

Government of
Northwest Territories

March 30, 2023

JANE WEYALLON ARMSTRONG
MLA, MONFWI**Oral Question #1402-19(2) Cooperation
Between Income Support and Child and Family Services**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on February 28, 2023 regarding the collaboration between the departments of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and Health and Social Services (HSS) in ensuring youth have access to supports and programs as they age out of the Government of the Northwest Territories' Child Welfare System.

ECE is responsible for the delivery of the Income Assistance (IA) program. The IA program provides financial assistance to residents who are at least 19 years of age to assist with their basic and enhanced needs. These needs include shelter, food, utilities, clothing, and allowances for persons with permanent disabilities or seniors. In order to qualify for benefits, residents must apply each month and have a need greater than their income. The IA program is available to all youth who have aged out of care and are at least 19 years of age.

While there is no specific pathway for ECE to assist youth who are aging out of care, the Income Security Programs Division does work closely with Child and Family Services to ensure benefits from both programs are supporting the needs of mutual clients. HSS also offers Extended Support Service Agreements (ESSA) to young persons who were in the permanent care and custody of the Director of Child and Family Services on their 19th birthday until they turn 23. The purpose of an ESSA is to support the young person in becoming an independent and healthy adult through various supports and services. Recognizing the uncertainties of this transitional period, the ESSA is completely voluntary and can be opted in and out of at the young person's discretion.

Thank you for your questions and interest in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson'.

R.J. Simpson
Minister, Education, Culture
and Employment

c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs