

2023-2024

CALLING FOR CHANGE

Investigative Reviews Report Summary

Between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) released 48 investigative reviews for children and youth who had been involved with the child intervention system: 47 for young people who had passed away and 1 for a young person who was seriously injured.

Of the 48 young people reviewed:

35

were Indigenous, highlighting how colonial policies and practices continue to impact Indigenous people through the over-involvement of government systems in their lives.

26

had mental health and/or substance use challenges and were impacted by significant trauma, grief, and loss.

12

were between the ages of 18 - 22 years old and many struggled with their transition to adulthood due to complex needs and limited supports.

This report focuses on:

Resilience and Community Supports

Community-based, culturally grounded services and supports that continue beyond a young person's time in the system can foster resilience, reduce the impact of adverse experiences, and promote well-being.

Mental Health and Substance Use

It is important young people know in real time what services and supports are available, and the criteria to access various programs.

Post-18 Supports

Youth in government care are especially vulnerable. As their guardian, the government has a responsibility to help ensure they transition to adulthood successfully.

Read the full report: ocya.alberta.ca/reports

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Advocate made five recommendations to improve services and supports and promote the well-being and resilience of young people involved with the child intervention and youth justice systems.

1

The Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction, Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Seniors, Community and Social Services should each conduct an annual assessment to identify the supports they fund that are provided at a community level.

2

The Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction, Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Seniors, Community and Social Services should each strengthen coordination between funded services that are provided at a community level both within their respective ministry and between ministries.

3

The Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction, Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Seniors, Community and Social Services should each strengthen navigation between funded services that are provided at a community level both within their respective ministry and between ministries.

4

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction should publicly post mental health and addiction service options available to children and youth along with their wait times.

5

The Ministry of Children and Family Services should review and revise the supports provided under the Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP).

“My hope is that with the implementation of these recommendations, young people with similar circumstances will have better outcomes.”

Terri Pelton, Child and Youth Advocate