

Government of Nunavut Department of Family Services

2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

Director of Child and Family Services | Family Wellness Division



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Director's Message

It is with a sense of excitement and cautious optimism that I present this year's Director's Report from the Family Wellness Division of the Department of Family Services. This report highlights the progress we have made through the dedicated efforts of our team while also acknowledging the journey that still lies ahead. At the heart of our advancements is the Family Wellness Strategic Plan, which steers our initiatives across several crucial areas. We have worked diligently to refine our internal processes and elevate our standards to better serve Nunavummiut. Significant attention has been placed on our Out-of-Territory Specialized Program, along with our training and development support. It has been a challenging journey, but our teams have remained motivated.

Progress in critical areas like case management has not improved as rapidly as desired, due to challenges with transitioning to a new client information management system, staff shortages, and the need for additional training. However, we anticipated this would be one of our more significant areas of improvement. We are keenly aware of the challenges faced by our frontline teams and are exploring innovative approaches to support them so that they can apply their training more effectively. Our goal is to improve case management quality, which includes more consistency and thorough documentation, investigation, and assessments while providing targeted training to streamline workflows and reduce inefficiencies which will continue to strengthen outcomes for families. We are dedicated to finding the solutions that make a meaningful difference in this critical area.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our staff, whose unwavering dedication to supporting children and families in this territory often goes unrecognized and is often criticized. Their relentless commitment is the driving force behind our progress. This report not only reflects their hard work and achievements but also emphasizes the ongoing journey we must continue to fully realize our vision for family wellness, which is to serve Nunavummiut at the highest standard. Your continued support and collaboration are invaluable as we work towards a future where every child and their family receive the care and support, they deserve. Thank you for standing with us during this challenging transformation.

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

Tavvauvutit,

Colby O'Donnell
Statutory Director of Child and Family Services

Executive Summary

Mission: Enhance the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut through integrated and innovative services.

Vision: “A Caring Community where all Nunavummiut thrive”

Key accomplishments include enhanced staff training and development, the creation of new standards for out-of-territory specialized services, and stronger relationships with provincial and territorial partners. We have introduced consistent tracking systems for children and youth receiving out-of-territory services, completed licensing and regulatory reviews of service providers, and introduced new resources to support staff in psychological safety and well-being.

Although the Statutory Director of Child and Family Services position has long existed, it previously lacked a structured framework. We have made significant progress in supporting our staff and promoting a more unified, collaborative approach.

We have also launched our Family Wellness Resource Program, marking a significant step in prevention efforts. We recognize the importance of Inuit self-determination and a holistic view of wellness within the territory.

In May 2023, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) released a third performance report on Nunavut’s Child and Family Services, highlighting significant failures in protecting Nunavut’s children. The report urgently called for changes in how the Family Wellness Division delivers its child protection services and carries out its responsibilities under the Child and Family Services Act.

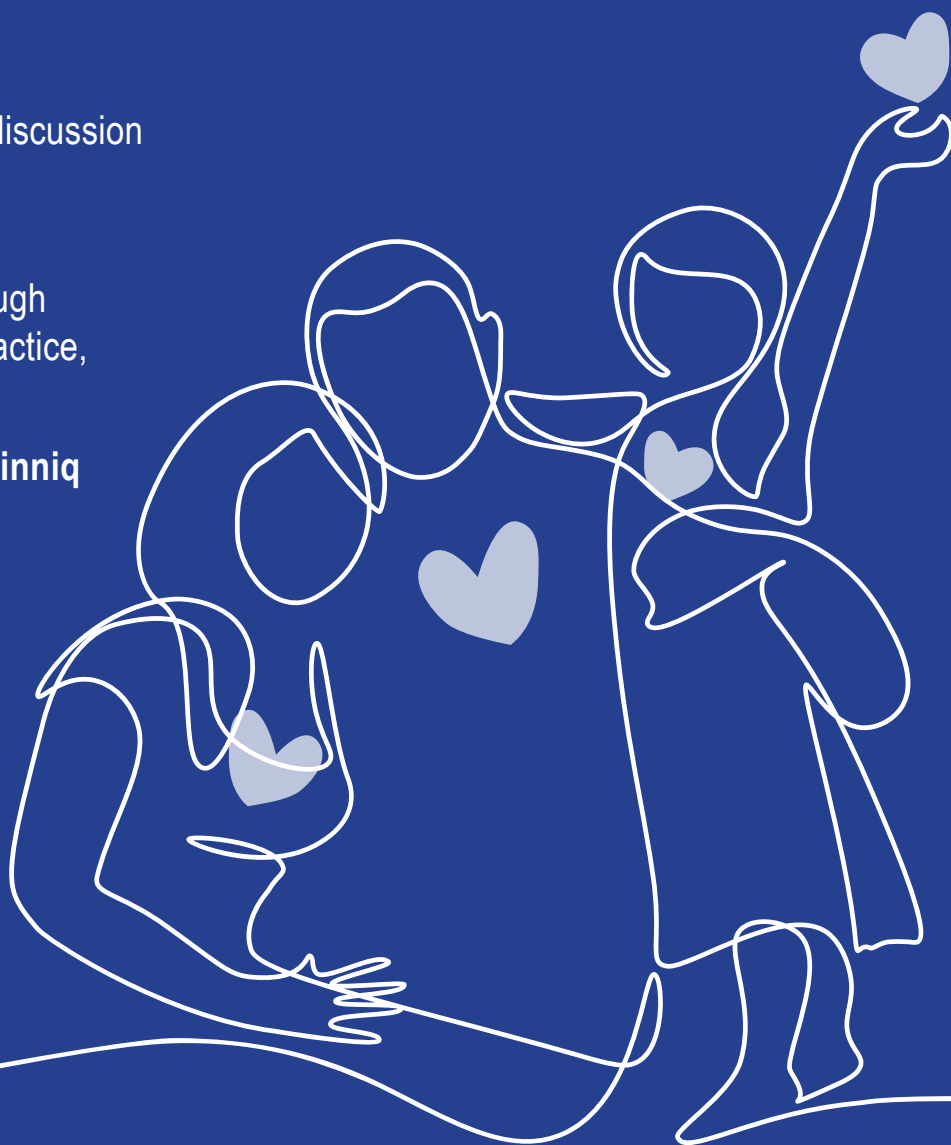
Implementing a change management strategy within a historically fragmented system involves considerable challenges and time.

Children and youth deserve to be heard and involved in decision-making processes. We prioritize ensuring they have a voice in decisions that affect them, their families, and their communities.

We hope this report provides valuable insight into the challenging and unique work of our Family Wellness team in 2023-2024 and highlights the importance of preventive measures in reducing strains on both the system and Nunavut’s families.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

- 1. Inuuqatigiitsiarniq**
(respect and relationship-building)
- 2. Tunnganarniq**
(fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive)
- 3. Pijitsirniq**
(service to the families and communities of Nunavut)
- 4. Aajiqatigiinni**
(decision-making through discussion and consensus)
- 5. Pilimmaksarniq**
(development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort)
- 6. Piliriqatigiinni/ikajuqtigiinni**
(working collectively)
- 7. Qanuqtuurniq**
(innovation and resourcefulness)
- 8. Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq**
(respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment)



Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) Principles and Child Welfare Practices

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) Principles are a collection of knowledge gathered by Inuit about their environment and their relationships with elements, animals, people, and family. Today, this body of knowledge helps Nunavummiut address social problems and issues in Nunavut in a respectful and culturally sensitive way. It achieves this by incorporating traditional knowledge into everyday practices.

Having IQ Principles as a foundation in child welfare practices is key to providing culturally responsive and effective services for children, youth, and families in Nunavut. These principles guide the Family Wellness Division's approach to service delivery, emphasizing holistic well-being, community collaboration, and respect for cultural identity. We prioritize the involvement of extended family and community networks in our decision-making processes, recognizing their invaluable role in supporting children and youth in need.

Child welfare practices founded on IQ Principles focus on a strength-based approach. This approach builds on the inherent strengths and resources of individuals and families. Through culturally relevant interventions and support, we aim to empower children, youth, and families to overcome challenges and thrive within their culture. By embracing IQ Principles, we not only honour Inuit heritage and traditions but also foster greater trust, engagement, and positive outcomes for those we serve as we navigate our path forward with Nunavut families. Each IQ Principle is carefully integrated across all areas of our work to reflect Inuit values.

In our Family Safety Program, application of traditional Inuit knowledge and practices to ensure that interventions are culturally appropriate. For example, when addressing family safety concerns, we seek to use traditional methods of conflict resolution and community support. In our Social Advocacy Initiatives, respect for the environment is a guiding principle. We prioritize projects that promote environmental sustainability and respect for the land, such as funding initiatives that support community-driven projects focused on preserving traditional hunting practices and environmental stewardship.

Our Family Resource Worker Program emphasizes community and collective well-being by offering programs that foster strong support networks. For instance, community-based parenting workshops are designed to reinforce the importance of shared responsibility in child-rearing and reflect the value of collective care and support.

Reciprocity and sharing are central to our quality assurance efforts, where we strive to ensure that resources and support services are distributed equitably. We regularly assess and adjust our programs to ensure that all community members have fair access to resources, embodying the Inuit values of mutual aid and shared responsibility. Respect and honesty are integral to our training and development programs for staff. We emphasize cultural competency and ethical practices, equipping our staff to handle cases with integrity and respect for individuals' dignity. This training helps ensure that our interactions with families are conducted with the utmost respect and honesty.

Finally, consensus and collaborative decision-making are fundamental to our policy development and quality assurance practices. We engage with community members, stakeholders, and families to ensure that our programs and services reflect a collective view and align with the needs and values of the Inuit community.

Community Family Wellness Offices

Our dedicated staff at community Family Wellness Offices include Community Social Services Workers (CSSW), Family Resource Workers (FRW), Clerk Interpreters, Receptionists, Case Aides, and Coordinators. They work tirelessly to deliver essential services. In Nunavut, there have been significant systemic challenges in hiring and supporting new social workers. These challenges are compounded by issues related to human resources capacity, staff housing, insufficient office space, affecting the service delivery structures across the territory. However, efforts are being made to strengthen recruitment strategies, improve retention through enhanced support systems, and provide ongoing training to ensure that social workers are better equipped to meet the unique needs of the communities they serve.

The primary challenge lies in the limited Human Resources capacity to effectively recruit, train, and retain social workers. Recruitment processes are often slow and complex, exacerbated by the remote and demanding working conditions in Nunavut. This delay impacts the Family Wellness Offices' ability to meet the increasing demand for services and provide timely support to families.

Another barrier is the shortage of adequate and affordable housing for social workers. Without suitable accommodation, attracting new professionals to the region becomes difficult. This shortage not only complicates recruitment efforts but also affects the stability and morale of existing staff, who may struggle with housing challenges, as do most of our clients. Additionally, the lack of adequate office space in the communities further exacerbates the situation. Overcrowded and inadequately equipped offices hinder staff effectiveness and impact their ability to deliver high-quality services to families.

This year also saw a substantial review of organizational structure and service delivery across the territory, which highlighted additional systemic issues. These reviews revealed that the current organizational framework may not be fully aligned with the needs of the communities it serves. The structure often lacks the flexibility and resources required to adapt to changing demands and growing service needs. The reviews have identified areas for improvement, including the need for better coordination between offices, clearer roles and responsibilities, and enhanced support systems for staff.

Despite diligent efforts and ongoing collaboration with government colleagues to address these challenges, progress has not kept pace with the increasing needs. The gap between available resources and the demand for family wellness services continues to widen, underscoring the urgent need for more comprehensive and accelerated solutions.

In the past year we have been dedicated to urgently addressing any staff vacancies, with a special focus on communities most in need of Community Social Services Workers and Family Resource Workers.

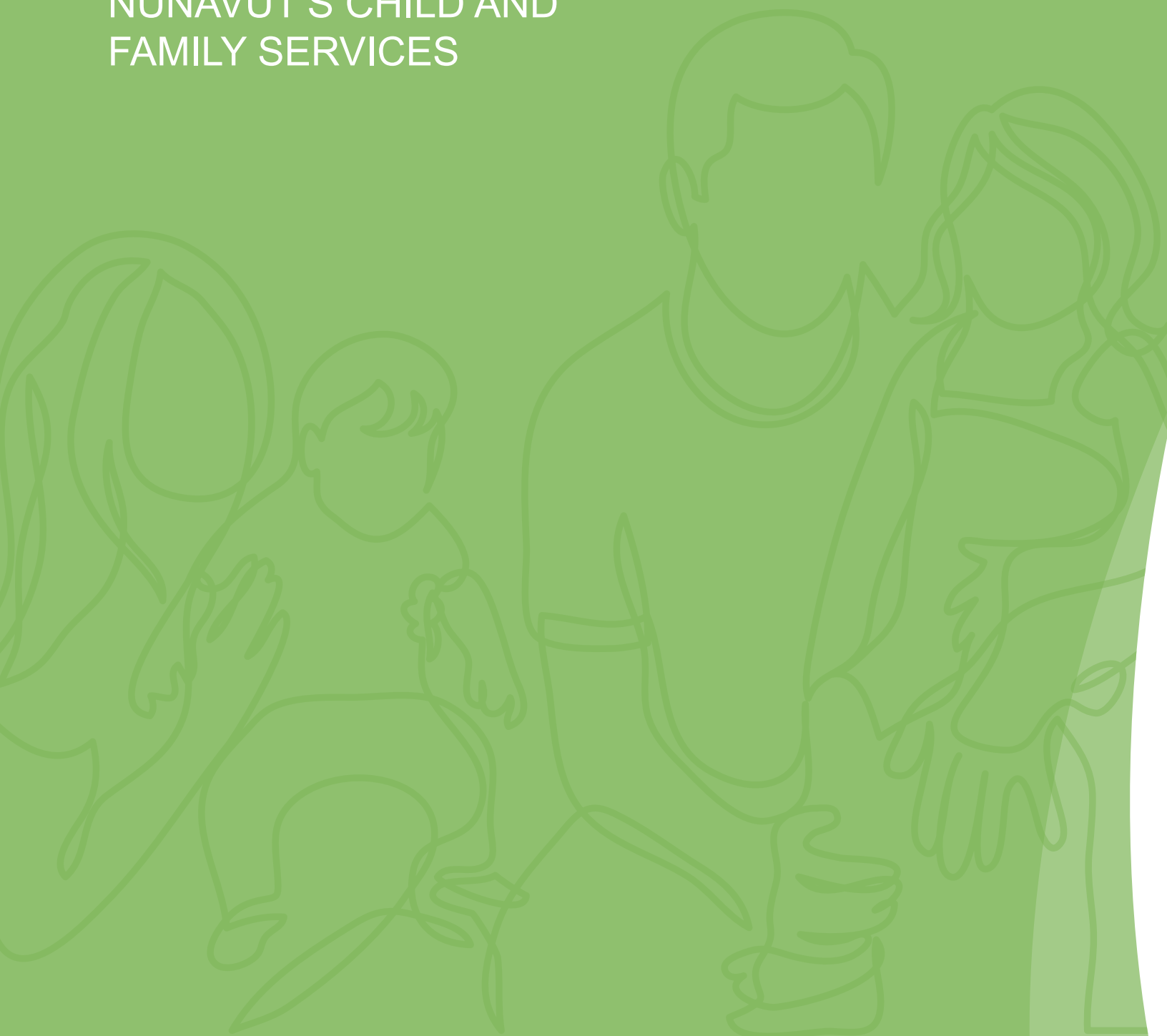
To ensure the highest standards of service, all staff now undergo a thorough onboarding process. This includes mandatory training on our Standards and Procedures Manual and a complete overview of culturally safe programs and services.

In 2023-2024, there were **approximately 78 frontline staff supporting children, youth, and families through Family Wellness** in communities of Nunavut.



SECTION 1

NUNAVUT'S CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES



Child and Family Services Act

The roots of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)* in Nunavut can be traced back to its inception within the broader context of the Northwest Territories (NWT). Originally crafted to safeguard the well-being of children and families within the territory, the Act underwent multiple changes to adapt to the unique cultural values and societal dynamics of Inuit communities following the establishment of Nunavut as a separate territory on April 1st, 1999. Since its creation, the Act has undergone several amendments aimed at aligning its provisions with the specific needs and realities of Inuit society in Nunavut.

Enacted to uphold their rights and ensure their safety, the Act outlines provisions for intervention, support, and services tailored to the unique needs of vulnerable children and youth within Nunavut. It establishes measures for identifying and addressing situations where a child or youth may be at risk of harm or neglect, empowering authorized individuals under the provisions of the CFSA to intervene when necessary to protect the child's welfare. Moreover, the Act emphasizes the importance of providing support to families facing challenges, promoting the provision of resources, counseling, parenting programs and assistance aimed at strengthening familial bonds and promoting family wellness and stability.

Central to its ethos is the recognition of the cultural landscape of Nunavut, with the Act emphasizing the importance of culturally appropriate approaches in child welfare interventions. It acknowledges the significance of Inuit Societal Values and community involvement in the care and upbringing of children, as stated in Section 2 of the Act. Additionally, the Act extends its provisions to encompass services tailored to the unique needs of children and their families as well as youth transitioning to adulthood, outlining measures for supporting them in areas such as education, finances, housing, counselling, and employment which is aimed to build off their current strengths. 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.

Continuum of Supports and Services for Children, Youth and Families

The Department of Family Services delivers child welfare services through Family Wellness Division, which acts under the authority of **the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)**. The Act encompasses a spectrum of services, ranging from preventive measures to protective interventions.

Prevention and Protection Services

Prevention Services

Collaborating closely with youth, families, or expectant parents, Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs) and Family Resource Workers (FRWs) endeavour to identify and implement support systems tailored to their specific needs. The primary aim of prevention services is to bolster the strengths of youth and families, thereby preserving familial bonds.

These services may encompass linkages to external service providers, participation in wellness programs, or engagement in activities conducive to overall family well-being. Throughout the engagement process, CSSWs adopt a holistic approach, striving to identify interventions that bolster the resilience and strengths of individuals and families.

Examples of requests include but not limited to housing advocacy, support letter writing for Inuit Child First Initiative applications and food insecurity.

Protection Services¹

Guided by the fundamental principle of ensuring children's right to a safe and nurturing environment, protection services are pivotal in safeguarding children and youth from abuse, harm, and neglect. In instances where concerns arise regarding potential maltreatment, individuals are required to report to a Community Social Services Worker (CSSW) or their local Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Upon receipt of such reports, CSSWs assess the situation to determine if further actions are warranted to ensure the safety of the children and youth involved. Subsequent interactions may involve discussions with relevant parties, including children, youth, parents, and other stakeholders, to gain insights into the family's circumstances. Families may then be offered preventive supports or may necessitate protective measures to mitigate risks and enhance their well-being.

¹ See Section 2: Protection of Children and Youth for additional information



Prevention Services

Voluntary Services Agreements (VSA):

Agreement with parents and children from 0 to the age of 15 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 18 who cannot remain safely in their parents' home and are making efforts to live independently.

Extended Support Agreements (ESA):

Agreement that allows the Department to support young adults between the ages of 19 and 26.



Protection Services

Plan of Care (POC) Agreements:

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. Plan of Care Agreements are an alternative to court and are less intrusive than a court process.

Child Protection 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, 2023 there were 226 children and youth under Court Orders. Starting on page 14 is information about the number of children and youth receiving Services through Court Orders, including the number of children and youth under apprehension or adjournment statuses.

Supervision Orders (SO):

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 Orders (TCO):

Court order which directs that the child be placed in the custody of the Director for a specified period.

Permanent Custody Orders (PCO):

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.





Strengthening Prevention Services: A Closer Look at Voluntary Services Agreements (VSA)

Specifically focusing on the Voluntary Services Agreement as outlined in Sections 5 and 6 of the CFSA, Section 5 establishes the framework for offering services to families on a voluntary basis. This provision is intended for situations where families or guardians seek support without requiring formal intervention. The agreement is made with the full consent of the family or guardian, who can choose to withdraw from the agreement at any time. The services provided may include counseling, parenting support, or other resources aimed at enhancing family dynamics and child welfare.

Section 6 of the CFSA details the procedures and requirements associated with the Voluntary Services Agreement. It specifies how the agreement should be documented, the services to be provided, and the goals and expectations involved. This section also includes guidelines for monitoring and reviewing the progress of the agreement to ensure that it meets the family's needs and achieves the intended outcomes. Additionally, it addresses the conditions under which the agreement may be terminated by either the family or child welfare authorities and outlines the steps to follow if the agreement is concluded.

For example, we support several families through our Voluntary Service Agreement (VSA) to access complex medical services not available in their community. Some children are dealing with serious respiratory issues, kidney transplants, or heart conditions, all of which require ongoing testing and proximity to a children's hospital with access to specialists. In 2023-2024, roughly 30 percent of the children placed out-of-territory are there due to the unavailability of medical services in their community. Other examples include limitations in homecare services and the need for regular nursing support in the community to manage the high medical needs of children.

In summary, the Voluntary Services Agreement is a preventative tool that allows families to receive support in a less formal manner, aiming to address the needs of children and their families before more serious interventions become necessary.



Counseling Services:

Professional guidance to help families address emotional and psychological challenges.



Housing Services:

Help with finding or improving housing conditions.



In-Home Support:

Assistance within the home to support daily living and manage specific needs.



Substance Treatment and Rehabilitation:

Programs to address and overcome issues with substance abuse.



Respite Care: Temporary relief for caregivers to alleviate stress and prevent burnout.



Mediation of Disputes:

Services to resolve conflicts within the family constructively.



Parenting Programs:

Educational programs to enhance parenting skills and family dynamics.



Health Services:

Assistance with dealing with the illness of a child or family member.

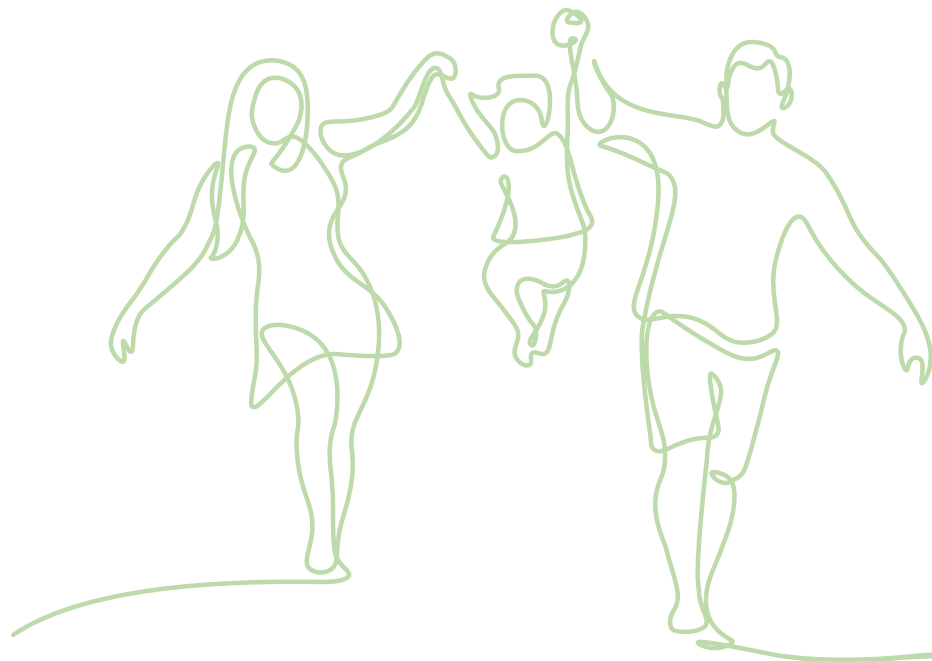


Financial Assistance:

Support services aimed at improving the family's financial situation.



Any other services agreed to by the Director of Child and Family Services, and the person who has lawful custody of the child.



Children and Youth Receiving Support Services by Family Services in 2023-24

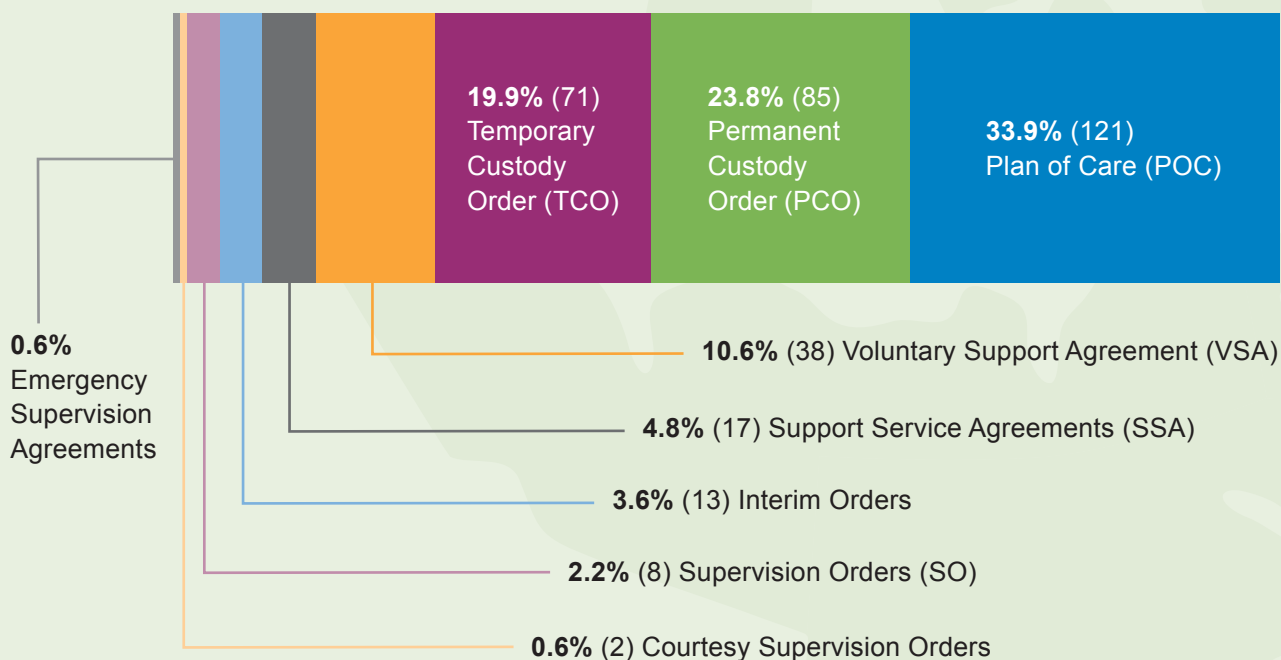
As of March 31, 2024 a total of **445 Nunavummiut children and youth are receiving services.**

In-territory Services

Of the 445, **357 are receiving services in the territory of Nunavut:**

- 45.4% (162 children and youth) - South Qikiqtaaluk Region
- 31.6% (113 children and youth) - Kivalliq Region
- 13.2% (47 children and youth) - Kitikmeot Region
- 9.8% (35 children and youth) - North Qikiqtaaluk Region

The distribution by status types is as follows:



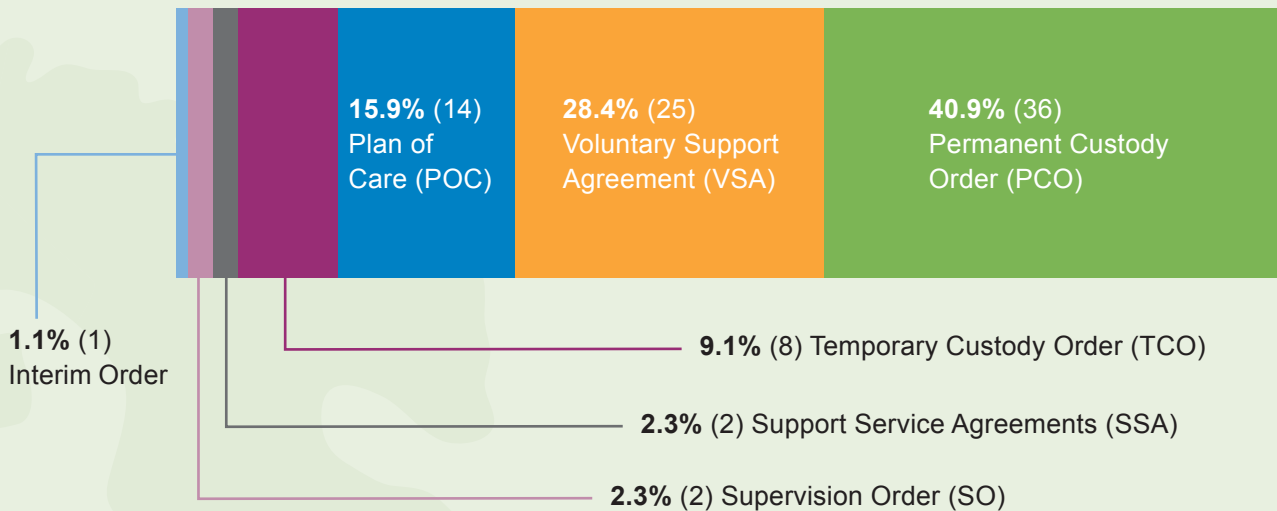
Out-of-territory Specialized Services²

In addition to 357 children and youth receiving in-territory services, **88 are receiving services in out-of-territory specialized placements:**

- 40.9% (36) have a Permanent Custody Order (PCO)
- 15.9% (14) have a Plan of Care (POC)
- 9.1% (8) are under a Temporary Custody Order (TCO)
- 2.3% (2) have a Supervision Order (SO)
- 1.1% (1) are subject to an Interim Order
- 2.3% (2) have a Support Service Agreement (SSA)
- 28.4% (25) receive services through a Voluntary Support Agreement (VSA)

² See Section 3: Family Wellness Resources, subsection Out of Territory Specialized Placements, for additional data and analysis.

The distribution by status types is as follows:



The overview underscores a diverse landscape of services for Nunavut's children and youth, both within the territory and beyond its jurisdictional borders. South Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq are key regions with substantial numbers of children receiving in-territory and out-of-territory services. The varied status types and placement arrangements illustrate the tailored approach to addressing the diverse needs of these children. The extensive coverage of these services highlights the importance of Family Wellness programs. However, it also brings to light the pressing issue of chronic understaffing within our workforce, which significantly impacts the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

Child Welfare Case Management

Managing a child welfare case in a remote community is an immense responsibility, especially for a Community Social Services Worker (CSSW) who may be the only professional available in the area. The role extends far beyond standard duties, demanding both a high level of dedication and a broad range of responsibilities, often with little support.

From the moment a case begins in the **Intake phase**, the CSSW is deeply involved. They gather and assess initial information from referrals or observations, carefully documenting every detail. This foundational work helps them understand the family's unique situation, including the often-complex effects of intergenerational trauma.

During the **Assessment phase**, the CSSW's role intensifies. They conduct home visits and interviews, keenly observing how trauma impacts the family. Each visit requires sensitivity and thorough documentation.

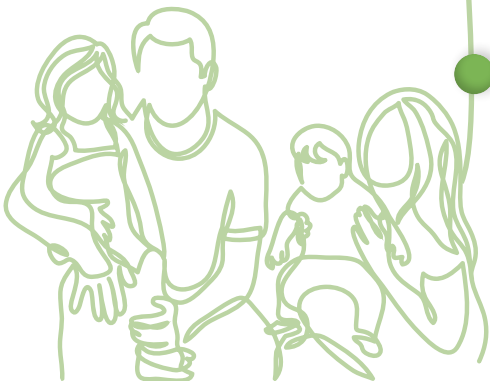
In the **Case Planning phase**, the CSSW develops a personalized plan in collaboration with each family, addressing their specific needs and their goals. This involves setting goals and objectives together, and arranging services like community programming or wellness supports. With a full range of responsibilities, including driving children to daycare or picking them up from school, taking children to appointments, the work never truly stops.

They also face the challenge of providing overnight care for children due to a shortage of placements in many communities. Balancing this need with their professional responsibilities and ensuring that each child's needs are met with compassion and efficiency is a difficult task.

As they move into the **Implementation and Monitoring phase**, their efforts to support the family are continuous. They monitor progress through regular check-ins, adjusting the case plan as needed. Their schedule is filled with not just office work but also the day-to-day tasks of community life, including emergency responses and transporting children. The documentation of these efforts is crucial for managing the complexities of each case.

In the **Review phase**, the CSSW assesses the effectiveness of their interventions and holds meetings with families to discuss progress. This phase requires careful reflection on the slow, ongoing process of healing and adjustment, all while managing a constant flow of other case-related duties.

Finally, in the **Case Closure phase**, they wrap up the case when the goals have been achieved and the child's safety is assured. This involves evaluating whether the improvements can be sustained independently, developing a closure plan, and completing detailed final reports. Throughout, the demands on their time and energy are persistent.



For many CSSWs, the workday often extends beyond regular hours. As the sole worker in their community, they manage on-call services, respond to urgent reports, coordinate transportation, and at times, provide overnight care for children in offices. This demanding and relentless role calls for patience and strong critical thinking skills. The information above offers only a brief glimpse into the wide range of responsibilities a CSSW handles for a single case.

In short, child welfare case management, especially in remote communities, is a demanding and complex responsibility that requires a diverse set of skills, and a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by families. The multifaceted role of a CSSW necessitates a high level of expertise, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability.

Given the critical nature of this work, continuous training and development are essential. **Training ensures that CSSWs are equipped with the latest knowledge, skills, and tools to manage cases effectively, especially in the face of intergenerational trauma and other pervasive challenges.** Therefore, investing in training is not just beneficial but crucial for enhancing the quality-of-service delivery and ensuring that CSSWs can provide the best possible support to families in need.

Key Progress on Training and Development

Training is essential for lifelong learning and helps enhance skills and knowledge of our staff. It is important for our staff to feel confident and equipped to use our systems and administer programs effectively. This training must be culturally appropriate and sensitive, which is vital for ensuring a healthy workplace while working with vulnerable populations.

The Training team's priority is to provide continuous access to learning opportunities. During the 2023-2024 training year, the team achieved some noteworthy successes. For example, new initiatives have been introduced to encourage a culture of learning, supported by improved access to training. This not only leads to staff retention but also improves the quality of work, boosts confidence, and improves decision-making skills.

We recognize the need for improved access to training at every level, and in November 2023, we addressed this need by holding Core Training workshops in Cambridge Bay. Participants included a Supervisor, Community Social Service Workers, a Foster Care Coordinator, and a Family Resource Worker. This cross-system training led to lively discussions on best practices and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of everyone's roles. This experience drives better service delivery for families in Nunavut.

E-learning

E-Learning is another exciting initiative we continue to build upon. We are adopting a blended approach to training and are currently refreshing and updating an existing course from NWT into an online learning module. Once the review and re-organization of this material are complete, the revised modules will be available for supervised independent learning.

The online modules will be complemented by in-class training and on-the-job training. The blended approach accommodates various learning styles like visual learners who learn by watching, auditory learners who benefit from listening to a facilitator, and kinesthetic learners who learn by doing.

The Family Wellness Division has successfully collaborated with key partners to help us deliver training within Nunavut's communities. While we have developed strong training programs for our employees, we are still looking at ways to ensure that the training is practiced to the standard that is required. We have made positive steps towards a better future for Family Wellness practices in the territory, but we understand that to change a broken system takes multiple years.

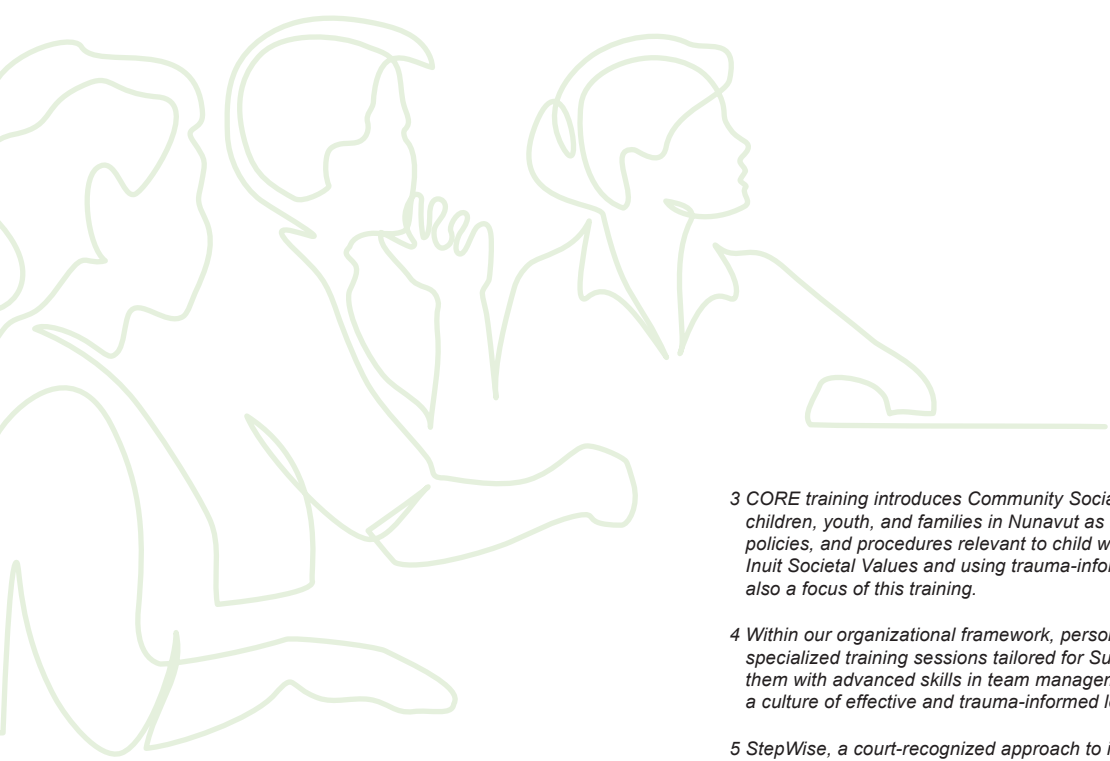
Family Wellness New Data and Electronic Case Management System

In addition, Matrix, our new Family Wellness Integrated Information System (FWIIS), was launched in December 2023. Training in all three regions is ongoing.

We delivered training to 104 participants in the past fiscal year.

- Core Training, 24 participants
- Receptionist/Clerk Interpreter Training, 10 participants
- Supervisor/Manager Training, 15 participants
- StepWise Training, 29 participants
- Mental Health First Aid/ Inuit Workshops and Foster Parent Training, 26 participants

The Family Wellness Division is also a member of PART (Practice and Research Together). PART provides resources for child welfare practitioners across the country, including bi-weekly webinars and evidence-based research. Membership has provided continuous professional development for our staff and has encouraged continual learning and growth.



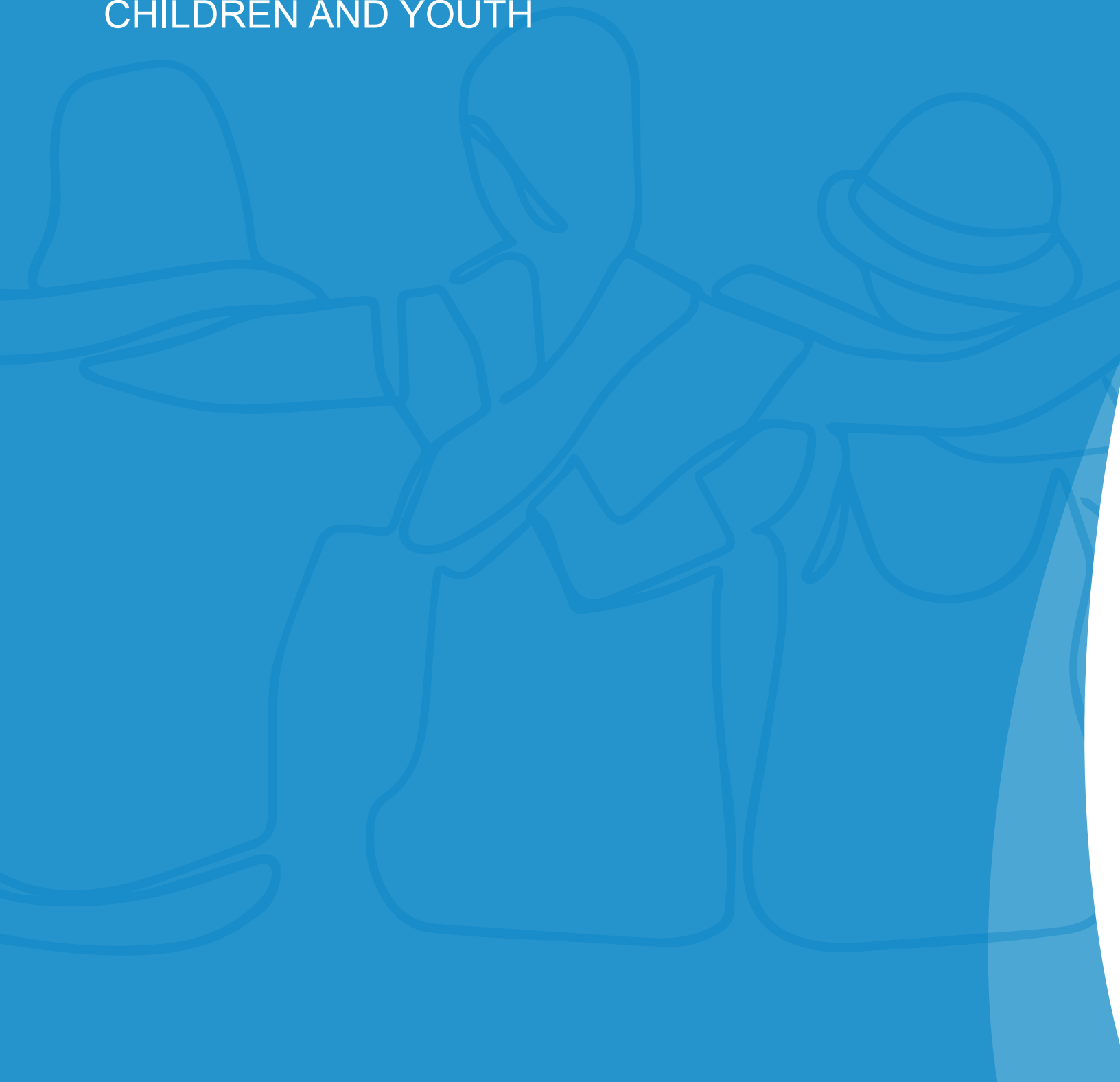
³ CORE training introduces Community Social Services Workers to the role of supporting children, youth, and families in Nunavut as they become familiar with the legislation, policies, and procedures relevant to child welfare and community work. Incorporating Inuit Societal Values and using trauma-informed practices while working with families is also a focus of this training.

⁴ Within our organizational framework, personnel occupying leadership roles receive specialized training sessions tailored for Supervisors/Managers. This training equips them with advanced skills in team management and strategic decision-making, fostering a culture of effective and trauma-informed leadership within the Division.

⁵ StepWise, a court-recognized approach to interviewing, is a basic training that provides participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct effective forensic interviews of children and youth.

SECTION 2

PROTECTION OF
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Report and Investigating Allegations of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement (CANRA), revised in late 2022 through the efforts of Surusinut Ikajuqtigiit, continues to be under review. This working group, established in 2023, laid crucial groundwork by integrating stakeholder feedback and territorial partnerships to enhance the processes for reporting and preventing child abuse and neglect. The review process remains active, ensuring that the agreement, once finalized, will further improve coordination and responsiveness in safeguarding Nunavummiut children and youth. The renewal of CANRA was approved by Cabinet in February 2024. Work is ongoing to advance this important Agreement.

As outlined in CANRA and stated in Section 8 of the CFSA:

- The duty to report a child in need of protection and incidents of child abuse and neglect is a collective responsibility. Individuals are urged to contact their local Family Wellness Office and speak with a Community Social Services Worker (CSSW) if they are concerned about a child's safety and well-being.
- Additionally, children experiencing abuse are encouraged to reach out to a CSSW or a trusted adult for assistance. The CFSA provides regulatory oversight of children and family services. Maltreatment, which includes abuse and neglect, is a significant concern in Nunavut and is often identified through reports from service providers or community members.

As outlined in the CFSA, harm to a child or youth is categorized into seven main areas:

1. Child physical harm
2. Child sexual harm
3. Child emotional harm
4. Inadequate care & supervision
5. Failure to obtain health services
6. Caregiver with a problem
7. Child exposure to family violence

Upon receiving an initial report of child abuse or neglect, a Community Social Services Worker (CSSW) gathers referral information, consults with their supervisor or manager, and utilizes the Structured Decision Making® (SDM®) Screening and Response Priority Assessment tool to determine the appropriate course of action, whether it involves an investigation, non-investigatory intervention, or no further involvement. This tool has been developed to follow Inuit Societal Values and prioritizes children's safety. In cases requiring investigation to assess the immediate safety of the child or youth, the CSSW conducts a thorough inquiry and employs the SDM® Risk Assessment tool to evaluate potential risks in consultation with the family. This process helps determine the necessary support, if any, required to ensure the child or youth's safety and well-being.

Apprehension and Return of Child Apprehended

Here's an overview of how the Apprehension and Return of Child Apprehended CFSA legislation works, as well as its core principles:

Apprehension of a Child

1. Criteria for Apprehension:

- Under the CFSA, a child may be apprehended if there are reasonable grounds to believe that their safety and well-being are at risk. This risk might be due to various factors including abuse, neglect, or other dangerous circumstances.
- Specific situations that justify apprehension are detailed in Section 7(3)(a) to (r) of the CFSA. These might include situations where a child is being physically or emotionally harmed, is neglected, or is exposed to harmful environments.

2. Decision-Making Authorities:

- The decision to apprehend a child is typically made by child protection workers or law enforcement officers. These professionals assess the situation based on the guidelines established in the CFSA and other relevant regulations.

Return of the Child

1. Reunification Efforts:

- The CFSA prioritizes the child's return to their family or primary caregivers, provided it is in the child's best interest and safe to do so. This is emphasized in Section 12 of the CFSA.
- The process includes conducting thorough assessments, providing necessary support services, and developing intervention plans to address issues that led to the apprehension.

2. Support Services and Community Involvement:

- Efforts to support family reunification involve providing various support services, which may include counseling, parenting programs, or other resources to address the underlying issues.
- The CFSA also emphasizes collaboration with community partners to ensure a comprehensive approach to supporting the child and family.





Cultural and Familial Considerations

1. Inuit Societal Values:

- The CFSA underscores the importance of Inuit Societal Values into the child protection process. This means that interventions and decisions are made with respect to cultural practices and traditions, recognizing their role in the child's identity and well-being.

2. Family Preservation:

- There is a strong focus on maintaining familial connections and stability. The CFSA supports interventions that preserve family ties and ensure culturally appropriate practices are integrated into the protection and support plans for the child.

In summary, the CFSA provides a framework for safeguarding children in Nunavut while also promoting family preservation and cultural sensitivity. The legislation ensures that child protection decisions are made with careful consideration of the child's safety, family dynamics, and cultural context, aiming for the best outcomes for children and their families.

Plan of Care Committee and Agreement

The Plan of Care Committee and Agreement in Nunavut are provided within **the Child and Family Services Act**. This legislation provides the legal framework for the establishment and operation of these crucial mechanisms aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of children and youth in the territory.

Under Section 14 of the Act, specific procedures are outlined for the establishment of a Plan of Care Committee. This includes the requirement for the Child Protection Worker to provide notice to individuals with lawful custody of the child, as well as the child themselves if they are aged 12 or older. Additionally, information about the procedures for developing a Plan of Care Agreement and seeking court intervention must be provided.

Section 15 of the Act defines the composition of the Plan of Care Committee, which includes representatives from various sectors such as **Child and Family Services Committee members and Child Protection Workers**. The committee's responsibilities, **outlined in Section 19**, include developing comprehensive care plans and entering into a plan of care agreement that addresses the child's needs in areas such as living arrangements, education, social and recreational activities, and other relevant support services.

Furthermore, the Act provides provisions **for the review and extension of Plan of Care Agreements**, as well as procedures for termination in cases where the child's safety is at risk, as stipulated in **Sections 20, 21, and 22**. These sections ensure that the Plan of Care Committee operates within a clear legal framework, with mechanisms in place to safeguard the rights and well-being of children and youth in Nunavut.

SECTION 3

ADOPTION



Overview of the Nunavut Adoption Act and the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act

The Nunavut Adoption Act, established in 1998, details the legal procedures and requirements for adopting a child or youth within the territory. This law ensures that the adoption process is centered on the child's best interests while safeguarding the rights of everyone involved. It outlines who is eligible to adopt, the process for obtaining consent, the role of adoption agencies, and the legal consequences of adoption. The Act aims to create stable, loving families for children needing adoption, with a focus on transparency, fairness, and accountability.

Alongside the Nunavut Adoption Act, the territory also upholds the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act (ACARA), introduced in 1995. This legislation recognizes and respects the cultural traditions and practices of Indigenous communities in Nunavut regarding adoption. Aboriginal custom adoption, which is based on cultural values and kinship connections, is formally acknowledged under this Act. It allows Indigenous families to formalize adoptions according to their traditional customs, ensuring children grow up within their cultural communities. The Act provides a legal framework for validating these custom adoptions, thus preserving and honouring Indigenous cultural heritage and family structures.

Together, the Nunavut Adoption Act and the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act offer a thorough legal framework for adoption in Nunavut. They balance child welfare and protection with respect for cultural diversity and Indigenous rights, reflecting the territory's dedication to supporting adoption practices that are safe, loving, and culturally appropriate for children, birth families, and adoptive families.

Adoption Program & Statistical Data on Adoption Status

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, we received four additional Nunavut family adoption applications. The total number of interested applicants was 11. Of the 11, three applications were approved for private adoption placement and two departmental adoption applications were finalized.

Registered Inuit Custom Adoptions

There is a fourth type of adoption named Custom Adoption, which is a centuries-old cultural practice of adopting through the process of consent with the birth parents without fulfilling the requirements of territorial legislation. Custom Adoptions are not managed by the Adoption Program, but by appointed Custom Adoption Commissioners who verify and assist families with registering their adoptions. Custom Adoptions are processed by appointed Custom Adoption Commissioners under the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act (ACARA).

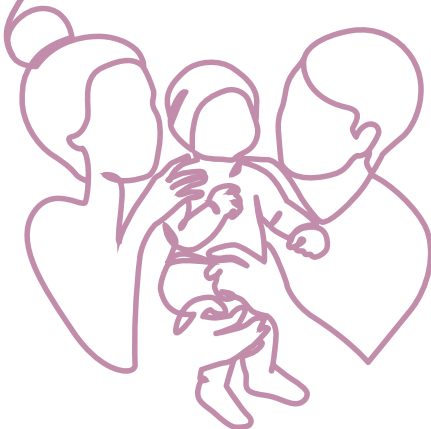
Adoptions in 2023-2024:

148 Custom Adoptions were registered in the Nunavut Court of Justice.

There are currently 21 Custom Adoption Commissioners appointed in Nunavut.

Custom Adoption Commissioner training occurred in June 2023.

9 Custom Adoption Commissioners were in attendance.



THE ADOPTION PROGRAM

oversees three types of adoptions in Nunavut

1

PRIVATE AND STEPPARENT ADOPTIONS are arranged independently between birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s).

15 private and stepparent adoptions administered⁶:

- 2 out of territory
- 3 residing in Qikiqtaaluk Region

13 private adoption orders were received and granted⁷:

- 10 out of territory
- 3 in Qikiqtaaluk Region

2

DEPARTMENTAL ADOPTIONS are processed when a child being adopted is in the permanent care and custody of the Director of Child and Family Services court order.

3 Departmental Adoption Orders were administered and granted (all in Qikiqtaaluk Region).

3

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS involve Canada (Nunavut) and a second country. All Intercountry adoptions are governed by the *Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Act*. Although Intercountry adoptions in Nunavut are less common, the Nunavut Adoption Program receives inquiries and assist families in completing these adoptions. Additionally, the Nunavut Adoption Program and adoption authorities across Canada meet monthly to discuss issues and concerns regarding Intercountry adoptions.

1 application from a Nunavut family to adopt a child from outside of Canada.

In alignment with Inuuqatigiitsiarniq and Piliriqatigiinniq IQ Principles, **the Adoption Program emphasizes respect, relationship building, and support for families involved in the adoption process.** This collaborative approach ensures that decisions are made in the best interests of the child, while preserving Inuit culture and community connections.

Roles of Community Social Services Workers in Adoption & Cultural Preservation

By providing adoption services to Nunavummiut, this gives children the possibility of finding a permanent, safe, and nurturing family environment. To support the work Community Social Service Workers (CSSWs) do for Nunavummiut, the Adoption Program has facilitated presentations about the program during CSSW Core Training as well as providing ongoing support to Family Wellness offices across the territory. CSSWs assist birth parents and prospective adoptive parents to support them through the adoption process. Where possible, CSSWs identify extended family and community members as the first choice for children requiring a home.

We see the importance of families making the effort to preserve Inuit culture, maintain community connections, and observe traditions. Doing so focuses on children's overall well-being and development. The Department of Family Services will be collaborating with NTI to improve the Adoption Program. Also, consultants have been hired to assist in the drafting of a Policy Intention Paper (PIP) for the review and updating of the *Adoption Act* and *ACARA*, which will better allow the Acts to align with the best interest of children and uphold Inuit Societal Values. It is anticipated that this PIP will be submitted for review in the Winter 2025.

6 In the context of adoptions, the difference between an adoption being administered and an adoption order being received and granted relates to the stages in the legal and administrative process. Adoption being administered refers to the overall handling or management of the adoption case. This includes everything from initial applications and preparation of legal documents to finalization. It covers the entire process from the beginning to the end, involving steps taken by the relevant authorities to ensure the adoption meets all legal requirements.


7 Adoption order being received and granted refers to a specific legal step in the adoption process. An adoption order received means that the application for adoption has been formally submitted to the court. Granted means that the court has reviewed the case and approved the adoption, legally transferring parental rights to the adoptive parent(s).

SECTION 4


FAMILY WELLNESS RESOURCES




By strengthening family wellness resources, the Family Wellness Team aims to achieve the following goals:



Enhanced well-being of families, children, and communities in Nunavut.



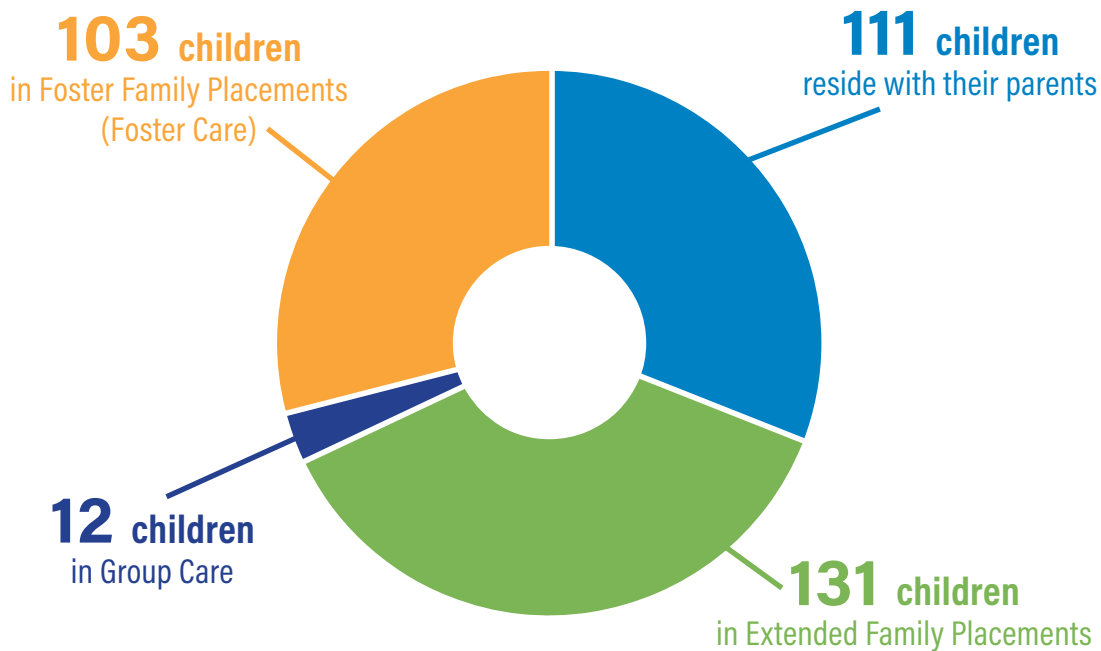
Healthy and well supported team of professionals providing services to Nunavummiut



The best interests, protection, and well-being of children are met.



The best interests of an Indigenous child are met.



In-Territory Placement Resources

Overview of Children and Youth in Placement Resources within the Territory 2023-2024

In Nunavut, placement resources are essential components of the child welfare system, designed to provide safe and supportive environments for children and youth who require out-of-home care. These resources prioritize the principle of “family first,” ensuring that, whenever possible, children remain within their extended families or communities to maintain cultural and familial connections. We have several types of placements in the territory, including Extended Family Placements, Foster Family Placements, Group Care, and other specialized options. Each type plays a distinct role in providing stability and support, tailored to the specific needs of children and youth. These placements are integral to the broader goal of fostering well-being, preserving cultural ties, and addressing the diverse challenges faced by families in the territory.

Foster Care

The Family Wellness Division has identified the enhancement of foster care, kinship care and adoption services as a strategic priority with a focus on providing a nurturing environment for children requiring out-of-home care in Nunavut. The In-Territory Foster Care Program ensures that care is safe and culturally appropriate, especially when out-of-home care is necessary. As of March 31, 2024, 103 children were in foster care within the territory, emphasizing the ongoing need for these services to support vulnerable children and families in Nunavut.

We have intensified our efforts to recruit caregivers in Nunavut, especially among Inuit families. Potential caregivers undergo a thorough assessment to determine their suitability. Then, successful applicants receive extensive initial and ongoing training and receive support every step of the way. We are addressing the financial and practical challenges of foster care by providing sufficient support, including trauma-informed care.

Our priority is centered on maintaining connections to Inuit culture and community, with a focus on local care for children and youth. Extended family members are often the first choice for foster caregivers due to their natural connection to the child and community. While extended family care is the goal, foster care serves as

a valuable alternative when it is not an option. Foster parents undergo a comprehensive application process, including criminal record and vulnerable sector checks, to determine their eligibility.

Once approved, the Family Wellness Team provides ongoing, extensive support and financial aid. This includes bi-weekly financial assistance, clothing allowances, respite and childcare provisions, homemaker services, and virtual training workshops for foster parents.

Additionally, we collaborate with Inuit organizations to refine adoption and custom adoption legislation, ensuring culturally aligned practices that provide long-term stability for children and youth using our services. Our ongoing work to establish a Nunavut Foster Care Association and Kinship Care Network will strengthen community engagement and support for children and caregivers with shared experiences.

Group Care

Group Care Living facilities play a crucial role in providing round-the-clock care for children and youth whose needs exceed what can be managed in traditional family or foster settings. These facilities offer a structured, secure environment designed to support individuals facing complex challenges or requiring specialized attention. In Nunavut, the operation of such facilities is particularly complex due to the region's remoteness and unique logistical challenges. Children in these settings often face significant emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues that require a tailored approach to care. As of March 31, 2024, a total of 12 children were placed in group care, receiving services to address their specific needs in a safe and supportive environment.

In 2023-2024, we had 5 group homes providing support and services to children and youth in 3 communities of Nunavut, including Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Chesterfield Inlet. However, it is important to note that in February 2024, the Department of Family Services closed its medical group home, Naja Isabelle in Chesterfield Inlet.

The team involved in Group Care Living typically includes social workers, psychologists, educators, and caregivers who work together to address each child's specific needs. This multidisciplinary approach is vital in providing comprehensive support, including therapeutic interventions, educational assistance, life skills training, and recreational activities. In Nunavut, the remoteness of the region adds layers of complexity to this process. Facilities must contend with limited access to specialized resources and professionals, as well as the logistical challenges of transporting supplies and personnel across vast, sparsely populated areas.

In addition to addressing the individual needs of the children, Group Care Living facilities in Nunavut must apply culturally sensitive practices, including Inuit Societal Values and IQ Principles. These values ensure that care is respectful of Inuit traditions and practices, which is essential for maintaining the children's cultural identity and fostering a sense of belonging. The application of these values is particularly important in Nunavut, where cultural connection and respect play a significant role in the well-being of the children and youth.

Efforts to support children in these facilities include not only providing direct care but also working towards reintegration with families or communities whenever possible. This involves collaboration with local resources and organizations, which can be challenging given the remote nature of many communities in Nunavut. The facilities must navigate logistical difficulties such as limited transportation options and the need for specialized services that may not be readily available in isolated areas.

Overall, Group Care Living in Nunavut involves a complex interplay of providing individualized care, maintaining cultural sensitivity, and overcoming the challenges posed by remoteness. Despite these difficulties, the goal remains to empower children and youth, helping them overcome obstacles and build resilience. By offering a stable and supportive environment, these facilities strive to equip children with the skills and confidence needed for positive life outcomes, all while managing the unique demands of operating in a remote and culturally rich region.

Out of Territory Specialized Placements

The Out of Territory (OOT) Specialized Services program has demonstrated exceptional improvements toward enhancing the health and well-being of Nunavummiut, particularly children and youth with complex medical, psychological, or social needs.

The OOT placements provide support and services to children, youth, and families whose needs exceed the capacity of local programs and services. We prioritize local resources first, only considering out-of-territory placements when necessary. These specialized services are provided in provinces like Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. Each child or youth undergoes a thorough needs assessment to determine their specific care and service needs. This ensures they are matched with the appropriate services to address their individual needs.

Phase 1: Assessment and Decision

- 1. Family-Centered Wellness Planning**
 - Schedule meeting with client, family, and caregivers.
 - Community Social Services Worker (CSSW) conducts and documents the meeting.
- 2. Consultations and Review of In-Territory Options**
 - CSSW consults with their direct supervisor about local service options.
 - Document efforts to find suitable local services.
- 3. Community Social Services Worker Identifies the Need**
 - Identify the need for out-of-territory placement.
 - Document rationale and process.
- 4. Approval and Notification**
 - Receive and document direct supervisor's decision.
 - Prepare child/youth and family for potential transition.

FLOWCHART: OUT OF TERRITORY SPECIALIZED SERVICES PROCESS

Phase 2: Application and Approval

- 1. Application Preparation**
 - CSSW completes application form and gathers supporting documents.
 - Ensure child/youth identification is ready.
- 2. Direct Supervisor Review**
 - Direct supervisor reviews application.
 - If complete, forward to Territorial Manager for Out of Territory Services; if not, return for corrections.
- 3. Approval Process**
 - Territorial Manager for Out of Territory Services reviews and requests additional info if needed.
 - Forward to Territorial Director of Family Wellness for final approval.
- 4. Contract Negotiations and Signature**
 - Territorial Manager for Out of Territory Services negotiates and finalizes contract with service provider.
 - Ensure all licensing and insurance requirements are met.
- 5. Interprovincial Placement Agreement**
 - Interjurisdictional Placement Specialist completes and sends Interprovincial Request for Services form.
 - Draft and finalize Interprovincial Placement Agreement.
- 6. Assignment of Courtesy worker or Authorized person**
 - Receiving Jurisdiction will provide a courtesy worker as needed
 - Director can also authorize a person, such as a Client Liaison Officer (CLO)

Phase 3: Implementation and Monitoring

- 1. Family-Centered Wellness Planning Meeting Follow-Up**
 - CSSW coordinates follow-up meeting for travel arrangements and overview.
 - Introduce Courtest worker or Authorized person and service provider.
- 2. Travel Arrangements and Documentation**
 - CSSW organizes travel for child/youth and family.
 - Ensure Interprovincial Placement Agreement is signed before travel.
- 3. Service Provision and Tracking**
 - CSSW contacts assigned courtesy supervision worker.
 - Interjurisdictional Placement Specialist monitors and tracks placements monthly.
- 4. Interprovincial Placement Agreement Renewal**
 - Interjurisdictional Placement Specialist advises CSSW and supervisor one month before expiration.
 - Monitor and ensure renewal processes are followed.
- 5. Client Liaison Officer Support**
 - CLO completes Cultural Support Plan.
 - Conduct annual site reviews of specialized service.
- 6. Extensions**
 - CSSW submits extension application one month prior to contract expiration.
 - Follow same approval steps as initial application.

Statistical Data on Children and Youth in OOT Specialized Placements

As of the most recent reporting period, a total of 88 children and youth from Nunavut are receiving services out of territory. This breakdown illustrates the diverse range of support and legal arrangements in place for children receiving services outside their home territory.

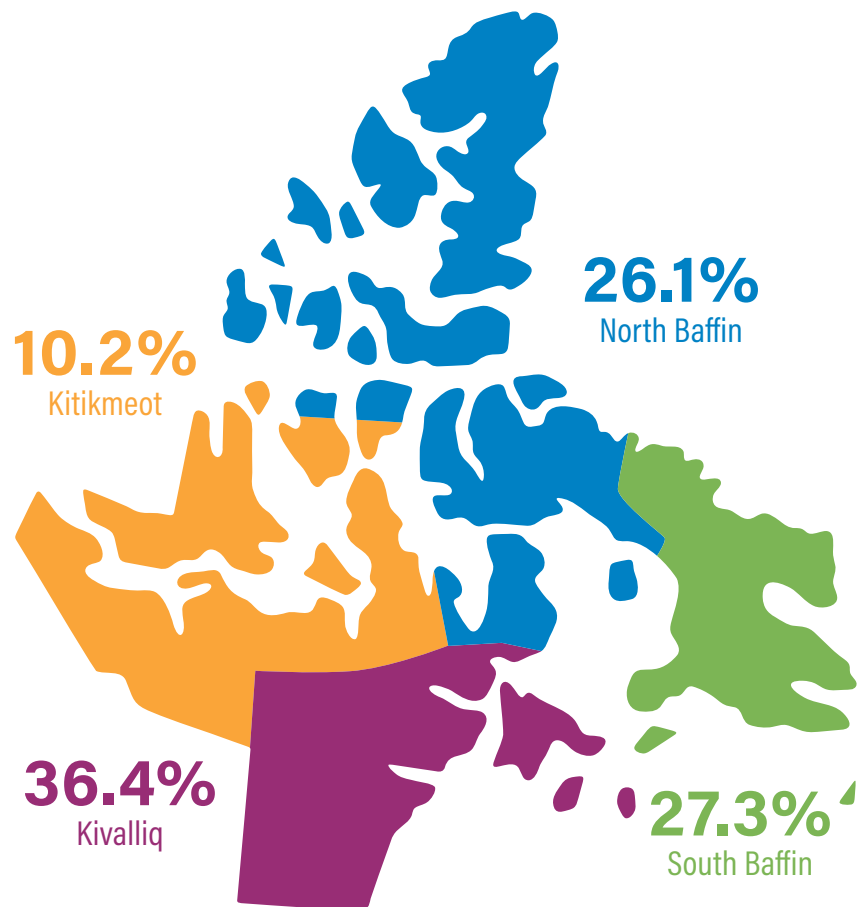
Distribution of Out-of-Territory Services by Region

Kivalliq Region - 36.4%

South Baffin Region - 27.3%

North Baffin Region - 26.1%

Kitikmeot Region - 10.2%



Of the 88 Children and Youth from Nunavut Received Services Out of Territory:

28.4% of children are under a Voluntary Support Agreement (VSA). This means that families are receiving support services voluntarily, without the need for a court order. A significant 40.9% of children are under a Permanent Custody Order (PCO), indicating that the court has determined it is in the child's best interest to remain in the care of child protection authorities indefinitely. Another 9.1% are under a Temporary Custody Order (TCO), which is a short-term measure used to ensure immediate safety while more permanent solutions are sought.

Additionally, 15.9% of children have a Plan of Care (POC), which outlines the necessary services and support to address their needs and facilitate possible family reunification. Only 1.1% are under an Interim Order, a temporary measure while long-term care arrangements are determined. Both Supervision Orders (SO) and Support Service Agreements (SSA) apply to 2.3% of children each, providing oversight and additional support services as needed.

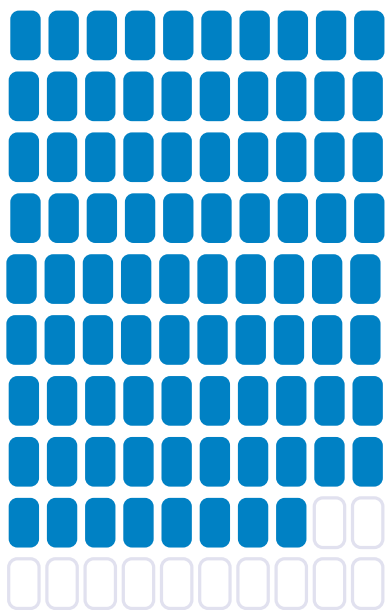
Medical Placements

38 of the 88 (43.2%) of the out-of-territory children are placed in medical placements, reflecting a significant need for specialized health care services. Additionally, about 30% of children and youth in out-of-territory placements under a Voluntary Service Agreement are receiving support services for medical. For example, consider a child with a severe congenital heart condition requiring multiple complex surgeries and ongoing care from a team of specialists. This child might need to be placed in a large children's hospital far from their home community.

At this specialized hospital, the child would receive care from a pediatric cardiologist, surgeon, and other experts who work together to manage their condition. The hospital offers advanced medical technology and treatments that aren't available in their local area, and the child's care plan would involve frequent monitoring, specialized procedures, and long-term follow-up. This situation underscores the essential need for comprehensive and expert medical care, often necessitating relocation to ensure the child receives the best possible treatment.

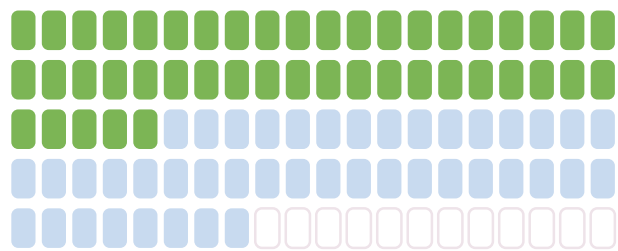
Interprovincial Requests

An **Interprovincial (IP) Request** refers to a formal request made by one province or territory (originating PT) to another (receiving PT) to provide child protection or welfare services. These services might include, but are not limited to, conducting child welfare checks, interviewing individuals involved in child protection cases, serving court documents, or supervising family visits, or requesting courtesy child protection workers when children and youth move out of the territory for OOT specialized placements.



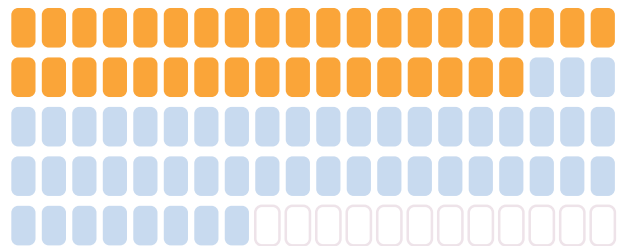
88%
Initiated IP Requests

88% of children in out-of-territory placements have had IP requests initiated to seek local Child and Youth Services Agency supervision.



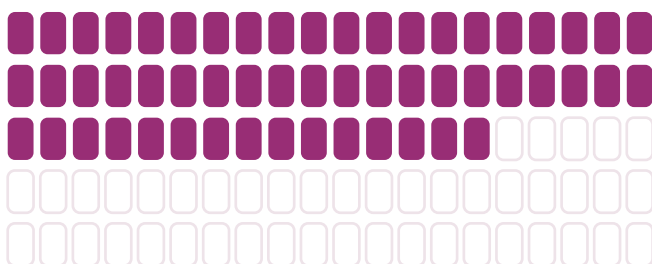
28% Signed Interprovincial Agreements

28% of the submitted requests have resulted in signed Interprovincial Agreements.



42% Signed Interprovincial Agreements

42% of the submitted requests are currently in the negotiation phase for an Interprovincial Agreement.



55%
Local Courtesy Supervision

55% of the cases have assigned local courtesy supervision workers who are actively assisting with overseeing the files.

Interjurisdictional Placement Specialist and Client Liaison Officers (CLOs)

The **Interjurisdictional Placement Specialist** plays a crucial role in coordinating placements, advocating for individual needs, and ensuring the provision of services. Their expertise and dedication are key components of the program's success, helping to uphold standards of care and fostering collaborations with external agencies from across the country.

Recognizing service gaps, the Interprovincial Program helps identify resources that build on the strengths of children, youth, families, and communities. The out-of-territory specialized services program was restructured to promote resilience, empowerment, and a sense of belonging. We now involve families in the decision-making process, working together as a team to find the necessary support. By embracing IQ Principles and delivering consistent, high-quality services, we continue to strive to provide culturally sensitive and effective care for those placed outside their home territory.

But we cannot do this without the help and expertise of **the Client Liaison Officers (CLOs)**. They ensure quality care through by being a liaison for case managers, supporting annual site reviews, and contribute a great deal to the cultural well-being of children, youth and their families. CLOs work with various departments and organizations to provide cultural services for children and youth from Nunavut who live in placements outside the territory. They also provide cultural presentations. This focus on respect, relationships, and caring for people (Inuuqatigiitsiarniq) ensures that individuals in out of territory placements remain connected to their cultural identity.

Family Resource Worker Program

Family Resource Worker

Within the Family Wellness Division, the Family Resource Worker (FRW) position plays a vitally important role. This position builds partnerships and coordinates efforts in Nunavut's communities to promote and enrich the well-being of children, youth, and families. The Family Resource Worker acts as a bridge for personal and cultural expression and collaborates closely with Elders to ensure that all community programs are guided by a holistic approach, deeply rooted in Inuit traditional knowledge, values, history, and traditions. Research shows that a strong cultural identity leads to better mental health, higher self-esteem, and resilience in Indigenous populations.

The Family Resource Worker program underwent a substantial transformation at the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year. We put our efforts and resources into targeting communities where Family Resource Workers already were established and initiated the following:

- Community Visits and Initial Feasibility Assessment
- Standardized Training Sessions
- Post-Training Support and Implementation of Community-Based Programming

We are making frequent community visits to grasp a thorough understanding of each community's unique needs and the specific roles and responsibilities of Family Resource Workers. We are actively forming partnerships with community leaders and Elders, as well as other government agencies, community partners, and stakeholders. This collaboration ensures our staff can embody the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principle of working together for a common cause.

The Family Wellness Program has evolved significantly, with a renewed focus on enhancing the role of Family Resource Workers across Nunavut. Established several years ago, the FRW position aims to collaborate with Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs), government agencies, and community partners to coordinate prevention programs that promote the well-being of children, youth, and families.. This approach supports the transmission of cultural values to children, youth, and families, fostering strong cultural identities.

As of March 30, 2024, there are only 9 Inuit FRWs serving communities across Nunavut, which comprises 25 communities.

Program Revision & Development

Despite the clear vision for the FRW role, challenges have arisen due to the lack of a comprehensive framework that bridges theoretical knowledge with practical application. Although training programs have provided valuable insights into child welfare, family dynamics, and community development, there has been a gap in translating this training into actionable steps. As of March 30, 2024, there are only 9 Inuit FRWs serving communities across Nunavut, which comprises 25 communities. Historically, wellness programming efforts have been hindered by their reliance on temporary external staff from Southern Canada, leading to project discontinuation and unsustainable community-based programs.

To address these challenges, our strategic focus has shifted towards revising and enhancing support for FRWs. This includes involving local FRWs, Elders, and community members in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of preventive initiatives, ensuring that these programs are sustainable and resonate with the unique sociocultural context of Nunavut. This approach aligns with Section 5 of the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA), which emphasizes voluntary support services and community-driven solutions. By empowering communities to lead their own well-being efforts, we aim to foster a sense of ownership and resilience.

In the last month of the fiscal year 2023-2024, we began revising and developing the Family Resource Worker Program. The next steps for fiscal year 2024-2025 include community visits and feasibility assessments, standardized training sessions, and post-training support to implement community-based programming. Community visits provide insights into the unique needs of each community and explore collaboration opportunities with other agencies and resources, embodying the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principle of collective effort.

We have already initiated virtual meetings with FRWs in seven communities to build rapport, understand their roles, and gather feedback. The aim is to support their work and increase their capacity to serve their communities more effectively. Additionally, we are collaborating with Inuit-led grassroots organizations to provide culturally appropriate, long-term training for FRWs, ensuring they are equipped to address community-specific challenges through culturally grounded programming.

Inuit-Specific Family Wellness Programs in 2023-2024

We are excited to share the progress and meaningful work already underway in several Nunavut communities as we revise and expand the Family Resource Worker Program. These efforts highlight the lasting impact and importance of the Family Resource Worker role in community. Despite facing incredibly low capacity at Headquarters, along with numerous other challenges, our dedicated staff is tirelessly working to overcome capacity issues and reach the full potential of this program.

We believe our prioritized work can transform our current welfare system from being protection-focused to prevention-focused. We are committed to the program's mission, which is rooted in community and cultural support. Read on to learn about some of the incredible contributions our Family Resource Workers are making in their communities.



Bringing Families Together

The Sewing Program was a striking example of Inuit Family Wellness. The space provided a safe avenue for interaction with a mother and her children, rather than the usual institutional setting, an unnatural and often intimidating environment. By focusing on individual and community strengths the space provided a transformative journey for the family. This approach alongside other factors not only allowed us to harness the family's strengths but also facilitated positive outcomes. Over the course of the program, we witnessed the family's progression from more intrusive interventions to least intrusive. Witnessing the mother's participation and comfort, especially bringing her children to sessions, was an emotional moment for everyone in the program.

Mending the Heart

The stories that emerged from the program highlighted the impact on emotional healing and the strengthening of familial bonds. After the program completed, instructor Dat Nguyen had a special moment with a participant. The conversation unfolded in the park surrounded by Arctic landscape while her children played joyfully outside. The participant proudly wore the summer amauti she had crafted and reflected on her family's tradition of crafting amautis. As the moment brought her back to the story of her grandmother sewing an amauti in an outpost camp long ago, she shared, "My mom told me to never give up on keeping Inuit traditions." And despite the ongoing challenges like staffing shortages and space limitations, the team's dedication ensured the program's success. This underscores the importance of culturally relevant and community-driven programming.

CAMBRIDGE BAY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS ON INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT (IQ) PRINCIPLES

Our Family Resource Worker in Cambridge Bay, Elder Harry Maksagak, has been making noteworthy strides in the community of Cambridge Bay. Harry instills Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles into every aspect of his work. Collaborating with justice representatives, the RCMP, and the Wellness Centre, he addresses social issues and partners on a variety of community initiatives. His participation in inter-agency meetings, speaking engagements at conferences and workshops, such as the Kitikmeot Teacher's Conference, CSSW Core Training, an On-the-Land Summer Program, and presenting to several high school classes, highlights his active involvement.

Harry's role as a counselor and mentor provides one-on-one, culturally appropriate support to Inuit facing personal challenges. He works with community members who are struggling with matters that impact their daily lives. He has been a supportive pillar in the lives of those who are building their own journey, providing new skills on how to manage life's complex issues.

Harry's approach is deeply rooted in the IQ principles of respect, community, and cultural identity. This allows him to connect deeply with his clients and address the impacts of historical and intergenerational traumas. We send our heartfelt thanks to Harry for the important and much-needed work he delivers in Cambridge Bay.

KUGLUKTUK

LADIES WELLNESS GATHERINGS

Our Family Resource Worker in Kugluktuk, Genevieve Nivingalok, has been making a meaningful impact through the Ladies' Wellness Gatherings, which she has led since 2021. The program has grown tremendously, starting with just four participants, to 47 women by International Women's Day in 2023. The Ladies' Gathering provides a supportive environment where women can share their stories and feel heard.

In February and March 2024, Genevieve combined recreational activities with wellness topics. Topics like self-care and resume writing were covered and facilitated by the Career Development Officer. Painting sessions were led by CSSW Araba Impraim. The regularity of the gatherings demonstrates the program's sustainability and its critical role in the community.

Genevieve's leadership highlights the importance cultural continuity, creating safe spaces for women, and promoting wellness. Thank you, Genevieve, for your tireless dedication and contributions to Kugluktuk.



Family Safety & Social Advocacy Initiatives

Family Safety Program

The Family Safety Program is a non-legislated program with focuses on the immediate safety needs of survivors of violence and supporting the front-line Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs) to ensure that safety is achieved.

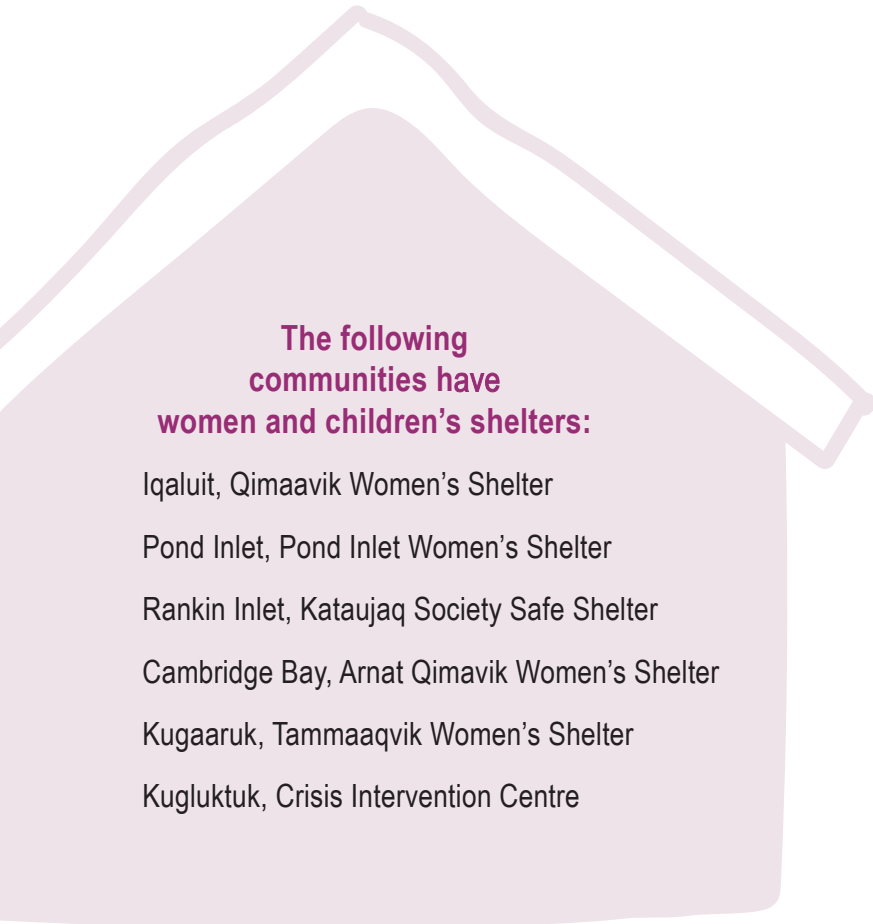
The priorities of the program are prevention through program funding, supporting CSSW's and Supervisors in complex cases, overseeing the operation of family safety shelters, the establishment of new shelters, overseeing the Gender Based Violence (GBV) portfolio for the territory and improving family violence policy and procedures within the department.

In 2023, the Family Safety Program welcomed a new Manager of Family Safety Initiatives. In addition, two new Coordinators for Women's Safety Initiatives joined our team in Iqaluit and Cambridge Bay. The program is expanding with the addition of regional team members filling vacant positions and this gradual increase in staffing allows us to support further education and awareness about the program and services.

In September 2023, the program saw a shift in language to better reflect the Department's values and goals. Formerly known as the "Family Violence Program", the program is now called the "Family Safety Program".

This progressive move forward stems from Inuit colleagues identifying and advising the Department that the word “violence” is considered negative and does not translate properly into Inuktitut language. This feedback was of utmost importance, and this simple change has allowed us to highlight exactly what we strive for while supporting the strategic plan by placing a stronger emphasis on supportive services.

The Manager and Coordinator regularly present at core trainings provided to both new and seasoned CSSW’s. This presentation has been revised from a brief overview of our services to in-depth and comprehensive training including violence prevention, risk management, step by step intervention guidelines and a thorough understanding of the support and services within the program. This presentation has been quite well-received by participants.



The following communities have women and children’s shelters:

- Iqaluit, Qimaavik Women’s Shelter
- Pond Inlet, Pond Inlet Women’s Shelter
- Rankin Inlet, Kataujaq Society Safe Shelter
- Cambridge Bay, Arnat Qimavik Women’s Shelter
- Kugaaruk, Tammaaqvik Women’s Shelter
- Kugluktuk, Crisis Intervention Centre

Family Safety Shelters

The Department provides operational funding to six shelters servicing women and children fleeing violence. The Family Safety Program staff provides financial and operational oversight.

In June 2023, the Manager of Family Safety Initiatives travelled with a team to Gjoa Haven for a roundtable discussion with the Gjoa Haven Council members and fellow stakeholders. They discussed the urgent need for shelters in the community. From this meet up, two buildings were identified and purchased by the Hamlet. Through Aajiiqatigiinniq – decision making through discussion and consensus, Council confirmed one shelter will open for women and children fleeing violence and the second shelter to open for men experiencing homelessness. Hiring and training of staff for these two shelters has begun and is being funded by the Department.

The Pond Inlet Women’s Shelter officially opened their doors on November 16th, 2023, with the Department of Family Services providing the main source of funding. This is a major milestone as it is the first shelter operating and serving the North Qikiqtaaluk region. Nunavut now has at minimum one (1) shelter for women and children fleeing violence in each region.

Partnerships - Better Together

In the spirit of Piliriqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtigiinniq, working together for a common cause, the Family Safety Program has strong relationships and regularly works with teams from Poverty Reduction, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), Indigenous Services Canada and Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC). Through these partnerships we are diligently working on building more family safety shelters across Nunavut and meet regularly to discuss progress.

Social Advocacy Initiatives

The Family Wellness Division believes in prevention as a pathway to success. This has shaped out work in wellness and social advocacy initiatives in 2023-2024. **The Social Advocacy Fund is overseen by the Family Safety Program and contains \$100,000 annually.** The available funding is used to deliver programming in communities and build capacity that promote empowerment, leadership skills, traditional knowledge, wellness, and more. The fund can be accessed by non-profit and Inuit organizations, individuals (in partnership with an organization), societies and hamlets.

In the recent past, programs and services that supported families in overcoming obstacles were either unavailable or only offered for short periods without long-term support. It has presented a challenge as the need far exceeds available funds. **However, with the support of additional GBV funds, our department's commitment of an additional \$1.4 million annually over four (4) years has gained much community interest, keeping money within Nunavut and seeing many new initiatives in the territory.** With increased programming brings more participants and community support. We are seeing an increase in community letters of support for program applications as well as different partnerships and collaborative efforts.

For example, many organizations expressed interest in applying for the GBV funding with similar ideas. To ensure initiatives were not duplicated, the Manager, Family Safety Initiatives connected organizations with one another where they could discuss their projects and make necessary changes if needed. These discussions created and strengthened relationships and in the long-term Nunavummiut will benefit from having diverse projects and engagements. **This process embodied *Piliriqatigiinniqlkajuqtigiinniql*: Working together for a common cause, while also supporting the Departments strategic plan strengthening partnerships and integration.** These collaborations are crucial to the ongoing and continual support needed to provide long-term, dependable services and support systems to Nunavut families.

The Social Advocacy Initiatives stream encompasses the following programs:

- Women's, Men's, and Boys' Grants Initiatives
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Initiatives Fund
- Attaarnangitumik Inuusiqarniq/Having a Safer Lifestyle Program

Without hesitation, Inuit continuously express the importance of spending time on the land for its gift of healing. The programs granted for the 2023–2024-year empowered participants to reclaim traditional skills, embrace their culture, feel a sense of pride, and contribute to the healing process.

The men left their power and strength on the land”

*Emily Angulalik, Elder,
Cambridge Bay*

For 2023-2024, the breakdown of available funding is as follows:

- **\$50,000 available annually through Women's Grants Initiatives**
- **\$50,000 available annually through Men and Boys Grants Initiatives**



Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Initiatives Fund

In 2023-2024, the Department of Family Services and the Department of Justice created a memorandum of understanding to assign funds for gender-based violence (GBV) initiatives. Under this agreement, the Department of Justice received **\$1,075,000** for GBV initiatives for the year.

Key highlights of the funding include:

- **Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council:** The council is launching a territory-wide campaign to educate Nunavummiut about the impacts of gender-based violence and prevention strategies. Community consultations were held in Kitikmeot by the Executive Director and Board Chairperson with additional consultations scheduled for Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. These consultations allow Nunavummiut to provide feedback and input on the campaign from design to execution. This Inuit-specific campaign is the first of its kind in Nunavut, and we look forward to its rollout in the coming year.
- **Kamatsiaqtut Nunavut Helpline:** In partnership with Miinga, a Nunavut-based for-profit organization, the department has funded pilot GBV workshops in Baker Lake, Igloodik, and Pond Inlet.
 - **New App Development:** As part of this partnership, a new app is being developed specifically for Nunavut by Nunavummiut. This app will address northern challenges related to GBV and mental health service delivery, offering descriptions of available services and access through integrated call or text features. The app will also be accessible offline and allow users to filter services by location.
 - **Miinga App Integration:** The integration of the Miinga app into the GBV workshops improves participants' access to GBV services during crises, increases awareness of local and regional services, and reduces stigma through a culturally and linguistically inclusive design.

The newly available funding has been key in strengthening relationships with Nunavut's non-profit, municipal, and Inuit organizations, and in forming new partnerships. These collaborations are vital for providing long-term, reliable services and support systems to Nunavut families.

Attaarnangitumik Inuusiqaarniq/Having a safer lifestyle

The Gender Based Violence National Action Plan, is a plan that was formed from the bi-lateral agreement between Canada and Nunavut, allotted an additional funding source for the Family Safety Program, increasing the annual budget by \$1.5 million between 2023-2027. Through this increase, the Department received 20 funding proposals in 2023 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year and are proud to announce the approval of all applicants.

With new funding through the Gender Based Violence National Action Plan (GBV NAP), the Department has consciously allotted an additional \$1.4 million specifically for program funding for men and boys, women and girls, elders, children and youth, based on the demand of applications. This new funding is called, '*Attaarnangitumik Inuusiqaarniq/Having a safer lifestyle*' was developed in consultation with the Departments IQ Advisor.

In 2023-2024, the Social Advocacy Fund provided funding for five programs across Nunavut.

1 Women and Girls Sealskin Project, Arctic Bay

Facilitated by two Elders, this program focused on harvesting sealskins, including the important skills of removing excess fat, drying and stretching the sealskin, concluding with making their own pair of mittens or kamiik.

2 Men and Boys Seal Hunt Program, Arctic Bay

This project focused on healing by going out on the sea ice to search for breathing holes. Men and boys were able to connect to nature and to ancestors who survived harsh conditions for future generations. This program focused on participants who do not have the means to experience the land and traditional activities. This is an extremely empowering program for Inuit men and boys,

3 Youth Dance Program, Baker Lake

Twelve youth travelled from Baker Lake to Toronto, ON where they danced on one of Canada's largest stages, showcasing their talents and expressing themselves through movement and creativity. The increase in confidence and self-worth and a decrease in bullying was reported. At the time, the applicant was unaware of where else to apply for funding, as time was limited. The Department recognized the hard work that the youth put forward for the eight months leading up to this moment and funded the travel portion without hesitation. We are beyond proud of the results and the hard work of Baker Lake youth.

4 Amautiit Making Program, Coral Harbour

This program was facilitated by two instructors, over 28 days to 20 participants (10 women and 10 girls). The intent of this program was for mothers to make this amautiit to keep their babies warm in Nunavut harsh winters, bringing a sense of togetherness and enhance Inuit traditional ways of life

5 Men's Self Care Group, Igloolik

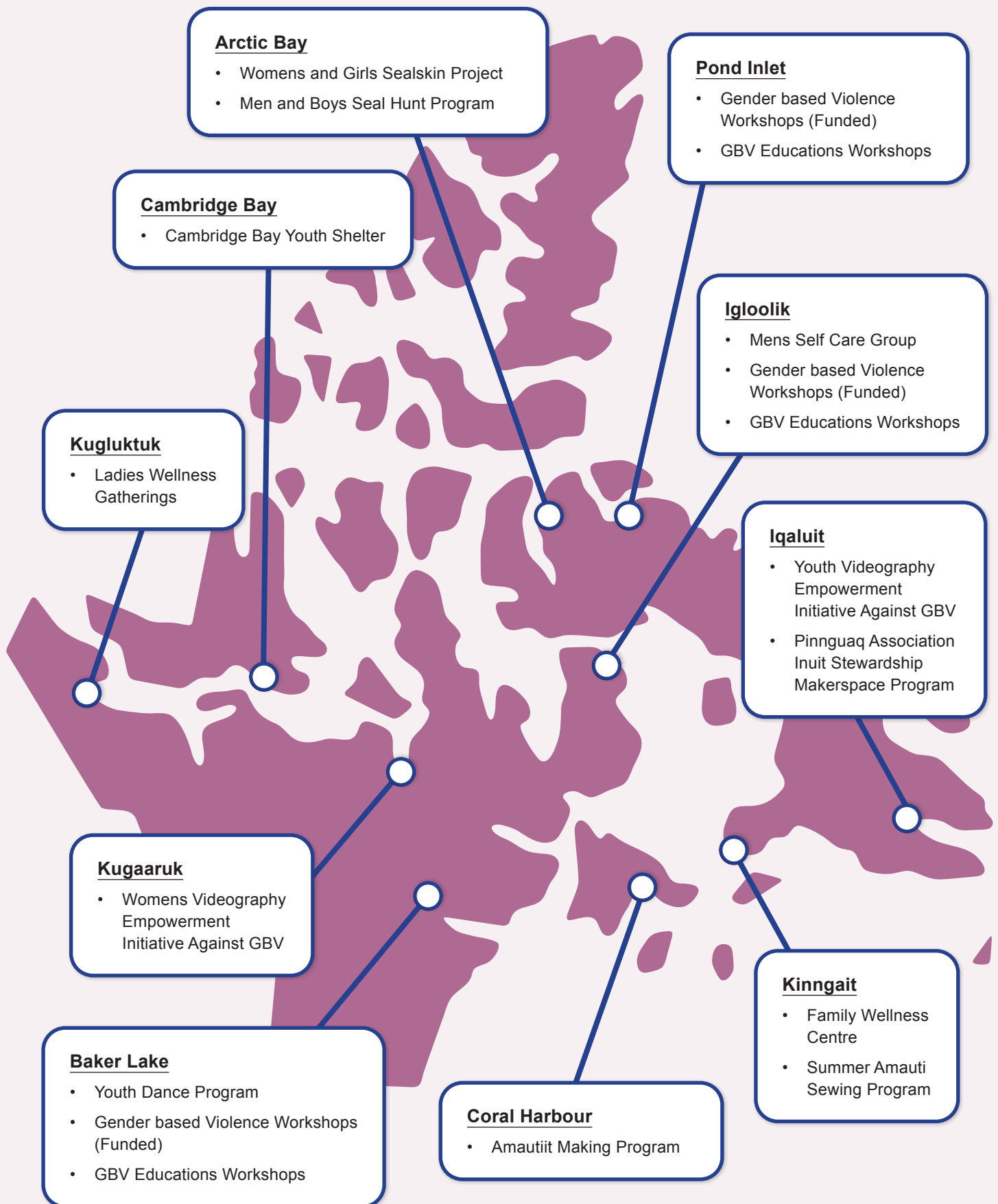
Running from January-March 2024, between 5-10 men and boys from ages 15-25 gathered weekly to engage in self-care related activities such as dogsledding to the floe edge, fishing, making niksiks, aluasauti and savikuvik in the shop, learning to sew, visiting elders and more. This program embraces self-care, learning of traditional skill and giving back to the community. Local guides and instructors were hired to guide the men, restoring power and unity in traditional way of life.

We give our respect and appreciation for applicants, instructors, Elders and participants who continue to keep traditional skills and knowledge transfer alive. As stated by Emily Angulalik, an Elder from Cambridge Bay, when speaking with her about the effects of forced relocation, she quoted, "The men left their power and strength on the land".

The Department of Family Services continues to strive in our commitment of prioritizing Inuit-specific services for Nunavummiut to continue reclaiming their rich culture.



Youth participating in the 'Outside Looking In' Dance Program at camp near Toronto



Due to the increase in funding, in 2023-2024, the Department was able to support two large-scale projects that aim to educate and engage Nunavummiut in the fight against gender targeted violence.

1. **Women’s Videography Empowerment Initiative Against GBV (Kugaaruk) & Youth Videography Empowerment Initiative Against GBV (Iqaluit)**

Over four weeks, women aged 15+ participate in visual storytelling to advocate for women’s rights, Inuit rights, address GBV, and amplify Inuit perspectives.

- Facilitated by Nunavut Marketing with the support of Embrace Life Council

2. **GBV Educational Workshops/ Pilot Inuit Specific Safety Phone App**

Baker Lake, Igloolik and Pond Inlet facilitated by Miinga with the support of Kamatsiaqtut Nunavut Helpline

In Baker Lake alone, 177 participants of all ages engaged in conversations and presentations regarding GBV and a new mobile app that is being piloted to act as a tool for GBV prevention and crisis intervention. This app was designed by Nunavummiut with feedback from the visited communities on how to offer more support. For example, Baker Lake residents expressed the importance of adding the Baker Lake arena and youth centre as options to keep safe and connected to community. Another example is feedback from an Elder who emphasized a specific section for Elder services and provided guidance on correct translations to Kivalliq dialect.

Feedback from the consultations has been overwhelmingly positive with one youth quoting that the app is “so easy to get around to find information. It is simple and will help people get the help they need”.

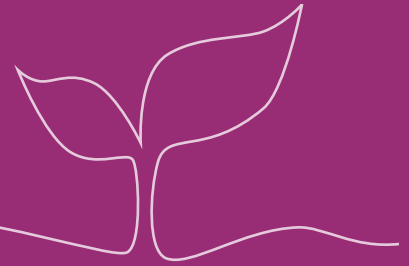
In 2023, the Department received 20 proposals for the 2024-2025 fiscal year totaling \$261,328.85. We are very proud to announce that all programs will be funded, meaning an increase in prevention services, community capacity, Inuit specific services and a continuation of working relationships.

The Youth Initiative Funding (YIF) Program

The YIF Program spans the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and Qikiqtaaluk regions and has been instrumental in fostering community resilience and promoting wellness. **With an equal allocation of \$300,000 per region, YIF provides a total of \$900,000 annually to support youth-focused initiatives.** This year, the program received a substantial number of proposals, reflecting a growing demand for these vital resources. **The total requested funding amounts to \$2,111,118.59, far exceeding the available budget and underscoring the critical need for increased investment.** YIF has played a pivotal role in community outreach, partnering with non-profit organizations and municipalities to raise awareness of healthy coping mechanisms and suicide prevention strategies. These efforts aim to help fill the gap in youth programming and shelter resources.

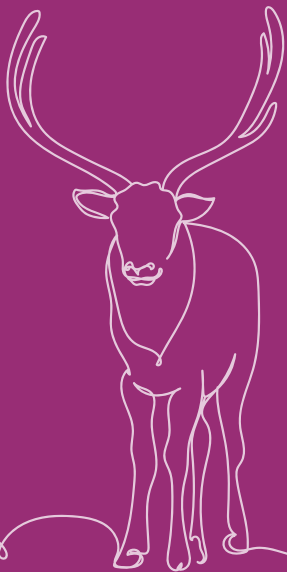
Hamlet of Cambridge Bay's Youth Shelter

The Youth Shelter has provided safety and mental health for youth within the community, particularly during winter when used as a shelter. This is crucial in a community where alternative safe spaces may be limited. Participants expressed gratitude for the shelter's role in providing a refuge from unsafe home environments.



"You are listening to Inuit voices and doing well for the community."

"What makes me proud of the curriculum is that they have our Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles and values in it."



Pinnguaq Association's Inuit Stewardship Makerspace Program

The Inuit Stewardship Makerspace Program has empowered youth with practical skills in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), essential tools for personal and professional growth in the digital age. Local leaders were provided training to ensure the program sustainable long-term.

The "Learn on the Land" kits provided by Makerspace promote respect for the land, animals, and the environment by integrating traditional knowledge about the environment. The program emphasizes collaboration and working together for a common cause through co-design and community partnerships. It fosters continuous learning and skill development, reflecting the Inuit value of adaptability and lifelong learning.

**HIGHLIGHTS
OF YIF-FUNDED PROGRAMS
DURING 2023-2024**

SECTION 5

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
IN 2023-2024



Maintain
24/7
operations

Youth Shelter Program

The Youth Shelter Program has achieved significant changes by increasing the sense of safety among youth during winter and after the youth center fire. Despite high demand for drop-in services and challenges in maintaining full staffing due to budget constraints, the program has learned the importance of continuous funding to maintain 24/7 operations and the potential benefits of expanding the age range for service eligibility.

Inuit Stewardship Makerspace Program

The Inuit Stewardship Makerspace Program has successfully piloted new educational kits and established makerspaces in multiple communities, reaching over 90 youth. Stories of youth who initially resisted the program but became engaged and enthusiastic participants highlight the program's impact on self-esteem and community involvement. Participants provided positive feedback about the inclusion of Inuit values, and the program aspires to expand further to nurture future community leaders and educators.

Reaching over
90 youth

Department of Family Services, First Operational Childcare Facility

We are proud to support Nunavut families with one of their most common challenges, childcare. In 2023-2024, we secured funding and achieved our goal of opening a childcare centre in Iqaluit. The Iqaluit Family Service office converted part of its space into a licensed daycare for children. The space is licensed for 8 preschoolers and 4 infants, marking the first childcare facility operated by the Department of Family Services. This child-friendly and developmentally appropriate space allows children to socialize, learn, and thrive while their parents' work. This daycare ensures that parents engaged in services with the Family Wellness Division have access to childcare so they can accept employment opportunities without the burden of searching for childcare. The daycare has been licensed and operational since November 2023.

**First
childcare
facility**
operated by the
Government of Nunavut

Five Scholarships awarded

Rebekah Williams Scholarship

The inaugural Rebekah Uqi Williams Scholarships, designed for Nunavummiut pursuing careers in social work, counseling, or psychology were awarded in 2023.

Five grants of up to \$10,000 each were awarded to:

- Sheena Kayasark (SSW, Cambridge Bay / Originally from Kugaaruk)
- Carmen Rowsell (SSW, Iqaluit / Originally from Iqaluit/Kinngait)
- Pauline Pauloosie (BSW, Cambridge Bay / Originally from Taloyoak)
- Katherine Lyall (BSW, Carleton University / Originally from Taloyoak)
- Sylvia Kablutsiak (BSW Indigenous Specialization, Laurentian University / Originally from Arviat)

Kinngait Family Wellness Centre

We are delighted to announce the acquisition of a building in Kinngait for a new Family Wellness Centre. In 2023, we secured the former Health Centre, which will be transformed into a community space dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health.

The space will also support our office space needs, community childcare needs and community workshop space. Construction and renovation of the centre has been delayed due to matters outside of the departments control. Kinngait is a vibrant community with a rich art scene. Ninety-three percent of its residents are Inuit, with 92% speaking Inuktitut. It is critical that Kinngait has a culturally appropriate community wellness space to thrive and grow as individuals and as community. We hope this community-based Family Wellness Centre fills this much needed gap.

New Family Wellness Centre



Illustrating the Family Resource Worker's Value

- In Kinngait, the Summer Amauti Sewing Program, led by FRW Martha Pudlat, involved traditional sewing skills and fostered cultural pride, resulting in positive family outcomes and emotional healing.
- In Cambridge Bay, Elder Harry Maksagak integrated IQ Principles into his community engagements, counseling, and collaborations, addressing social issues and supporting individuals through culturally grounded approaches.
- In Kugluktuk, Genevieve Nivingalok's Ladies' Wellness Gatherings have provided a safe space for women to connect and support each other, highlighting the importance of ongoing community-driven programming.

Representative for Children and Youth Office (RCYO) Engagement

The Representative for Children and Youths Office in Nunavut is an independent office established to advocate for the rights and needs of children and youth. Its mandate includes monitoring the effectiveness of child welfare services, investigating complaints, and promoting systemic changes to improve the welfare of young people in the territory.

The Representative for Children and Youth's Office reported in 2022-2023 that 77% (55 cases) of all new individual advocacy cases were related to the Department of Family Services, leaving 23% for the rest of the Government (RCYO Annual Report, pg. 39, 2022-2023). 20 recommendations, in addition to 86 other recommendations from external entities.

While progress continues on addressing these recommendations, none have been fully resolved yet. The complexity of these systemic issues, coupled with the need for coordination across various departments and external stakeholders, has contributed to the barriers for Family Wellness to move through these recommendations.

We are hopeful that throughout 2024-2025, **the RCYO will observe meaningful improvements and progress within Family Wellness.** It is important to recognize that addressing long-standing challenges and transforming a system with a history of suboptimal practices is a complex process that requires substantial time, effort, and resources. **While the changes may not be immediate, we remain committed to ensuring continuous progress and strengthening the overall framework for better outcomes in the future.**

SECTION 6

STRATEGIES FOR A WAY FORWARD



The Family Wellness Division is dedicated to making strategic decisions that drive impactful change. Reflecting on the past year, we are reminded that meaningful progress requires time, and we've carefully evaluated our successes and our shortcomings within the Division. A key issue remains our infrastructure, particularly the shortage of trained personnel. We continue to prioritize change management to ensure our processes and systems are adaptable, effective, and efficient.

Our strategic framework plan remains our guiding force toward measurable improvements. While we've made significant progress this year, we remain focused on enhancing infrastructure, nurturing collaboration, and increasing training opportunities. These efforts are dedicated to building healthy and effective services and supports for the children, youth, and families of Nunavut.

We are guided by Inuit values, particularly Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respect and relationship-building), Piliqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtigiinniq (working together), Qanuqtuurniq (innovation and resourcefulness), and Pijitsirniq (service to families and communities). These values prepare and equip us to overcome challenges and continue to move forward with determination and purpose.

Organizational Excellence

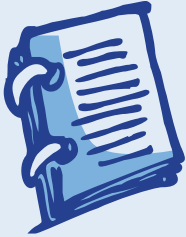
We are committed to achieving the highest standards in all aspects of Family Wellness. This involves continuously improving our processes, systems, and practices to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and overall success, while fostering cultural awareness and Inuit Societal Values. Our focus on training, development, and compliance drives our commitment to organizational excellence.

Through our Quality Assurance and Monitoring Program, we are refining our documentation and monitoring systems to regularly share transparent results, such as the number of children in care, placement details, and background information. This commitment is crucial to addressing the diverse needs of families in Nunavut, improving service quality, and maintaining high standards in our practice.

Training and Development

One of the cornerstones of our strategy for organizational excellence is our comprehensive training and development program. This program is designed to equip our staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver exceptional family wellness services while ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and best practices.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



1. Focused Training Modules:

We have implemented a series of focused training modules that address both foundational knowledge and advanced skills in family wellness. These modules cover key areas such as child protection, family counseling, and trauma-informed care. Each module is developed in collaboration with subject matter experts and is regularly updated to reflect the latest research and regulatory changes.

For example, recent training sessions have included a module on the new updates to the Child and Family Services Act. This has ensured that all staff are not only familiar with the latest legal requirements but are also prepared to integrate these changes into their daily practice.



2. Social Work Clinical Supervision:

To reinforce compliance and support continuous professional development, we have established a structured approach to teach and clinical supervision.

Teaching Clinical Supervision: Our teach supervision sessions focus on enhancing the theoretical understanding and practical application of family wellness concepts. Supervisors conduct regular workshops where they discuss complex cases, review recent developments in family wellness, and share insights on best practices. These sessions are interactive, allowing staff to engage in case discussions and scenario-based learning. This collaborative environment fosters a deeper understanding of compliance requirements and helps staff navigate challenging situations effectively.

Clinical Supervision: Clinical supervision is a critical component of our commitment to maintaining high standards of practice. Through one-on-one supervision meetings, staff receive tailored feedback on their case management, therapeutic techniques, and adherence to protocols. Supervisors use these sessions to address specific compliance issues, review case documentation, and provide guidance on ethical dilemmas. This individualized support ensures that each staff member is aligned with our organizational standards and is continuously improving their practice.



3. Performance Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:

Our performance evaluation process is closely linked to our training and supervision efforts. Regular evaluations assess staff competencies, compliance with regulations, and overall effectiveness in delivering family wellness services. Feedback from these evaluations is used to identify areas for improvement and to tailor further training opportunities.

For instance, if an evaluation highlights a need for enhanced skills in working with specific family dynamics, targeted training sessions are developed to address this gap. This iterative process ensures that our staff are always prepared to meet the evolving needs of the families we serve.

Human Resource/Workforce Planning

To ensure that our training aligns with practice standards and policies that effectively serve Nunavummiut, we plan to combine onboarding and core training sessions as soon as staff are hired. It is also important to continue discussions with Inuit organizations to explore culturally appropriate ways of learning. Additionally, we need to create more online resources for supervisors to maintain best practices.

The Department of Family Services has recently been granted approval for numerous new positions across the territory for Community Social Service Workers, addressing the acute shortage of social workers across Canada. Despite this progress, we face significant hurdles in filling these positions due to ongoing challenges with housing and office space availability. We are actively collaborating with the Human Resources Department and Nunavut Housing Corporation to explore innovative solutions to support our first responders in the communities. While the systemic challenges are substantial, we remain optimistic and committed to overcoming these obstacles. As a government body, we believe that with persistent effort and collective action, we will navigate these difficulties and create a sustainable pathway forward.

Investing in our People

Investing in our people and building internal capacity within this framework refers to a deliberate and structured effort to enhance the skills, knowledge, and overall capabilities of the division's workforce through training, professional development, and supervision. This involves initiatives aimed at developing, supporting, and empowering employees to ensure they are well-equipped to contribute effectively to the department's objectives.



We are committed to investing in our Family Wellness Team by significantly enhancing our training and support systems. We have expanded our core Family Wellness training program to include in-person sessions for all team members, encompassing Case Aides, Family Resource Workers, Supervisors, Managers, Clerk Interpreters, Directors, and Community Social Service Workers. This comprehensive approach ensures that each team member can tailor the training to their specific role and responsibilities, fostering a more cohesive and effective team.

In addition to the in-person training, we have introduced a 19-module online training program designed to complement and reinforce the core training. This online course is trackable and culminates in a certificate of completion, providing a structured way to document and validate the learning progress of our staff.

Recognizing the importance of psychological health, we have also prioritized the well-being of our team. As a proactive measure, we have implemented ongoing counseling support, debriefing sessions, and monthly check-ins conducted by a dedicated team of counselors. This initiative aims to address and support the mental health needs of our staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle the demands of their roles while maintaining their overall well-being.

Partnerships and Engagement

This strategic focus aims to continue to foster meaningful connections, collaborations, and interactions both within and outside the department. This involves actively seeking and nurturing partnerships, learning from external entities, and maintaining effective communication channels. The Department of Family Services welcomed pediatrician Amber Miners, through a meaningful collaboration with The Department of Health during 2023-2024. Dr. Miners has been contracted to provide services as the Family Wellness Territorial Child Maltreatment Lead at the Umingmak center. This position is accountable for providing medical care, advice, as well as education and strategic direction for programming specific to children and youth who have experienced abuse/trauma and those involved with the child welfare system. Dr. Miners also offers consultative support, and education to frontline workers to enhance their capacity in managing pediatric cases, particularly those involving child maltreatment. This collaboration with the Department of Health has been instrumental in our ability to advance this very important service and demonstrates the Department's continued commitment to improving services for children while enhancing educational supports for Family Wellness front line social workers.

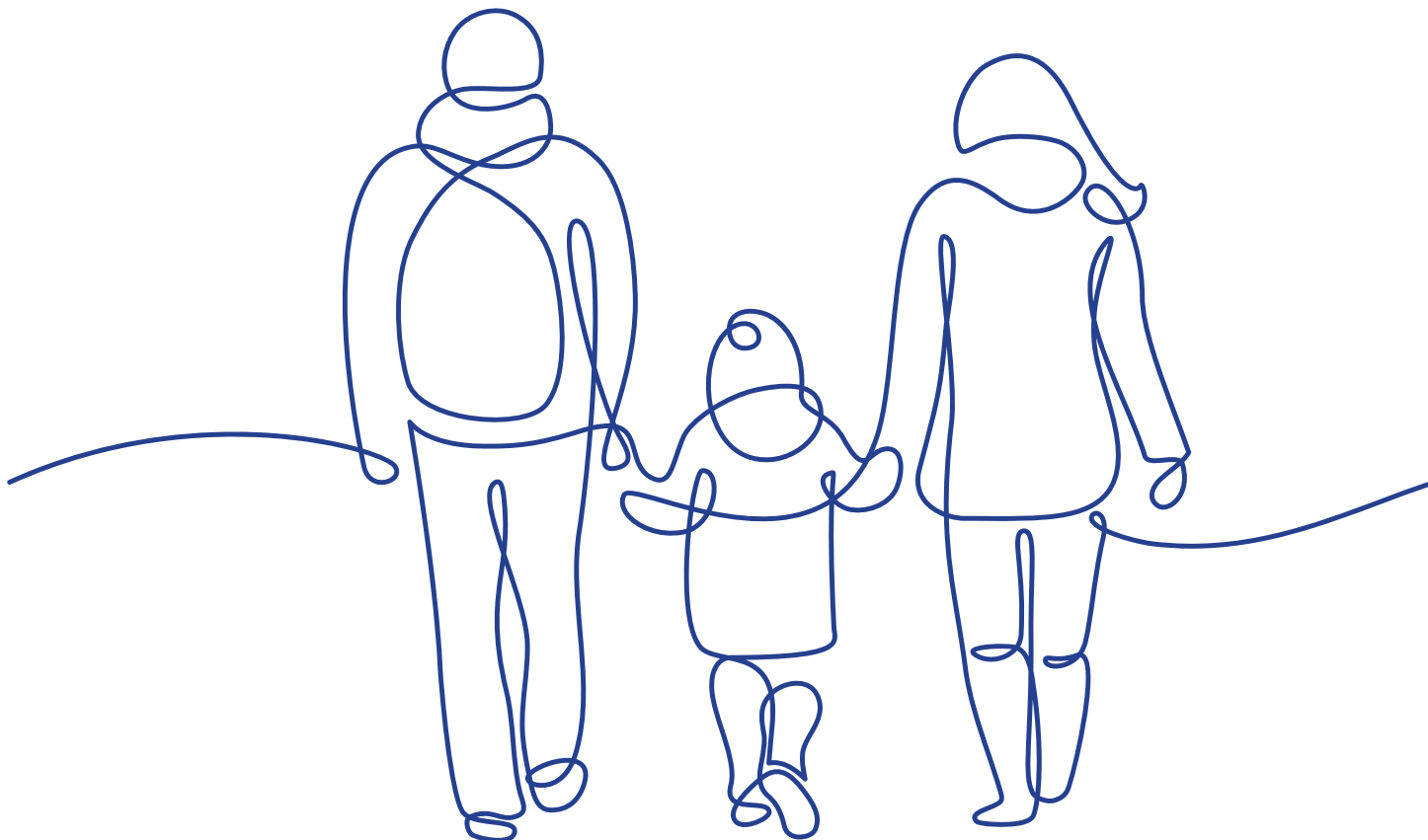
Quality Assurance and Accountability

Quality Assurance and Accountability involves a comprehensive system designed to ensure our operations meet quality standards, maintain accountability, and comply with relevant acts and regulations. This system focuses on building a compliance structure centered around data collection, documentation, analysis, and development, ensuring the division consistently delivers high-quality services and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

Although this strategic focus is still in-development, we are already seeing quality improvements. For example, our Family Wellness Team steadily reviews complex issues during critical incidents, even though a formal process is not yet fully in place.

Conclusion

Through a dedicated focus on comprehensive training, compliance-oriented supervision, and continuous performance improvement, the Nunavut Family Wellness Division is advancing towards organizational excellence. Our approach not only enhances the capabilities of our staff but also ensures that we provide high-quality, compliant services to the families of Nunavut. By maintaining these high standards, we can effectively support family well-being and contribute to the overall strength and resilience of our community.



APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Apprehension

The legal act of taking a child into custody by child protection authorities due to concerns for their safety or well-being.

Apprehension less than 72 hours

A temporary custody situation lasting less than 72 hours, typically used in urgent situations where immediate protection is necessary.

Child

A person who has not reached the age of majority, typically defined as under 16 years old.

Child Emotional Harm

The infliction of emotional harm or psychological trauma on a child by a caregiver or other person in a position of trust.

Child Exposure to Family Violence

A situation where a child witnesses or is exposed to domestic violence or other forms of family violence.

Child Physical Harm

The intentional infliction of physical harm or injury upon a child by a caregiver or other person in a position of trust.

Child Protection Order

A legal order issued by a court to protect a child from abuse, harm, or neglect, typically involving restrictions on contact with certain individuals or removal from a harmful environment.

Child Sexual Harm

The sexual exploitation or molestation of a child by a caregiver or other person in a position of trust.

Community Social Services Worker

A professional who provides social services and support to individuals and families within a specific community.

Director of Child and Family Services

An official responsible for overseeing child welfare and family support services within a jurisdiction or organization.

Extended Support Agreement

An agreement providing additional support and services beyond the age of majority for youth transitioning out of the child welfare system.

Inuit Qaujimagatugangit

Traditional Inuit knowledge, values, and cultural practices that guide decision-making and behaviour within Inuit communities.

Inuit Societal Values

Core principles and beliefs held by Inuit communities, shaping social norms, relationships, and governance structures.

Neglect

The failure to provide adequate care, supervision, or support for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, education, and medical care.

Out-of-territory Specialized Placements

Placements of children or youth in specialized care facilities or services located outside the territory of Nunavut.

Permanent Custody Order

A legal order granting permanent custody of a child to the Director of Child and Family Services, typically issued by a court.

Plan of Care Agreement

A formal agreement outlining the care, support, and services to be provided to a child or youth under the supervision of child welfare authorities.

Plan of Care Committee

A committee responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of a plan of care for a child or youth involved with child welfare services.

Supervision Order

A legal order requiring supervision of a child-by-child welfare authorities or other designated individuals.

Support Services Agreement

An agreement outlining the support services to be provided to a child, youth, or family by child welfare authorities or other service providers.

Temporary Custody Order

A legal order granting temporary custody of a child to the Director of Child and Family Services, typically issued by a court.

Voluntary Services Agreement

An agreement entered voluntarily by a family to receive support services.

Youth

A person who has reached adolescence but has not yet reached the age of majority, typically defined as between the ages of 13 and 18.

