

Message from the Advocate

Fall is a time of fresh starts, brightly colored leaves and frosty mornings. For children it also means the beginning of a new school year, new school supplies and another chapter filled with new learnings.



Carol A. Chafe

New learnings play a significant role in the work that we do at the Advocate for Children and Youth (ACY). With each investigation completed there are new learnings, in our daily advocacy role there are new learnings, and with each new learning we educate the public through many venues, including our investigative reports, presentations and in our newsletter.

In this newsletter we discuss the four (4) new investigations I called on September 28, 2016. We also discuss the places we visited as part of our outreach where we provided education sessions to professionals and community organizations about our office and the work we do. Finally, be sure to try our "Right's Stuff" word puzzle with a focus on children's right to access to information, Article 17 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*.

Have a wonderful, productive and educational season everyone!



What's New

On September 28th, the Child and Youth Advocate held a press conference where she publically called four (4) new investigations and provided a brief overview of each:

- An eighteen- year old youth who committed suicide while residing in a group home and receiving services from DCSSD and the Regional Health Authority.
- A sixteen-year old youth with complex mental health needs whose health deteriorated while in her group home placement and had experienced several critical incidents. Eventually, she was moved to another service provider and is currently thriving in her new placement.
- A family of several children, who had an open protective intervention file with DCSSD for several years, and yet they were allegedly maltreated and physically and sexually abused by their parents.
- A young child who was placed in an alternate care arrangement by DCSSD as his mother required further supports. The child remained in that arrangement for a lengthy period of time and concerns have been identified with the services provided by DCSSD including a lack of permanency planning.

In addition to the four new investigations, we are currently conducting six previously called investigations. In the press conference, the Advocate also reiterated how imperative it is that she receives accurate and timely information in the event of a critical incident or death of a child or youth. In November 2014, the House of Assembly passed a motion committing to legislation to respond to her request of June 2014 to amend the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* to ensure mandatory reporting by all government departments and agencies of critical incidents and deaths of children and youth receiving services.

In her statement, the Advocate said "*We can no longer accept that "change takes time"; action must be taken immediately to make that "change now". We must ensure that not one more child or youth suffers because their right to services is not upheld*".

Please visit <http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/PressReleaseSept28-2016.pdf> to see the full press conference statement.

