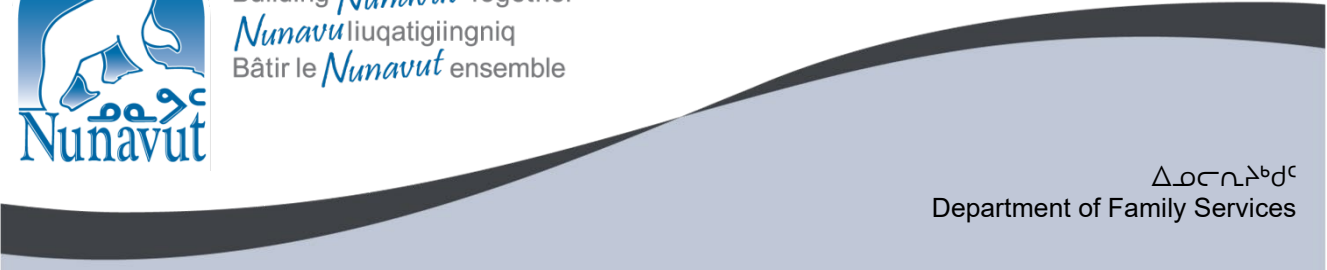


Director's 2021-2022 Annual Report on Family Wellness



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Building *Nunavut* Together
Nunavut liuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

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Department of Family Services



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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to submit the Director of Child and Family Services 2021/2022 Annual Report in compliance with the requirements of the Child and Family Services Act and Regulations. This report presents the statistics with respect to the operations of child welfare within the territory and provides an overview of the services and initiatives under the Family Wellness Division.

The 2021/22 fiscal year required continued ***Qanuqtuurniq*** (innovation and resourcefulness) and taught us to operate effectively with limited resources and stringent controls due to the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic. We were able to work within these confines to support families, children and youth and a concerted effort was made by the Family Wellness team to ensure that children and youth in care maintained regular communication with their families. We continued to train our foster parents and our Family Wellness team and found solutions to keep connected when the world, and even Nunavut, as a territory, seemed to become further isolated.

We worked in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik incorporated (NTI), who supported Family Wellness by funding an initiative to make iPads, cell phones and connection to internet services available to all eligible children and youth in care across the territory. We collaborated with the Embrace Life Council to provide unique supports for our youth and outreach team and with Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut as part of our preparation for our summer youth camps. We continued to collaborate with our community-based partners through ***Piliriqatigiinniq*** (working together for the common good) to provide safety and security for women, children and youth through our shelter programs and community-based initiatives. We streamlined our processes to ensure that placement and file reviews are aligned with policies and procedures by updating our Family Wellness Planning Committee (FWPC) procedures.

Respecting ***Pijitsirniq*** (serving and providing for family and/or community), we provided support to children while they remained at home with family, and in community. We improved oversight outside of the territory by resuming site visits with the children, youth and adults outside the territory. We reinforced youth support programs through a pilot initiative and hired two Youth Outreach Coordinators to ensure that supervised activities were available for youth across the territory.

The future of Nunavut is dependent on healthy children and families. Caring for children and youth is the only way to create a solid foundation. Family Wellness work is aligned with ***Katujjiluta***, the Government of Nunavut's Sixth Assembly's Mandate. We too, "hear and support the youth who continue to speak about their hopes and needs". We whole-heartedly believe in the need for continued investment in the supports that children and youth need to create the path toward building a meaningful future. This is the core of our departmental mandate and guides our work with our community partners who hold the responsibility for delivering the education, employment, and health portfolios.

The past year, 2021-2022, renewed our commitment to support those whom we rely on most in the delivery of Family Wellness programming, including our frontline staff; Community Social Service Workers (CSSWs), Family Resource Workers, Foster Care Coordinators, families, extended families, foster families, and our community partners. We also work closely with all of the Divisions within our department; Income Assistance, Career Development, Corporate Services, Human Resources, Policy, Poverty Reduction, and our Executive Management Committee to deliver a continuum of care within our Department. To all the individuals under these umbrellas, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your continued dedication and time. Without you we would be challenged to achieve our mandate.

Further, I want to thank the headquarters' team including all the specialists, those who have left the team after years of dedicated service, new team members and those who remain. The efforts that you undertake behind the scenes to ensure that all the work gets done is critical, although it is rarely mentioned, so, '*nakurmiik*' to all of you!

The tireless efforts of all these individuals allowed us to receive and process more than 9,300 referrals and to support more than 760 families this year.

To all of you, ma'na, nakurmiik, quana.

Tavvauvutit,

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Joanne Henderson

B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W.

Director of Child & Family Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an overview of Family Wellness operations during the fiscal year 2021-2022 for the period beginning in April of 2021 and ending March 2022.

Family Wellness services required collaboration and support at all levels. High staff vacancy rates in our team created a significant challenge to providing the quality of services that we aspire to provide. However, innovation, resourcefulness and perseverance assisted us in receiving and responding to more than 9,300 referrals and supporting more than 764 children and youth under various statuses.

Our focus on family safety continues to be paramount especially because a percentage of the referrals received over the course of the last year were related to family violence. In some regions, family violence-related referrals account for 16% of the total referrals received. As we look forward to another year of targeted programming to create safer communities, we have undertaken Women's Safety Initiative roundtable discussions in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Kugaaruk. These conversations focused on how departments and organizations can work more collaboratively together to provide Nunavummiut with effective services and resources as part of proactive work around violence prevention across Nunavut.

Housing and food insecurity also continues to have a negative impact on families. Two of the four regions within the territory handled over 300 referrals related to advocacy for housing. This represents 69% of all tracked housing referrals received over the 2021-2022 year. Further, we noted that over 50% of all informal requests for services were related to food insecurity.

Our commitment to support and develop the skill level of our team is central to our ability to provide quality services to children and families. Training provides the required tools for team excellence. Staff received regular training through online "Lunch and Learn" sessions through-out 2021-2022. Topics included mental health and wellness, trauma and attachment, child behavior and development, supporting foster parents, Child Abuse Network and Response Agreement (CANRA), Office of the Public Guardian and Inclusion and Diversity. Foster parent training sessions including webinars provided information on various topics related to fostering and how to support Nunavummiut foster children in care. In November 2021, the first on-line course on resiliency was launched for staff. An online platform is also being developed that includes over 40 online self-directed modules for staff.

This year, efforts to provide structured programming for youth were reinforced. We have made connections and are building partnerships to create and deliver unique programs for our youth with the Embrace Life Council, Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut, Outside Looking In, and Makerspace. Finally, retention measures alongside recruitment will feature strongly in the coming year. This is important for staff, foster parents, and our support persons within the community. We rely on their support and are invested in improving and building our resource base through *Ikajuqtigiinniq* knowing that success is only possible by working together for a common cause.

Introduction

The Department of Family Services is responsible for the Income Assistance program, the Family Wellness Division, Career Development Services, and the Poverty Reduction Division. Our Mission is to enhance the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut through integrated and innovative services. Our Vision is for “A Caring Community where all Nunavummiut thrive”.

The Family Wellness division provides a range of support services for children and vulnerable adults who may require protection or other specialized support. The division assists individuals, families, groups and communities to develop skills and make use of both personal and community resources to enhance their well-being. It has the following objectives:

- For services related to family wellness to be coordinated and supported across the territory.
- Fulfilling the legislative responsibilities inherent in the following statutes: *Child and Family Services Act*, *Adoption Act*, and *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*.
- Protecting the rights of children, youth, families, and vulnerable individuals.
- Advocating for the interests of vulnerable members across Nunavut.
- Strengthening prevention and emergency supports for individuals and families impacted by or at risk for family violence.
- Supporting youth by developing safe community spaces.

The Director’s Annual Report is a requirement under Section 42 of the Child and Family Services Act. It is an overview of the services provided to children and families under the Act and other services and initiatives provided to support families and communities across Nunavut.

This report focuses on the main areas of work the division is mandated to provide. This includes assisting families through the work of Community Social Service Workers (CSSWs), including child protection, adoption and foster care, adult services, as well as family violence shelters and social advocacy programs.

Family Wellness Operations 2021-2022

The Family Wellness team consists of Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs), Family Resource Workers, Specialists (including the Child Protection, Adoption, Client Services, Family Safety, Training Specialist), Family Safety program support and coordination staff, Coordinator for the Prevention of Violence Against Children and Youth Initiatives, Youth Outreach Coordinators, and Foster Care Coordinators.

Referrals

This year there were more than 9,300 referrals received and processed by Family Wellness staff across the territory. The Iqaluit office operations were especially taxed with low staffing level and high intensity operations.

In 2021-22, the Iqaluit office handled:

Approximately 8 intake/referrals daily Monday-Friday from 08:30-17:00 (approximately **2,880 calls over the year**)

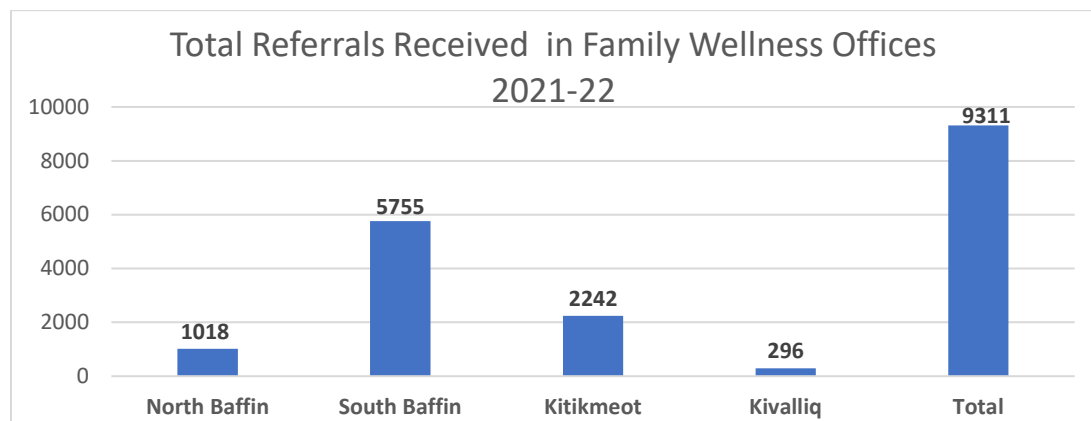
Approximately 10 intake/referral calls after hours daily from 17:00-08:30 (approximately **3,650 calls over the year**)

Approximate calls per year-**5,730**

Average calls per day-**15**

The team, across the territory, although somewhat hindered by extraordinary staffing vacancies and turnover rates, handled high volumes of referrals; and provided services to intervene in situations impacting both the community and the team. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the number of referrals received according to the Territory by region for the 2021-2022 fiscal year (FY).

Figure 1: Total Referrals Received by Family Wellness Offices Territory Wide in 2021-2022



Resiliency, at both the community and amongst staff, has assisted us in staying the course and working with families despite our limitations. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic took a toll on the team, but we persevered and were able to work to protect children and to support children, youth, and families; and individuals with needs ranging from safety, food, and housing insecurity. Table 1 below presents a synopsis of the total referrals received related to child protection over the 2021-2022 FY by region.

Table 1: Synopsis of Types of Referrals Received by CSSWs Across the Territory for FY 2021-2022

Reasons for Referrals	North Baffin	South Baffin	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq	Total
Child Physical Harm	12	687	12	5	716
Child Sexual Harm	16	458	24	20	518
Child Emotional Harm	11	401	171	4	587
Child - Inadequate Care & Supervision	37	1317	148	17	1519
Child- Failure to Obtain Health Services	3	61	69	4	137
Child - Caregiver with a Problem	30	1547	162	14	1753
Child Exposure to Family Violence	105	286	222	49	662
Child Voluntary Services Agreement (Age 0-15)	18	4	55	6	83
Youth - Support Services Agreement (age 16-18)	4	0	1	13	18
Child and Youth Extended Family Care	40	8	67	18	133
Child and Youth Foster Care	48	0	104	15	167
Custom Adoption Certification	1	0	0	3	4
Adoption (Private & Departmental)	11	0	0	2	13
Request for Courtesy Service	17	9	150	6	182
Request for File Disclosure	1	4	74	5	84

Table 1 above alerts us to the fact that physical, sexual, and emotional harm were the most prevalent reasons for referrals representing **1,821** referrals. The highest rates of referrals of this kind were received in South Baffin. Programs like the Inunnguiniq Parenting Program were impacted by COVID-19 and have been on hold for the last two years. These, and other trauma-informed community-based healing initiatives, have a significant positive impact and would benefit from being resumed. The need is clear in the high rates of referrals received regarding inadequate care and supervision (1,519 across the territory) and care giver issues/problems (representing 1,753 across the territory).

Other issues and trends that impact the well-being of children and their caregivers were evident over the year. These included food and housing insecurity and the need for families to access places of safety due to the threat of or because of family violence.

Family Safety

Family Safety is a concern in our communities. Some percentage of all referrals were initiated due to family violence: 12% in North Baffin, 5% in South Baffin, 10% in Kitikmeot and 16% in Kivalliq. Figure 2 below, provides an overview of the rate of exposure to violence in our communities when compared to other referrals received and Figure 3 provides an overview of the referrals received due to concerns that children or youth have been exposed to family violence.

Figure 2: Proportion of Referrals Related to Family Safety compared to Respective Community Referrals by Region in FY 2021-2022

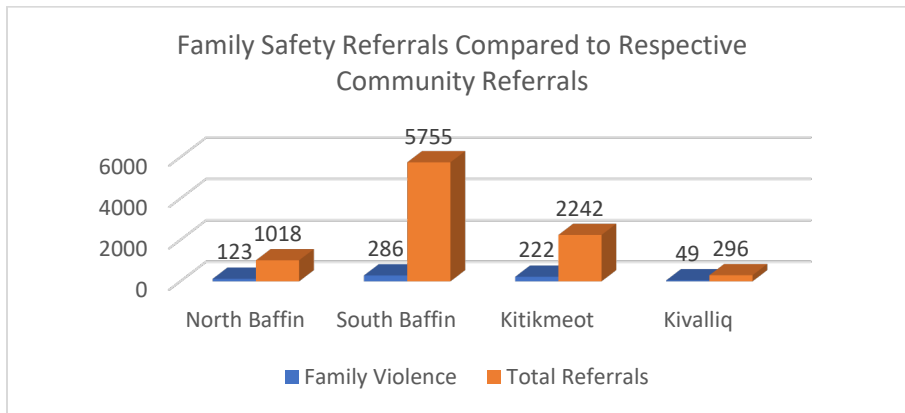
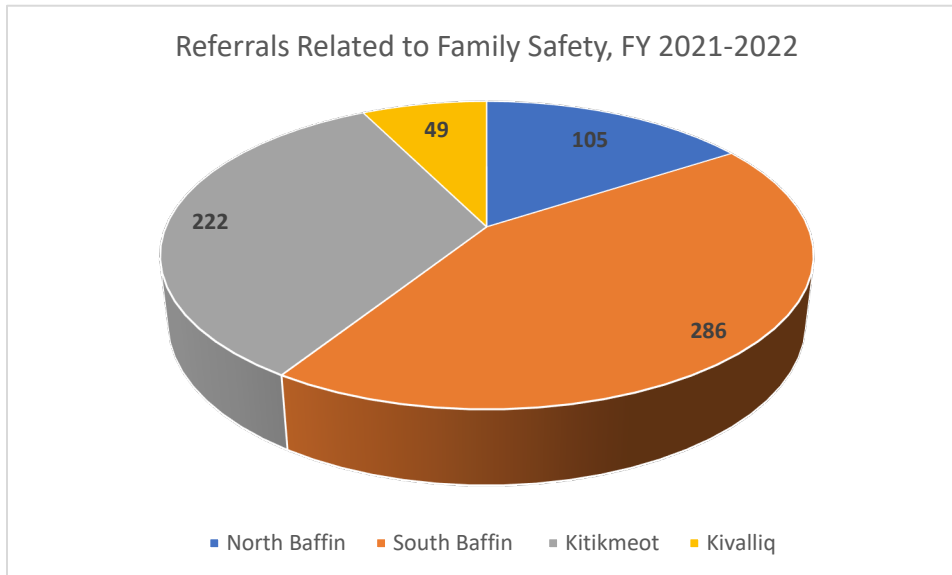


Figure 3: Referrals Related to the Exposure to Family Safety in FY 2021-2022



Programs that provide safety and security for children and families and assist them in finding alternatives to violence is paramount for healthier communities. This is critical in program and initiative planning especially if we take time to reflect on the fact that **children under the age of six spent a total of 1,515** nights in shelters in Nunavut due to family Violence (see table 2 below).

Table 2: Total Number of Nights Spent by Children and Youth in Safe Shelters 2021-2022

Region	Child Age 0-2	Child Age 3-5	Child age 6-18	Total Children
Baffin	624	411	1607	2642
Kitikmeot	209	148	439	796
Kivalliq	117	6	452	575
Total in Age Range	950	565	2498	4013

Of equal concern, is the fact that as of March 31,2021, **1,076**, Nunavummiut were admitted to safe shelters due to threat of or having experienced violence and of these 640, or 59%, were children and youth. Figures 4 and 5 provide a visual overview of the situation within our shelters.

Figure 4: Nunavut Shelter Occupancy Rates

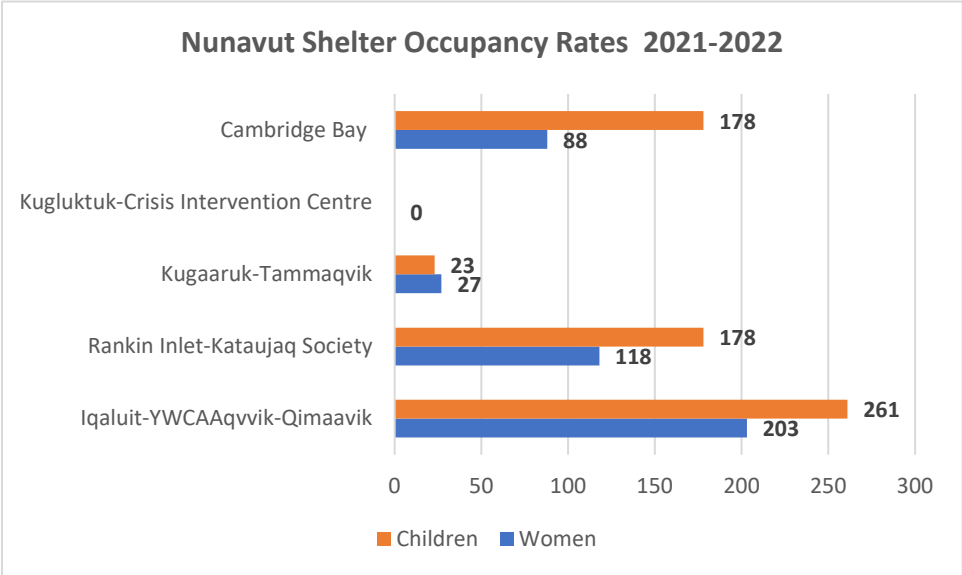
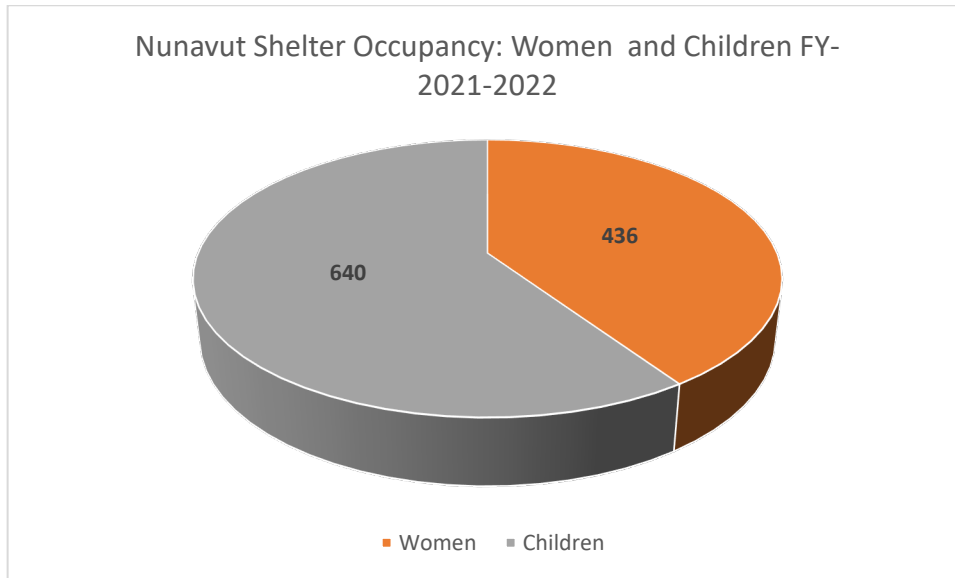


Figure 5: Nunavut Shelter Occupancy Rates Adult Admissions Verses Children and youth



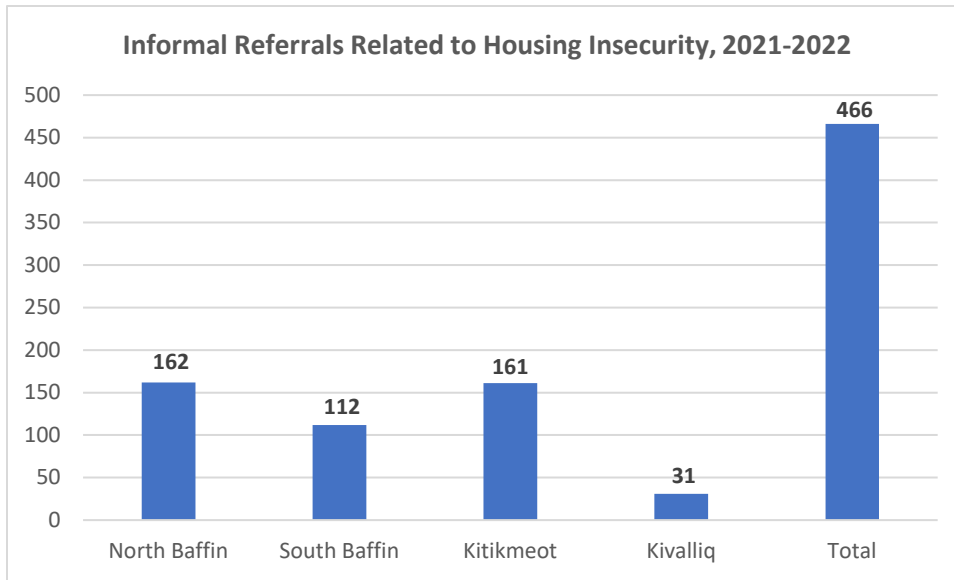
The data on the high level of occupancy in Nunavut shelters demonstrates the need for increased programming to support families impacted by violence. Adequate training for family safety service providers equips them to create programs that assists in the healing process of women and children who have experienced abuse. Family Services addresses family violence through community-level support and funding for Family Violence Shelters. The Department focuses on enhancing shelter training through collaboration with YWCA of NWT and Women’s Shelter’s Canada to develop training for Northern shelter workers. Shelters are encouraged to take advantage of this funding to allow staff to access current training and innovative ideas to improve their service

Housing Insecurity

Overcrowding and food insecurity increase the complexity of the social barriers that children face creating systemic barriers to their future success and immediate needs. Our Family Wellness offices across the territory provided advocacy services and letters of support to local Housing Associations for families who have limited access to adequate housing.

Housing presents a unique challenge and shelters are mostly located in larger centers like Cambridge Bay, Iqaluit, and Rankin Inlet. The department has taken steps to create safe shelter spaces for youth and is working with community to continue to enhance these services. Figure 6 provides an overview of the referrals related to housing by region. The North Baffin and Kitikmeot regions combined handled over 300 referrals related to housing representing 69% of all referrals received related to housing.

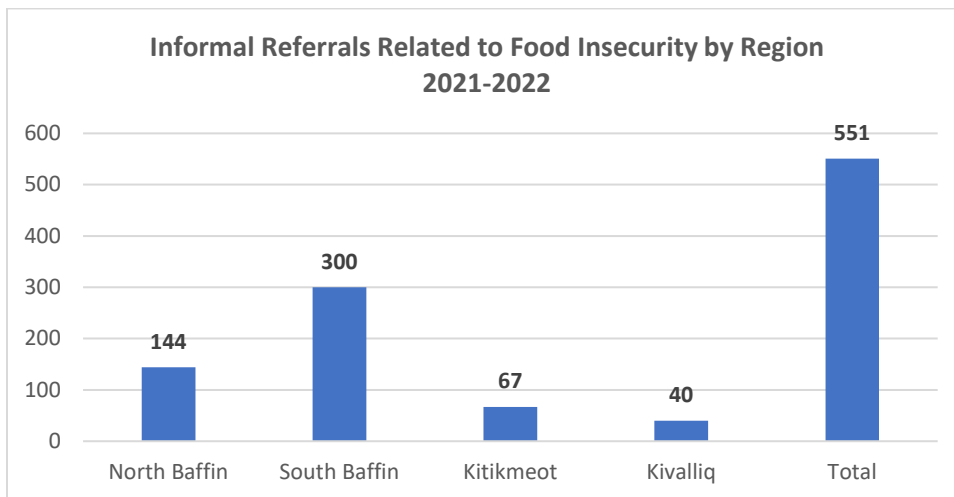
Figure 6: Referrals related to Housing Insecurity by Region



Food Insecurity

Figure 7 below provides a breakdown of the 551 referrals received related to food insecurity by region. It is of interest to note that over 50% of all informal requests related to food insecurity occurred in the South Baffin Region which includes Iqaluit. Food programs have become common place in Iqaluit and across Nunavut. This speaks to the impact of the limited access to healthy food for the most vulnerable in the community. Limited access to country food and increasing food prices also creates added pressures on the communities.

Figure 7: Referrals Related to Food Insecurity by Region



Food insecurity, homelessness, and violence culminates into systemic barriers that impact families and children and youth from finding steady ground to grow and thrive. Family Wellness focuses on prevention. The Child and Family Services Act provides solutions through voluntary services agreements to mitigate circumstances related to housing and food insecurity. High-risk situations presenting potential harm including family violence or the threat of violence require more intrusive measures. Resolution to these issues is only possible through collaboration and a vocal and action-focused response at all levels.

CHILD PROTECTION

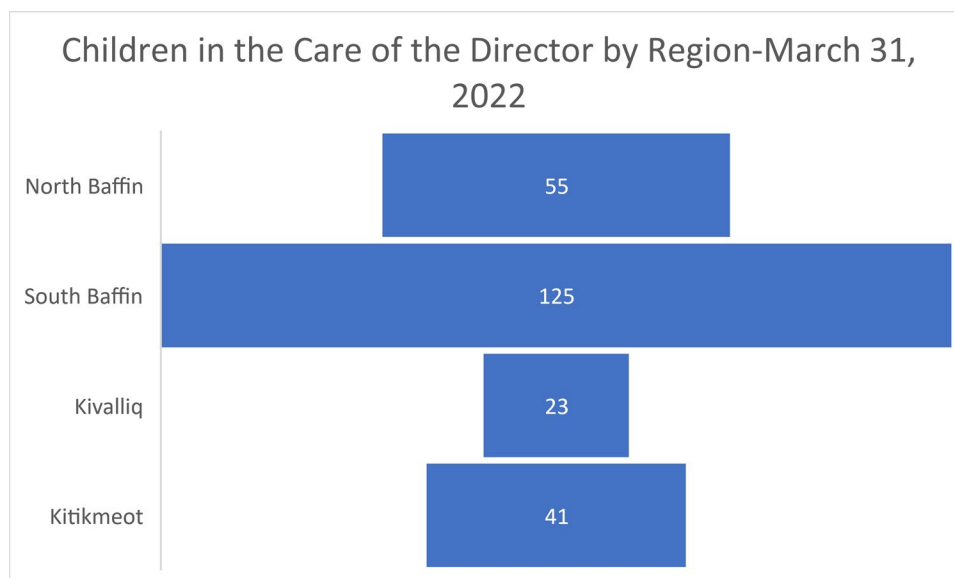
Child Protection Services, part of the Family Wellness Division, ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth by providing a variety of services. This includes investigations and interventions that are provided by child protection workers under the *Child and Family Services Act*. The Family Wellness team, despite the many challenges and barriers experienced during 2021-2022, continued to provide client and community-focused services. This section presents an overview of the children who received services under the care of the Director as of March 31, 2022. The data is categorized by region, age, gender, and legal status.

Figure 8 below presents the regional distribution of children in the care of the Director. The largest portion of children in care in the territory are in the South Baffin Region which consists of Iqaluit, Kinngait and Kimmirut. Based on the number of children in care, initiatives are being undertaken to provide structural and culturally based programming to support these youth and their families. Over the last year, camps have been held in the summer and winter months for these youth, with specialized programming related to film-making as a means of health expression through art.



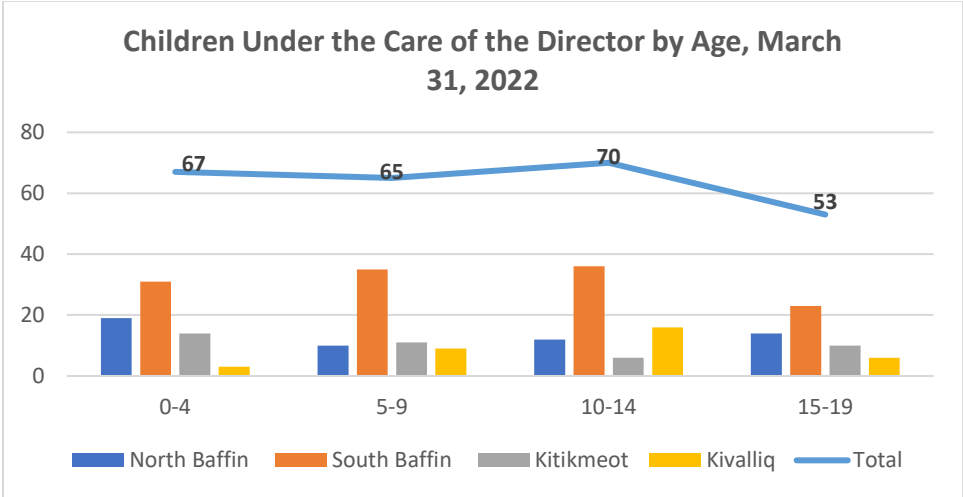
Temporary Youth Outreach workers held on line activities across the Territory to provide healthy options to children and youth in care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown periods. Booklets with cultural and healthy activities were also provided on-line, with competitions and games to provide entertainment for children, youth, and families when they were not able to visit family members or friends.

Figure 8: Children Under the Care of the Director by Region- as of March 31, 2022



Placement “in care” is an intervention that is only undertaken when all other options have been exhausted. The least intrusive measures are utilized, and the objective is always to return children to their families. Repatriation is critical given the impact of separation of children from their families at any age or stage in their lives. Figure 9 below provides the age range of children under the care of the Director.

Figure 9: Children Under the Care of the Director by Age



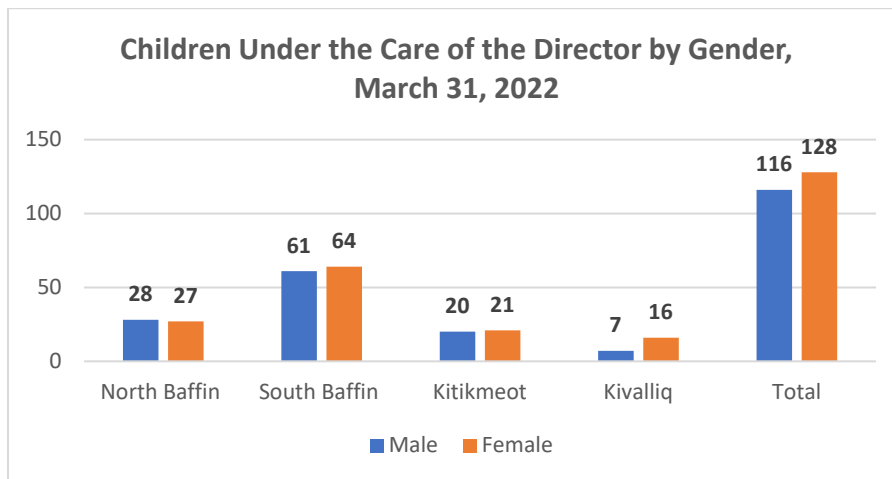
The age range of the children in care across the Territory does not vary significantly, however when combined it is notable that most children in care, 132, or 51%, are in the 0-9 age range.

Trauma informed supports for these children is critical to ensure that they can lead a problem-free life respecting *Inuttiavaunasuaqniq* (working towards a good or problem-free life). Family Wellness programs must recognize the impact of residential schools and colonialism and how this may be perpetuated in our intervention methods and approaches. We must focus on providing the tools that equip parents and their support circles to nurture and raise their children and youth to be productive members of society in alignment with *Inunguqsainiq* (nurturing or raising an individual to be a productive member of society).

The gender of youth in care may be of importance in planning future programs and services. As such it is interesting to note that 128, or more than 50%, of children in care as of March 31, 2022, were women and girls.

Figure 10 below provides an overview of the children in care by gender.

Figure 10: Children Under the Care of the Director by Gender



Family Wellness has developed initiatives for men and boys based on three Regional Men and Boys Gatherings during FY 2016/17, when the Department coordinated to have discussions and address social issues impacting Inuit men and boys. The information obtained from the 2016-2017 gatherings in Nunavut indicated that there was a gap in specialized services for men and boys in the Territory.

We recognized that women and girls are also in need of support. Family Wellness has developed a grant program that provides an opportunity for women-serving organizations to access funding to help increase community capacity, and help women and girls gain skills in several areas such as leadership and economic self-reliance. It supports projects, programs, or services that promote women's leadership skills, employability, wellness, and traditional knowledge. Supporting all youth as part of community-based prevention will positively impact on the number of youths, of either gender, entering the child protection system.

The level of intervention or response undertaken by a Community Social Services Worker (CSSW) in respect to a child who needs protection is based on the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Screening and Response Priority Assessment. This tool has been tailored to follow Inuit Societal Values as a guide and prioritizes children's safety from a both a physical and cultural lens. The criteria include an assessment of various types of harm or neglect which range in severity from the death of a child, physical harm, sexual harm, emotional harm, and neglect. Interventions with families are focused on prevention supports and would normally start with voluntary services or services by agreement. Figure 11 below provides an overview of the number of children and youth who were supported through service agreements as of March 31, 2022.

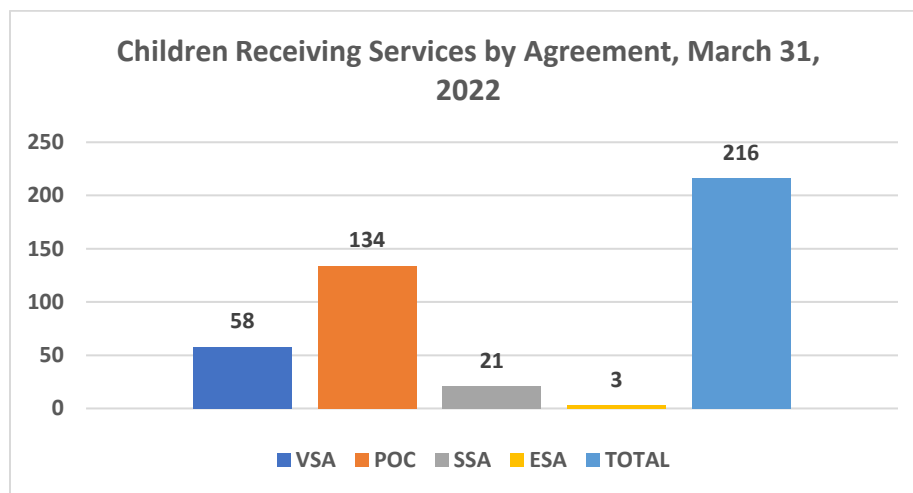
Service Agreements

Voluntary Services Agreements (VSA): agreement with parents and children under the age of 16 who are not in need of protection but require some form of support.

Support Services Agreements (SSA): agreement with a youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who cannot remain safely in their parents' home and are making efforts to live independently.

Extended Support Agreements (ESA): an agreement that allows the department to support young adults between the adults of 19 and 25.

Figure 11: Children Receiving Services by Agreement, March 31, 2022



Legend:

VSA: Voluntary Service Agreement POC- Plan of Care SSA- Support Services Agreement

ESA: Extended Service Agreement

As shown above, of the 216 children receiving services by agreement, 134 children were served through Plan of Care Agreements. A Plan of care Agreement is a written agreement between the parent(s) and the Department that outlines a case plan for the child and family to ensure the child's protection and wellbeing. Although Plan of Care Agreements are used when child protection concerns exit, they are an approach to child protection that is more collaborative in nature and avoid involvement of the court. When possible, Family Wellness will work with families, extended family, community members and community agencies in the development of a Plan of Care Agreement. If a Plan of Care does not resolve a protection concern court proceedings may be the only and last resort.

Court Orders

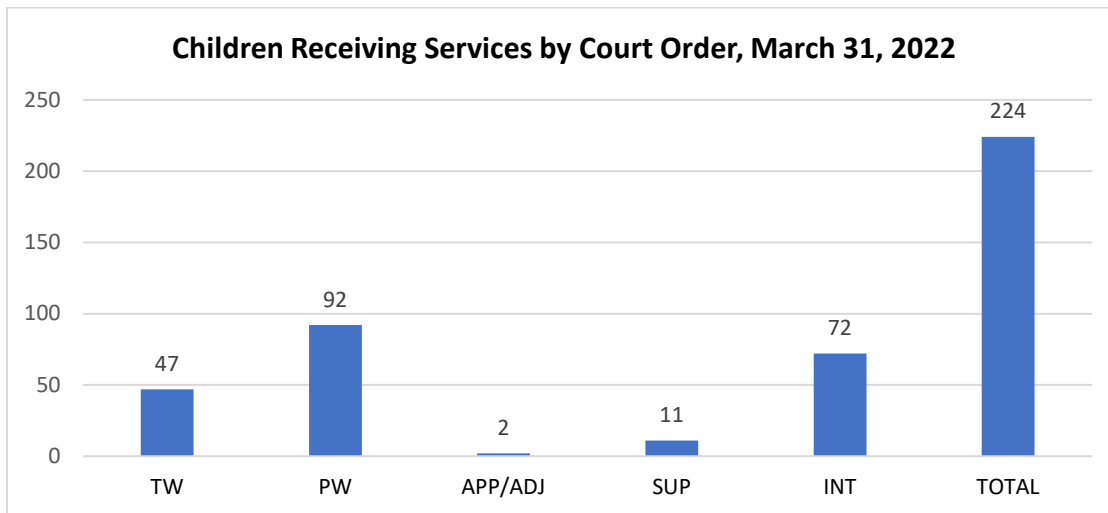
There are three types of court orders, explained in the list below, that are mandated under the Child and Family Services Act when a child needs protection. As of March 31, 2022, there were 224 children and youth under Court Orders. Figure 12 below provides a snapshot of the number of children and youth receiving Services through Court Orders, including the number of children and youth under apprehension or adjournment statuses.

An apprehension is a point in time when a child has been removed from the care of their parent(s).

An adjournment order means a court order was made to bring the matter back to court on a later date, at which point one of three types of court orders can be issued.

Court Orders	
Supervision Order:	court order that directs a CSSW to supervise the home of a child according to the terms and conditions of the order. The order cannot exceed one year.
Temporary Custody Order:	court order which directs that the child be placed in the custody of the Director for a specified period.
Permanent Custody Order:	court order that places a child in the permanent custody of the Director to age 16, extendable to 19 if the youth consents or if ordered by the court.

Figure 12: Children Receiving Services by Court Order



Legend:

TW: Temporary Wardship PW: Permanent Wardship APP: Apprehension ADJ: Adjournment
 SUP: Supervision Order INT: Interim Order

A review of figure 5a highlights the fact that the most utilized service agreements are Plans of Care (POC). 134 POCs were in force as of March 31, 2022. Plans of Care are an alternative to court and are less intrusive than a court process.

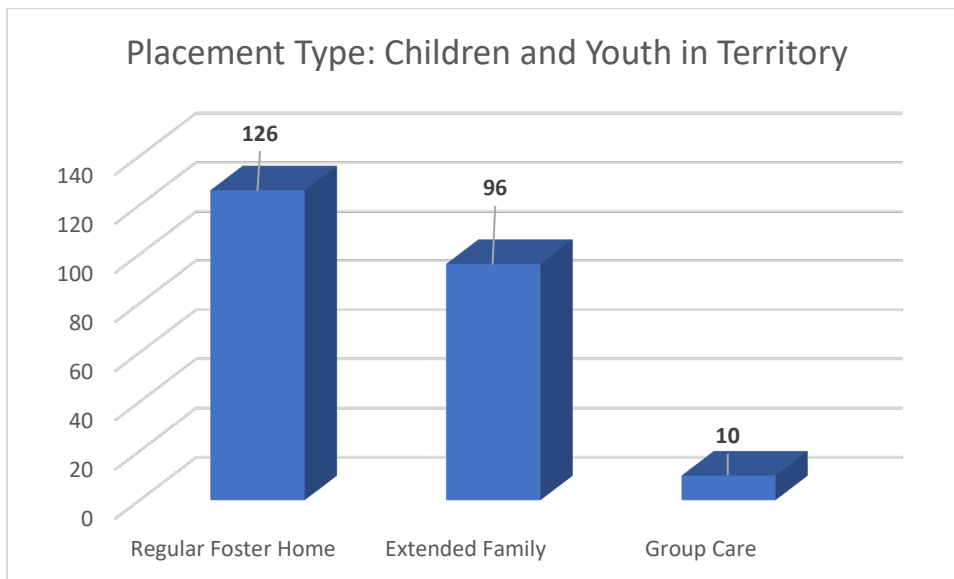
Figure 12 indicates that **224** children received services by court order. Many of these children and youth, **92** in total, receive support through Permanent Custody Orders. It is imperative that these children and youth receive services that support permanent placement with extended family within the territory. More promotion of adoption subsidies is required allowing families to make informed choices about creating permanency for children who are unable to rejoin their immediate families due to safety concerns.

Programs that allow youth to access support to ensure that they are successful in the education and employment sector are required in the territory. Children who remain in the system long-term must be provided with services that prepare them for life after they “age out” (or reach the age of majority) of the system as part of regular case management. These services are sorely needed in the territory; without them, youth enter mainstream society ill-prepared. This does not create the foundation that they need to place them on the path towards success.

Where Children and Youth Receiving Services Live

The first placement of choice for a child who needs to be removed from the home is with extended family within their home community. When a child or youth’s needs cannot be met in the family or community, Family Wellness will explore residential care facilities in-territory, such as group homes that offer 24-hour care for children whose needs exceed the care provided within a family or foster family. Most children and youth in care were in regular foster homes or with extended family. Figure 13 below provides data on where children and youth under the care of the Director who were receiving services as of March 31, 2022 were placed.

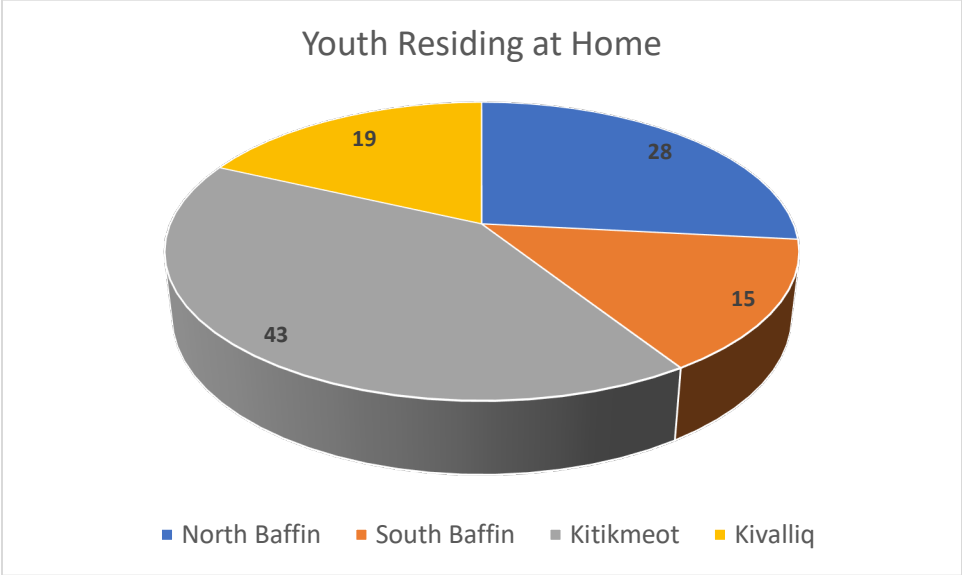
Figure 13: Placement Type Children and Youth in Director Care In-Territory



Children do best within stable family settings and in their communities, which is why the focus of our work is *Pijitsirniq* (serving and providing for family or community). Our community Social Services workers are tasked to ensure that community, culture, language and family remain the focus while ensuring children’s safety. This approach is also aligned with *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Bill C-92), co-developed with Indigenous, provincial, and territorial partners with the goal of keeping Indigenous children and youth connected to their families, communities, and culture.

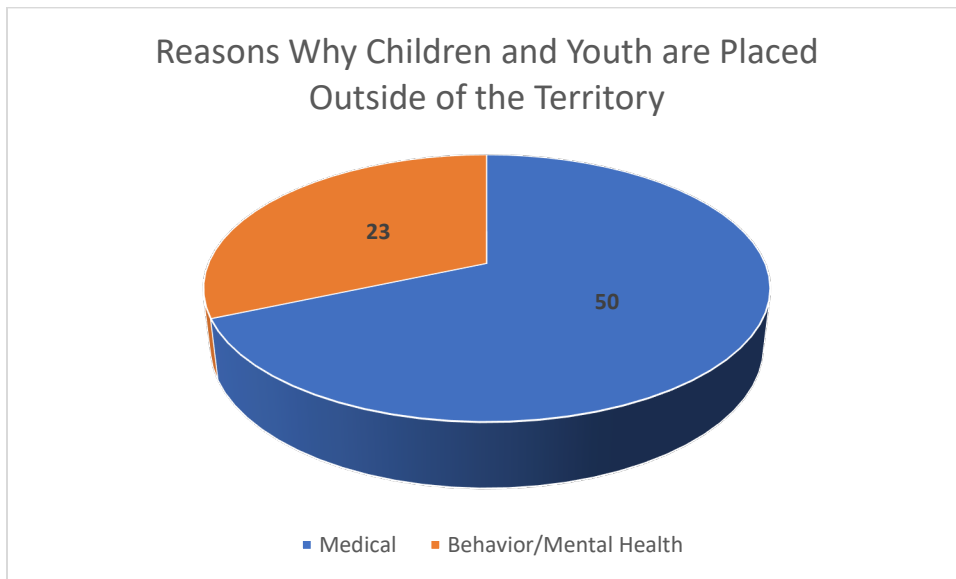
Figure 14 provides a snapshot of children and youth who received services while they remained at home with their families. The Kitikmeot region has the highest number of children and youth who are utilizing our services while they are in the care and custody of their parents. Family Wellness highly supports “family caring and providing for family” so we consider this is the best possible outcome for children and youth and their communities.

Figure 14: Children in Parental Home while Receiving Services



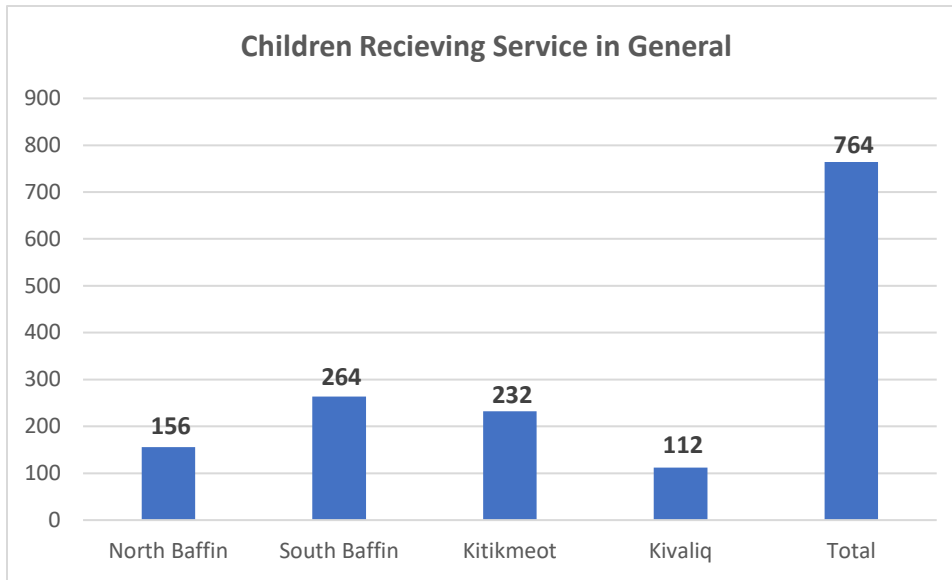
When a child or youth has complex medical or behavioral needs that cannot be met in the territory, out-of-territory residential care is utilized to access specialized services. 73 children and youth, less than 30% of the children in the care of the Director, are receiving care outside of the territory. The majority, 68%, of the children placed are due to medical reasons. Due to the limitations that continue to exist within the territory, separation from home and family still occur due to complex care needed. The supports available from programs like the Community Liaison Officers (positions in the Family Wellness Division that provide follow-up) are crucial in ensuring that children and youth maintain cultural and community connections. The reasons for placement out-of-territory are depicted in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15: Reasons Why Children and Youth are placed in Out-of-Territory Residential Care



At least 764 children and youth and their families, including youth who remained at home, combined with those in the care of the Director under various statuses, received support services including counseling, referrals to community programs, this past year. In some cases, regular or informal drop-ins were not recorded. Figure 16 provides an overview of the total number of children and youth by region receiving services in general.

Figure 16: Children Receiving Services in General by Region



Foster Care

Foster families provide a safe place to stay for children while their families seek help and support to allow them to reunite as a family. Foster families provide support to children in need and encourage children's growth in many areas of their development. There are many ways foster families help support children and families, including:

- provide respite homes, providing rest to families with sick children
- support children while a parent seeks medical care
- provide emergency short-term care for infants awaiting adoption
- support family preservation through parenting support and mentorship
- provide long-term support to extended family and other community youth as required

Extended family members are identified as the first choice for children requiring foster care services. This way they can provide support to families to ensure children remain in their home communities or at least maintain their close family ties. There were 222 children in foster care in the territory over FY 2021-2022.

Adoptions

Under the Adoption Act, the department is responsible for processing adoptions, including departmental and private adoptions. Over the last fiscal year 2021-2022, the Family Wellness Division completed 30 adoptions. Of these, 26 were private adoptions and 4 were departmental adoptions.

Departmental Adoptions:

Departmental adoptions involve a child being adopted who is in the permanent care and custody of the Regional Director of Family Wellness by court order. For the Department of Family Services in Nunavut, there are two reasonings for why Permanent Care (meaning adoption) would be granted:

- A parent delivers the child to a Child Protection Worker for the purpose of adoption, and the consents required have been provided to the Director (Sec. 37. (1) of the *Child and Family Services Act*).
- A child has been apprehended (Sec. 33 of the *Child and Family Services Act*) and eventually comes into the permanent care and custody of the Director of Child and Family Services.

Private Adoptions:

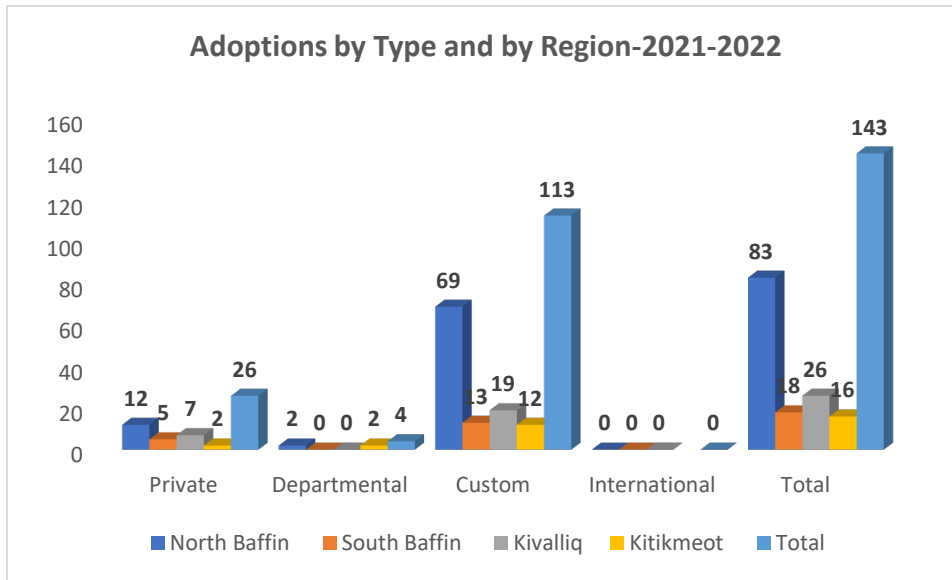
Private adoptions occur when the child or youth to be adopted is not in the care of the Director of Child and Family Services. Private adoptions are arranged independently between the birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s) and must meet the requirements of the *Adoption Act*. Children and youth can be placed in adoptive families out of Nunavut, but the requirements of both Nunavut and the receiving province or territory must be met.

Custom Adoptions:

Custom adoption is a long standing and accepted practice of child placement in aboriginal culture. One or both birth parents and adopting parents must be of Inuit, Dene or Metis descent and must be a resident of, or have some legitimate connection, to Nunavut. Custom adoption is an arrangement for the care of children between the natural parent(s) and the adoptive parent(s). Usually the adoptive parent(s) are relatives or other people in the same community.

Custom adoptions are processed by Adoption Commissioners in the various communities in Nunavut. The department also provides support to Custom Adoption Commissioners under the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act (ACARA)*. Although the Department has no direct involvement in the custom adoption process, it is responsible for ACARA, including the appointment, training, and payment of Adoption Commissioners. Under this legislation, custom adoptions are legally registered outside the courtroom and without legal proceedings, with the assistance of an appointed Custom Adoption Commissioner. Figure 17 below provides the total adoptions completed in the territory by type and by region for 2021-2022.

Figure 17 Total Adoptions Completed by Type and by region for 2021-2022.



Most adoptions were traditional in nature and were completed under the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act (ACARA). The purpose of the legislation is to provide a procedure by which a custom adoption may be respected and recognized. Under this legislation, custom adoptions are legally registered outside of the courtroom and without legal proceedings, with the assistance of an appointed Custom Adoption Commissioner.

Custom Adoption Commissioners will process custom adoptions if one birth parent is Nunavut Inuit, and one adoptee parent is Nunavut Inuit. Custom Adoption Commissioners can refuse to process a custom adoption if they do not feel the legislation or Inuit tradition is being followed. Family Wellness provides compensation for completed and registered adoptions and provides annual training for the Custom Adoption Commissioners.

Extended Services

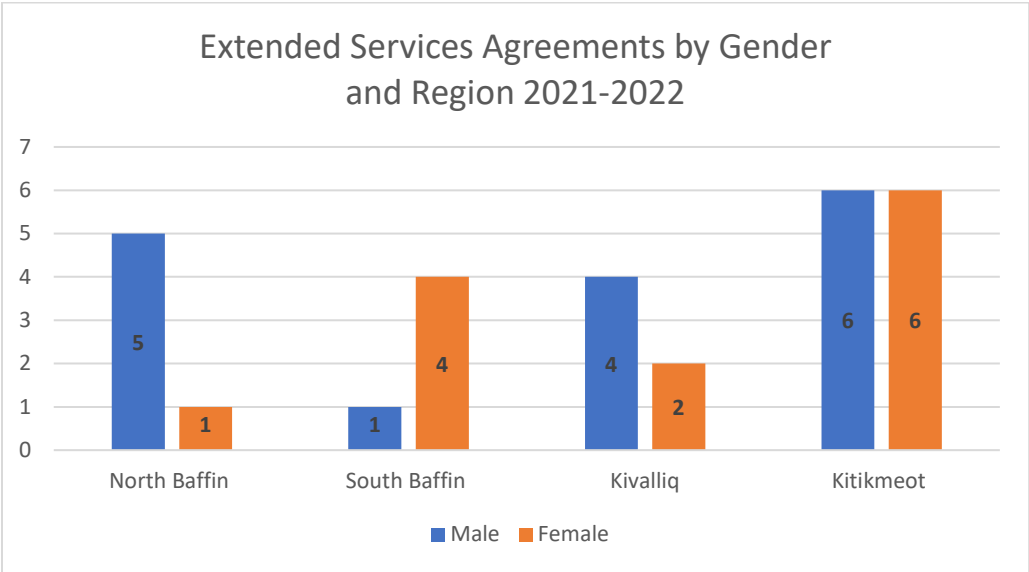
Family Wellness provides support services and enters into agreements with youth under section 6 (1) of the *Children and Family Services Act*. Youth can access to receive these services if they cannot reside with their parents and require assistance to care for themselves.

The types of supports, as defined in the legislation, that may be provided by the Department to support the youth include:

- *counselling*
- *parenting programs*
- *services for improving the youth's financial situation*
- *services for improving the youth's housing*
- *drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation*
- *mediation of disputes; and*
- *any other services agreed to by the Director and the youth.*

In 2021-2022, 29 youth received services under Extended Services Agreements. Most extended services agreements were in the Kitikmeot region. An equal number of males and females received services over the year. Figure 18 below provides an overview of the extended service agreements in place across the territory by region and gender.

Figure 18: Extended Services Agreements by Gender and Region



Youth Aging Out

Case management activities should prepare youth for becoming adults and ensuring that the youth can perform basic life skills such as laundry, shopping and maintaining personal hygiene, financial literacy and so on). Activities should include employment readiness and the development of a stable social support network prior to and after reaching adulthood. The youth should be engaged in planning and should be consulted at every stage. Where appropriate, alternative care providers, legal guardians, educators, family of origin and/or any other support people identified by the youth may also be involved.

9 youth transitioned out of care in 2021-2022. Focus during this transition is placed on preparing and assisting youth leaving the Family Wellness system to access other departmental and community programs to steer them on the path towards success. This is aligned with *Inunguqsainiq*-based practice, nurturing or raising these youth to be productive members of society- future Nunavut leaders.

Our Continued Objective: Building Quality Programs and Accountability

Building Quality Programs

Family Safety Initiatives:

The Community Coordinator, Women's Safety Initiatives (CCWS), position in Iqaluit has been staffed indeterminately since February 2022. In this time, the coordinator has collaborated with various Government of Nunavut Departments and Inuit organizations, both within the territory and other provinces, to establish new working relationships while strengthening existing ones.

Women's Safety Initiative roundtable discussions have been undertaken in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Kugaaruk. The conversations focused on how departments and organizations can work more collaboratively together to provide Nunavummiut with effective service and resources.

Further, the CCWS travelled to Cambridge Bay in the Winter of 2022, with the Coordinator of Preventing Violence Against Children and Youth Initiatives, to facilitate a 10-day youth outreach program for a group of youth who had been identified as struggling with coping and healing.

The Department of Family Services also provides funding for 4 emergency women's shelters in Nunavut, located in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay, Kugaaruk and Rankin Inlet. Annual shelter reviews ensure that the shelter operations are safe, culturally relevant and are respectfully responding to the needs of the residents. Reviews were not possible this fiscal year due to COVID-19 restrictions, but the Department aims to resume them next fiscal year.

Preventing Violence Against Children and Youth Initiatives (PVACYI):

The Preventing Violence Against Children and Youth initiatives (PVACYI) has focused on working in collaborative efforts with numerous agencies and organizations both in and out of territory in proactive work around violence prevention across Nunavut for youth and children. This includes work on program implementation through Youth Initiative Funding. The PVACYI continues to work to raise awareness of the Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement (CANRA). Ongoing presentations are underway with Health, Justice, Education and other service providers. All stakeholders in Nunavut have expressed agreement to a coordinated responses between all departments to address child protection concerns

New and on-going Partnerships:

OLI

Outside Looking In (OLI) is an Indigenous focused, Toronto-based organization that has been working collaboratively with Family Wellness to implement their dance program catered for children and youth in Nunavut. OLI visited three communities in June 2022; Baker Lake, Kimmirut and Iqaluit and will be implanting their fall 2022-2023 program to youth and children in Baker Lake. Family Wellness and OLI have also worked collaboratively with the Hamlet of Baker Lake and Recreation to help finalize program planning.

RPAN

Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut (RPAN) have established future partnership opportunities

following a meeting in June 2022. RPAN has demonstrated interest in working with Family Wellness to implement their Fall/Winter camps to Nunavummiut; identifying the same interest and goal of ensuring that all communities have camp resources and programming in preventative and supportive planning for youth.

ELC

Embrace Life Council (ELC) has worked with Family Wellness in supporting programming facilitated in Cambridge Bay following a tragic incident in March 2022. ELC has also assisted in supporting local programs through application to Youth Initiative Funding and have continued to work collaboratively in supporting Family Wellness INSPIRE Camps located in Iqaluit.

Makerspace

Pinnguaq's Makerspace Program and Family Wellness have identified potential communities to implement their computer refurbishing program directed towards young girls and women, providing a space for safe and continuous learning. Makerspace have also assisted in providing activity kits and training for staff for Family Wellness INSPIRE Camps.

Accountability

Family Wellness is committed to quality improvement. We hired a Quality Assurance Specialist as an unfunded PY to ensure that audits and investigations are performed in relation to programs under the Child and Family Services Division. The position contributed towards:

- 1) the provision of independent and objective reviews of Children and Family Services client files, including compliance and special audits and risk assessments;
- 2) ensuring relevant legislation, regulations, policies, procedures, and program guidelines are properly followed, and
- 3) that proper internal controls are developed to prevent the occurrence of irregularities. To ensure that we have continued oversight and accountability built into our programming business cases were submitted for a permanent quality improvement position.

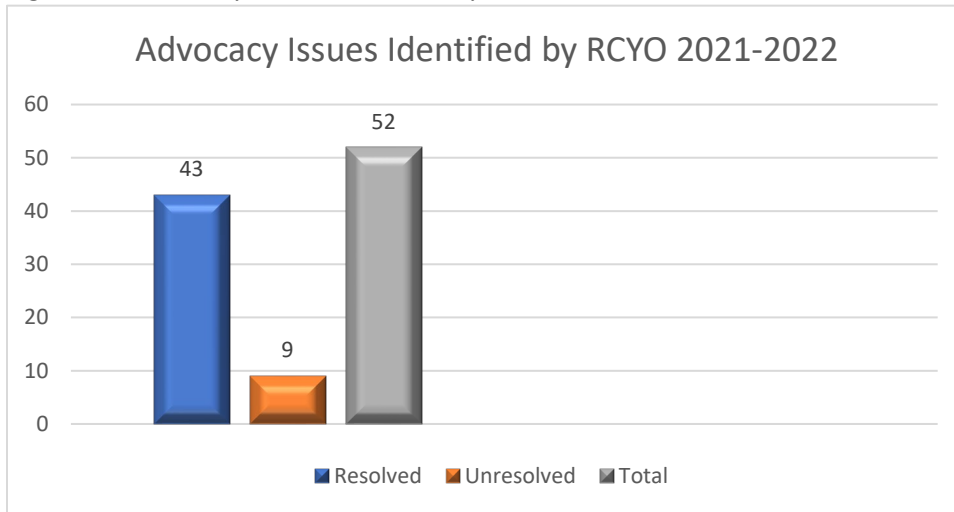
The highest volume of requests that we receive is from the Representative for Children and Youth's Office (RCYO). The RCYO is an independent office for children and youth whose mandate is to advocate, protect, and promote the rights and interests of children and youth. With this comes the ability, under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* (RCYA), to direct requests for written information. Family Wellness received a total of 52 requests from the Representative for the year 2021-2022. Of these requests, 43 were resolved and 9 were unresolved due to lack of staff in community, non-response, or the exhaustion of all avenues. See Figure 19

The office of the RCYO acts an additional level of accountability and oversight. Given the level of vacancies and staffing levels, requests are sometime challenging. Timely responses and attention are required where issues pose a risk to the wellbeing of children or youth and families. Where matters are identified as systemic in nature, joint advocacy may present the best response. Table 3 below provides an overview of the number of requests received and resolved and the reasons for the lack of resolution.

Table 3: Advocacy Issues Identified by the RCYO-2021-2022

Advocacy Issues Identified by the RCYO 2021-2022	Total
Period April 1- June 30 2021	10
Number Resolved	5
Number Unresolved	5
Reasons for Lack of Resolution:	
Unable to contact Family Wellness staff	
Resolved without GN Services	
Period July 1- September 30 2021	14
Number Resolved	13
Number Unresolved	1
Reasons for Lack of Resolution	
No resolution all avenues exhausted	
Period October 1- December 31 2021	13
Number Resolved	11
Number Unresolved	2
Reasons for Lack of Resolution	
All Advocacy Avenues Exhausted	
Resolved without Support-Children First Initiative	
Period January 1- March 31 2021	15
Number Resolved	14
Number Unresolved	1
Reasons for Lack of Resolution	
Unable to contact Family Wellness staff	

Figure 19: Advocacy Issues Identified by the RCYO-Resolve/Unresolved



CARING FOR OUR CAREGIVERS

Our commitment to support and develop the skill level of our team is central to our ability to provide quality services to children and families. Training provides the required tools for team excellence.

Staff received regular training through online “Lunch and Learn” sessions throughout 2021-2022. Topics included mental health and wellness, trauma and attachment, child behavior and development, supporting foster parents, Child Abuse Network and Response Agreement (CANRA), Office of the Public Guardian, Inclusion and Diversity. Upcoming sessions include an overview of the Family Wellness Planning Committee, the Accountability Framework, and a presentation by the Office of the Representative of Children and Youth.

Due to COVID-19 public health measures in the beginning of 2020, in-person training was put on hold for the safety of staff, foster parents, and all Nunavummiut. Training resumed and was held for Family Resource Workers in September and November 2021 in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, Core Statutory Training was offered in September 2021 and November 2021 in Iqaluit, Management Training was provided for Family Services staff in October 2021 in Rankin Inlet and Interviewing Children and Youth Training was held in December 2021 in Iqaluit facilitated by the Forensic Practice.

Foster parent training sessions including webinars provided information on various topics related to fostering and how to support Nunavummiut foster children in care. Participants were able to engage in discussions with other foster parents across the territory. When offices were able safely re-open foster parents were welcomed to community offices to access computers and to log into the webinars. This allowed connection with other foster parents and staff across the territory.

Family Wellness was also approved for 3 multi-year funding grants, through the Government of Nunavut Training Fund, to provide ongoing Management Training, Family Resource Worker Training, and Foster

Care Coordinator Training. An online platform with NVision is also being developed that includes over 40 online modules that staff can complete at their own pace.

Further, in November 2021, the first on-line course on resiliency was launched for staff. Additional courses were available for staff throughout 2022. Currently, privacy training, courses on Family violence, trauma, and attachment are all available on the NVision learning system.

Core training is being planned for every 3 months for CSSW's, supervisors and other Family Wellness Staff. This training is a requirement for staff to get their letters of authorization and statutory appointments. Management training module 2 on Performance Management was made available to Family Services supervisors, managers, and directors at the latter part of 2022.

Upcoming specialized training for child protection staff facilitated through The Forensic Practice, Stepwise 360: Interviewing Children and Youth will be available in Nunavut in October 2022 and February 2023. Registration for these sessions is ongoing. These courses are also a requirement for statutory appointments.

Family Resources training continues in partnership with the Nunavut Arctic College. From April 4 to 14, 2022, family resource workers participated in the "Written Communications" course which is one of the courses required in the Family Resource Worker Certificate Program.

The Client Information System (CIS) training continues to be provided online by the Training Specialist using Microsoft Teams. Small and large group training sessions are available and set up as needed.

To round up training and resource supports for the team, a Critical Incident Debriefing and Response Specialist position has been approved and will be staffed in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This puts the Family Wellness team in an excellent position to support staff retention in the oncoming years.

CONCLUSION

This 2021-2022 Annual Report presents the statistics with respect to the operationalization of child welfare within the territory and provides an overview of the services and initiatives under the Family Wellness Division.

The year 2021/22 required continued ***Qanuqtuurniq*** (innovation and resourcefulness) on our part and taught us to operate effectively with limited resources and stringent controls. Nevertheless, we worked to support families, children and youth and the Family Wellness team made deliberate efforts to ensure that children and youth maintained regular communication with their families. We continued to train our foster parents and our team members and found solutions to keep connected, when the world, and even Nunavut as a territory, seemed to become further isolated.

Respecting ***Pijitsirniq*** (serving and providing for family and/or community), we provided support to children while they remained at home with family, and in community. We improved oversight outside of the territory by resuming site visits with the children and youth and adults outside the territory. We reinforced youth support programs through a pilot initiative and hired two Youth Outreach Coordinators to ensure that structured activities were available for youth across the territory.

Family Wellness work is aligned with *Katujjiluta*, our Sixth Assembly Mandate 2022. We believe that “manifesting the courageous dream” can only be achieved by working together for a common cause because it is in our hands to create a better world for all who live in it.

The upcoming year marks the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of Family Services. At this time, we must look back to see where we have come from even as we prepare to move forward and work with even more resolve to create caring communities where all Nunavummiut thrive.

Taima!

Note on Data Collection

The data in this report came from Occupancy Reports, information provided by frontline staff and the internal tracking system. All efforts are made to provide accurate information.