



## Introduction

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Thank you for allowing us to appear before you on April 10, 2019 to discuss the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 Annual Reports of the Representative for Children and Youth Annual reports.

The Government of Nunavut recognizes the Representative for Children and Youth Office's mandate in protecting the rights and advancing the interests of young Nunavummiut, and appreciate the opportunity to reflect on and respond to the recommendations the Standing Committee.

The government remains committed to working together to ensure that quality government services and programming are accessible to children, youth, families, and the communities they reside in.

Below you will find responses to recommendations #3 and #4 which details the Government of Nunavut's (GN) activities and initiatives to address the needs of our children and youth.

### **Standing Committee Recommendation #3:**

*The standing committee recommends that in the spirit of piliriqatigiinniq (working together for a common cause) and aajiiqatigiinniq (decision making through discussion and consensus) the Government of Nunavut work towards establishing a comprehensive interdepartmental protocol for the coordination of government services for young people across Nunavut.*

*The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report, indicate which Ministry will take the lead in developing the interdepartmental communication protocol regarding services for children and youth and what will be the timeline will be for its implementation.*

### **Response:**

GN agencies are committed to working together to ensure the coordination of government services for children and youth across the territory. The GN's *Interagency Information Sharing Protocol* and *Working Together: The Nunavut Interagency Information Sharing Protocol Training Manual* supports departmental coordination and information sharing efforts.

With the experience of developing the *Interagency Information Sharing Protocol*, the GN is now in the process of developing a comprehensive interdepartmental protocol for the coordination of services.

The Departments of Health and Family Services are co-leading this work as the co-chairs of the Inuusivut Committee (formerly the Quality of Life Committee), and it is anticipated that the protocol will be finalized by June 2020.

While work is underway to establish a protocol for the coordination of services, GN departments continue to work together to identify and connect resources and supports within communities to support childhood development.

One example of this collaboration is the partnership between the Departments of Health and Education to offer a multi-day pilot training program to mental health outreach workers and Iliniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit school counsellors together in February 2020. The purpose of this training is to increase participants' competence and confidence in providing mental health interventions, while working together to enhance school-based programs and improve access to community services.

**Standing Committee Recommendation #4:**

*The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide an explanation of what specific factors have led to a lack of resources being allocated to child and youth services and indicate what specific new investments will be included in upcoming budget allocations that will be dedicated to supporting comprehensive child and youth services across Government of Nunavut departments.*

**Response:**

The Government of Nunavut is committed to delivering a continuum of services within the territory to support children, youth, and families, while making new investments to enhance services and address the priorities identified in *Turaaqtavut*.

New budget allocations are made with children and youth in mind as they comprise half of Nunavut's population. The GN's infrastructure and social programming investments will have a lasting impact on Nunavummiut throughout the lifespan. The following includes a few of the budget highlights from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with investments that have an impact on children and youth.

**Budget 2017-18:**

- \$6.6 M to establish the Quality of Life Secretariat within the Department of Health to support community and wellness organizations, operate mobile trauma response units, support the Embrace Life Council, and help fund a 24-hour crisis help line.
- \$2.5 M to expand community-based mental health and addictions services.
- \$1.3 M to Nunavut Arctic College to help fund its Social Worker and Early Childhood Education programs.

- \$850,000 to improve education support services offered to students and their families.

#### Budget 2018-19:

- \$22.7 M to strengthen Income Assistance to ensure food allowance covers the basic living expenses for households and fairly represents differences in the cost of living between communities.
- \$11.9 M to fund and additional 40.5 teacher positions, as well as an additional \$1.4 M to staff the new school in Igloolik.
- \$5.8 M to expand Nunavut's tuberculosis prevention and control program.
- \$1.8 M to develop a cannabis harm-reduction program and to train health care providers in communities in order to promote the health and safety of Nunavummiut, especially for children and youth.

#### Budget 2019-20:

- \$4.6 M in funding for the in-territory addictions and trauma treatment Nunavut Recovery Centre. On August 19, 2019, the GN, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Indigenous Services Canada signed a Joint Declaration of Intent concerning the funding commitments for the construction and operation of the Nunavut Recovery Centre as part of a three pillar approach to trauma and addiction treatment in Nunavut.
- \$2.7 M to expand the Medical Travel Program to allow guardians who are travelling as an escort for a child to bring an infant with them while on medical travel, and expanded escort benefits for women who must travel to give birth outside of their home community.
- \$2.0 M to strengthen emergency shelters, set up transitional housing for women, and improve emergency services for women and children.
- \$0.7 M to create more clinical positions in communities for the screening and testing of TB.
- \$0.6 M in new funding to support the planning of a pediatric unit at the Qikiqtani General Hospital.

In addition to the budget allocations outlined above, the Government of Nunavut, in partnership with the Arctic Child and Youth Foundation, has made direct investments in the Umingmak Children and Youth Support Centre, which is a one-stop centre that provides a safe, culturally informed, child-friendly environment where agencies can deliver services in a collaborative way to child victims of abuse.

Our government looks forward to providing updates to the Standing Committee on our efforts and successes around the delivery of services to Nunavut's children and youth, as we increase our capacities and improve service delivery.