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

Child and Family Services Act

2018/19 Annual Report

Nunavut Department of Family Services

September 2019

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

FY 2018/19 marked the sixth year of Family Services' operations. As we continue to work towards strengthening supports for children, youth, families, and communities, it is important to reflect on the work done to date.

In 2014, the *Child and Family Services Act* was revised to include service agreements, which allow Family Services to provide prevention and support services to families. They also offer opportunities for Family Services to work collaboratively with youth and young adults, who are transitioning into adulthood and require supports. Additionally, the Act was revised to ensure decisions made about a child's wellbeing take into consideration their family, community, and the child's cultural values and practices.

These changes marked a new way forward with respect to how the Department works with and supports families, striving to keep families together where possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on a major initiative the Department of Family Services has been working on over the past year, the Client Information System (CIS). The CIS is an electronic case management system that will enable the secure documentation of client information, accessible anywhere in Nunavut. The new system will reduce the workload associated with reporting, assist workers make more informed case management decisions, and allow for increased oversight and transparency over the Child & Family Services Division. The system will be operational in FY 2019/20, and I look forward to reporting on its first year of operation in next year's Annual Report.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to departmental staff who have devoted significant time and effort towards implementing the CIS. You have played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of the system.

There are many changes on the horizon for FY 2019/20. National events such as the Calls to Action of the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will inform work related to reducing family violence in the territory. The introduction of Bill C-92, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*, the federal legislation that affirms the rights and jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples in relation to child and family services, may influence the way we provide services in the coming years.

I believe that it is only by working together in the true spirit of Piliqatigiinniq that we will realize true success. I also believe that the basis of our every action must be rooted in Inuuqatigiitsiarniq, to promote caring and respect for others. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit will

continue to inform our work and the delivery of culturally safe services that meet the needs of families and communities. This is key for creating an environment that is nurturing, and one where we can raise children to be healthy, well, and productive members of communities.

Taima!

Jo-Anne Henderson-White
Director of Child & Family Services

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Implementing the Client Information System

As noted previously, the Department worked diligently over FY 2018/19 to implement the Client Information System (CIS).

Prior to the CIS, client information was captured manually in a paper-based system. The system was administratively burdensome, made data collection challenging, and was limited in its ability to help workers remain compliant with key standards (i.e., meeting timelines for reporting).

The work towards implementation officially began in April 2017, when the vendor was secured. The vendor worked closely with staff across the territory to build components of the system, and understand what the system needed to achieve in order to be successful.

Since that time, the Department has undertaken a number of steps to ensure the CIS could launch in FY 2019/20, including:

- Scanning all paper files and client records into the system, in order to maintain historical case files (from the creation of the Department of Family Services) in the new system;
- Updating and standardizing templates, to allow for electronic, auto-populate capabilities in an effort to ensure data is captured consistently, and to reduce duplication and errors;
- Integrating training into the system, allowing staff and their supervisors to sign up and track training completed throughout the year; and
- Implementing Structured Decision Making (SDM) into the CIS, a system recognized as best practice in child protection, that supports staff in making consistent, accurate, and equitable decisions when conducting investigations.

The CIS offers many benefits that will strengthen the Department's capacity to focus its work with families. It will allow greater oversight over service delivery, improve capacity to audit compliance with standards such as reporting and timelines, and reduce administrative duties for staff, as the system will feature automated reporting for family files and be accessible anywhere in the community (i.e., for use on cellphones, laptops, etc.).

It will also facilitate our capacity to be involved in the Pan-Northern Child Welfare Data Project, to inform national efforts to understand risk factors for children entering care, and contribute to territorial policy and program efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families.

It is expected that all staff will be trained and fully utilizing the system by the fall of 2019.

Strengthening the Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse

In the *Inuusivut Anninaqtuq Action Plan 2017-2022*, the Department of Family Services committed to leading efforts to strengthen the Government of Nunavut's response to child sexual abuse. In March 2017, the Department began this work by compiling research related to best practices to address child sexual abuse. Along with this, the Department secured funding for the Coordinator, Preventing Violence Against Children & Youth. The Coordinator is, among other things, responsible for leading an interagency working group to collaborate and coordinate resources to respond to and prevent child sexual abuse, and leading initiatives to improve the ability of frontline staff, foster parents, and other service providers to identify and work with clients who have experienced sexual abuse.

At the end of FY 2018/19, the Department hired the Coordinator, whose first task included coordinating training on child sexual abuse investigations for frontline service providers. The training will take place in early FY 2019/20.

In addition to this, in November 2018, the Department participated in the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse Inuit Nunangat Forum sponsored by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). The two-day forum was an opportunity for policy and decision-makers from across Inuit Nunangat to participate in dialogue and knowledge exchange related to best and promising practices in the prevention of child sexual abuse. The Department of Family Services and Arctic Child & Youth Foundation (ACYF) presented on the work done to date to establish the Umingmak Centre. The Department will continue to engage with ITK on national work being done to address and prevent child sexual abuse in Inuit Nunangat.

Establishment of the Umingmak Centre

The Umingmak Centre is the first child advocacy centre in Nunavut to support children and youth who have experienced abuse. The Centre is a collaborative effort between the Government of Nunavut Departments of Family Services, Health, Justice, and Education, and the ACYF, to work together in order to reduce trauma following a disclosure of child abuse. In November 2018, partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the working relationships around the centre, describe joint processes following a disclosure of abuse, and the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved. Since that time, the Government of Nunavut and ACYF have worked to locate a building and develop programming. The Centre is expected to open in FY 2019/20.

Some other notable highlights for the Department in FY 2018/19 included:

- Funding community-based organizations to deliver programming under the Men and Boys Initiatives Grants and the Women's Initiatives Grants;

- The signing of a Protocol between the Representative for Children and Youth (RCYO) and the Department, to facilitate effective advocacy on behalf of children and youth in Nunavut, and ensure a clear and mutual understanding of the mandates of RCYO and Family Services;
- Providing Inunnguiniq Facilitator-Training to departmental staff and funding Inunnguiniq initiatives across the territory;
- Piloting a safe sleeping workshop in spring 2019 for departmental staff; and
- Actively participating with the Government of Canada, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories on the Pan-Northern Child Welfare Data Project, as noted previously, to understand child welfare trends across the North.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Table 1 presents an overview of the services delivered to Nunavummiut through the Child & Family Services Division. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented is from March 31, 2019, and represents a snapshot in time.

Table 1: Statistical Summary of Child & Family Services

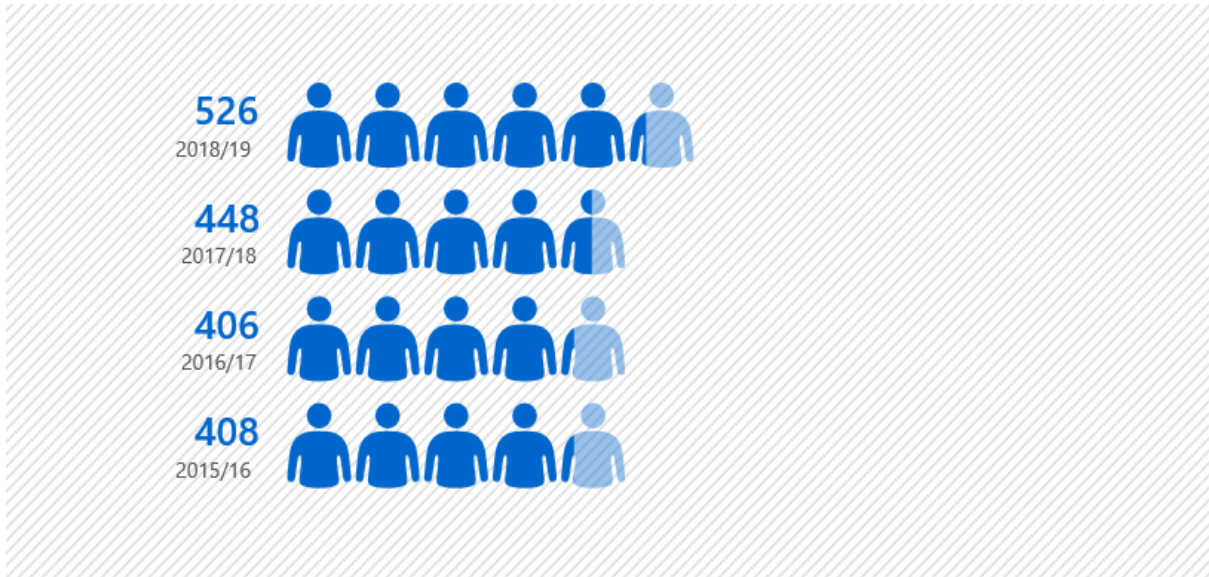
Select Indicators	Total	Percentage
Number of Children and Youth Receiving Services	526	100
Male	261	50%
Female	265	50%
<i>Children and Youth Receiving Services by Court or Agreement</i>		
Under Court Order	263	50%
By Service Agreement	263	50%
<i>Children and Youth Receiving Services In or Out-of-Territory</i>		
In Nunavut	456	87%
Out-of-Territory	70	13%
<i>Children and Youth Receiving Services In Nunavut, by Placement Type</i>		
In family / extended family	295	65%
Foster homes	146	28%
Group homes	15	3%
Number of Adults Receiving Services	150	100
In Nunavut	53	35%
Out-of-Territory	97	65%
Total Number of Persons Admitted to Family Violence Shelters	569	100
Women	290	51%
Children	279	49%

As of March 31, 2019, the Department was providing supports to 526 children, youth and families, an increase of 78 from FY 2017/18. A large proportion of children and youth (87%) were receiving care and services in Nunavut and more than half of those children (65%) were receiving services within their immediate or extended family.

The figure on the following page presents an overview of the number of children and youth receiving services from the Department from FY 2015/16 to FY 2018/19. Since FY 2016/17, the number of families supported by the Department has steadily increased. This may be attributed to increased staff capacity across the territory, including both Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs) and Family Resource Workers, to support families, and increased awareness of the Department's services and the supports available (i.e., Voluntary Support Agreements).

With increased awareness around the Department’s capacity to assist families in prevention-based work, families may be more willing to reach out to the Department for support.

Figure 1: Number of Children & Youth Receiving Services, from FY 2015/16 – FY 2018/19



SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Under the *Child and Family Services Act*, the Department is mandated to provide a wide range of child protection services to children, youth, and families, delivered primarily by CSSWs. Broadly speaking, these services fall into two categories: Service Agreements and Court Orders.

Service Agreements are utilized when a youth or family would benefit from receiving supports, but no serious, persistent child protection concerns exist. These include:

- **Voluntary Support Agreements:** an agreement with parents and children under the age of 16 who are not in need of protection but require some form of support;
- **Support Services Agreements:** an agreement with a youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who cannot remain safely in their parents’ home and are making efforts to live independently; and,
- **Extended Support Agreements:** an agreement that allows the Department to support young adults between the adults of 19 and 25.

Plans of Care are similar to Service Agreements, in the sense they are a collaborative way to work with families, and an alternative to court. However, a Plan of Care is utilized when there are child protection concerns. A Plan of Care is a written agreement between the parent(s) and the

Department that outlines a case plan for the child and family to ensure the child’s protection and wellbeing. Plans of Care give a family an opportunity to resolve the issues before court involvement is warranted.

Court Orders are utilized when a child is at significant risk. Court orders are often relied upon if there are persistent and ongoing child protection concerns. There are three types of court orders:

- **Supervision Order:** a court order that directs a CSSW to supervise the home of a child according to the terms and conditions of the order. The order cannot exceed one year;
- **Temporary Custody Order:** a court order which directs that the child be placed in the custody of the Director for a specified period; and,
- **Permanent Custody Order:** a 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. The court may specify in the order any terms and conditions that the court deems necessary such as provisions around the child’s access to their parent(s).

The figure below provides an overview of the number of children and youth receiving service, through Service Agreements and Court Orders, from FY 2015/16 to FY 2018/19.

Figure 2: Number of Children and Youth Receiving Service, by Type of Service, from FY 2015/16 – FY 2018/19

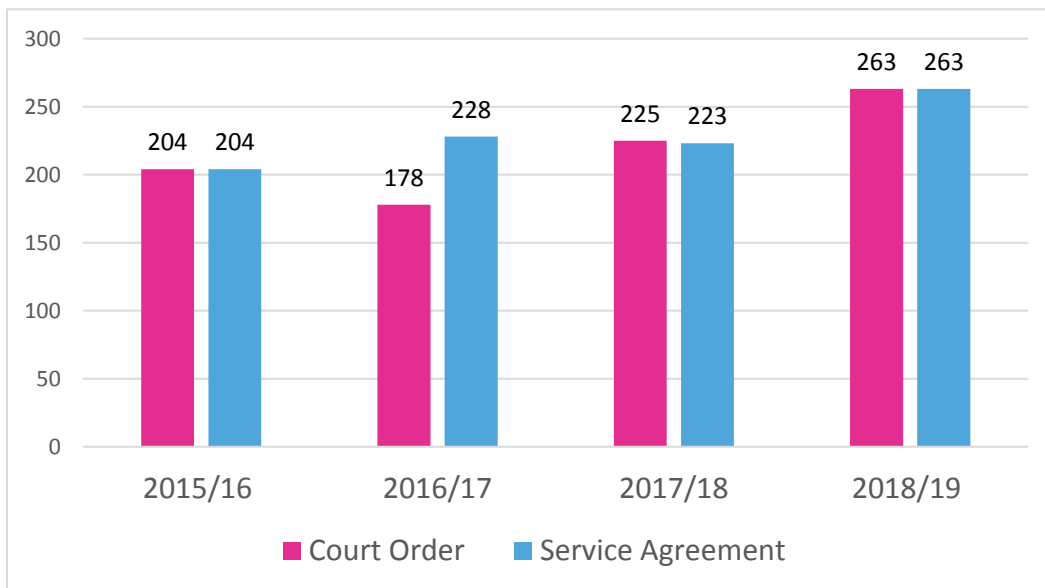
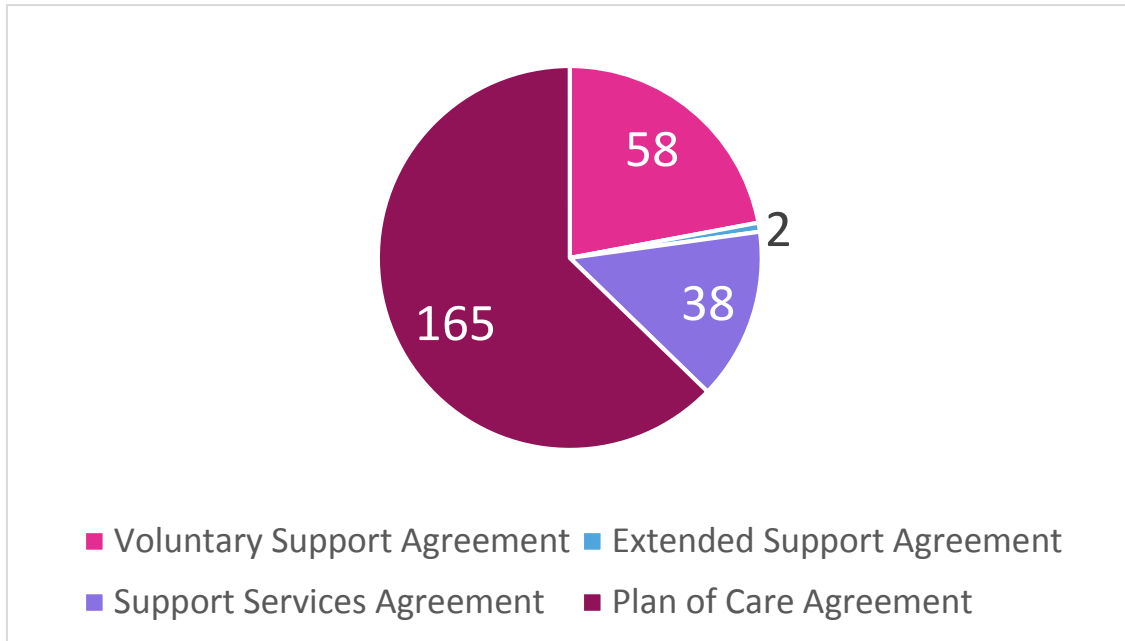


Figure 2 demonstrates that the number of children and youth receiving services by Court Orders and Service Agreements are generally comparable, with the greatest difference in FY 2016/17.

Service Agreements

Figure 3 below describes how many children and youth were receiving services, by Service Agreements, in FY 2018/19.

Figure 3: Number of Children and Youth Receiving Service, by Service Agreement, March 31, 2019

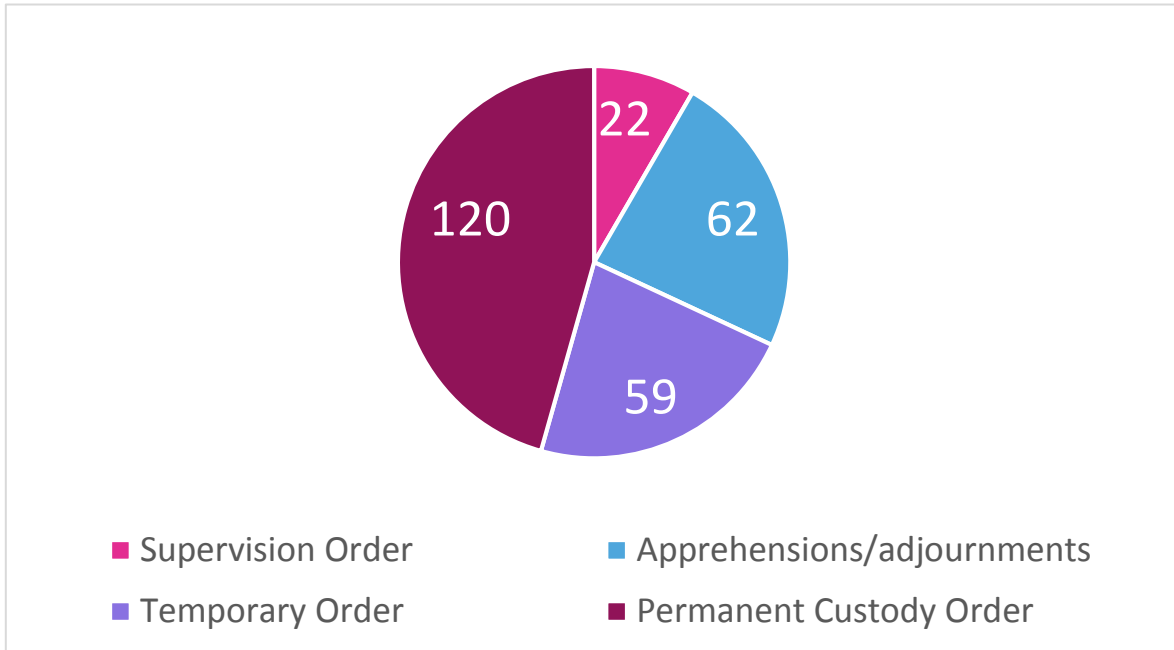


263 children and youth were receiving care through Service Agreements in FY 2018/19. The majority (165) were receiving care through Plan of Care Agreements, which reflects the Department’s attempts to resolve issues with a family in a collaborative manner before seeking court involvement. Where possible, CSSWs will work with families, extended family members, community members, and members of other agencies (i.e., RCMP), in the development of a Plan of Care Agreement, to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to supporting families.

Court Orders

As of March 31, 2019, there were 263 children and youth under Court Orders. Figure 4 on the following page provides a snapshot of the number of children and youth receiving services through Court Orders, including the number of children and youth under apprehension or adjournment statuses. An apprehension is a point in time when a child has been removed from the care of their parent(s). An adjournment order means a Court Order was made to bring the matter back to court on a later date, at which point one of the three types of Court Orders can be issued.

Figure 4: Number of Children and Youth Receiving Service, by Court Order, March 31, 2019



The majority of children and youth (120) were receiving services under Permanent Custody Orders (also known as Permanent Care). This reflects an increase of 16 children under Permanent Care from FY 2017/18. Under the *Child and Family Services Act*, the Department is mandated to seek Permanent Custody Orders for children and youth who have experienced and/or are at persistent risk of abuse, neglect, exposure to family violence, etc. The court is called upon in these cases to deliberate the matter, and either issue or deny the Permanent Custody Order. Typically, when the Department is seeking a Permanent Custody Order, CSSWs have worked previously with the family through Plans of Care and other Court Orders. If the family struggles to meet the agreement and conditions deemed necessary to protect and support a child, the Department must seek a Permanent Custody Order to ensure the child’s ongoing safety and develop a more permanent plan for the child.

Where Children & Youth Receiving Services Live

Figure 5 below reflects the number of children and youth receiving services both in-territory and out-of-territory, from FY 2015/16 to FY 2018/19.

Figure 5: Where Children & Youth Receiving Services Live, from FY 2015/16 – FY 2018/19

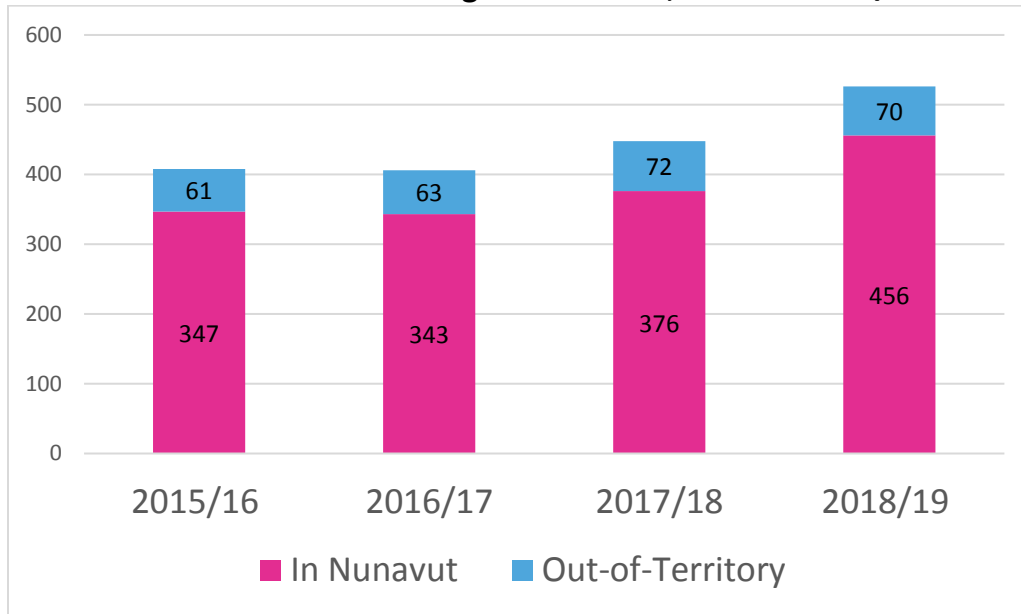
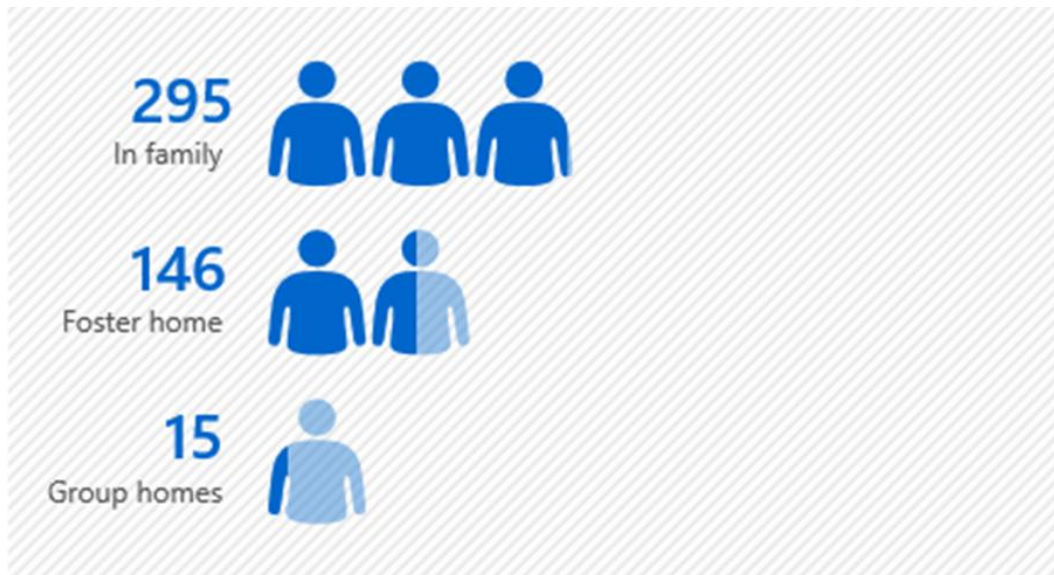


Figure 5 demonstrates a consistent trend that the majority of children and youth receiving services from the Department are in-territory. Additionally, as Figure 6 below demonstrates, the majority of these children remain within their family or extended family (295 or 65%).

Figure 6: Number of Children and Youth Receiving Service In-Territory, March 31, 2019

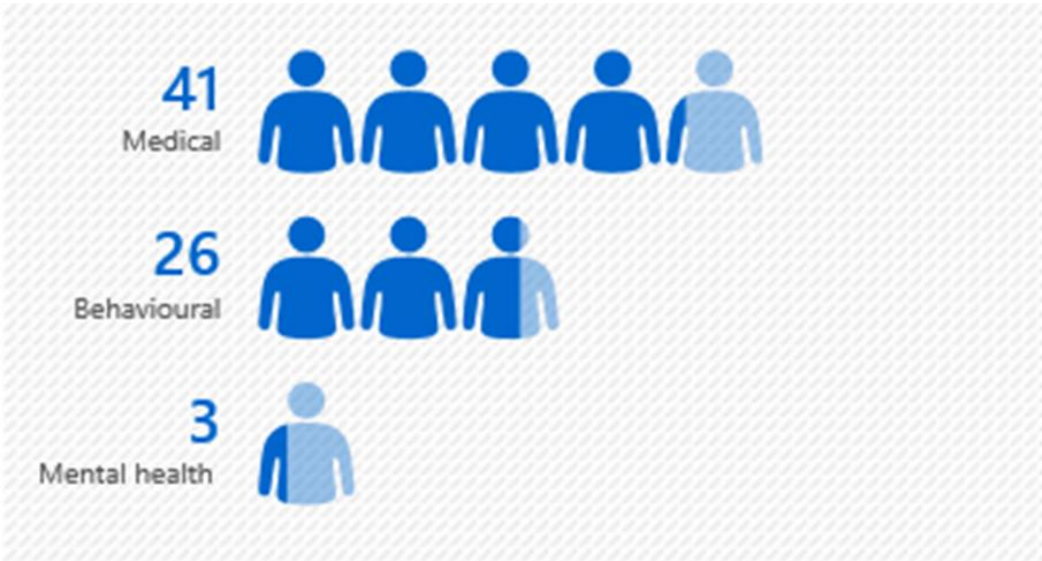


Since FY 2015/16, the number of children and youth residing out-of-territory has ranged from 60 to 70. This number remains consistent, given departmental efforts to keep children and youth

in-territory, whenever possible. The Department will only place a child or youth out-of-territory if the child’s needs cannot be met in-territory, and will collaborate with respective stakeholders to find a suitable placement.

Figure 7 below outlines the specific reasons why children are placed out-of-territory, ranging from mental health or behavioural challenges to medical issues. Where there are mental health and/or medical challenges, the Department will work with the Department of Health to find a suitable placement and supports.

Figure 7: Number of Children and Youth Receiving Services, Out-of-Territory, March 31, 2019



Over the past year, the Department increased its out-of-territory service capacity through the hiring of its Client Liaison Officers (CLOs). The CLOs are responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of the clients, and ensuring services delivered to these clients are reflective of Inuit culture. The CLOs will play an important role in supporting children and youth out-of-territory, and will work with the respective CSSWs to ensure all clients receive adequate and appropriate care as per case plans. The CLOs were both hired in FY 2018/19.

Foster Care

Foster care plays an important role in providing children with a safe, stable and supportive environment until the child or youth’s home is safe, or the Department locates a permanent home. Extended family members or community members can provide short-term foster care for children and youth during emergencies, or long-term foster care until a more permanent plan is developed.

The Department identifies extended family members as the first choice for children requiring foster care services, and provides supports to families to ensure children remain in their home communities. Of the 456 children receiving care in Nunavut, 146 (28%) were in foster homes.

Foster parents receive funding to cover a child’s needs, including recreational costs and allowances for special occasions. Basic per diem rates depend on the community and may be supplemented for children that require specialized foster care. Family members undergo the same screening process as other foster parents, and are eligible for the same supports.

The Department is working to strengthen the foster care program, with the hiring of additional staff responsible for providing training to foster parents, recruiting more foster parents, and providing resources to foster parents.

ADULT SUPPORTS & RESIDENTIAL CARE

Residential care provides placements and supports for adults whose complexity of needs cannot be met by the family or within the community. Residential care includes group homes, which provide 24-hour care, and supported living homes, which offer semi-independent living arrangements for individuals with low needs.

As of March 31, 2019, there were 53 adults receiving care in-territory, and 97 adults receiving care out-of-territory.

Figure 8: Number of Adults Receiving Services, In and Out-of-Territory, March 31, 2019



Nunavut does not have the specialized human resource capacity or infrastructure to support adults with high needs in-territory. As such, the Department must rely on out-of-territory residential care facilities to meet the needs of Nunavummiut who require specialized care. As noted previously, CLOs will play a large role in supporting these adults, ensuring their level of care is adequate, and facilitating cultural connections.

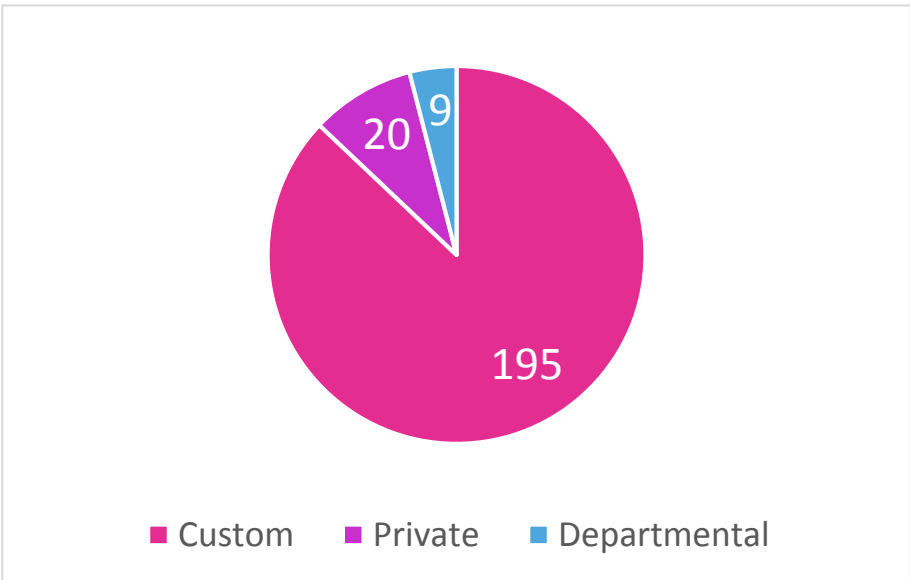
ADOPTIONS

Under the *Adoption Act*, the Department is responsible for processing adoptions, including departmental and private adoptions. Departmental adoptions involve a child being adopted who is in the permanent care and custody of the Director of Child & Family Services by court order. Private adoptions are arranged independently between the birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s) and must meet the requirements of the *Adoption Act*.

The Department also provides support to Custom Adoption Commissioners under the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act (ACARA)*. Although the Department has no direct involvement in the custom adoption process, it is responsible for ACARA, including the appointment, training, and payment of Adoption Commissioners. Under this legislation, custom adoptions are legally registered outside the courtroom and without legal proceedings, with the assistance of an appointed Custom Adoption Commissioner.

In FY 2018/19, there were 195 custom adoptions registered in Nunavut, an increase of 64 custom adoptions from FY 2017/18.

Figure 9: Number of Adoptions in Nunavut, March 31, 2019



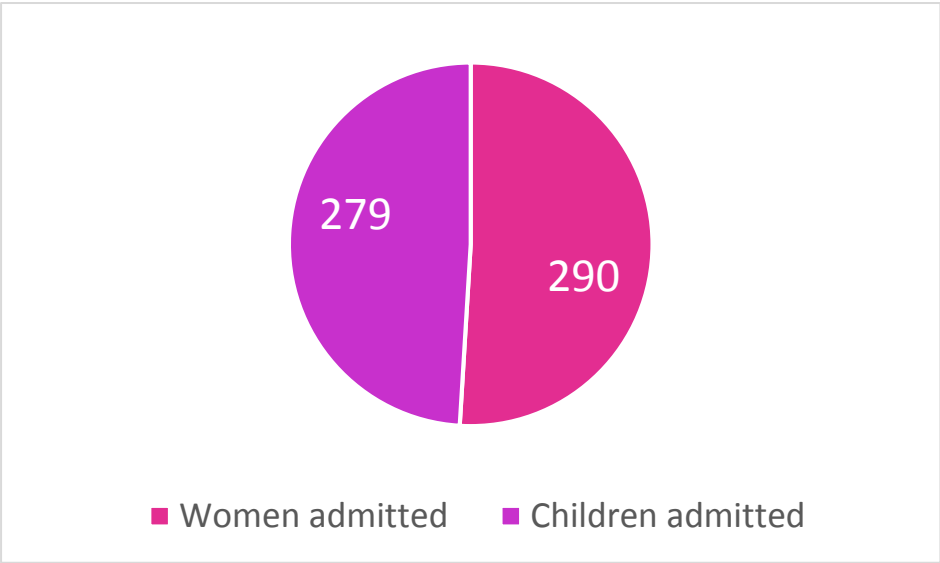
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Shelters

Family Violence Shelters provide a critical service to women and children seeking 24-hour emergency protection from violence. Admission to a shelter can be made through self-referral or community professionals, including CSSWs. CSSWs also play a critical role in family violence intervention in communities by facilitating safety planning, referrals to other services, and transportation to a safe location.

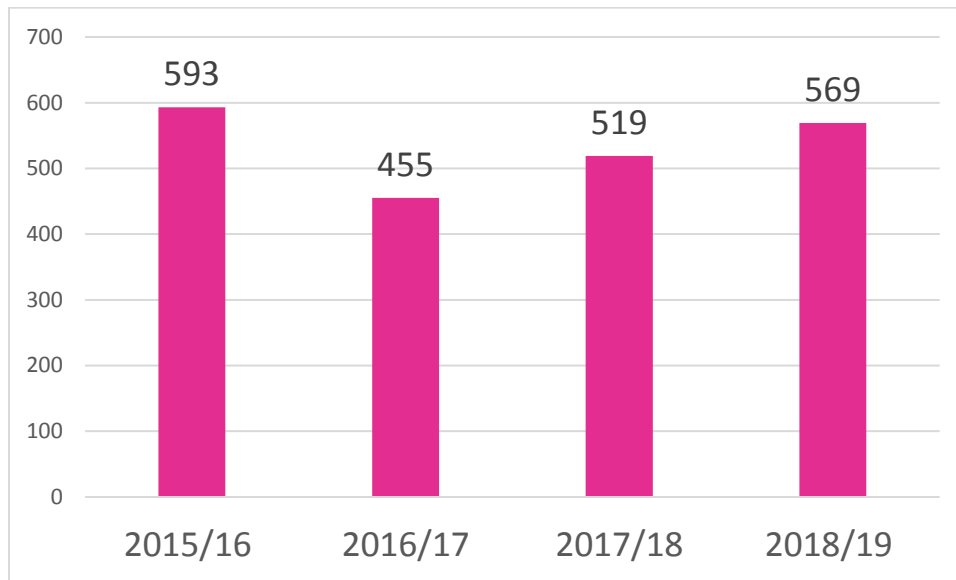
For FY 2018/19, the Department provided \$2,601,000 to five Family Violence Shelters in Nunavut. 569 clients accessed the shelters, including 279 children and 290 women.

Figure 10: Persons Admitted to Family Violence Shelters, FY 2018/19



The number of women and children who have accessed Family Violence Shelters since FY 2015/16 has remained fairly consistent, the lowest being in FY 2016/17, with 455 clients, and the highest being in FY 2015/16, with 593.

Figure 11: Persons Admitted to Family Violence Shelters, from FY 2015/16 – FY 2018/19



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Implementing Structured-Decision Making

Throughout FY 2018/19, the Department worked to incorporate Structured Decision Making (SDM) into its child protection investigations. SDM is a system that supports staff in making consistent, accurate, and equitable decisions when conducting child protection investigations. The system contains a series of assessment tools designed to protect the safety and wellbeing of children by focusing not only on the needs of the family, but also on the strengths. SDM is recognized as best practice in child protection, and will foster a more positive approach to child protection delivered under Nunavut’s *Child and Family Services Act*.

SDM is being incorporated into the new Client Information System (CIS). It is expected that SDM will be fully utilized by staff in FY 2019/20, once the CIS is implemented.

Community Coordination for Women’s Safety

For FY 2019/20, the Department was successful in obtaining additional funds to strengthen prevention services, advocacy services, and expand emergency supports for women and children fleeing violence. Specifically, this includes additional funding for:

- Qullit Nunavut Status of Women so they can hire an additional staff person to assist in advocacy services and strengthening Nunavut’s voice when it comes to gender-based violence;
- Qimaavik Shelter in Iqaluit, to increase staffing levels and programming;

- The safe home program; and
- Strengthening coordination services to support individuals and families at high risk of harm due to family violence.

Strengthening the Foster Parent Program

In FY 2018/19, the Department was successful in obtaining funding for three (3) Foster Parent Program Coordinators, who will be responsible for recruiting foster parents, and supporting foster families through training and resource support.

The Department is working to develop a foster parent training program, which will be initiated in the coming year. The training program will be based on a Nunavut version of P.R.I.D.E. (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education). The P.R.I.D.E Foster/Adopt Pre-Service Training Program is a training program for prospective foster and adoptive parents and is a model for the development and support of resource families. It is designed to strengthen the quality of family foster care and adoption services by providing a standardized, structured framework for recruiting, preparing, and selecting foster parents and adoptive parents. It also provides foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development. The program will be trauma-informed and launched as a pilot in FY 2019/20.

Note on Data Collection

The data in this report came from monthly summaries provided by frontline staff. All efforts are made to provide accurate information until the CIS is fully operational.