, the Department of Social Services has been working with the Department of Justice and others on the Family Law Review project since July of 1988.

To date community, ethnographic, and legal research has been conducted.

Family and Children's Services continues to have a representative participate in the Family Law Working Group.

A final report with recommendations is expected in August of 1991.

### **Home Studies For Custody Disputes**

After April 1, 1990, the Family and Children's Services Division stopped doing home studies for custody disputes between competent parents. These disputes are not child welfare matters when both parents are able to care for a child, but unable to agree on who will have custody.

It must be stressed that Social Workers still conduct investigations if there are allegations of abuse.

## DEINSTITUTIONALIZING CARE

The Yellowknife Receiving Home closed its doors last September in order to deinstitutionalize emergency child care in Yellowknife. Since then the Department has concentrated on strengthening emergency foster care because it is the Department's belief a child in an emergency situation is less traumatized in a family setting than in an institutional setting.

The money from the closure has been redirected toward making the child welfare system function in a more efficient manner by the following measures:

- One "person year" was transferred to the Yellowknife Area Office to help develop new foster care resources in Yellowknife. As a result of this there is now a foster care coordinator to service the Yellowknife area.

The Coordinator provides liaison between foster parents and the Department of Social Services, ensures foster parents training needs are met, and develops programs to recruit new foster parents.

- A contract was tendered for a small emergency home in Yellowknife (4 beds for up to 6 weeks) in the event the Department does not have emergency foster care. As well, a tender for a new six bed group home in Inuvik which offers supervised care to children (birth to 17 years) who are wards.
- Two "person years" were reassigned to child welfare. This has led to the creation of two new positions. They are:

**Court Liaison Worker:** This position helps community workers with their cases in court. It ensures that someone is available to assist Community Social Services Workers to provide well written Section 18 reports and properly prepared documents.

With the training, workshops, and individual assistance the Court Liaison Worker provides the court process can be less intimidating to workers.

**Placement Officer:** To ensure that no child falls through the cracks of the Child Welfare system, the placement

officer monitors where children are in the system and provides assistance to Community Social Services Workers who are looking for appropriate institutional and interregional placements.

Part of the position's responsibilities are to make sure that the institution where the child is placed (especially with southern placements) is aware of the expectations of the Department including case planning for each child, and progress reports.

As well, the Placement Officer monitors budgets and draws up the contracts for institutional placements.

#### **CAPITAL SPENDING**

This last fiscal year capital spending in the Family and Children's Services Division amounted to almost half a million dollars:

These funds were allocated to:

- The construction of a new entrance to accommodate handicapped children was built for the Group Home in Rankin Inlet.
- New skirting was built around the children's group home in Iqaluit.
- A van was purchased for the Territorial Treatment Centre in Yellowknife.
- A major contribution was made to NWT Family Counselling Services towards their purchase of a new building in Yellowknife.
- The Trailcross Treatment Centre in Fort Smith moved into a different building which has been totally renovated and new furnished.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Government of the Northwest Territories, 1990 Annual Report.
2. Government of the Northwest Territories, 1989 Annual Report.
3. Thursday's Child, Child Poverty in Canada:  
A Review of the Effects of Poverty on Children  
by Catherine Ryerse  
National Youth in Care Network
4. Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
A Report from the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Board and the  
Department of Health  
October 1990
5. A Portrait of Children in Canada  
Statistics Canada, Housing, Family and Social Services Division  
September 1990
6. Children of Canada, Children of the World  
Canada's National Paper for the World Summit for Children  
1990
7. Tobacco Use By Youth in the Canadian Arctic  
Health Services and Promotion Branch  
Health and Welfare Canada  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
1989
8. Canada Youth and AIDS Study  
Queen's University at Kingston  
November, 1988
9. 1989 Labour Force Survey  
Overall Results and Community Detail  
Bureau of Statistics  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
June, 1989



## REFERENCES

### Part I Children In The Northwest Territories

#### Demographics

- 1 Population and Dwelling Characteristics  
Northwest Territories  
Part I  
Statistics Canada
- 2 Population by Region, Sex and Ethnicity  
Northwest Territories  
June 1989
- 3 Family Allowance Statistics  
Number of Children  
June 1, 1989  
Statistics Quarterly  
December 1990
- 4 Population by Sex, Region, and Ethnicity  
Northwest Territories  
June 1989
- 5 Population and Dwelling Characteristics  
Census Divisions and Subdivisions  
Northwest Territories  
Part I

#### Health

- 1 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 16
- 2 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 2, Page 43
- 3 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 2

---

## REFERENCES

- 4 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 16
- 5 Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics
- 6 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 43, Page 44
- 7 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 19
- 8 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 22
- 9 Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic  
Health and Welfare Canada  
Page 1
- 10 Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic  
Health and Welfare Canada  
Page vii
- 11 Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic  
Health and Welfare Canada  
Page vii
- 12 Tobacco Use by Youth in the Canadian Arctic  
Health and Welfare Canada  
Page vii
- 13 Canada Youth and AIDS Study  
The Northwest Territories Report  
Page 12
- 14 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 45
- 15 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 199  
Page 49
- 16 Canada Youth and AIDS Study  
The Northwest Territories Report  
Page 27

- 17 Statistics from the Department of Health  
Epidemiology
- 18 Statistics from the Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics
- 19 Statistics from the Department of Health  
Epidemiology

## Children And Education In The NWT

- 1 Statistics from Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
October 1990  
Page 17
- 2 Government of the Northwest Territories  
1989 Annual Report  
Page 33
- 3 Source: Department of Education
- 4 Source: Department of Education
- 5 Source: Department of Education
- 6 Health and Health Services in the Northwest Territories  
Page 42
- 7 Government of the Northwest Territories  
1989 Annual Report  
Page 33

## Children And Economic Security In The NWT

- 1 Children of Canada, Children of the World  
Canada's National Paper for the World Summit for Children  
Page 62, Page 63
- 2 Selected Characteristics for Census Division and Census Subdivisions  
1986 Census
- 3 Selected Characteristics for Census Division and Census Subdivisions  
1986 Census
- 4 Selected Characteristics for Census Division and Census Subdivisions  
1986 Census
- 5 Selected Characteristics for Census Division and Census Subdivisions  
1986 Census

- 6 1989 NWT Labour Force Survey  
Overall Results and Community Detail  
Page 5
- 7 Source: Department of Social Services

## **Part II Children In Care**

The source of all the statistics is the Department of Social Services, Family and Children's Services Division.

## **Part III Youth And Perceptions**

The questionnaire was distributed to the Akaitcho Hall students. Other information in this section is from the Northwest Territories Report for the Canada Youth and AIDS Study.

## APPENDIX

### Amendments to *Child Welfare Act*

- 16.(1) The Superintendent, a Child Welfare Worker, a Peace Officer, an Executive Director, or any person authorized by the Minister or the Superintendent may
- (a) apprehend without a warrant any child where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the child is in need of protection; or
  - (b) without a warrant, enter a place by day or night, using force if necessary to effect entry, and apprehend a child where there are reasonable grounds to believe that
    - i) the health and welfare of the child is in immediate jeopardy; or
    - ii) a child committed to the care and custody of the Superintendent or a children's aid society has been absconded and is being harboured in any place.
- 30.2(1) Subject to subsection (2), no person authorized to act under this Act shall be liable for anything done or not done with regard to the welfare and protection of a child when that person is carrying out his or her duties in good faith under this Act.