

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of services provided by ministry caseworkers, including difficulty contacting and not seeing their caseworker. 	<p>In some cases, a child or youth may not be pleased with the placement option that his or her worker feels is in the best interest of the child or youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In ensuring that the placement matches the needs of the child or youth, there may be circumstances where despite a request from a child or youth, it may not be safe or appropriate for him or her to be moved from a family environment to group care, or from group care to a family environment. • Provincial policy is that caseworkers must ensure that any decisions concerning the placement of a child or youth take into account the benefits of placement with extended family, in their home community, and be respectful of the child or youth's familial, cultural, social, religious backgrounds, and significant relationships. • Provincial policy is that children and youth in care must be advised of the range of formal and informal mechanisms available to them to have their concerns heard and resolved, including through the Child and Youth Advocate. • Legislation requires caseworkers to inform a child or youth of their procedural rights. • For some remote and rural communities, securing placements can be challenging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A province-wide foster parent and aboriginal caregiver recruitment campaign is underway to address this challenge. ○ A placement committee focused on securing appropriate placements for high needs children and youth has been established by some DFNAs. • Provincial policies are in place requiring that caseworkers have contact with a child or youth in care on a monthly basis and face-to-face contact at least every three months, including time spent with the child with no caregiver present. • Provincial practice is for caseworkers to attempt to return calls from children and youth by the end of the next business day. • If a caseworker is not able to resolve differences with a child or youth they serve, they are expected to provide children and youth with the ability to speak to the caseworker's supervisor and/or manager to resolve the issue, and inform them of their right to access the services of the Child and Youth Advocate. • A ministry working committee which includes representatives from CFSAs and DFNAs is developing a process to address quality of care and intervention-type investigations. Where intervention-type assessments have occurred, the information is entered into the child or youth's file. • Review of allegations of abuse in care and where the safety or wellbeing of a child or youth may be at imminent risk take priority and are investigated immediately, in accordance with ministry policy.
--	--

Report on Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) and Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNAs)

The tables below include information about how cases where mandatory notifications were made to the advocate were addressed by CFSAs and DFNAs. CFSAs and DFNAs are required by ministry policy to inform the advocate whenever:

- A child or youth is alleged to have suffered physical, emotional, or sexual abuse while in provincial government care.
- A child or youth receiving services, or a significant person in their life, disagrees with the services planned for a child or youth in care.
- It is felt that the viewpoint or interests of a child or youth in care are not being considered or the rights of a child or youth in care are not being respected.

The ministry response section of the table shows the number of such incidents reported to the advocate and whether they were founded or unfounded, based on the facts discovered when the incident was investigated.

When an allegation is verified, the first priority of the ministry is to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child or youth in care. The nature of these steps vary, depending on the unique circumstances of each case and can include:

- The permanent closure of a foster home or kinship care home, or the discipline of group home staff, up to and including dismissal. Incidents that are criminal in nature are referred to the appropriate police authorities.
- A requirement that foster parents or kinship caregivers receive additional training before being able to care for children or youth in their home again. In some cases a child or youth in care may remain with the foster parent or kinship caregiver, provided their safety and wellbeing can be assured.
- The need for foster parents or kinship caregivers to take additional steps to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of children and youth in their care, such as making sure third parties who have placed the safety and wellbeing of the young person at risk are barred access to the child or youth.
- The ministry providing additional supports and services to the foster parent or kinship caregiver and increasing its monitoring activities.
- Forwarding verified cases of abuse to the ministry legal services branch for referral to the Office of the Public Trustee.

Child and Family Services Authorities

CFSA	Concern Reported	Ministry Response
Southwest CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five mandatory notifications involving nine children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two allegations of abuse involving three children were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of sexual abuse by one foster child on another child. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perpetrating foster child moved to a group home and matter referred to police. ○ One case of a child in care being exposed to alcohol and drug use by adults in the kinship home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children moved to a foster home.
Southeast CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four mandatory notifications involving five children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two allegations of abuse were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of inappropriate discipline strategies used by a foster parent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child moved to a more structured group home. ○ One case of physical abuse by a kinship caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child moved to foster home and matter referred to police.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests from youth about support for financial services. • Youth involvement in their own case planning. • Access to biological parents/siblings. 	<p>each youth's needs and supporting his or her permanency plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region has reviewed this matter and affirmed that youth receive the financial support they are eligible for under provincial policy. • Staff continue to make efforts to involve children and youth in case planning and ensure they are aware of their opportunity to access the services of the advocate if they feel they are not being heard or disagree with a decision. • Staff are to ensure that children and youth have regular and frequent contact with their parents, siblings, and extended family when it is safe to have such contact.
Central CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine mandatory notifications involving 13 children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three allegations of abuse involving five children were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of emotional/verbal abuse and inappropriate discipline strategies used by a foster parent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster children moved and foster home closed. ○ One case of a foster parent injuring a youth by holding the youth's arms during an argument. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth moved to another foster home and foster home is on hold. ○ One case of sexual assault by one youth on another youth in a group home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perpetrator and victim were moved to other separate residential programs and matter was referred to police.
East Central CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three mandatory notifications involving eight children. • Lack of involvement in case planning, not being advised of their legal status, or transported under false pretences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One allegation of abuse involving four children was substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of inappropriate discipline strategies used by a kinship caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased supports and respite care for caregivers provided. • The region makes every effort to involve youth in their own case planning, but there are circumstances when details are not provided to the youth for their safety (e.g., if there is gang involvement, self-harm, suicidal ideation, absent without permission behaviours).
Edmonton & Area CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 mandatory notifications involving 97 children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six allegations of abuse involving fifteen children were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of physical injury of a child in a kinship home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children removed from home and placed in a foster home. ○ One case where one foster child injured another while trying to intervene during a temper tantrum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional training and supports provided to foster parent. ○ One case where an investigation revealed that while no sexual abuse had occurred, there was risk of sexual abuse in a foster home (the foster home was closed).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number / suitability of placements. • Investigation practice for allegations of abuse. • Extension of enhancement agreements / support for financial assistance agreements. • Lack of involvement in case planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster children moved and foster home closed. ○ One case of inappropriate care and disciplinary strategies used on a youth by staff at a group home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Both workers involved resigned from their positions at the group home. ○ Two cases where a youth was sexually assaulted by an adult acquaintance or biological adult child of the caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster children moved and foster home / kinship home closed. ▪ Both matters were referred to police. • While there are challenges finding appropriate placements for children and youth, practice is to respond to issues in a timely manner. • Region staff continue to work diligently to find the best solutions for children and youth. A foster parent and aboriginal caregiver recruitment strategy is currently underway and is yielding positive results. • Direction regarding the appropriate assessment of abuse reports is being addressed at a provincial level. • Allegations of abuse reports related to children already in care are pursued, but not as “intervention investigations” because the child is already receiving intervention services, and a new file on the same child would not be opened. • The region reviewed this concern and did not find a significant increase in the number of cases where support and financial assistance agreements have been denied. Regional management are to be notified of any unresolved cases and none have been brought forward to senior management in this reporting period. • Staff continue to make efforts to involve children and youth in case planning and ensure they are aware of their opportunity to access the services of the advocate if they feel they are not being heard or disagree with a decision.
<p>North Central CFSA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven mandatory notifications involving nine children. • Reduction in counselling and family visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three allegations of abuse involving three children were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate (all allegations related to the same incident). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case where a youth in a group home was trying to sexually engage other youth in the group home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immediate steps to ensure the safety of the youth involved were taken, some of the youth were moved, and the matter was referred to police. • The region is not aware of any child or youth being denied counselling due to cost management strategies. • The frequency of visits with family is determined on a case-by-case basis and depends on whether visits will place the safety or wellbeing of the child or youth at risk.

Northwest CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mandatory notifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A.
Northeast CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mandatory notifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A.
Métis Settlements CFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six mandatory notifications involving 12 children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three allegations of abuse involving eleven children were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One case of physical abuse by a kinship caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children were moved, the kinship home was closed, and matter referred to police. One case of emotional abuse by a kinship caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children were moved to a foster home and kinship home was closed. One case of inappropriate discipline strategies being used by a kinship caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional supports and training, respite care, and after-school care provided.

Report on Delegated First Nation Agencies

Delegated First Nation Agency (DFNA)	Concern Reported	Response
Blood Tribe Child Protection Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One mandatory notification involving one child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up determined that the allegation of abuse was not verified by the facts discovered during the investigation into the allegation.
Kasohkowew Child Wellness Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four mandatory notifications involving eight children. Meetings with the Director / Concerns with administrative review timelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One allegation of abuse involving one child was substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One case of sexual abuse by a foster child on another child in the same home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased supports, safety planning, and supervision planning provided. Matter referred to Zebra Child Protection Centre. The agency acknowledges there have been difficulties coordinating meetings with the advocate. The agency is working to resolve these issues. All matters where an administrative review was filed have since been addressed.
Kee Tas Kee Now Child and Family Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two mandatory notifications involving two children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up determined that the allegation of abuse was not verified by the facts discovered during the investigation into the allegation.
Piikani Child and Family Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One mandatory notification involving one child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up determined that the allegation of abuse was not verified by the facts discovered during the investigation into the allegation.
Siksika Family Services Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mandatory notifications. Youth requesting placement closer to or in home community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A. Placements for youth, especially high-needs or high-risk youth, continue to be a challenge. It is sometimes necessary to move a youth outside of their home community to access the specialized services they need, which may only be offered in larger centres. A placement committee for the agency, focused on securing appropriate placements for high-needs or high-risk youth, has been established by the DFNA.
Siksika (Calgary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four mandatory notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four allegations of abuse involving four children were substantiated and addressed

	<p>involving four children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits with siblings also in care. 	<p>to the satisfaction of the advocate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case (three allegations) of physical and emotional abuse by a foster parent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children moved to another placement and foster home closed. ○ One case of emotional abuse and exposure to alcohol consumption by adults in a foster home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional supports, training, and monitoring provided to foster parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing placements for larger sibling groups continues to be a challenge for the DFNA. If one placement for all siblings cannot be arranged, every effort is made to coordinate visits. • A placement committee for the agency, focused on securing appropriate placements for high-needs or high-risk youth has been established by the DFNA.
Stoney Child and Family Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three mandatory notifications involving five children. • Staff shortages. • Placement of youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One allegation of abuse involving one child was substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of emotional abuse and alcohol use by adults in the foster home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased supports to the foster parents. • Staff were hired to fill two vacant positions and the agency is now fully staffed. • Securing placements for youth, particularly older youth, is a challenge for the DFNA. The DFNA and Calgary and Area CFSA are working together to jointly address this matter.
Tribal Chiefs Child and Family Services (East)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two mandatory notifications involving one child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two allegations of abuse involving two children were substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of a foster child being shoved by another foster child in a group home, during an altercation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group home enhanced its supervision of children at the home, including direct supervision of the child initiating the shoving. ○ One case of inappropriate supervision by group home staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervision concerns followed up on by the CFSA.
Tsuu T'ina Child and Family Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four mandatory notifications involving six children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One allegation of abuse involving three children was substantiated and addressed to the satisfaction of the advocate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One case of emotional/verbal abuse and exposure to domestic violence by a kinship caregiver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children moved to another kinship care placement.

* The Child and Youth Advocate did not receive any mandatory notifications or have additional observations regarding the Delegated First Nation Agencies not listed in the table above.