

**From:** [webmaster@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:webmaster@assembly.ab.ca)  
**To:** [CYAA Review](#)  
**Subject:** Children and Youth Advocate Act - RESPONSE October 14, 2016 1:19 PM  
**Date:** Friday, October 14, 2016 1:19:35 PM

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**PART A: Submitter Contact Information**

First Name: Patricia  
 Last Name: Yuzwenko (on behalf of Legal Aid Alberta)  
 E-mail: [pyuzwenko@ycdo.ca](mailto:pyuzwenko@ycdo.ca)  
 Phone: 780 422 8383  
 City/Town: Edmonton  
 Age 18 or Over? Yes  
 Confidential Submission?: No

**PART B:**

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**1. AGE LIMITS**  
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Yes

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**2. DESIGNATED SERVICES**  
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The Act should allow Advocates to assist a child who is not receiving a designated service but wishes to. Youth without means who are seeking treatment or housing are denied services under the Child and Family Enhancement Act often because they are deemed too old to house in any of the available placements. The Advocates Office should be able to provide youth in that situation with assistance.

Assistance is sometimes provided on a case by case basis when Child and Family Services have opened an investigation into a child's circumstances but the timing of that assistance should change. Assistance should instead be provided when screening a family (which is the step taken before an investigation is opened). Early assistance is critical in obtaining better outcomes.

Further there should be a requirement that a child be given information about the Child and Youth Advocate whenever a decision is made by Child and Family Services that affects that child. Youth are often not aware of the assistance that is available to them. In practice, this could be similar to the legislative requirement to advise youth of their right to legal counsel.

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**3. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS**  
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No change required

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**4. POWERS**  
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In addition to investigations and publishing reports, there should be the authority to convene a judicial inquiry. While preserving the child's privacy, this would allow for a findings of fault or responsibility, which, in turn, would promote quicker changes to the system.

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5. INFORMATION PROTECTION

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Yes

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6. INVESTIGATIONS

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The Advocate should be able to investigate and report on systemic issues facing children receiving a designated service without the need for a death or serious injury. There may be significant gaps in services that do not lead to either of these results but still have a significant impact on a child's ability to develop and stay safe. For example, the lack of appropriate housing for youth can and does force youth to reside "on the street" leaving them vulnerable to sexual exploitation and other costly social hazards.

Including the power to investigate systemic issues would be consistent with other provinces such as British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

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7. REPORTING

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No change required other than the addition of findings of fault or responsibility as outlined above in our answer to question 4.

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8. OTHER

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No further comments or suggestions.

PART C: HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS REVIEW?

- Newspaper
- AMMSA website
- CFWE Radio
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Other: Legal Aid Alberta was invited to make a submission