



Questions & Answers Report of the Director of Child and Family Services, 2018-2019

Questions and Answers about the report:

Q: Why is there a 'Report of the Director of Child and Family Services'?

A: The Child and Family Services Act states that the Director of Child and Family Services prepare and submit an annual report to the Minister. The report is due every year on October 1.

Q: What is in the 'Report of the Director of Child and Family Services'?

A: The *Child and Family Services Regulations* state that the report must capture a fiscal year on the administration of the *Act* and share statistics on children in the temporary and permanent custody of the Director. The report must also list the number of children placed in permanent custody for purposes of adoption and display information on plan of care agreements and all voluntary support services agreements. It can also report on any initiatives in child and family services at the territorial and community level.

Q: How are the statistics generated for the 'Report of the Director of Child and Family Services'?

A: This year, the data is generated from the new information system; Matrix NT. Adoptions and Extended Support Services Agreement information is documented and extracted manually.

Q: Will the new child and family information system be able to produce the same statistics?

A: The new child and family information system (Matrix NT) is a different system with different reporting abilities. While some indicators are comparable to previous statistics, there are many new and interesting statistics available. For example, we are able to provide statistics on the reasons people are requesting voluntary services. We are also able to provide statistics on the type of abuse and neglect concerns that are being reported.

Due to the shift from child-level (individual) to household-level (family) assessments, there were challenges related to measuring individual child-level service statuses. Therefore, some data are not comparable to previous years. As a result, trends in time were only analyzed where an effective comparison could be made.

Q: What changes will be made to Child and Family Services as a result of the report?

A: The report will enable the Department to monitor trends to assess whether changes made in the Child and Family Services System are potentially making a difference for the wellbeing of children, youth and families in the Northwest Territories. The data in the report also helps us to grow a more responsive system to the evolving needs of children, youth, and families in the Northwest Territories.

Q: How are the charts interpreted within the report?

A: Every chart is designed to show data from the current reporting period (fiscal year). Each chart provides a snapshot of child and family services trends and is explained in the interpretation of the data analysis at the bottom of each figure.

Questions and Answers about the content:

Q: Why aren't 10 year trends examined in this report?

A: As a result of the change from the Child and Family Information System (CFIS) to Matrix NT, there was a shift from child-level (individual) to household-level (family) assessments. This has brought challenges related to measuring individual child-level service statuses and; therefore, some data is not comparable to previous years. As a result, trends in time were only analyzed where an effective comparison could be made.

Q: What 10 year trends were analyzed and what were the results?

A: We were able to analyze 10 year trends for the number of children in the permanent care and custody of the Director. The results show a continued trend over the past ten years of a decrease in the number of children in the permanent care and custody of the Director.

Q: Why are there fewer children in permanent care?

A: There has been a decrease in permanent custody orders which has led to an overall decrease of children in permanent care.

Although we cannot say with certainty, the decline of children in permanent care may reflect the discussions Child Protection Workers have with families that review alternatives to prevent the child from becoming a permanent ward of the Director. This could include Custom Adoptions, Guardianship Agreements or Plan of Care Agreements.

Q: What are voluntary support services? What are protection services?

A: Voluntary support services allow families to access supports and services to strengthen families and address or prevent child protection concerns. When child protection concerns cannot be adequately addressed in this way, a child protection order may be sought from the court to ensure the safety of the child. If a Child Protection Worker and the family can reach an agreement outside of the court system, then a Plan of Care Agreement is offered. Voluntary support services include Voluntary Services Agreements, Support Services Agreements and Extended Support Service Agreements. Protection services include Interim, Supervision, Temporary and Permanent Custody Orders.

Examples of services provided under both Voluntary Services Agreements and Plan of Care Agreements include counselling, addictions treatment, temporary foster or respite care, and financial or material assistance such as food or rent. Support Services Agreements address the needs of youth, who are not in need of protection, but nevertheless require supportive services such as counselling, housing supports or addictions treatment.

Q: Are the majority of children receiving services Indigenous?

A: The majority of children and youth receiving voluntary and protection services are Indigenous. In 2018-19, 79% of children receiving services were First Nations, 15% were Inuit, 5% were Metis and 1% were non-Indigenous. This does not mean that the majority of Indigenous children are receiving care.