

From: [Isabel Henderson](#)
 To: [CYAA Review](#)
 Subject: Child and Youth Advocate Act Submission
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Alberta Government
Child and Youth Advocate Act Review

The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invites your input on the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. The Act enables the Advocate to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth receiving intervention services or who are involved with the youth criminal justice system.

WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER IN YOUR SUBMISSION?

The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices requests your answers to the following questions.

Please read the relevant section of the discussion guide (which follows) for background information about each question.

1. There are services provided to different age groups under the Act. Are these age limits appropriate?

Appear appropriate given flexibility regarding continuous advocacy for youth transitioning to young adults with special provisions for individuals in the justice system.

2. Does the Act permit the Advocate to provide appropriate services to children and youth? Should the Advocate provide services to children and youth who are receiving government services other than what is currently indicated within the Act? Please explain your answer and provide suggestions, if possible.

Yes, given focus of services on both individual and systemic advocacy for three primary categories of vulnerable children and youth – 1) those receiving child welfare services; 2) those falling under the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act; and 3) those involved in the youth justice system.

Uncertain whether the children and youth covered by the Child and Youth Advocate Act include those with concurrent issues related to mental health, physical or cognitive disability or behavioural challenges. If Yes, perceived benefits if the Advocate provide consultation services with other government jurisdictions to determine jointly how best to meet special needs of children and youth within the defined population under the Act .

3. What the Advocate can do is made possible by the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. In your opinion, should the role of the Advocate stay the same? Is the Advocate able to do enough or should the Advocate be able to do more? Please explain your answer and provide suggestions, if possible.

In general the role of the Advocate appears to have sufficient scope to provide advocacy, education and research services in addition to identifying issues and making recommendations for improvements at both an individual and systemic level for the populations served. With respect to any role changes, refer to potential “consultation” role in #2.

4. Does the Act provide the Advocate with sufficient powers to conduct the roles and functions set out in the Act? Are other powers necessary?

Appears to do so. No other specific powers identified as necessary.

5. Is the information provided by a child to an advocate sufficiently protected? Is the information provided for an investigation sufficiently protected?

Yes based on more "definition" of the information provided appears in the full-text of the Act.

6. What the Advocate can investigate is made possible by the Act. Should the Advocate be able to investigate the same, more, less or different issues? Please explain your answer and provide suggestions.

See #2 above – re other concomitant disabilities who might also be considered to be vulnerable.

7. What the Advocate can report after an investigation is set by the Act. Do these reports contain enough information? Should these reports contain the same, more or different information? Please explain your answer and provide suggestions.

15(5) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act also references, "The Advocate must make a report made under subsection (1) available to the public at a time and in a form and manner that the Advocate considers appropriate." This action should be retained to ensure transparency and accountability of the Office of the Advocate to the public in addition to increasing public awareness of the systemic challenges of supporting vulnerable populations.

8. Do you have any other suggestions or comments about the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*? Please comment on any topic related to the Act not addressed by this discussion guide.

Isabel Henderson, Senior Operating Officer
Alberta Health Services, Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital
10230 - 111 Avenue, Edmonton AB Canada T5G 0B7
TEL: +1.780.735.7984 FAX: +1.780.735.7980
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