



**OFFICE OF THE YUKON CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCATE**  
**2070 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Unit 19, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1B1,**  
**PH: 456-5575, FAX 456-5574, [www.ycao.ca](http://www.ycao.ca)**

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## **Child & Youth Advocate releases report highlighting the experiences of children and youth in Group Care**

*Whitehorse...*The Office of the Yukon Child & Youth Advocate has released its latest review, *Empty Spaces – Caring Connections: the Experiences of Children and Youth in Yukon Group Care*. A copy of this report has been provided to the Department of Health and Social Services.

The systemic review describes the experiences of children and youth living in Group Care from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2018 (the review period). 94 children and youth lived in Group Care facilities during the review period.

The systemic review aims to improve outcomes for children and youth through the systemic analysis of Group Care from a child rights lens. “Too many children and youth living in Group Care describe not being active participants in their own lives,” states Annette King, Yukon Child and Youth Advocate.

The Advocate’s recommendations focus on integrating culture into care, involving children and youth in case planning, and providing additional supports to children and youth as they transition out of Group Care.

The Advocate found that children and youth often identified safe relationships and positive connections to front line staff in Group Care facilities. However, the connections to their families and communities were lacking, which contributes to poor outcomes when children and youth leave care.

78 per cent of the children living in Group Care during the review period are identified as Indigenous. Although the importance of cultural identity is outlined in the policy manual of Family and Children’s Services, the Advocate heard this is an area that is not consistently demonstrated in practice.

“The lived experiences of children and youth in Group Care are the primary focus of this review”, states Annette King. “It was important to hear from young people as well as the people they are most connected to and it is vital that privacy be upheld when amplifying the voices of children and youth”, states Annette King.



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Under *Section 21 of the Child and Youth Advocate Act*, the Advocate has the authority to request follow up with the proposed recommendations within a specified time of the steps that have been or are proposed to be taken.

A copy of the review is available on the Child and Youth Advocate's website: [www.ycao.ca](http://www.ycao.ca)

The Child & Youth Advocate Office is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly. The operations of the office are guided by the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. Children, youth or others concerned about a child or youth receiving services within Yukon Government can contact the Child and Youth Advocate Office at (867) 456-5575.

### **Editor's Note:** Backgrounder

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## **Backgrounder**

- In March 2018, the Advocate notified the Minister of Health and Social Services that the Advocate would be conducting a systemic review.
- Terms of reference for the Review were released by the Advocate in May 2018.
- The Advocate interviewed children and youth, staff, families and First Nations representatives,
- The Advocate visited Group Care facilities and conducted an anonymous employee survey.
- The Advocate reviewed departmental records, legislation, policies and relevant reports.
- Given the over representation of Indigenous children and youth living in Group Care, the Advocate ensured that the Review incorporated First Nations culture, history and collected the views and vision of First Nation representatives and family members.