

## Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

### Report on the Review of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate 2023-2024 Annual Report

February 2025



**COMMITTEES**  
OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices  
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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OFFICES**

February 2025

To the Honourable Nathan M. Cooper  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
of the Province of Alberta

The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices has the honour to submit its report relating to the review of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate 2023-24 Annual Report for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

Sincerely, *(original signed by)*

Shane Getson, MLA  
Chair, Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

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**MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OFFICES  
31st Legislature, First Session**

Shane C. Getson, MLA  
Chair  
Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)

Glenn van Dijken, MLA  
Deputy Chair  
Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC)

Amanda Chapman, MLA  
Calgary-Beddington (NDP)

Nolan B. Dyck, MLA  
Grande Prairie (UC)

Janet Eremenko, MLA  
Calgary-Currie (NDP)

Jacqueline Lovely, MLA  
Camrose (UC)

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Leduc-Beaumont (UC)

Marie F. Renaud, MLA  
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David Shepherd, MLA  
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Scott Sinclair, MLA  
Lesser Slave Lake (UC)

**Substitutions Pursuant to Standing Order 56(2.1-2.4):**

Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, MLA<sup>\*</sup>  
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)

Diana M.B. Batten, MLA<sup>§</sup>  
Calgary-Acadia (NDP)

Lorne Dach, MLA<sup>†</sup>  
Edmonton-McClung (NDP)

Martin M. Long, MLA<sup>\*\*</sup>  
West Yellowhead (UC)

Garth Rowsell, MLA<sup>‡</sup>  
Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)

Justin Wright, MLA<sup>††</sup>  
Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC)

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<sup>\*</sup> Substitution for Brandon Lundy on January 17, 2025

<sup>†</sup> Substitution for Marie Renaud on January 17 and February 7, 2025

<sup>‡</sup> Substitution for Jackie Lovely on January 17, 2025, and for Brandon Lundy on February 7, 2025

<sup>§</sup> Substitution for Janet Eremenko on February 7, 2025

<sup>\*\*</sup> Substitution for Nolan Dyck on February 7, 2025

<sup>††</sup> Substitution for Glenn van Dijken, Acting Deputy Chair, on January 17, 2025

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Child and Youth Advocate (the “Advocate”) is appointed under the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, S.A. 2011, c. C-11.5, (the “Act”) as an Officer of the Legislature. Pursuant to section 9(1) of the Act, the Child and Youth Advocate’s role is “to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of children.”

Section 21 of the Act provides that the Advocate must report annually to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly with respect to the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. The reporting requirement includes the Office’s annual report and reports on any mandatory death reviews and systemic reviews following a serious injury or death of a child who was receiving a designated service under section 1(e) of the Act. Pursuant to section 21(1.1) of the Act, the annual report must include information on the progress of the implementation of the Advocate’s recommendations.

In accordance with section 21(3) of the Act, once tabled, an annual report stands referred to the committee of the Legislative Assembly charged with the review of the report. Pursuant to section 21(4) of the Act, a committee undertaking the review “must report back to the Legislative Assembly within 90 days of the report being referred to it if it is then sitting or, if it is not sitting, within 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting.” On December 3, 2024, the Legislative Assembly passed Government Motion 55, referring the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices (the “Committee”) for review.

This report is not a comprehensive record of the Committee’s proceedings. For a complete record of the Committee’s review, consult transcripts 31-1-9 (pp. LO-153 to LO-166) and 31-1-10 (pp. LO-167 to LO-185) available at [assembly.ab.ca](http://assembly.ab.ca).

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

On February 7, 2025, the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices made two recommendations:

1. that the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate continue to work with the relevant ministries to improve outcomes for children and youth in care in Alberta.
2. that the Government continue cross-ministry efforts to address the challenges identified for children and young people in care with disabilities and complex needs in the 2023-24 annual report of the [Office of the] Child and Youth Advocate.

## 3.0 COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee met on January 17 and February 7, 2025, to review the Child and Youth Advocate’s Annual Report 2023-2024.

At the January 17, 2025, meeting Terri Pelton, the Child and Youth Advocate, made a presentation to the Committee on the Advocate’s Annual Report 2023-24. The report lists eight new recommendations for the 2023-2024 year in addition to providing an update of the Office’s evaluation of a further 27 outstanding recommendations. Of the outstanding recommendations, the annual report indicated that six were met, five were closed with some progress, one was closed as unmet with no progress, and 15 are ongoing.

Following the presentation by the Advocate, the Committee decided to learn more about how ministries are responding to and collaborating with each other in their efforts to address the outstanding recommendations made by the Advocate. Accordingly, the Committee requested, by way of the following

resolution, that officials from the Ministry of Children and Family Services; Seniors, Community and Social Services; Mental Health and Addiction; and Justice each appear before the Committee to provide an oral briefing on the ministries' responses to the recommendations of the Advocate:

that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite officials from the Ministries of Children and Family Services; Seniors, Community and Social Services; Mental Health and Addiction; and Justice to each provide an oral report at the Committee's next meeting on the ministry's response to the recommendations in the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Child and Youth Advocate.

The Committee also agreed to the following motion, requesting a written submission from the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services:

that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite officials from the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services to provide a written submission, no later than February 3, 2025, on the ministry's response to the recommendations in the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Finally, the Committee invited the Child and Youth Advocate to attend the meeting with the invited ministries by passing the following motion:

that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite officials from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to provide technical assistance to the Committee, if requested, when officials from the Ministries of Children and Family Services; Seniors, Community and Social Services; Mental Health and Addiction; and Justice meet with the Committee regarding the recommendations in the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Child and Youth Advocate.

On February 7, 2025, the Committee heard oral presentations from ministry representatives, including the Assistant Deputy Minister of Child Intervention Delivery at the Ministry of Children and Family Services; Assistant Deputy Minister of Employment and Financial Services at the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services; Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy and Programs at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction; and Assistant Deputy Minister of Court and Justice Services at the Ministry of Justice.

After hearing the oral presentations, the Committee deliberated on the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and made two recommendations with respect to the new and outstanding recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OFFICES**

At its meeting on February 7, 2025, the Committee made two recommendations with respect to the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Recognizing that supporting children in care is a complex responsibility involving multiple ministries, the Committee acknowledged that some progress has been made and encouraged ongoing collaboration of the involved ministries and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate through the following recommendation:

1. that the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate continue to work with the relevant ministries to improve outcomes for children and youth in care in Alberta.

The Committee also recognized the importance and added challenges of providing sufficient supports for children and youth in care who have disabilities or complex needs. Further, the Committee expressed its desire that the ministries continue to work collaboratively with the Advocate and with each other to ensure

the well-being of children and youth in care in Alberta. As a result, the Committee made the following recommendation:

2. that the Government continue cross-ministry efforts to address the challenges identified for children and young people in care with disabilities and complex needs in the 2023-24 annual report of the [Office of the] Child and Youth Advocate.