



Frequently Asked Questions

Who should call the Child and Youth Advocate?

Anyone can call. Children and youth may call themselves, or an adult may call on their behalf or on behalf of a group of children.

What is the definition of "child" and "youth"?

Under the Child and Youth Advocate Act, a "child" is defined as a person under the age of 16 years.

A "youth" is defined as a person who is 16 years of age, but under 19 years of age. This includes:

- a youth in care or custody under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act;
- a youth on remand under the Criminal Code or the Young Offenders Act (Canada);
- a youth subject to a sentence under the Criminal Code;
- or a youth subject to a disposition under the Young Offenders Act (Canada), who is under 21 years of age.

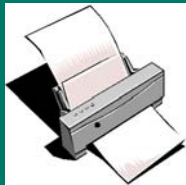
Why would a person contact the Child and Youth Advocate?

As a child or youth, you would call the Child and Youth Advocate when:

- You have a complaint(s) regarding access to or provision of services that have been designed to support children and youth.
- You believe your viewpoint is not being heard or that your rights are being ignored.
- You believe that all the information about your needs has not been gathered or given the proper consideration.

As an adult, you would call the Child and Youth Advocate when:

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- You believe a child's or youth's viewpoint is not being heard.
- You believe a child's or youth's rights are being ignored.
- You believe a child's or youth's interests are not being considered.
- You believe all the information about a child or youth or his/her needs have not been gathered or duly considered.
- You have a concern regarding the availability, effectiveness, responsiveness or relevance of services designed to support children and/or youth.

What information will the Child and Youth Advocate require from you when you contact the office?

When you contact the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate you will be asked for information about your concern, the steps you have taken to resolve your concern and how you would like the office to help you.

It would be helpful if you could provide this information to the Advocate in the form of a written letter and send it in the regular mail or e-mail.

What happens then?

Once you have provided this information, you will be advised if the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is able to help you.

What will the Child and Youth Advocate do?

Once you contact the Child and Youth Advocate regarding a problem/concern, the Advocate may review the matter and:

- help you and/or others close to you to advocate on your own behalf;
- refer you, or a group of children or youth or the adult who called on your behalf to appropriate supports;
- conduct an investigation on your behalf or on the behalf of a group of children or youth in cases where advocacy or mediation or another dispute resolution process does not result in an outcome the Advocate believes is satisfactory;
- initiate and participate in, or assist you to initiate and participate in case conferences, administrative reviews, mediations or other processes in which decisions are made about the provision of services;
- advocate or mediate or use another dispute resolution process on your behalf or on behalf of a group of children or youth;
- make recommendations to government, an agency of the government or communities about legislation, policies and practices respecting services to or the rights of children; and
- provide information to the community regarding the rights of children and youth, promote their well being and enhance child advocacy interest.

It is important to note, the Child and Youth Advocate can review and investigate any matter related to government services affecting children

and youth *whether or not a request or complaint is made.*

However, the Child and Youth Advocate may refuse to investigate such matters if:

- the matter occurred more than one year before the complaint was received by the Advocate;
- in the opinion of the Child and Youth Advocate the matter is frivolous or vexatious, was not made in good faith, or it concerns a trivial matter;
- the complainant does not have sufficient personal interest in the matter;
- in the opinion of the Child and Youth Advocate, the public interest outweighs the interest of the person aggrieved;
- the circumstances do not require investigation;
- existing administrative procedures provide a remedy that is adequate to deal with the complaint and the complainant has not availed of that remedy.