

**Standing Committee on Oversight of  
Government Operations and Public  
Accounts  
Televised Hearing on the 2024-2025 and  
2025-2026 Annual Reports of the  
Representative for Children and Youth  
September 25, 2026**

**Members Present:**

Fred Pedersen, Chair  
Edward Attagutaluk, Co-Chair  
Johnny Mike  
David Porter  
Steven Taqtu  
Gordon Kautuq  
Abraham Qammaniq  
Hanna Angootealuk  
Simon Kuliktana

**Staff Members:**

Alex Baldwin  
Wendy Bens

**Interpreters:**

Blandina Tulugarjuk  
Andrew Dialla  
Mary Nashook  
Jacopoosie Peter  
Kataisee Attagutsiak

**Witnesses:**

Jane Bates, Representative for Children and Youth

Jarrett Parker, Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services, Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

Anna Fowler, Deputy Minister, Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs

Jonathan Ellsworth, Deputy Minister, Department of Family Services

Clayton Greaves, Assistant Deputy Minister, Family Wellness, Department of Family Services

Megan Leslie, Director of Family Wellness, Statutory and Strategic Initiatives, Department of Family Services

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Megan Hunt, Deputy Minister, Department of Health  
Victoria Madsen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Inuusivut  
Rebecca Hainnu, Deputy Minister, Department of Education  
Shannon Spendlove-Robidas, Director of Student Achievement, Department of Education  
Christine Ellsworth, Deputy Minister, Department of Justice  
Andrew Blackadar, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety, Department of Justice

>> *Committee commenced at 9:00*

**Mr. Pedersen:** Good morning, and welcome back to the Standing Committee meeting on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts. We'll continue our televised hearing on the 2024-2025 and 2025-26 for Children and Youth. Before we get started, Ms. Angootealuk, can you say an opening prayer, please. Thank you.

>>Prayer

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angootealuk. Just a note for everybody. Mr. Kablutsiak had to leave today for constituency business back in Arviat, so he won't be with us for the remainder of the hearing. And Mr. Porter has a quick medical appointment this morning, so he'll be in later on.

Before we commence with the scheduled questions, I believe Ms. Bates had some reflections on some of the testimony from yesterday, and she would like to make a few comments on that. And once she's done, if any government representatives would like to do the same, I'll open the floor to the government after Ms. Bates is done. So, Ms. Bates, go ahead, please. Thank you.

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**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. After considering yesterday's proceedings, I would like to clarify two answers I provided and share several observations. Yesterday a member asked whether I believe Nunavut is facing a child sexual abuse crisis. Department of Justice cited 381 registered sex offenders. Considering that figure and the information available to me in 2023, my answer is yes, I believe Nunavut is facing a child sexual abuse crisis. I did not consider the registered sex offender figure when I answered yesterday and I felt I did not provide a definitive answer.

I was also asked about our outstanding critical injury reviews. I did not explain that delays in completing these reviews have resulted from the volume of complaints to our office requiring immediate attention and the RCYO's limited staffing. Because of that volume, all RCYO staff, including me, are currently assigned individual advocacy cases. We hope to complete the outstanding reviews by the end of this fiscal year. I apologize for not providing fully considered answers to those two questions yesterday.

In his Opening Comments, the Deputy Minister of Family Services referred to standard 117 and the GN RCYO protocol as the framework for the Department's work with the RCYO. I would like to provide some context about how that standard was developed.

Standard 117 replaced standard 702. The Department provided standard 702 to our office in November 2025 after it had already been finalized and implemented. We had not been consulted about a standard concerning our office. The original finalized standard, 702, inaccurately described the RCYO's statutory authority and did not accurately reflect the response timelines agreed to in the GN RCYO protocol.

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I raised these concerns with the Deputy Minister in December 2025 and asked that the Department withdraw and revise the standard. The Department did not agree to withdraw the standard, but did engage in a collaborative process to develop a new standard 117, which took effect on March 30, 2026.

Yesterday a member asked me what needs to change in the GN RCYO protocol. I feel that my response was inadequate. The current issue is not the wording of the protocol. It is the Department of Family Services' interpretation of the RCYO's statutory powers and its application of the protocol. It also raises broader concerns about the Department's approach to child protection.

Section 29E of the protocol states that the RCYO can be included in case planning meetings, mediations, and other decision-making processes. Section 30C confirms that our role includes participating directly in planning processes with or on behalf of children and youth to ensure that their views are heard and considered and the rights are upheld.

In one individual advocacy matter, we were concerned that decisions were being made that were not in the young person's best interests. We asked to attend the case management meetings where those decisions were being discussed and made. The Department took the position that the RCYO could be excluded, that Family Wellness would decide when our participation was appropriate. The Department stated, "effective child protection case management requires independence and deliberative environments where professionals can critically evaluate evidence." And it referred to the need for "a protected space for objective professional discussion."

This statement by the Department was the basis for my comment yesterday that the system we

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encounter is closed, institutionally controlled, authority-based, and it operates without sufficient transparency and accountability.

Under the Department's interpretation, it can discuss and decide what it believes is best for a young person without the advocate responsible for protecting that young person's rights present, and then inform the RCYO much its decision.

This is a common practice we see. Case management occurs and decisions made about children and families rather than with them. The issue, therefore, is whether the Department can control when the RCYO may participate in meetings connected to an active review. It also raises serious concerns about why discussions and decisions affecting a young person would need to be protected from scrutiny by the independent office reviewing the matter and advocating for that young person.

In my experience, effective child-centred, family-focused case management in child protection requires collaboration and open, transparent discussions with young people, their parents, extended families, foster parents, advocates and the service providers involved with that family. Decisions should be made with them and informed by their knowledge and perspectives so that families are supported and children are protected.

Yesterday a member read from previous Standing Committee proceedings in which Family Services had raised concerns about the volume of the Representative for Children and Youth Office information requests. The Assistant Deputy Minister attributed delays in providing information to three factors: workers not understanding why certain records were requested, workers checking other workers' records for accuracy, and the Department's centralized process for responding to RCYO requests.

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To be clear, when we review a matter, we examine events and departmental work that have already occurred. The records we request should have been created when the work was performed. We are not asking the Department to create case documentation after the fact. Under standard 501, case documentation, case notes must be completed within 48 hours. Under standard 202, investigations, a protection investigation, including all required documentation, must be concluded within 30 days of being assigned. The information we request should therefore already exist.

In many cases, we have seen case notes created, agreements signed and investigation reports completed only after we notify the Department that we were conducting a review or requesting a specific document. In those cases, the additional work or volume arose because records had not been completed in accordance with departmental standards, not because the Representative for Children and Youth Office requested them.

In recognition of the volume of requests, in 2025 we asked for access to the Department's Matrix system where case records are kept. This would allow us to obtain records directly and reduce the burden on frontline staff. We have not yet received a response.

Finally, I want to clarify the critical injury figures in our 2024-2025 Annual Report. The Department submitted 395 reports to our office. On review, 134 met the RCYO's definition of a critical injury. The Assistant Deputy Minister attributed the discrepancy to a difference in classification. However, standard 506 requires the Department to report only level 4 incidences, the most serious incidences, to the RCYO.

We identified that the issue was not classification. The Department's quality

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assurance process was not reviewing the reports before submitting them; it was simply forwarding the reports received from the regions directly to our office. That is why 261 of the 395 reports did not qualify as critical injuries. The discrepancy, again, was not the result of a classification issue; it resulted from a lack of quality assurance.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide these clarifications, observations and additional information. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates, for that information provided. Would anyone from the government have anything to say on this or reflections on yesterday? Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Ms. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't take this time, Mr. Chair, to challenge the Representative's positions with respect to the matters she's outlined, but would very much appreciate the opportunity to respond to those comments in writing following the conclusion of these hearings.

But if you will, Mr. Chair, I would like to supplement my earlier response to the representative's characterization that the Division of Family Wellness is failing in its objectives, if I may.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to begin by being clear. I'm not seeking to minimize any of the concerns raised by the representative. There are areas where the Department needs to be better. We have acknowledged deficiencies in practice, documentation, consistency and oversight, and we have an obligation to address them. But I do want to respectfully challenge the broader characterization that Family Services is failing.

Earlier in the proceedings, Mr. Chair, a member spoke about social workers in his community

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who are effectively working around the clock and reaching the point of burnout. I think that observation is important. These are the same people we are talking about when we talk about the Family Wellness Division. Behind the findings, numbers and recommendations discussed during these hearings are social workers, supervisors, income assistance workers, community staff, and others who are responding to very difficult circumstances every single day.

In some communities they are doing so with vacancies, limited housing, limited placement options, and very few people available to share the workload, as we've heard. They continue to answer the telephone when there's a crisis. They continue to respond when a child needs protection. They continue to support families, despite the extraordinary demands being placed upon them.

Mr. Chair, that does not mean that we should lower our standards, nor does dedication excuse a failure to meet a statutory obligation or an appropriate standard of practice. Where we fall short, we need to acknowledge it and correct it. But I think there's an important distinction between identifying deficiencies in a system and characterizing the entire division as failing. I am concerned about what broad statements like that communicate to employees who may already be working extraordinarily long hours, carrying difficult case loads, and trying their very best under circumstances that the committee has itself heard can lead to burnout. They need to know that accountability does not mean their efforts are invisible.

As Deputy Minister, Mr. Chair, I have a responsibility for the shortcomings of this Department. I also have a responsibility to the employees who come to work everyday and continue delivering these very important services. I do not think those responsibilities are inconsistent. We can acknowledge where

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the system has fallen short, accept criticism and make changes, while also recognizing the commitment and professionalism of the people doing this extraordinarily difficult work.

The representative has an important statutory role, Mr. Chair, in identifying concerns and advocating for children and youth, and we respect that role. The Department has a responsibility to respond to those concerns and demonstrate improvement. There may be occasions when we disagree with a particular finding or characterization or interpretation, and I believe it is appropriate to say so respectfully.

So I would ask the committee to assess this against the complete record of these proceedings. Where standards have not been met, what has contributed to those circumstances? What corrective actions have been taken to date? And what progress has been achieved? And importantly, what remains to be done?

I'm not suggesting, Mr. Chair, that Family Services is where it needs to be. It is not. And there's significant work ahead of us. But I would respectfully distinguish that from saying that we are failing.

I see a system under enormous pressure. I see areas that require substantial improvement, but I also see people working incredibly hard to keep that system functioning and to support children and families across Nunavut.

We should be held accountable for where we fall short, but accountability should also be fair, evidence-based, and recognize the people who are carrying this work every day. I think we owe that both to the children and families who deserve better outcomes and to the employees who are working so hard to achieve those outcomes, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. And all of the comments that have been made and continue to be made have been noted and are on record, and we'll now proceed with our hearing.

Today we're starting on the theme of systemic reviews and individual advocacy activities. Oh, sorry. Ms. Ellsworth, you had a statement to make as well. Go ahead.

**Ms. Ellsworth** (interpretation): *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman. (Interpretation ends) I just wanted to make a clarification of the number that we presented yesterday under the National Sex Offender Registry. There is a total of 387, but I want to be clear that of those 230 offenders were convicted are against children and youth. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Ellsworth. Any other government departments wishing to speak at this time before we proceed? Ms. Hainnu, go ahead.

**Ms. Hainnu:** Thank you. Good morning. Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity. I want to commend my colleagues. This is a difficult -- including RCYO as my colleague. Representative for Children and Youth officials do work very hard, and they are working under -- with some vacancies. Same can be said about the government offices, including the Department of Education.

However, these televised hearings, I want to articulate, and even though we all understand that the purpose of the televised hearing, hearing from the representative for Children and Youth, that you have a role in this, and that we can be called to do better to incorporate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in our practices. It's both ways. That accountability is both ways.

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How we work together, that's up to us. And so if there's something that is not working in terms of our relationship with the Office of the Representative, then it's both parties need to come together to come to a better understanding.

And I think the agreement attempts to do that, and the majority of the time it does work. I heard my colleagues, and I want to summarize something a little bit and maybe if I'm not, I will stand corrected. But to be anti-government, to be anti-service, anti-program that is run by governments, the reputational damage is quite harmful, and I hope we are mindful of this that as it pertains to Education, you know, Education is bad or Family Services is bad, or Justice practices are bad. Anti-government general statements are very harmful.

We are recipients of services that we are receiving the services and programs that are run by these departments. We are temporarily here, and I hope that you will see that there is -- we're open to criticism. I always -- Ms. Bates I called her and she's called me. I look at it this way: the Representative for Children and Youth is my coach. I'm the one on the field. If they see something that's not working, they have every right to tell me how to do a better job. That being said, sometimes the request might be more pertinent to a different department, like Family Services, and they're open to that. And I hope this relationship can become better because children rely on us. So thank you for the opportunity, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hainnu. Any other comments? Okay, we'll then proceed with the systemic reviews and Individual Advocacy Activities. Questions from members? Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Your 2024-2025 annual report indicates that your office had initiated a number of reviews of

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**ልኅረገጽ** (ጋዜጣ)፡ ማለፊያ፣ ጥር ነገረው።  
ጥር <ልኅ ተነስቶ።

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**ᐃᓕᑦᑲᑦ** (ᐅᓕᑦᑲᑦ): ᓖᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᑦᓕ ᐃᓕ. ᑦᓕ  
ᓖᑦᑲᑦ.

**ክፍለ-ጽሑፍ፡** ሃይማኖት (ጋንታባጋርጭጋጭ) ርዕሰ  
 ልማት-አካላዊ ጋርጭጋጭ, 2024-2025  
 ለፍርድቤት ምክር ቤት ርዕሰ ልማት  
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 “ፍርድቤት” ርዕሰ ልማት ልማት  
 “ልማት” ርዕሰ ልማት ልማት ልማት  
 (ጋንታባጋርጭጋጭ) ሃይማኖት

**ᐃᑦᑲᐃᑦᑲᑦ** (ᐃᑲᐃᐃᑦ): ᑦᑲᑲᑦᑲᑦ, ᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ.  
ᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐃᑲᑦᑲᑦ.

**ልዑካ (ጋኦጋጋ):** ናዕዲ፣ ልሳኒ፣  
 ልዑካ፣ የግንባታ ልሳኒ  
 ጋኦጋጋ፣ የግንባታ ልሳኒ

out-of-territory placements of youth in group care facilities. As of today, what is the status of these reviews? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. We have an active and ongoing review of group care or residential care which includes a component specific to out-of-territory care. Due to the high number of young people that are in out-of-territory residential care, the review is certainly taking longer than we had anticipated, but it is actively ongoing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** What are your office's main observations and recommendations concerning the replacement of youth in out-of-territory care facilities? *Oujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can I just clarify. You're requesting what my initial findings and recommendations would be?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Yes, this question was: what are your Office's main observations and recommendations concerning the placement of youth in out of territory care facilities? Go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you for the clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point in time our main observations would be, first, case management is -- could be improved in terms of when young people are placed out of territory. We see deficiencies in the long-term case planning and planning in general. So typically what we've been seeing is that there's

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 የዋናው መረጃዎች ለዚህ ዓመት ስራዎች.

**ልኅጭርፍ** (ጋካቦሀና)፡ ናድሬዊ፣ ሥር ልደጽ።  
ሥር ንጉሥ.

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**ልሃዊነት** (ጋንታባህ): የፊኒክስ ልሃዊነት፣ ልሃዊ ልሃዊነት፡

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not a clear plan in place for the young person when they are placed in outside residential care. We have seen young people who have remained in out-of-territory residential care for years at a time, and there doesn't seem to be a plan in place.

The second thing I would say is parent engagement or caregiver engagement, when a young person is out of territory in residential care, we see a significant disconnect for obvious reasons; they're out of their community and away from their family. But what I'm talking about is that constant communication between Family Wellness and the parent and the child, that around what's happening for the child out of territory, what's going on for that child and what the planning is. It really all comes back to that planning and that constant working on how do we get this young person back, how do we reunify them back to the community and their family.

The third observation I would say is that you see a lot -- you don't see a lot of placement changes, but the decision-making related to when young people are being moved from an out-of-territory placement to another out-of-territory placement, I would say there's an area that we've looked at in terms of having concerns about how those decisions are made or why they're being made, why they're being moved. That's another initial concern that we have identified.

We've also identified some issues with the contracts. So when a contract is completed for out-of-territory placement, we've noted on several contracts that the wrong piece of legislation is cited in the contract. All young people, typically most young people are placed out of territory under the *Child and Family Services Act*, and we see that on several contracts we've seen the *Trustee and Guardianship Act* cited as the piece of

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ገዢ ናፊራ፣ ልብህ።

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 $<\Delta^c$ , ልሰጋች.

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legislation on which the young person is placed outside the territory.

I think those are my initial -- oh, and I would say involvement of the young person. That real connection between -- certainly they have client liaison officers who go to the residences out of territory, but there's that real disconnect we see with young people being connected with their community social service worker. And again, it comes down to case management, case planning. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* Your 2024-2025 annual report indicates that your office had initiated a review of the “current reporting structure of the Department of Family Services' Family Wellness Division. As part of that review our office also made a referral to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.” As of today, what is the status of this review? *Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. The Privacy Commissioner completed his review and made recommendations to the Department. At that time -- and those recommendations were accepted.

We decided at that point in time to put our review on hold to allow an opportunity for the Department to address those recommendations. We didn't see -- we felt it was probably over-reviewing, if you will, to continue on with our review, considering the Privacy Commissioner had made a report and recommendations.

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**ᐃᑲᓯᕙᐅᑕᖅ** (ᐅᕗᕈᐱᐣ): ᖁᓴᓄᒋᑲ, ገᕐᑕ ᖅᑭᑭᓂᖅ.  
ገᕐᑕ ᐃᐅᕐᕕᐅᑕ.

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However, having said that, I do have a report from our legal counsel that I will share with the Department, as its been about a year since those recommendations were made. And I would be interested to hear from the Department of Family Services what progress has made. I think the Deputy Minister did indicate there has been progress made in his Opening Comments. So I trust that answers the question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* This one's going out to the Department of Family Services. The 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Representative for Children and Youth indicates that the Office initiated a number of reviews, out-of-territory placements of youth in group care facilities. How has the Department responded to this review? *Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Department has responded to those reviews by providing all of the information possible and necessary for the representative to conduct her review of the situation. And certainly we look forward to her findings and recommendations arising from the review of out-of-territory placements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. The same department, 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Representative for Children and Youth indicates that the Office initiated a review of the current reporting structure of the Department of Family Services, Family Wellness Division. In September of 2025, the

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ᒥᕐᕋ ᐃᕈᕐᕋᕈᕋᑦ, ᐊᕈᕈᕋᑦ.

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**ፍቢሙ** (ጋኒዮባይ)፡ የሥራ ርዕስ ለማንበብና ለማረጋገጥ፣  
ለማንበብ ዓላማ? (ጋኒዮባይ ስርዓት) ያልተፈጸመ፡

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**ፈልጋል** (ጋላጋላ)፡ ናዲላፊግ፣ ልብደርኤ፡  
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 ለደራላፊግ ደደደላፊግ ለደራላፊግ ለደራላፊግ  
 ለደራላፊግ ለደራላፊግ ለደራላፊግ ለደራላፊግ  
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Department sent correspondence to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner in which it indicates that it had initiated a legislative review to address these issues.

What is the Department's timeline for introducing a bill in the Legislative Assembly?  
*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this work arises out of the Privacy Commissioner's issued review report in relation to the allegations made by the Representative for Children and Youth, and certainly we take that finding seriously. Though I will say for the record that we necessarily -- the minister of the day necessarily disagreed with a certain reading of particular provisions of the current legislation.

To the member's question. Mr. Chair, we've begun work on a Policy Intentions Paper. Much of that work was paused during the election period, but we've resumed that work now that we have our mandate and our directives.

The Policy Intentions Paper is the defining mechanism by which we begin legislative change, following which I would say timeline for bringing legislation forward for review. It's early to define what that is. I know we're working on that as an important matter, because we do need to also align our legislation with some relevant provisions of a federal bill, C92, Mr. Chair.

And so the policy intention paper is nearly complete, and we suspect that it will be going through the Article 32 Katujjiqatigiinnirmut framework for further considerations by our partners at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in terms of their level of engagement through that process.

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 ሶህጋካጋካ ጋኛካጋካ ልዎሪጋካጋ 2024-2025  
 ልኛጋጋጋካጋካ ልኛካጋጋጋ ልኛጋጋጋ ልኛጋጋጋ  
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 ልኛጋጋ ልኛጋጋጋጋጋጋ ልዎሪጋጋጋጋ. ልኛጋጋጋ  
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 (ኃጎሳጋጋጋጋጋጋ) የደኅዳዊት.

**Δ<sup>b</sup>Γ<sup>a</sup>▷C<sup>b</sup>** (Δ<sup>b</sup>Γ<sup>a</sup>▷C<sup>b</sup>):  $\varphi_d^a \sqsubseteq \Gamma^b$ ,  $\Gamma^b \leq \sigma^b$ .  
 $\Gamma^b \leq \Delta^c$ .

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**ᐃᑲᓯᕙᐅᑕᖅ** (ᐅᓴᓱᐅᑕᖅ): ᖁᓄᓇᒋᑲ, ᑦᓴ <ᐃᖅ. ᑦᓴ  
ᖁᓂᓚᑭᖅ.

**ክፍሉማሪያ፡** የወንጀልኛው (ጋራገባርጭናጭ) ልሳላዊና፡  
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**Δ<sup>b</sup>ρ<Δ<sup>c</sup>σ<sup>b</sup>** (ጋንጋባህ): ናወላዊ፣ ገር ናይሊፍ፣  
ገር <Δ<sup>c</sup>.

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There will need also to be consultation phase where Nunavummiut have an opportunity to inform what that legislation will look like in the longer term. Our desire is that new legislation will reflect the Inuit ways of doing and living, and will incorporate in a greater detail Inuit societal values, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

So like I mentioned earlier, I don't want to present a timeline that is erroneous for the committee's consideration, but I will commit to getting more details and making a written submission which will define in a more detailed way the timeline that we're working within for this piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. This one is going to Representative for Children and Youth. Your 2024-2025 Annual Report indicates that your Office had initiated a review of the adoption process and the recognition of custom adoptions. As of today, what is the status of this review? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question. The current status -- that one is -- that particular review is, again, quite active. It has incorporated -- a concern came as part of the review that we're exploring, which is birth certificates. It's a systemic issue that has arisen just in this fiscal year, 2025-2026 year, in terms of birth certificates and adoptions, and that's also related to custom adoptions. So right now that's an active an active, a very active review, and I'm hoping that we can get it completed by the end of this fiscal year. Thank you.

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**ᐃᑲᓯᕙᐅᑕᖅ** (ᐅᐱᓴᐅᐭᑦ): ᖃᐅᓂᕈᒪᖅ, ᐱᓯ <ᐃᖃ. ᐱᓯᑕ  
ᖃᐅᐱᓂᖅ, ᐊᐅᐱᑦ.

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**ᐃᑲᑦᐸᐅᑕᑦᑲ** (ᐅᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱ): ᑦᐃᑦᐸᐅᑕᑦᑲ, ᑦᐃᑕ ᑦᑲᐅᑕᑦᑲ.  
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**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. And just a reminder to all members and witnesses to please wait for the red light to go on before you start speaking. Sometimes there's a delay because interpretation is still happening in the background. Just be patient with that. Thank you. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. What are your office's main observations and recommendations concerning possible amendments to the territorial *Adoption Act* and the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. I don't feel that I would be in a position today to give you those recommendations. I think once we complete the review of adoptions, particularly the custom adoption component, I think I would be in a better position to offer recommendations with respect to any legislative amendments that should take place. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. This one is going to Family Services. The 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 6, 2026. It indicates that "under current Nunavut practice, Regional Inuit Associations or other applicable Indigenous organizations are notified when an adoption placement is being proposed for a child in permanent care and are invited to respond before a placement proceeds."

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To what extent do Regional Inuit Associations actively participate in this adoption process?  
*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate the very detailed question arising from the director's annual report. I don't have those details with me at the present time. However, I will commit to submitting those details to you to the committee in writing following the conclusion of these proceedings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* The 2024-2025 annual report of the Director of Child and Family Services was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 6, 2026. It indicates that “In 2024-2025, the Family Wellness Headquarter worked in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to support the development of a new Policy Intention Paper related to the future modernization of the *Nunavut Adoption Act* and the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act.*”

What is the department's timeline for amendments to these statutes? *Oujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it is true that we would have been working very closely with our colleagues and friends at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. The Policy Intentions Paper remains under development. Because of the important nature of this legislation, we want to ensure that the necessary facets in that Intentions Paper reflect the collective of views of the groups that are

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involved. And so I don't have a timeline at the present time, Mr. Chair. It's under involvement.

And similar to the *Child and Family Services Act* comment, I'll commit a timeline in writing following the conclusion of these proceedings, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** What specific changes are being actively considered? *Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think in a broad sense, the Department and the intentions of our colleagues at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated is to modernize relevant provisions of the *Adoptions Act* in particular. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The legislation is based on quite dated legislation from the '80s, and it doesn't necessarily reflect Inuit values or the Inuit views of how things should be done, and we want to create legislation that is built upon those values.

And so, as I mentioned earlier, I can't give you the details of what changes will be made, but we're looking at a sweeping legislative change to ensure that that law is reflective of Nunavummiut and the communities we live in, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. This one is going to Representative for Child and Youth. Your 2024-2025 Annual Report indicates that your office had initiated a number of reviews of mental health services and treatment for youth.

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As of today, what is the status of these reviews?  
*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. As with the other reviews in progress, what I want to say is often what we find when we're doing reviews is things are connected; systemic issues become connected. So you start down the road of a review, and often other systemic issues arise or are identified during the course of your reviewing, and we're always challenged with trying to narrow -- keep the scope our reviews narrow but yet still address or identify those systemic issues that sometimes cross departments as well.

But in terms of all of the systemic reviews, all of them are actively in progress. With the current staffing, as I said earlier, the volume of what we're dealing with has also impacted our ability to complete these reviews. But they are active and we continue to work on them. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* What are your Office's main observations and recommendations concerning the provision of mental health services and treatment for youth? *Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. What I have to say about mental health services is in direct relation to our review of "Our Minds Matter" in 2019. That was a report that we completed on mental health services in the territory. I can

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safely say that the improvement or increase in services of mental health services has been significant. And I think that, you know, you need to significantly congratulate or thank the Department of Health for their intense work with respect to mental health and ensuring that people have access to the mental health services that they require.

Having said that, I think one of the main findings that we had found or are currently working on is the having services going to families. So in terms of if someone is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or if they are triggered by going to the health centre, that's a barrier for them to access services. And so that was I think one of the major findings that we had so far is that that outreach piece, going to the home or having alternative places for people to get services, mental health supports and services, other than say in the health centre. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* The Department of Health. The 2024-2025 annual report of the Representative for Children and Youth indicates that the office initiated a number of reviews of mental health services and treatment for youth. How has the department responded to these reviews? *Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Hunt.

**Ms. Hunt:** *Qujannamiik*, Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. I'll provide a broad overview and then through you, Chair, I may ask ADL Madsen to provide some additional information.

So as part of looking at mental health and the review that the RCYO did for 2024-2025,

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Health has worked to ensure that there is a clear collaboration and communication cross-departmentally with departments that are involved with a young person to be able to identify and discuss the individual's case, the youth or child's case, determine the right course of action. So being able to distinguish, for example, the difference between behavioural challenges or issues and true mental health or diagnose mental health. That allows through that collaborative process for the teams to work together to decide what the most effective and appropriate course of action, programs or services are.

If it's determined that a young person may require out-of-territory placement or out-of-territory services, that's determined with the young person, their family, Health, the Department of Family Services, and any other relevant parties that may be involved. And that could include the Representative of Children and Youth Office.

We ensure that there is case coordination for those placements. We also have out-of-territory in-person reviews. There are participation in case reviews. There are home visits and there are treatment plans. And some of the locations that young people go to for treatment may also include the family unit. *Oujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hunt. Ms. Madsen, would you like to add to that? Go ahead.

**Ms. Madsen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with the Representative for Youth and Children's Office on the fact that it's really difficult for some young people to seek mental health supports. The courage that that takes. And I don't think that it would be very easy to go to a health centre and say, "I'm here for mental health supports." And that's why we've put a lot of energy into the paraprofessionals, which I've mentioned quite a few times in these

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types of hearings, as those positions are filled by local Inuit that understand the community's needs, often know the families and are an easier access into the mental health system.

So we really hope that that has helped youth access services. The other is things like 988, which is a mental health number. We track the number of youth that use kids help phone.

And also, lastly, is Integrated Youth Services. And we have started our work on bringing youth together to ask them what do they need in their communities, both virtual and in person, and they will be able to access things like mental health supports. But also medical supports and Education, Family Services and Justice will be involved in services for youth. So it's sort of like a one-stop shop so that we can remove more barriers so that the youth can seek the services they need. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Madsen. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* Going back to Representative for Children and Youth, your 2025-2026 Annual Report indicates that your office has changed its approach to reporting on systemic referrals and issues. Can you describe what changes have been made in this area?  
*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. If I may just add to my answer to your last question about mental health services, I really need to point out that the Department of Education has done an immense amount of work in terms of having mental health services available in schools, and I think I neglected to mention that. My apologies. But I do believe they should be

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acknowledged for the immense amount of work that they had done in that area, so I just wanted add to that.

In terms of our systemic -- as you can see in the actual report, what we did this year, which is different than previous years, is we've maintained -- previous years we maintained a database, and when we received a referral or we identified a systemic issue, we would just log that referral or systemic issue into our database. And then often it would sit until it could be assigned or we could address it.

This year what we did was we want to do make -- we wanted to connect the systemic issues that we were seeing occurring in the individual advocacy cases specifically or in our other reviews. So it was a more active approach to it. So we're no longer just logging these systemic issues. We're actually identifying them in our work during the year and then we're reporting on those specific ones; because we're actively working on them, we're actively addressing being them often through our individual advocacy work or through review functions as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* Your 2025-2026 annual report indicates that your office "continued seven systemic reviews initiated in previous years and initiated four new reviews." Can you describe the subject matter of these four new reviews?  
*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. Let me just ... I do know one of the systemic reviews that we initiated was on medical travel and

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medevac -- I want to say medevacs. And the issue that came to our attention, the review that we started on that particular one was, part of it was consents related to medical travel and also how -- the concern that came to our attention was a young person needed to be medically evacuated to Iqaluit and there seemed to be delay in that service, a delay in them getting to Iqaluit.

So what the systemic review is about is looking how that process, what happens when a young person needs a medical evacuation? What is the process? Like who makes those decisions? What is the criteria used to determine priority, if you will. So that is one of the -- and they are kind of a combined -- we combine them into one review.

Birth certificates, that was the other review what we started to initiate that kind of falls -- it's an interesting systemic review, because the birth certificate, what we're seeing is that when -- in Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions, women typically travel outside to give birth to their children, and so they have to apply to Vital Statistics in the place where you give birth. And there's been issues; often in certain circumstances that doesn't happen. The birth doesn't get registered. So then the family comes back to the territory and the young person doesn't have a birth certificate.

There's quite a process involved. And if you down the road obviously if you go to apply for a birth certificate, it's quite onerous. And I think that one of the things that we've been looking at is how could the Department of Health or another service provider ensure that when that person, when that woman is out having her child, to ensure that they receive those supports to make sure that the birth certificate is applied for when they give birth in the particular province.

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And the issue related to birth certificates that we're seeing is they're delaying adoptions. So you can't finalize an adoption unless you have a birth certificate is one of the documents that's required. So it has a major impact. We've seen adoptions that are delayed. I just dealt with a matter in which an adoption was delayed for four years because there wasn't that birth certificate. And we're seeing it more and more, adoption delays, because a lack of a birth certificate. So that's the nature of that particular review.

And obviously the custom adoption matter is one of the ones that we initiated in that review as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. I too have dealt with out-of-territory births as GLO in our town. It is truly difficult. So a checklist, probably make a checklist of registration of birth package. A checklist should be made to an expecting mother when they go out of territory would be a good suggestion. *Qujannamiik*.

Continuing, I have another question. Your 2025-2026 annual report indicates that your office “monitored 19 systemic recommendations. Thirteen recommendations continue to be monitored and six recommendations were implemented.” Some of these recommendations date back to the 2021-2022 fiscal year and all of them concern the Department of Family Services.

In your view, to what extent is the Department making progress towards implementing outstanding recommendations? *Oujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

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In terms of the other recommendations, I think that's for the Department of Family Services to give an update on where they're at with those particular recommendations. But I can tell you that the bulk of them, as you can see, are all

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standards and procedures related, but according to the Department, their standards and procedures manual has been fully updated. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. This one's going to Department of Family Services. The Representative for Children and Youth's 2025-2026 annual report indicates that her office “monitored 19 systemic recommendations. 13 recommendations continue to be monitored and 6 recommendations were implemented.” Some of these recommendations date back to the 2021-2022 fiscal year and all of them concern the Department of Family Services. What is a realistic timeline for implementing the recommendations? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank the member for your question. During the course, Mr. Chair, of the development of the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Plan, the initial literature review contemplated not only findings from the Auditor General of Canada in their three previous reports, it also contemplated recommendations made by the Representative for Children and Youth Office, and it also contemplated other observations that came about in the literature review.

And so the Strategic Action Plan is a five-year roadmap for the Department to respond to all of those recommendations. As I mentioned in my Opening Statement, Mr. Chair, we've completed 28 of the 80 action items in that Strategic Plan. Forty-eight are ongoing and four we have not yet started.

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To prescribe a timeline, recognizing the challenges I described earlier with respect staffing, housing, office space capacity, training, etcetera would be a challenge. However, I do know, Mr. Chair, that we are now looking at evaluating the Strategic Plan itself and building upon its foundation to ensure that ongoing recruitments are going to happen in the near and long term.

We take the recommendations of the Representative to heart. We implemented them in the course and the framework of our strategic plan. We know that there remains work to be done, Mr. Chair. But we also know that the government had committed to better resourcing the Department, and so that's happened over the course of the last three fiscal periods. We've seen a significant increase in allocation to our funding envelope for the Wellness Division.

Like I mentioned, Mr. Chair, we've also been afforded new employees' positions, and I'll qualify that that it still remains a challenge to staff those positions. But notwithstanding, I think what that demonstrates is a government that wants to ensure that we are making changes to improve the outcomes for children and youth who are receiving our services.

And so that's a long way of saying as soon as possible, Mr. Chair, being mindful, however, of the challenges that the Department faces, and the reality that we're building upon a system that doesn't historically reflect the values of Nunavummiut. And so there's, you know, it's responding to recommendations, developing the foundation to create the space to make significant improvements in the longer term.

It's been a number of years that this system has been in place in Nunavut, and it will be sometime before we can say it's fully built upon what Nunavut needs. But we've started that had work, Mr. Chair, and we remain

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committed to ensuring that positive outcomes are the result of our collective work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Qammaniq, you have more questions. Go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. Going back to Representative for Children and Youth. Your 2025-2026 annual report indicates that “28 systemic issues were identified through our casework, reviews, community engagement, monitoring and other oversight activities.” Some of these issues are very broad and complex, such as the “governance, monitoring and accountability framework for District Education Authorities” and “medical travel and medical evacuations.”

How does your office determine when to initiate a broad systemic review of a given issue? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question. Typically we initiate a broader review when we see the issue arising in case work several times. So if we see it becoming, there's a chronicity of seeing the systemic issue, that usually causes us to say clearly we need to look at the bigger system. So that is the criteria that we use. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. Department of Education. The Representative for Children and Youth's 2025-2026 annual report indicates that her office has identified a number of systemic issues, including District Education Authority governance and oversight of daycares. How is

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the Department addressing the Representative's concern? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Hainnu, go ahead.

**Ms. Hainnu:** Thank you, Chair, and I thank them for the question. The systemic review cited in the 2025-2026 Annual Report of the Representative's Office indicate that the systemic reviews the absence of clear standards and procedures governing the transfer of students between schools. This only occurs in Iqaluit. So technically speaking, it could be an individual case, but it is cited as a systemic review.

Boards of daycares and district educational authorities have authorities. They are a board. They govern themselves. As the Department of Education, we have done training, we have funded the coalition for District Education Authorities, \$4.02 million per year. They have nine employees now, and their sole objective is to support and train District Education Authorities across the territory.

In addition to that, there are four District Education Authority development offices at the Department ready to be deployed to any District Education Authority who is struggling with coming up with bylaws, doing their bookkeeping, or training and office manager. So there are many different ways that the Department of Education has been supporting District Education Authorities. And the early learning sector is a very young developing sector with the Government of Canada now signing an agreement with \$109.9 million. There are more resources that can go into the communities to train daycare boards. But I hope that answers the question. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hainnu. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

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**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* This one is going to Department of Health. The Representative for Children and Youth's 2025-2026 annual report indicates that her office has identified a number of systemic issues, including medical travel. How is the department addressing the Representative's concerns? *Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Hunt, go ahead.

**Ms. Hunt:** *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for the question. There have been several actions that the Department of Health has taken in relation to medical travel. So, for example, we have put significant effort into creating and expanding services closer to home, so in territory within regions, to reduce the need for out-of-territory travel for children and youth and their families or caregivers.

So things like oral health promotion and prevention, areas around territory-wide pediatrics. So ensuring that there are regular visits to the communities. With pediatricians having a consistent pediatrician attached to each of the communities in Nunavut, as well as being able to access a number of programs and services through virtual care.

We have developed a strong link between Qikiqtani General Hospital, emergency rooms, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to ensure that we can get on-demand supports for urgent, critical supports.

We have increased psychiatry within the territory that includes areas of pediatric psychiatry.

We have also ensured that vaccines continue to be a promotion that we do in territory to increase resiliency for babies and children from

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becoming sick and needing to receive higher levels of care outside of territory.

We also completed the "What We Heard Report" on medical travel, the programs and the policies. And we are working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated around the modernization, the quality improvement and services for medical travel. And so we look forward to continuing to moving that work forward and having strengthened outcomes.

Some of the things that people will see and will be experiencing is increases in promotional materials, social media, being able to explain medical travel, people's rights, linking and the ability to connect with the Office of Patient Relations, as well as a medical travel handbook that has been done in all of the languages.

*Oujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hunt. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* This one's going back to the Representative for Children and Youth. Your 2025-2026 annual report indicates that “children and youth living in out-of-home care accounted for more than half of the office's individual advocacy cases. More broadly, nearly 90 percent of the new individual advocacy cases for the 2025-2026 year, which largely stem from external complaints and referrals made to our office, involve the Department of Family Services.”

What observations do you have regarding this trend? *Oujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question. My thoughts about this trend is -- and I think I've talked about this -- the system itself is

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struggling. And I would say the rise in children in care, certainly for our case load, I would say I would attribute a lot of it to the lack of standards and procedures for children in care.

There's not a section that sets out what the standards of practice are when managing children in care. So I suspect that this trend will continue until those standards get put in place across, for the entire territory. It's certainly an area that just year over year we continue to see this rise in seeing children in care on our case loads.

And in fact one of the requirements of the legislation is that when a young person is admitted to the care of the Director to a facility or a foster home, it's the requirement of the Department to notify or let the young person know that they have the right to contact our Office and how to do that.

We had a meeting with the Assistant Deputy Minister not too long ago, and we discussed how we can partner, work together to ensure that is occurring, so young people are made aware of our office and how do we work together to make sure that that young person receives that information and to operationalize a process, if you will. I trust that answers your question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. Approximately how long does it take to resolve and/or close an individual advocacy case?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the member for the question. I also just want to circle back to my last answer and say that I also attribute the trend of seeing a

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high number of children in care. On our individual case load is we are much more active in terms of going to group homes, meeting with young people, and then one young person sees that we're there, they ask us what we're doing there, and that has I think increased our numbers.

Also, when we are in community, we just become so much more visible that young people more and more are coming to us saying, you know, "can I have your advocacy support?"

In terms of how long does it take to resolve, I think if you look at the numbers, year over year it's taking longer and longer to resolve. I can't give you an average case time-length, but I can tell you for some cases, we've had some cases open for years, literally. Because often when you're dealing with an individual advocacy case, there's multiple issues that arise.

So the initial reason that you become -- that we become involved can be for something like planning. And then as we progress working through the individual advocacy case and working with the child and the family, we realize that there's another issue that we have to deal with.

So again, I can't give you actual timelines of how long it takes, and it really does vary on the nature of the case. We do want to, you know, certainly track that information. We're just trying to figure out how to do that so it's accurate.

But we do have cases that really resolve themselves quickly in terms of, you know, I can tell you often when -- I just had a case not too long ago where it came to my attention, I immediately reached out to the Deputy Minister of Education and she picked up the phone, and we literally resolved it in an hour. So there are those cases where we see quick resolution.

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Additionally, I think I mentioned yesterday, we had contact with a young person who was over the age of 19, came back to our attention, and we were quite concerned about the situation. And I again immediately reached out to the Deputy Minister of Health and also to the Deputy Minister of Justice, and again they -- it was resolved in literally, like an hour. They immediately took it and ran with it, and we were satisfied that that young person will receive those supports. So we do have those cases where it's a quick resolution. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik*. How many individual advocacy cases are currently open before your office? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for the question. I can only speak to, we didn't do that role up right before we left. My apologies. We did deal with 99 individual advocacy cases for the 2025-2026 year. Certainly it's been -- I can't give you an exact number. I can certainly do that calculation and certainly present it to the Standing Committee in writing. But it's definitely over 100 at this point in time. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq:** *Qujannamiik.* Your 2025-2026 annual report indicates that your office “started a complex file review involving several young people under the age of 10 whose caregiver was defined by the Department of Family Services, Standard 203 as a 'sensitive client/organization'. The

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Department of Family Services' lack of documentation has significantly hindered completion of this review." As of today, what is the status of this file? *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you to the Chairman, and thank you to the member for the question. The status of that, we're actually in a final stage of reviewing and coming up with some findings of that particular file based on the documentation that we have. They're mainly going to be systemic recommendations in terms of the standards and procedures related to when the Department is dealing with matters that involve the term "sensitive clients." Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Qammaniq, is that the end of your questions? Thank you. I've just got one for Family Services, and it's going back to the issue of the legislative amendments. The specific issue that was reviewed by the Representative for Children and Youth and the Privacy Commissioner was very narrow and focused on who could access information within the Department of Family Services. Will the Department be introducing a standalone bill to fix this issue before a broader set of amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act* are ready? Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that very specific inquiry, and I appreciate the nature of the matter. Given the resource-intensive nature of legislative development, we feel that it would be perhaps challenging to do one now and another later. We want to combine the efforts so that we can realize some efficiencies during the course of the broader legislative updates that we hope to bring to the House, Mr Chair. Thank you.

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**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. And before we move on to our next issue area, we'll take a 15 minute break. Thank you.

>>Committee breaks at 10:20, and resumes at 10:37

**Chairman:** Thank you all for coming back. We'll resume the televised hearing. The next area we'll be asking questions on is Client Relation's Office. Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Government of Nunavut's response to the standing committee's *Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 annual report of the Representative for Children and Youth* indicates that the Department of Family Services “is committed to providing regular reports to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on the operations of its Client Relation's Office. Data will be summarized in quarterly reports and tabled in the Legislative Assembly, together with details of actions taken to address concerns.

When will the first quarterly report be tabled in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have defined this reporting cycle to be relevant to the annual report of the Director of Child and Family Services under the *Child and Family Services Act*. And so our intention is to table that report. I believe it will -- I'm quite certain it will be tabled in the next session, Mr. Chair, with details of our Client Relation's office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Next one is on status of young Nunavummiut. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

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**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is for the Representative for Children and Youth. The “Status of Young Nunavummiut” section of your 2025-2026 annual report includes detailed statistical information concerning a wide range of subjects, including the number of births to mothers age 19 and younger, childcare spaces, school graduation rates, violent incidents in schools, referrals to the Department of Family Services, custody orders, adoptions, placement services to group homes and other facilities, medical travel, pediatrician visits, boil water orders, youth arrests and incarcerations.

What are the most significant trends that you have observed over the past two years? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Kuliktana. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask if it's all right for the Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services to answer this particular question.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Go ahead, Mr. Parker.

**Mr. Parker:** For the most -- the trends we're seeing are different for each department, obviously. Pulling them together is what really makes the report critical.

And if you're looking at birth rates, demographic rates, and say for education, you defer them towards the school attendance rates, the graduation rates, and see if those are going up or down.

We also have impact on the number of licensed childcare spaces waiting list and as the sections evolve, we get it more concise every day.

The bigger trends and data sets -- the increases of childcare spaces from 89 -- are

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increased by 89, which is good. For Education, for Family Services, the trends we see were discussed earlier, but services increased from 395 to 421 really demonstrates a consistent data is important, and particularly improves the decline in medical travel. It could be attributed to some of the issues that the Deputy Minister of Health implemented or referenced in some of their improvements.

And Justice, this is a number -- I have a history in Youth Justice, so I know it fluctuates, but the youth justice incarceration increased from six to 11, and that's a number we know fluctuates, because they're individual counts.

Domestic charges declined significantly, like over half. Again, charges and convictions may not always arise or be resolved in the same reporting period, and we know violence is an issue with children, domestic violence, and is a significant issue within Nunavut. So that's a number that also varies.

People accessing Victim Services increased from 123 to 216, and more people accessing that service is also a trend we're seeing and would like to see. Unfortunately, the reasons they're accessing is an issue.

With our children in care reports and data sets we got from Family Services compared to last year wasn't as precise, and the children in care numbers are going up we see from the numbers we have got.

It's important to note that these numbers we request from departments, so the actual trends each department's seeing is from them; they are what they give us.

And for Family Services, I'll say the permanent children in the care of the director has gone from 246 to 261, and that's an increase now of those under the court orders.

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The trends are only as reliable as the data, and it's hopeful as the data improves there will be more trend analysis in place and start seeing outcomes versus actions.

I think the one examples is 2024-2026 we're provided information on the Access to Family Violence Shelters, and that wasn't available to us for this reporting period. So we usually request similar information every year, and when there's gaps in the data we get, it's hard to tell everybody what the trend is. So we're really encouraged by people's dedication to improving data.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Parker. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the Representative of Youth and Children. The “Status of Young Nunavummiut” section of your 2025-2026 annual report includes updates on Government of Nunavut responses to 16 previous recommendations made by your office concerning a wide range of issues, including the accuracy and timeliness of statistical information published by the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics. To what extent are you satisfied with the government's progress in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Go ahead, Mr. Parker.

**Mr. Parker:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question. The statistical data from EIA we are receiving is I think accurate to what they can provide for it. As it outlines from them in their report, they get a lot of their information from Stats Canada, and the concern that we would have is the process that's caused a delay in some of the information statistics, so it could be a year or two behind.

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The other statistic that we mentioned a bit earlier in relation to the birth certificates. We know that almost two-thirds of people born in Nunavut, or Nunavummiut born, are born in Alberta or BC or outside of territory. And how those get counted within the departmental demographic statistics is something that we are still researching. It's part of that investigation, and we haven't got to that part yet of the review on the birth certificates.

I think the data itself we're getting is as accurate as the departments can report it to us, and EIA's we're satisfied with. Yes.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Parker. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My next question is to the Department of Education. The “Status of Young Nunavummiut” section of the Representative for Children and Youth's 2025-2026 annual report includes updates on Government of Nunavut responses to previous recommendations made by her office, including early learning and child care spots, school attendance rates, school graduation rates and the reporting of violent incidents in schools. Can you summarize the department's progress to date in addressing these recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Go ahead, Ms. Hainnu.

**Ms. Hainnu:** Thank you, Chair. I thank the member for the question. As I indicated earlier today, the Representative's Office can see (indiscernible) and articulate them in a recommendation, and we take them very seriously. And so as it pertains to violence in schools, we've taken action.

We'll work with the Nunavut Teachers Association to come up with online database that report violence. And so we've kept track.

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**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hainnu. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My next one is for the Department of Family Services. The “Status of Young Nunavummiut” section of the Representative for Children and Youth's 2025-2026 annual report includes updates on Government of Nunavut responses to previous recommendations made by her office, including the “collection of accurate and complete statistics.”.

Can you summarize the department's progress to date in addressing this recommendation?  
Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we implemented a case management software solution called Matrix, as I referenced in previous submissions. We know that that remains a vulnerability because of challenges around staffing and such.

However, we also know simultaneously that there's been a significant increase in the active use of the database to ensure the accuracy and consistency of our data continues to improve during the course of the implementation of the Ilagiitsarniq Strategic Plan.

I've made submissions in this House in previous hearings around the importance of reliable data. I've also made submissions around the lack of historical data that we can reconcile against previous numbers that were provided. This is perhaps one of the most important tools that the department can use to not only ensure that we're managing clients and their needs appropriately and to the standards of practice that we have implemented, but also from a policy perspective, Mr. Chair, that data helps to inform developments in the way that

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we do our work when we recognize trends that are happening that require us to pivot to respond to those trends.

In addition to the benefit of good data respecting policy, I would also respectfully submit that that data is important in terms of discussing appropriate financial allocations, appropriate levels of staffing in community, appropriate levels of oversight roles, perhaps at headquarters or regional centres.

So I can't understate the importance of accurate and reliable data. The department remains committed to ensuring the active implementation of the Matrix software system. We've built other modules as we've learned more about the challenges that our staff face in collecting data. We've made interface changes to ensure that the flow is more efficient and reflective of the fact in addition to dealing in an emergency situations, we still need to collect that data.

We've heard concerns, and we acknowledge that the data reliability and experiences ebb and flow at times. However, we have and will continue to make improvements in terms of the nature of the data we collect, the verification processes that must occur to ensure the veracity of that data, and the staffing processes to ensure that everyone has the opportunity for training and to enter the information that is required to inform our decisions, but also to inform the Representative's reviews, the important work that she does in the context of the section relating to young Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you. Again, this time to the Department of Health.

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The “Status of Young Nunavummiut” section of the Representative for Children and Youth's 2025-2026 annual report includes updates on Government of Nunavut responses to previous recommendations made by her office, including the issues of dental care and access to pediatricians. Can you summarize the department's progress to date in addressing these recommendations? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Ms. Hunt, go ahead.

**Ms. Hunt:** Qujannamiik, Chairman, and thank you to the member for the question.

So we have organized and implemented significant investments in terms of programs and services both in person and virtually in territory. So dental services have now expanded at the Qikiqtani General Hospital. We are continuing work to restart dental surgeries for pediatrics in Churchill, and then also being able to have community programs for oral health at the health centre level as well as health promotion education and programs.

This also helps us to reduce the burden of medical travel and be more seamless to support local community needs, to keep families together, and to be able to be responsive to the programs and services that we can offer at the more local community level. *Oujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hunt. Do you have any more questions, Mr. Kuliktana? No? Our next area is Inuit Organizations. Mr. Kautuk, go ahead.

**Mr. Kautuk:** Thank you, Chairman. This is going out to the Representative for Children and Youth.

On August 27, 2026, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced that it will “continue exploring ways to strengthen support,

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advocacy, and oversight for Inuit children and families. This work includes examining opportunities under Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, including the potential for NTI to register as an Indigenous governing body. Such a step could improve information-sharing, centralize notifications, and support more coordinated advocacy for Inuit children and families.”

To what extent does your office work with Nunavut Tunngavik on issues related to child welfare and protection? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kautaq. Ms. Bates.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question.

In the 2025-2026 fiscal year we initiated contact with NTI organization, and we've had several meetings with them. They have just hired a director of child welfare, who's a subject matter expert in child welfare. And so right now we are in I'd say regular conversation, having regular meetings with them to talk about how we can support them in terms of furthering their goals. I anticipate that will continue over this fiscal year as well. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Mr. Kautuk, go ahead.

**Mr. Kautuk:** Thank you, Chair. This is going out to Department of Family Services.

On August 27, 2026, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced that it will “continue exploring ways to strengthen support, advocacy, and oversight for Inuit children and families. This work includes examining opportunities under Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, including the

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potential for NTI to register as an Indigenous governing body. Such a step could improve information-sharing, centralize notifications, and support more coordinated advocacy for Inuit children and families.”

Has Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated formally expressed interest in taking on responsibility for child protection services in Nunavut? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kautuk. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for that important question, sir.

The committee might note from our recently released strategic document from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated where they expressed a desire to enhance prevention services as it pertains to children and youth in Nunavut.

In addition to the announcement that you just shared with the committee, Mr. Chair, we work regularly with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated through the Article 32 Katujjiqatigiinni working group. So I don't want to speak on behalf of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. I understand they have an intention.

The Government of Nunavut is of course more than willing to continue to collaborate on our collective responsibility as it pertains to Inuit Children and Youth in Nunavut.

And so to sum up my response, Mr. Chair, I know its expressed in their strategic documents. I know that announcement was made arising from their board of directors' meeting. At the Department of Family Services and the Government of Nunavut remain committed to working with them to achieve their objectives. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. And you mentioned it is an important issue. You know, right now we have former premiers talking publicly about moving to an entirely different type of government. I just wonder if you could answer, are we looking at a future where NTI hires the social workers and child protection workers? Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm not fully aware of their long-term intention. I appreciate that it's been a matter that's been the subject of much media coverage. If that is their intention, of course the government will find ways to incorporate that intention into the longer term strategic goals and work together with them in collaboration for the benefit of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. I think the next issue area and actually the last one is Review of Legislation. Mr. Kautuk, are you continuing on?

**Mr. Kautuk:** Thank you, Chairman. This is for the Representative for Child and Youth.

Section 40 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* requires that the legislation be reviewed on a periodic basis. Your 2023-2024 annual report included five specific recommendations for amendments to the statute. What are your main recommendations for amendments to the statute? Thank you, Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kautuk. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for the question. The amendments that we were requesting at that time were to strengthen the definition of critical injury and death. That was the first one.

The second one was to remove our employees out of the public service or make them exclusions. Because they review work of the government, we feel that it's a conflict for them to be part of the union. So that was the second amendment that we asked for.

The third amendment that we asked for, the third one that actually came into effect was the coming into force the section of our, the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* to review critical injury and death. That was completed.

I'm just trying to think of the other ones. Oh, and also I think the other one was the term of the independent officer. So in Nunavut, there are seven independent officers, and our office is the only office that doesn't have consecutive term. It's only two 5-year terms. And given the challenge with hiring independent officers and attracting them, we feel that it would be prudent to change that clause in the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* to allow that instead of two five year terms, that it would be you have the option to have consecutive terms, which is similar to the Privacy Commissioner, the Language Commissioner, the Elections Commissioner, the Ethics Commissions; all of those independent offices are consecutive terms. So there's no time limit of only two. And so that was the other amendment that we were proposing.

We are currently reviewing our *Act*, because we do know that a review should be upcoming yet again, and we will be proposing some further amendments. At this point I can't tell you what those are, but we will be proposing some further amendments, including what we previously requested. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. Do members have any other questions that they would like to ask? Ms. Angootealuk?

**Ms. Angootealuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and also thank you for appearing before us and providing support. I would like to direct my question (interpretation ends) ... The department continues to prioritize extended family, community, culture, language and identity when children cannot safely remain with their caregivers. As of April 2026, there were 159 foster homes across Nunavut, including 84 regular foster homes and 75 extended families or kinships homes.

(interpretation) I will speak Inuktitut. Thank you for giving me an opportunity today. Today this issue has not changed at all. Even now the grandmothers in the past, they are now great grandmothers; now they are Elders. And the social workers bring the children that have been apprehended to the Elders, seniors, who are great grandparents as the family where the parents were in dispute, and they send the child to the great grandparents without any resource funding, even for food. And I have seen an 88-year-old taking on children without any providing support of any form, even for meals. To date this is occurring.

We need to respect the seniors today, and still to date this is still occurring. Can they just bring the apprehended children to the senior citizens and the Elders can't do anything or retaliate. And social workers still won't pay respect to them.

So I believe we need to stop this and make sure the workers respect the Elders. I know they don't even do monitoring to go check on the family, whether the children have proper beds. There were nine children in one bedroom, the grandchildren and great grandchildren that were sent to the great grandparents by the social workers and by the RCMP. And the Elder has been put into the Elders' facility.

These are some issues that need rectifying. And this Elder who's 88 years old, they usually get visits from the homecare, and nobody does visits to their homecare because there's somebody already there taking care of. So all these issues have to be rectified and provided with solution. Thank you for giving me opportunity to speak.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angootealuk. Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to recognize the seriousness of the concern that you've raised here, ma'am, and appreciate that it's challenging for Elders of that age to help support younger children.

We recognize that there is ongoing work that needs to be done to ensure that people taking care of young children are adequately compensated for that and supported in that role.

I would say for the community's benefit, Mr. Chair, that shifting from removal from community to kinship placements, placements with extended family is a priority for the Department of Family Services. And I will say that we're committed to improving those outcomes, and we'll take that back to the operational team for further action.

I will note, though, ma'am, and Mr. Chair, that this does form a part of our strategic plan and the ongoing work of enhancing services for those providing -- or, sorry, support for those providing services.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, I will confirm that the department recently announced that there was a 45 percent increase to payments for foster parents and those providing services retroactive to April 1st. And I understand that we are managing that increase very well, and will continue to ensure that improvements are made

for better outcomes for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. I think Mr. Mike -- you're done? Are you done? Okay. Mr. Mike, you had your hand up as well. Go ahead.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue -- I want to make a comment alluded by the Department of Family Services and also by the representative of Children and Youth in regards to NTI had announced, especially a child on child services, I would like to state child welfare.

As the Deputy Minister had stated that it's in agreement number 32, Article 32. I have also been a negotiator during the Land Claims' negotiations for our community. I'm very pleased that we're discussing this matter, because I'm very pleased that Nunavut Tunngavik, according to the article, they are now starting to implement the article.

But then Article 32, it talks about Nunavut Social Development Council. They had a vote in place in the past, but NTI dissolved the Social Development Council. It would be very beneficial to have that kind of board on its own entity, independent entity.

One thing, the reason why we thought of it, because Inuit and government entities, they deal with social issues and culture issues. This Article 32, if it's going to be implemented, they don't state that if Article 32 will be implemented, but I would recommend and be very pleased if it was implemented with the government, and NTI's workers, social workers or other staff, if they're going to work together to deal with this issue, because in Nunavut Land Claims, Article 32, it states that the Social Development Council is to be established. And look at the government's work on child welfare and the Inuit Tunngavik Social Development

Council will have to work together, and then the Board of Social Development Council.

And it states like that that they have the power and that they would report to Ottawa about social issues or about the work that they're doing on social issues.

It's okay to have government departments own work with the social issues and children's welfare; it's okay. And also NTI and other entities below NTI should make a report on the status of what's happening within Nunavut territory today and look at the weaknesses, look at the issues.

And once Article 32 has been implemented, it would improve what I'm talking about perhaps. The Deputy Minister of Family Services, as she stated about Article 32, have you discussed this or is there an ongoing discussion with NTI? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Mr. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate the member's involvement in his negotiation of the land claims and congratulate him for that role.

Mr. Chair, whether or not the board of NTI decides to create a subset committee is I think within their purview to decide. And as I mentioned earlier, I'm at the working level, so I don't work with their political leaders; I work with their chief executive officer, their chief operating officer. Directors in my office meet with directors in their office who have the objective of implementing the partnership tables work plan. We've made considerable progress.

And so I think to the member's question specifically, I would work with whichever entity is defined to do that work and would be

happy to contribute everything we can to ensure the objectives of those committees could be achieved, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. That's all the questions that we have. Witnesses have made a number of commitments to get back to the committee with written information. We look forward to receiving this information and which will be tabled in the House by me for the benefit of the permanent public record. At this time we'll take concise closing comments, and I'll start with the Representative for Children and Youth. Ms. Bates, go ahead.

**Ms. Bates:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Legislative Assembly and Standing Committee for the opportunity to appear before you again and be held accountable for our Office's work. I also thank all the departments here for their time and their work they do daily to enhance the lives of all Nunavummiut.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the staff at the Representative for Children and Youth Office. I know you're watching. The work we do is hard, but tackling it alongside of you is an honour and a privilege, and I cannot thank you enough.

To the people of Nunavut, you are at the heart of these conversations, and although this meeting will soon adjourn, I promise you our work will continue. Your voice matters. And our office is always here to listen and advocate for you.

Regarding our work, I want to revisit something I said in my Opening Comments. Our Office will continue to advocate for and support children, youth and their families when they are involved with government services. We will keep providing you with the information and independent findings, continue to make recommendations and keep tracking whether those recommendations have been

implemented. Still, ultimately we cannot compel action or change.

On behalf of the children, youth and families of this territory, I'm again asking you to do what successive governments have not: take decisive action, establish the strong, regular and public accountability necessary to address these longstanding issues and bring an end to Nunavut's child welfare crisis.

Based on what I know firsthand and what we've heard in this chamber, the challenges before us are significant. But I truly believe they are not insurmountable. I know a better future for everyone is waiting on the other side. If we band together, if we use our collective knowledge and expertise, put in the work, let's get to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Bates. I'll move on to Department of Family Services. Mr. Ellsworth.

**Mr. Ellsworth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee for allowing us to appear before you today. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Representative for Children and Youth for the very important nature of her work in conducting reviews and providing insights and recommendations to government through the lens of improving outcomes for Nunavummiut.

As we've heard here, Mr. Chair, there remains significant work ahead of us. I just want to reiterate, however, that shortcomings do not mean there is no progress, and challenges do not mean there is no commitment.

Our responsibility now is to continue improvement, to demonstrate it through our actions, through better services, through greater accountability, and ultimately through better

outcomes for children, families and Nunavummiut.

To the representative and to the members of this honourable committee, Mr. Chair, and particularly to the children, youth and families whose experiences are at the centre of these discussions, we have heard you. We will continue our work in pursuit of better outcomes for children, families, and all Nunavummiut.

And finally, Mr. Chair, to the frontline staff of Department of Family Services and other government departments across Nunavut, I want to tell you that your work matters, your efforts are seen, and we thank you very much. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ellsworth. Moving on to Department of Justice. Ms. Ellsworth, go ahead.

**Ms. Ellsworth** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) I want to thank the Chair and Alex and Wendy, as well as the members here today, and very much thankful for working with the Representative for Children and Youth, as well as my colleagues around the table. I really appreciate the work we do together, and I know that we'll continue to do that work together.

I also want to acknowledge the children and youth that do come into the justice system. This is not a place -- we don't want them to be at this place, but we are here for them and we want to help them. We want to support them, and we need to guide them because they are our future.

And lastly, I would like to say thank you very much to the entire Department of Justice for their continued work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Ellsworth. Moving on to Department of Education. Ms. Hainnu, go ahead.

**Ms. Hainnu:** (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to thank everyone here and also our staff. The Department of Education within the government has been approximately 25 years old, and usually there's not enough money set aside to support the students, the counsellors, the classrooms and so on.

I would like to thank the Office of the Representative for supporting us in our work. I would also like to thank the daycares and the parents of the students who support us on a volunteer basis. I thank you all also.

And I would like to thank everyone for welcoming me. And also the interpreters. At times even when we're talking fast, they do keep abreast. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hainnu. Moving on to the Department of Health. Go ahead, Ms. Hunt.

**Ms. Hunt:** (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) I would like to thank the committee, the Representative of Children and Youth, my colleagues around the table, of course the interpreters.

The last two days have been really important. They've been powerful and they have been meaningful.

I would like to thank all of our staff in the Department of Health. Their dedication and their contributions to serving and supporting young people across the territory are noticed. They are valued and supported. We may reflect and communicate the work that the department

does, but it is all the people behind us in every single role and function in the department that brings life to offering the services that we do.

To the young people of Nunavut, we're committed to you, we will continue to engage with you and to ensure your voices are reflected in the services and the programs that are offered by our department.

We are committed to collaborating across departments and with partners, clearly defining and understanding issues, and having clarity on roles, scopes and function, transparency, cooperation, planning, trust and connection, accountability, and most importantly, ensuring that there are strong outcomes. We're committed to reviewing and monitoring our work together.

Our children, our families and our staff deserve our best and how we work together.

*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hunt. Last but not least, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Go ahead, Ms. Fowler.

**Ms. Fowler:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to provide a few remarks. I want to acknowledge that the topics we've discussed over the last day are deeply personal for many people at this table.

I want to acknowledge the work of the Representative and her staff. The questions and dialogue with members of this committee, thank you.

And finally, I want to acknowledge and commend the commitment, the hard work and dedication of the deputies around the table, and their staff, the toll the work takes, and the hard decisions we make to protect the health and wellness of the people working with and for Nunavummiut.

I've appreciated being here, and I look forward to the continued work together. (interpretation)  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Fowler. And I thank all of you for your closing remarks. I thank the committee for the questions that were asked during the last two days. For viewers at home, enjoy your weekend and spend work outside while we still can. The weather is changing.

Please tune in and join us on Monday at 9 a.m. Eastern as we commence with our televised hearing on the Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. And I can say now that we are adjourned for today. Thank you, all.

>> *House adjourned at 11:28*