



17-YEAR-OLD EDWARD

AN INVESTIGATIVE REVIEW

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Alberta
May 2026

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Under my authority and duty as identified in Section 9(2)(d) of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA)*, the following is an individual investigative review regarding Edward. His circumstances meet the criteria for a **systemic review**. Edward and his family had received Child Intervention through Assessment within two years of his passing.

Investigative reviews are designed to improve the lives of young people by identifying ways to enhance services and supports, leading to system improvements and better outcomes for young people and their families. Releasing individual reviews ensures that each young person's circumstance is reported in a consistent manner and provides increased transparency and public accountability. I believe that this is in the public interest. I will review and report annually on themes identified across the investigative reviews and include recommendations.

The investigation process includes:

- Examination of critical issues
- Review of documentation and reports
- Review of policy and casework practice
- Personal interviews
- Other factors that may arise for consideration
- Notification and involvement of the young person's family, Band, Delegated First Nation Agency, community or cultural group, relevant Ministry, law enforcement agency, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Alberta Health Services, and any other person the Advocate considers appropriate.

In accordance with the *CYAA*, investigative reviews must be non-identifying. Therefore, the names used in these reports are pseudonyms (false names). Great care has been taken to protect their privacy; however, there is no guarantee that interested parties will be unable to identify them. Accordingly, readers and interested parties, including the media, should respect this privacy and not focus on identifying the individuals and locations involved in these matters.

Investigative reviews do not contain findings of legal responsibility or conclusions of law nor replace other processes that may occur, such as investigations or prosecutions under the *Criminal Code* of Canada. The intent of a review is not to find fault with specific individuals but to identify key issues and meaningful findings.

Edward's experiences were unique, and he left a lasting impression on those who knew and loved him. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family and those who cared about Edward.

Respectfully,

[Original signed by Terri Pelton]

Terri Pelton

Child and Youth Advocate (Alberta)

ABOUT EDWARD AND HIS FAMILY

Edward¹ was 17 years old when he was involved in an accident. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner concluded that he died as a result of those injuries.² Edward and his family had received Child Intervention through an **Assessment**³ within two years of his passing.

Edward was a young First Nation man who enjoyed playing basketball and wanted to become a firefighter. He loved to spend time with his family, friends, and his daughter, Kaya. Prior to his birth, his mother, Joan, made arrangements for him to be raised by his aunt and uncle, Lydia and Albert. They lived in their First Nation and were also foster parents.

SUMMARY OF EDWARD'S EXPERIENCES WITH GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS

Edward from Birth to 12 Years Old

Edward was born healthy and was discharged to Lydia's care. She and Albert later adopted him. Little is known about the education services Edward received in his First Nation.

In his first nine years, Edward was taken to the hospital multiple times for minor illnesses. Each time, he was treated and discharged home. Once, he was transferred to the city because of an injury to his wrist from a bike accident.

When Edward was ten years old, Child Intervention received a report about failure to protect from sexual abuse. Concerns were related to an allegation made by a foster child in Lydia and Albert's home. The concerns were not substantiated, and involvement ended.

Edward from 13 to 17 Years Old

Little is known about the education services Edward received in his First Nation during this time. In Grades 9 and 10, Edward's school attendance was sporadic, and his teachers were unable to assess his learning.

At 15 years old, Edward became a father. He, his girlfriend, Nina, and their daughter, Kaya, lived with Lydia, who helped provide care. At times, Edward and Nina took turns going to school so one of them could stay home to look after their daughter, and he worked part-time to help provide for Kaya. He did not attend school regularly nor complete assignments. It is not known if he received supports to engage him in his education.

That same year, Edward was taken to the hospital twice because of accidental injuries. Each time, he was treated and discharged home. Six months later, Child Intervention received a report about emotional injury. Lydia and Albert had separated, and she had difficulty meeting her children's basic needs. She was referred to community-based supports, and involvement ended.

When Edward was 16 years old, Child Intervention received a report about emotional injury related to a physical altercation between intoxicated adults in the home. Additional concerns were received about inadequate food and heating. Edward was a minor, and separate Assessments were completed for both him and Kaya to consider their individual needs. Caseworkers developed safety plans with Edward and his family that included not allowing people in the home who used alcohol. The concerns related to neglect were not addressed, and Edward did not receive supports for himself nor for Kaya.

Several weeks later, 17-year-old Edward was involved in an accident and passed away. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner concluded that he died as a result of his injuries. A funeral was held in his honour. Edward's family, friends, and those who knew and loved him continue to grieve his loss.

1. All names in the report are pseudonyms.
2. Details about Edward's death are not provided to protect his privacy.
3. Bolded terms are defined in Appendix A.

TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Birth to 12 Years Old	13 to 17 Years Old
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth – 9 Years Old<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Born premature· Adopted by aunt and uncle· Several hospital visits for minor illnesses and injuries• 10 Years Old<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Child Intervention involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 – 14 Years Old<ul style="list-style-type: none">· School attendance declined• 15 Years Old<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 2 hospital visits for injured arm· Daughter born· Child Intervention involvement• 16 - 17 Years Old<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Attendance remained sporadic· Child Intervention involvement <p>17-year-old Edward passed away</p>

FINDINGS

Children and Family Services

Child Intervention was involved with Edward twice in his first 15 years because of failure to protect from sexual abuse and emotional injury. The concerns were either not substantiated or the family was appropriately referred to community-based supports before involvements ended.

When Edward was 16 years old, Child Intervention received a report about emotional injury. Additional concerns related to neglect were received. The family agreed to a safety plan to address the emotional injury; however, the concerns related to neglect were not mitigated prior to the involvement ending. Although a separate Assessment was completed for Edward, both as a child-in-need and as a guardian to Kaya, he did not receive direct services for himself nor for Kaya. The Enhancement Policy Manual outlines that minor parents require additional emotional and physical support and have unique needs and challenges. Edward would have benefited from services that supported him as a child in need, as well as a minor parent.

The Ministry of Children and Family Services has been notified that an internal review of Edward's circumstances may be beneficial to determine if improvements are required to strengthen adherence to policy and practice standards to support minor parents.

Health

Little is known about the health services Edward received in his First Nation. He went to the hospital several times for minor illnesses and injuries. When his community health centre did not have the capacity to address his medical needs, he was appropriately transferred to the city to receive care.

Education

Little is known about the education services Edward received in his First Nation. In Grade 9, his attendance began to decline, and by high school, it became sporadic. It is not known if he received supports to engage him in his education.

THEMES TO TRACK

1. Implementation and consistency of policy and practice expectations

Policy and practice standards outlined in the Enhancement Policy Manual related to supporting minor parents was not met.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

Assessment

The gathering and analysis of information to determine whether a child is in need of intervention under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

Systemic Review

Under the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, the Advocate may conduct a public review when a young person is seriously injured or dies while (or within two years of) receiving designated services (*Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* Intakes, Assessments, post-18 supports, was in open or closed custody under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, and/or involvement under the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*) to determine if systemic issues are present.

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