



Every Child Matters

A Vision for Culturally Grounded Youth Protection Services

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CONSEIL CRI DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE LA BAIE JAMES
CREE BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES OF JAMES BAY

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1. RIGHTS OF THE CREE CHILD



Children's Rights According to the United Nations

Water

Food

Education

Life



Health

Identity

Freedom

Protection

Children's Right to Protection According to the United Nations

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children recognizes the "right to protection" for children as:

The right to live in a secure and protective environment which preserves the child's well-being. Each has the right to be protected from all forms of maltreatment, discrimination, and exploitation.

Rights of Children

The CBHSSJB recognizes the following rights of children:

- The right to life, security, physical integrity and freedom;
- The right to culture and language;
- The right to inviolability;
- The right to dignity;
- The right to equality when exercising one's rights;
- The right to information.

Protecting Cree Children is a Shared Responsibility

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility and it belongs :

- First to parents, as the primary custodians for their child;
- To the community, which provides the help that children and parents need in exercising their roles;
- To the government, which:
 - Must implement and deliver services (e.g. Health and Social Services),
 - *And in **special circumstances**, must intervene to compensate for parents' absence or inability to protect their child (i.e. DYP).*

Laws and regulations establish a framework in regards to the services provided to children and families:

- The Youth Protection Act (YPA)
- The Act Respecting Health Services and Social Services for Cree Native Persons (S.5)
- The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)
- CBHSSJB By-Law 12 (on the application of Article 37 of the YPA)
- The Quebec Civil Code
- The CBHSSJB Code of Ethics
- The Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms
- The Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms

2. CONCEPT OF PROTECTION

Concept of Protection in the Youth Protection Act vs Children's Need for Services

1. The YPA is intended to correct the situation **endangering the child's security and development** because the child's fundamental needs indicated in the YPA are not being met.
2. It does not cover all the situations of children who may need assistance or specific services.
3. **The governments' authority to intervene in families' lives must be confined to the serious and exceptional situations provided by the YPA.**
4. Sometimes, parents have difficulty fulfilling their responsibilities. They are then entitled to receiving health and social services for themselves and for their child.
5. The primary purpose of these services is to rebuild or support parents' capacities to protect their child themselves.
6. Similarly, the role of the DYP consists mainly in providing parents with appropriate assistance measures, by giving aid, counsel and assistance and by supporting their accessing and participation in the services offered by the community and the health and social services network.

3. CREE DYP WITHIN QUEBEC SYSTEM





Cree DYP within the Quebec

(Key Difference in One Sentence)

The Cree Nation is the only First Nation in Québec with a treaty-recognized, Cree-run Youth Protection system delivered by Cree staff under the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), whereas most other First Nations remain under provincial YPA authority with limited control over services.



1. Governance & Legal Authority

Cree Nation (Eeyou Istchee)

- Youth Protection is delivered by the **Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB)** — a Cree institution created under the **James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA)**.
- The Cree Nation has **treaty-recognized authority** over health and social services.
- The Cree Nation under the CBHSSJB is working on developing a Cree Youth Protection Program to redesign the system “the Eeyou/Eenuu way.”
- Furthermore, to create a Cree Commission (aah chishtipistihch Awash-USchiniichisuu sikischaayimuwinyiu with the same CDPDJ powers is proposed to be considered

Other First Nations in Québec

- Youth Protection remains under the **provincial Director of Youth Protection (DYP)**.
- First Nations can deliver *prevention* or *family support* services, but **legal authority** for protection decisions stays with Québec.
- No other First Nation has a treaty-based regional health and social services board with YP authority.



Delivery of Youth Protection Services

Cree Nation

- **YP services are delivered by Cree staff**, from Cree communities, under the Cree governance of CBHSSJB.
- Cree workers understand:
 - language
 - culture
 - family structures
 - land-based practices
- This creates a culturally grounded system.

Other First Nations

- YP investigations and legal decisions are made **MOSTLY** by **non-Indigenous provincial DYP staff**.
- Some First Nations have local workers, but:
 - Non-legal decision-makers
 - often work under provincial direction
 - cultural knowledge can be inconsistently integrated



Cultural Integration

Cree Nation

- The Cree system is explicitly being redesigned to reflect **Eeyou values, traditions, and culture**.
- The Cree Youth Protection Commission has gathered stories and solutions from all communities to embed Cree culture into law and practice.

Other First Nations

- Cultural considerations are acknowledged but **not structurally embedded** in the YPA.
- Cultural continuity depends on individual workers or local agreements, not on a treaty-based system.



System Design & Reform

Cree Nation

- The Cree Nation is undertaking a **territory-wide reform** of Youth Protection and Youth Criminal Justice systems.
- This includes:
 - community consultations
 - Cree-specific standards
 - Cree-led oversight
 - potential Cree legislation

Other First Nations

- Reforms are fragmentary and depend on:
 - provincial willingness
 - local capacity
 - federal funding
- No other First Nation in Québec is redesigning the entire YP system at a regional level.



Treaty & Structural Differences

Cree Nation

- The JBNQA creates a **unique governance structure**:
 - Cree School Board
 - Cree Health Board
 - Cree Nation Government
- These institutions have **legal authority** and **funding mechanisms** that other First Nations do not.

Other First Nations

- Governed by:
 - Indian Act band councils
 - provincial YPA
 - federal funding agreements
- No modern treaty granting regional control over health & social services



Outcomes & Overrepresentation

Cree Nation

- Still faces challenges, but:
 - More children remain in their communities
 - more placements are with extended family
 - cultural continuity is stronger
- The Cree system is actively working to reduce overrepresentation through Cree-led reforms as the one we're embarking.

Other First Nations

- First Nations children remain **highly overrepresented** in Québec's youth protection system.
- Many children are placed outside their communities and culture.

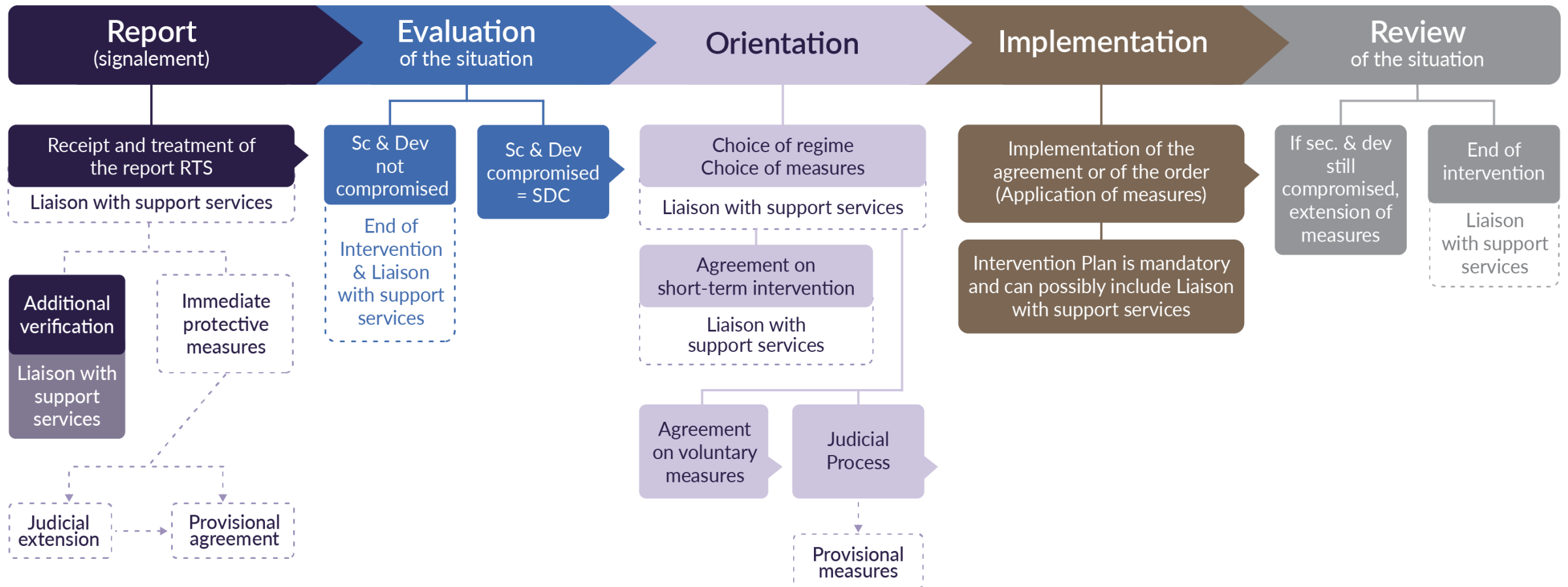
Summary Table

Feature	Cree Nation (Eeyou Istchee)	Other First Nations in Québec
Legal authority	Treaty-based (JBNQA)	Provincial YPA
Service delivery	Cree-run (CBHSSJB)	Provincial DYP
Staff	Mostly Cree	Mostly non-Indigenous
Cultural integration	System-wide, intentional	Limited, inconsistent
Reform process	Cree Youth Protection Commission	No equivalent regional reform
Oversight	Moving toward Cree-led oversight	Provincial oversight
Placement approach	Community-first, kinship-focused	Often external placements

4. STATISTICS 2024-2025



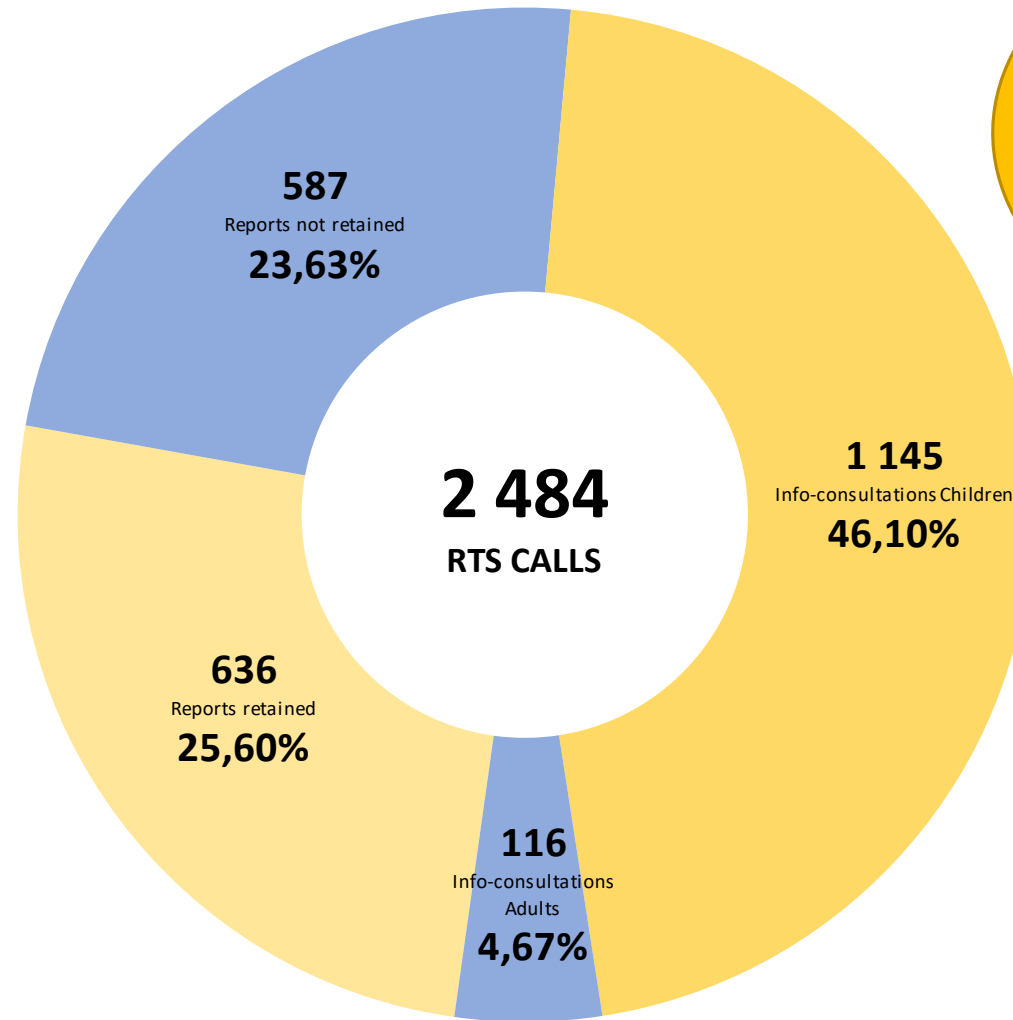
Youth Protection Intervention Process



RTS CALLS - 2024-2025

25.60% retained for evaluation

23.63 NOT retained for evaluation

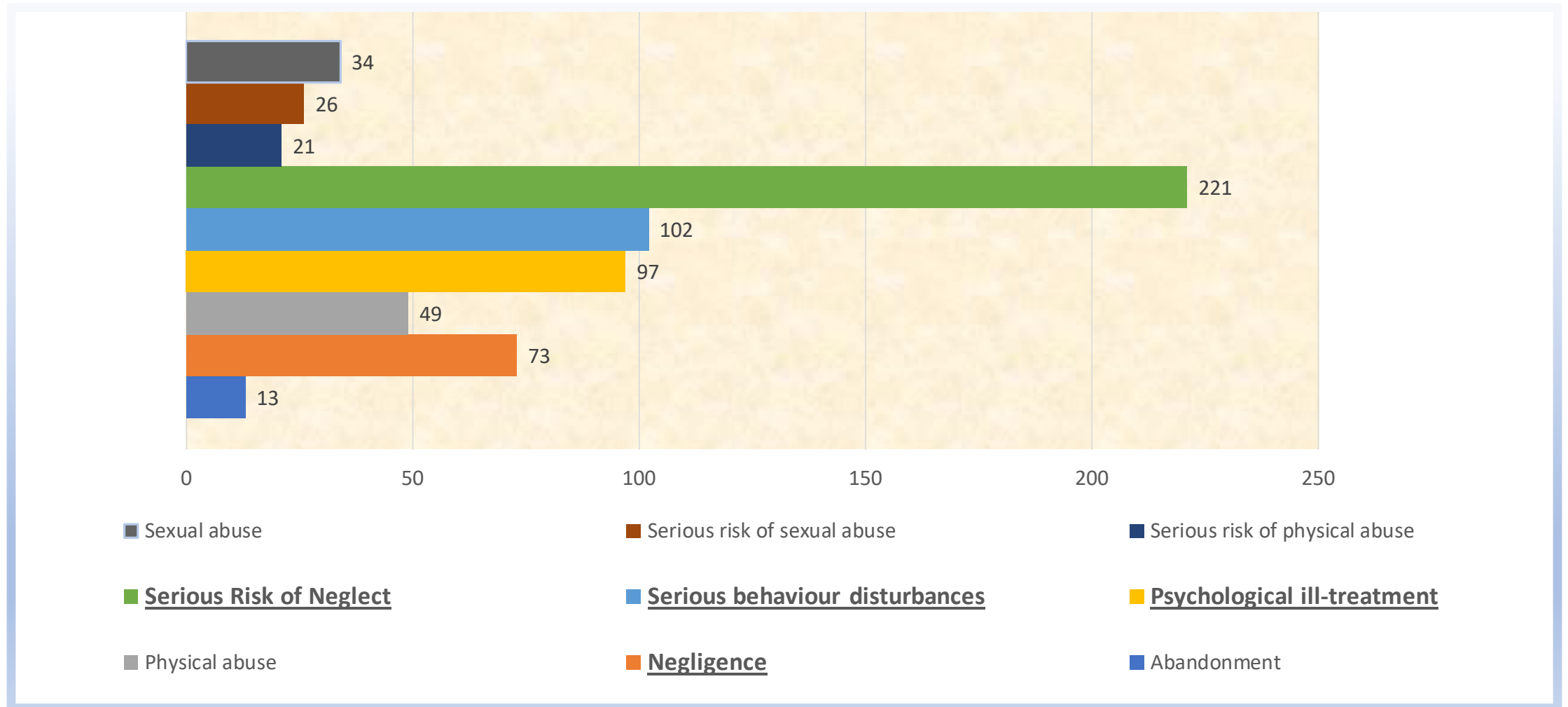


Cree DYP receives 14.5 times more reports per 1,000 people compared to the rest of Quebec

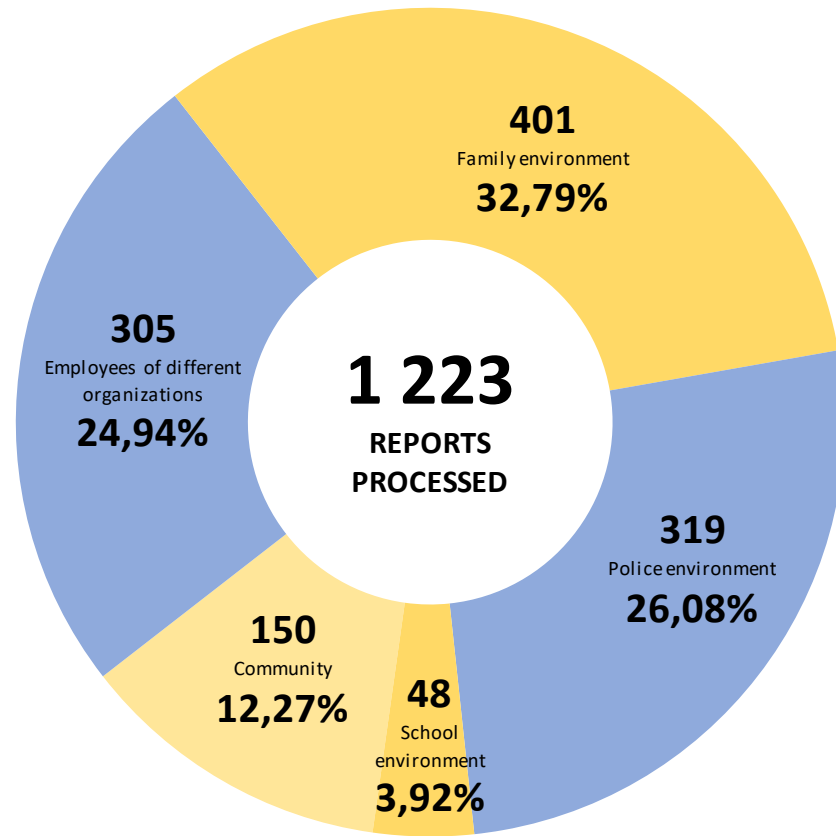
4.67% for adults in distress

46.10% Info-Consult

Reason for Reports to RTS



ORIGIN OF THE YP REPORTS PROCESSED - 2024-2025



3.29% came from Employees from school environment

59.63% not retained as parents took steps to protect their child

24.94% came from Employees from different organizations

32.79% came from Family Environment

26.09% came from police

25 Evaluation – Orientation Community Workers Required using Provincial Standards

DYP DECISIONS AFTER EVALUATION

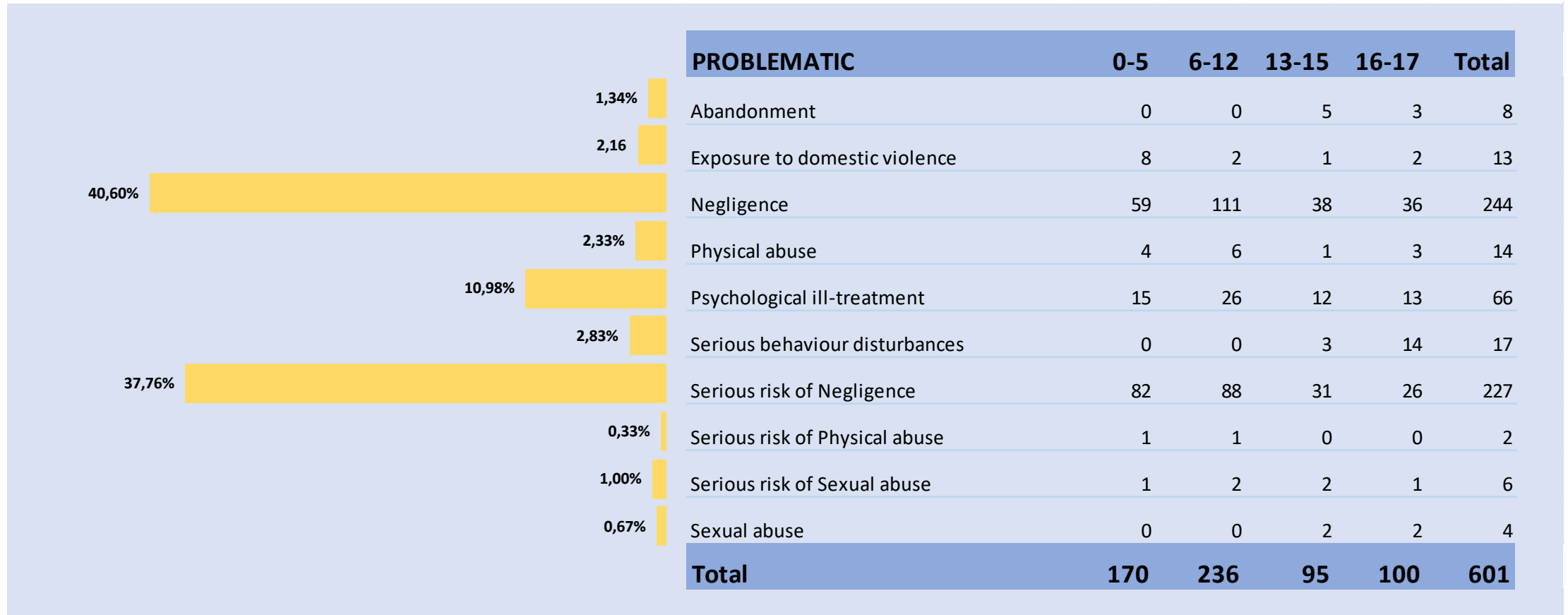
38.17%
(601)

• Security & Development
Compromised

61.83%
(587)

• SD – Not Compromised

CHILDREN WHOSE SITUATION IS TAKEN INTO CHARGE BY THE DYP - 2024-2025



67,55% of children whose situation was taken care of by the DYP in 2024-2025 were aged 12 and under.

Big Need for Parenting Support Programs

Serious
Behavioural
Disturbances
17 Files

Abandonment
8 Files

Risk of Physical
Abuse

2 Files

Sexual Abuse

4 Files

Serious
Risk of
Negligent
227 Files

Negligence
224 Files

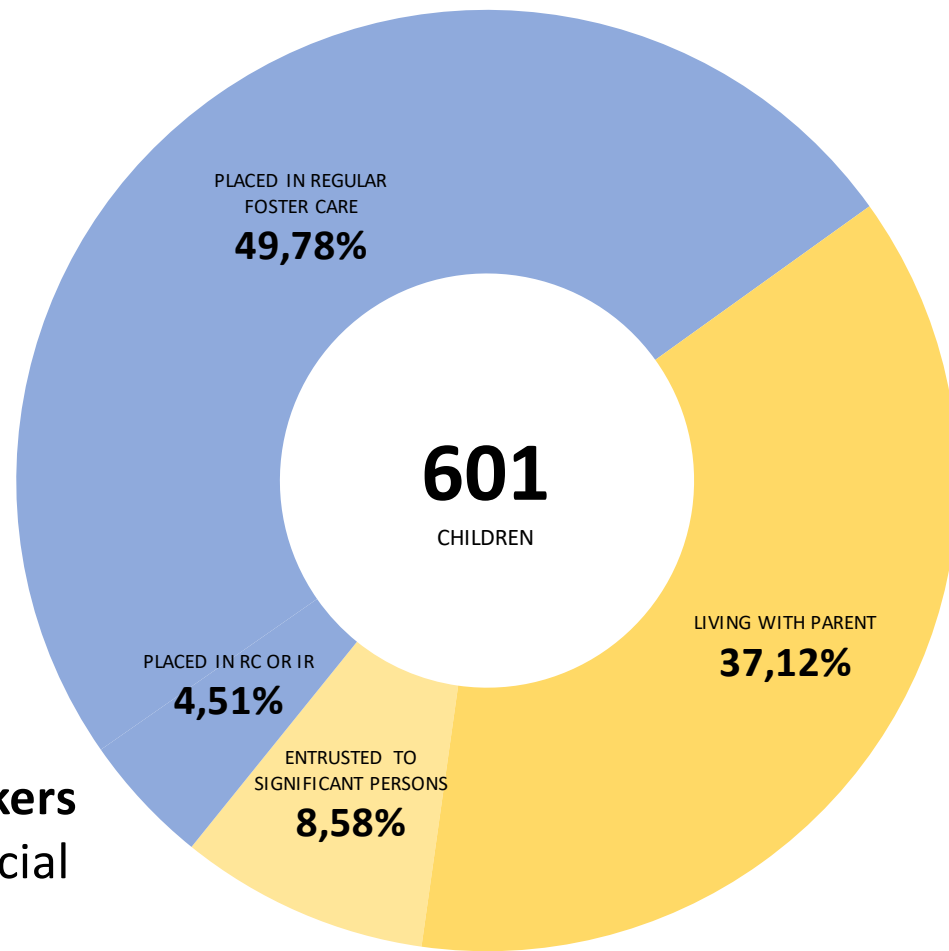
Psychological
Ill Treatment
79 Files

Physical
Abuse
14 Files

Risk of Sexual
Abuse

6 Files

CHILDREN'S LIVING ENVIRONMENT WHOSE SITUATION WAS TAKEN CHARGED BY THE DYP, AS OF MARCH 31, 2025



4.51% placed in YHS

8.58% entrustments with significant persons

30 Family Support Workers required to meet provincial standards

37.12% remained in family environment with support

49.78% placed in Foster Care

March 31, 2025 – Other Info

1718 Active YP Files

567 Court Orders –
Voluntary Measures

55 art. 32 Workers
currently in positions in
YP – just enough to meet
the files of 2025

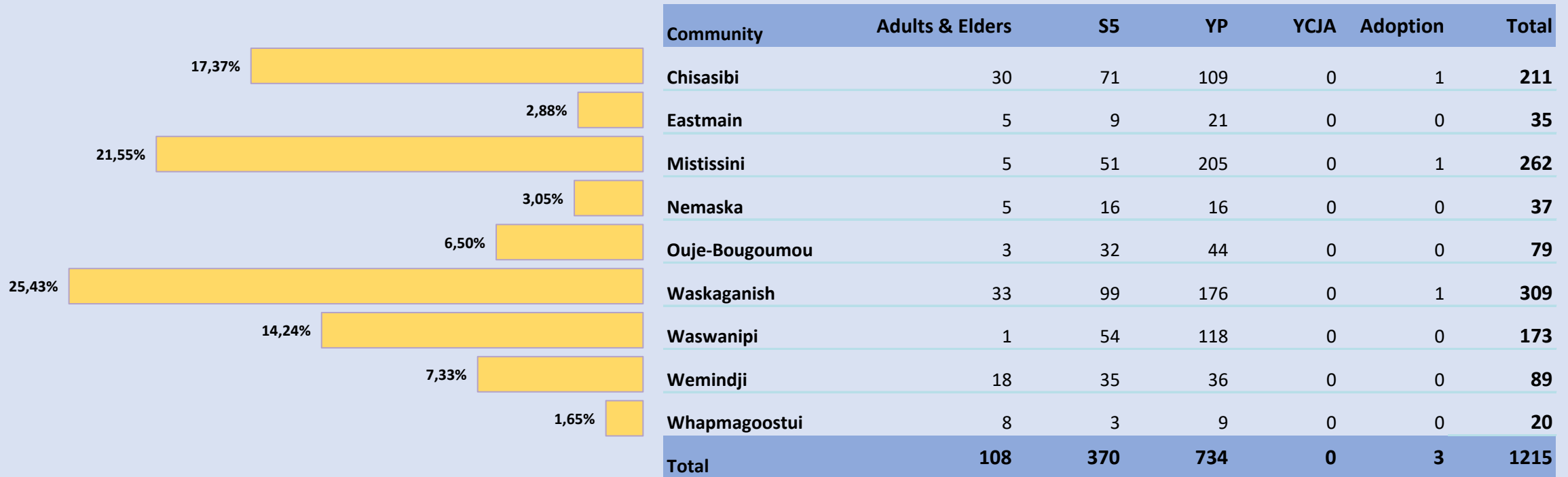
53 Inter-DYP
Collaborations

167 Age Of Majority
Placements

1089 Evaluations still to
complete

*YP has been on survival
mode – Not enough
Family Support Services
& Programs*

Foster Homes Placements - 2024-2025



In 2024-2025:

60,41% of placements were done under **YP**,
30,45% were done under **S5**,
8,89% were done under **Adults & Elders** and
0,25% were done under **Adoption**.

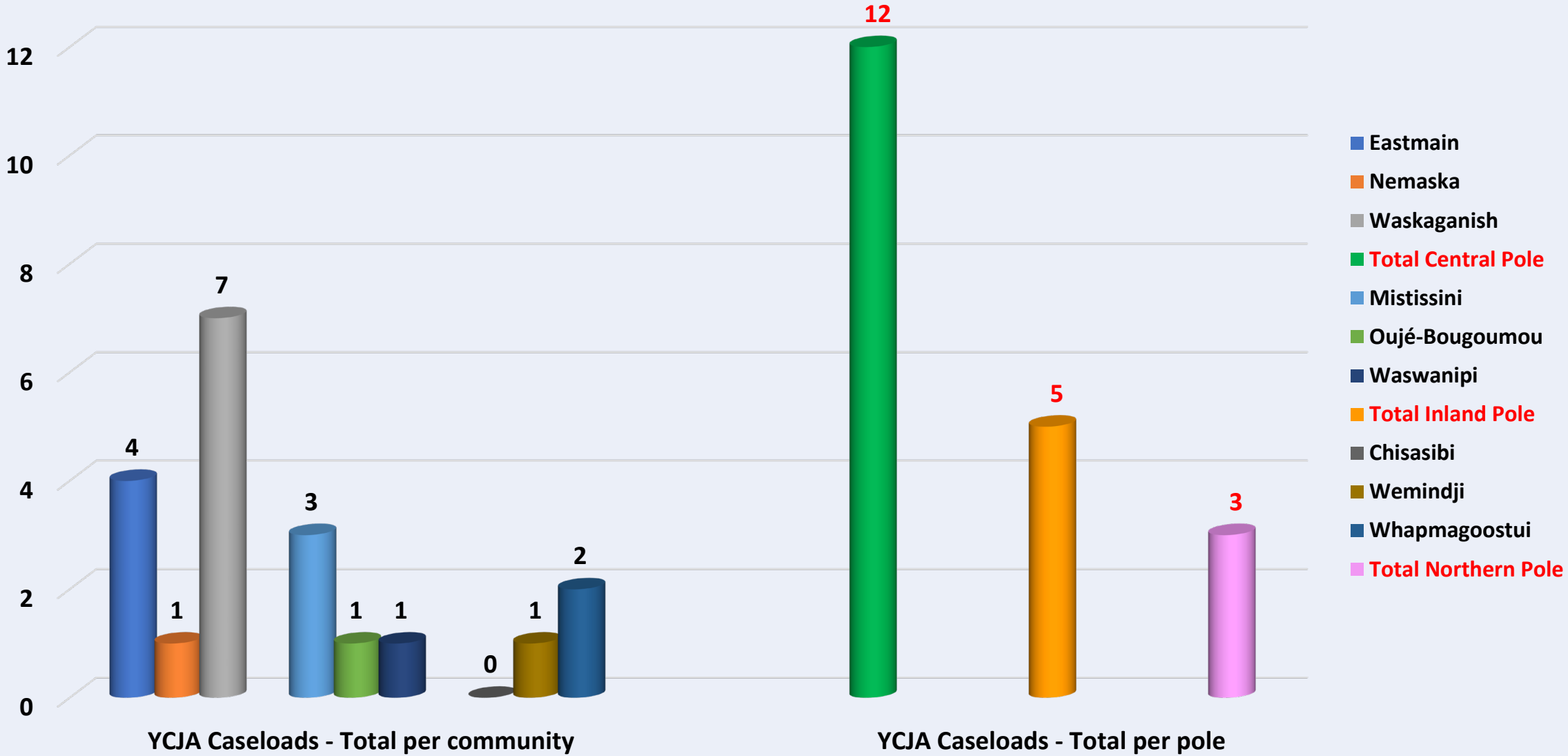
Foster Care Statistics - 2024-2025

Summary of Financial Data by law, age group and category of placements

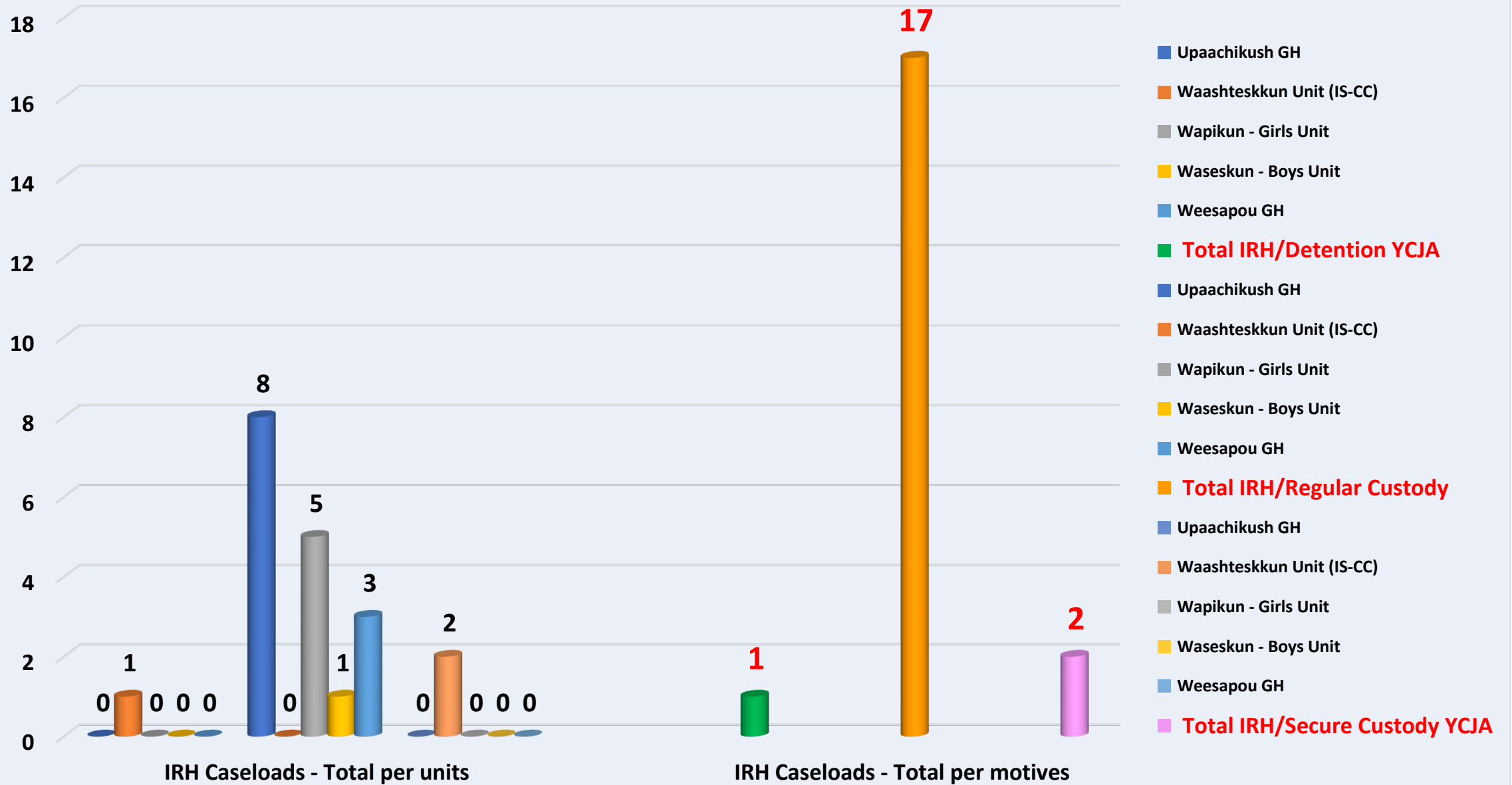
Placements	Regular	Days	Special	Days	Rehabilitation	Days	Emergency	Days	Adoption	Days	Other	Days	Totals	Days
All Communities														
Youth Protection														
0-4	\$105 446.32	4379	\$3 123 144.88	38648	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$3 228 591.20	43027
5-11	\$186 943.68	6744	\$4 767 547.57	58997	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$4 954 491.25	65741
12-15	\$128 964.24	3708	\$2 302 600.14	28494	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$2 431 564.38	32202
16-17	\$83 857.20	2235	\$1 002 932.91	12411	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$1 086 790.11	14646
Total Youth Protection	\$505 211.44	17066	\$11 196 225.50	138550	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$11 701 436.94	155616
S-5 Children														
0-4	\$86 543.52	3594	\$63 678.28	788	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$150 221.80	4382
5-11	\$146 943.72	5301	\$75 234.11	931	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$222 177.83	6232
12-15	\$140 685.10	4045	\$45 011.17	557	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$185 696.27	4602
16-17	\$36 094.24	962	\$20 283.31	251	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$56 377.55	1213
Total S-5 Children	\$410 266.58	13902	\$204 206.87	2527	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$614 473.45	16429
Adults/Elders														
Adults	\$209 448.52	5940	\$199 358.27	2467	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$408 806.79	8407
Elders	\$18 169.20	630	\$107 881.35	1335	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$126 050.55	1965
Total Adults/Elders	\$227 617.72	6570	\$307 239.62	3802	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$534 857.34	10372
Adoption														
0-4							\$6 303.59	365					\$6 303.59	365
5-11							\$4 047.85	365					\$4 047.85	365
12-15							\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
16-17							\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
Total Adoption							\$10 351.44	730					\$10 351.44	730
YCJA														
0-4	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
5-11	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
12-15	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
16-17	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
Total YCJA	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0					\$0.00	0
Other Categories														
Special Needs											\$178 222.54	71	\$178 222.54	71
Stand-By Families											\$252 347.45	7044	\$252 347.45	7044
Special Payments											\$55 085.54	0	\$55 085.54	0
Adjustments											\$10 431.16	0	\$10 431.16	0
Overpayments											(\$58 913.04)	0	(\$58 913.04)	0
Total Other Categories											\$437 173.65	7115	\$437 173.65	7115
Grand Total	\$1 143 095.74	37538	\$11 707 671.99	144879	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$10 351.44	730	\$437 173.65	7115	\$13 298 292.82	190262

YCJA: Caseloads as of March 31, 2025 = 20

(There are 14 more cases but a decision from the crown is awaiting)



YHS: IRH Caseloads as of March 31, 2025 = 20



NUMBER OF YCJA CLIENTS WHO RECEIVED SERVICES OR WERE EVALUATED AND REFERRED BY THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR IN 2024-2025

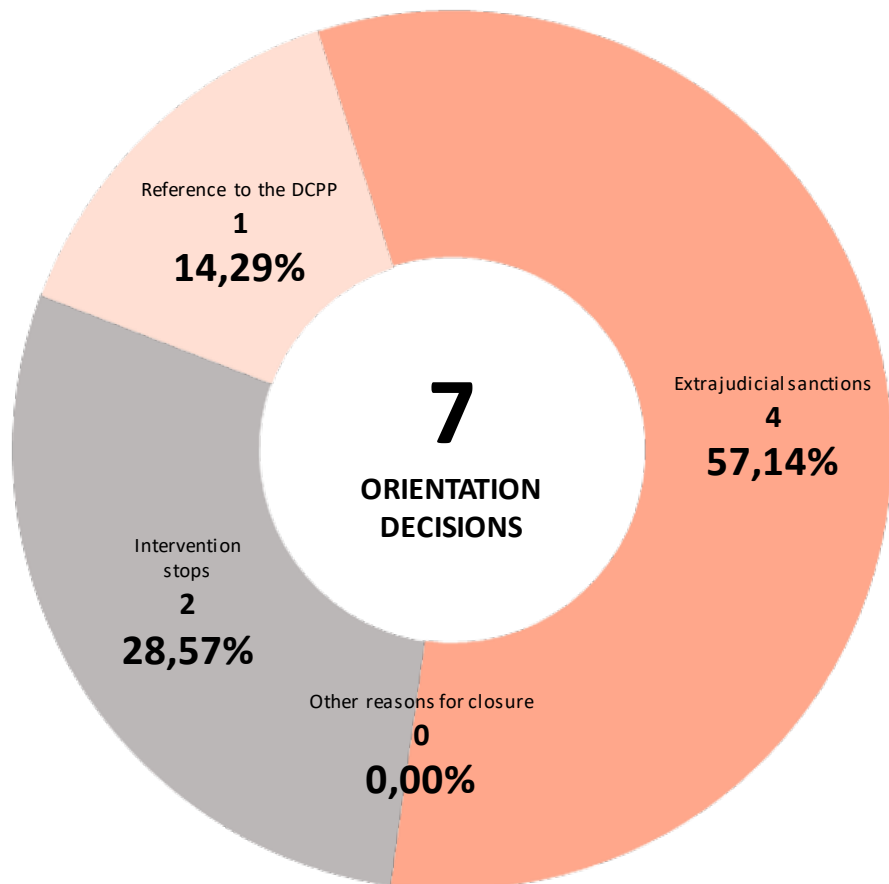
YCJA CLIENTS WHO RECEIVED SERVICES

	12-13	14-15	16-17	18 and +	Total	%
GIRLS	0	7	6	3	16	36%
BOYS	0	4	14	11	29	64%
Total	0	11	20	14	45	100%

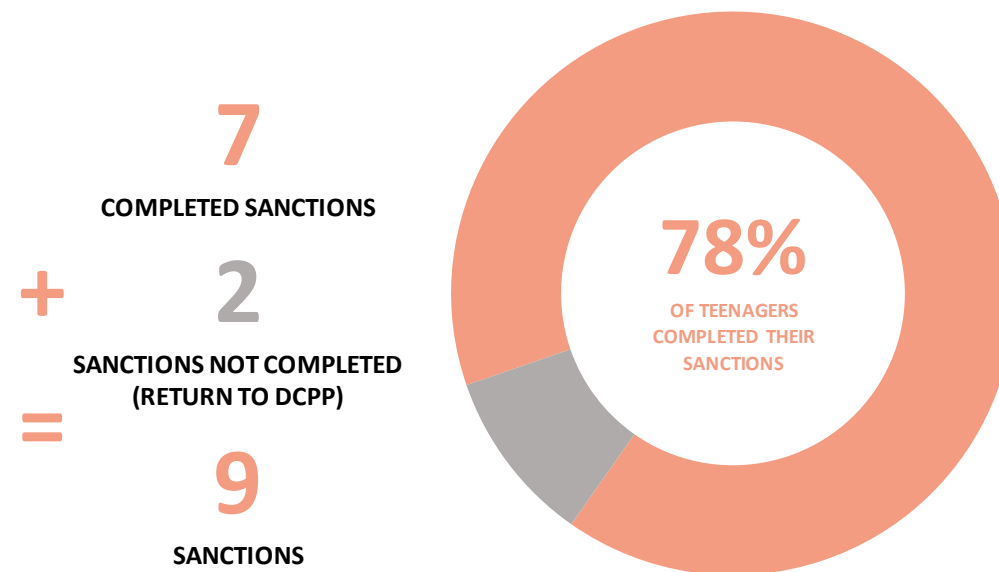
YCJA CLIENTS WHO WERE EVALUATED AND REFERRED

	12-13	14-15	16-17	18 and +	Total	%
GIRLS	0	1	2	1	4	57%
BOYS	0	0	2	1	3	43%
Total	0	1	4	2	7	100%

NUMBER OF YCJA EVALUATIONS, ORIENTATIONS AND DECISIONS BY THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR IN 2024-2025

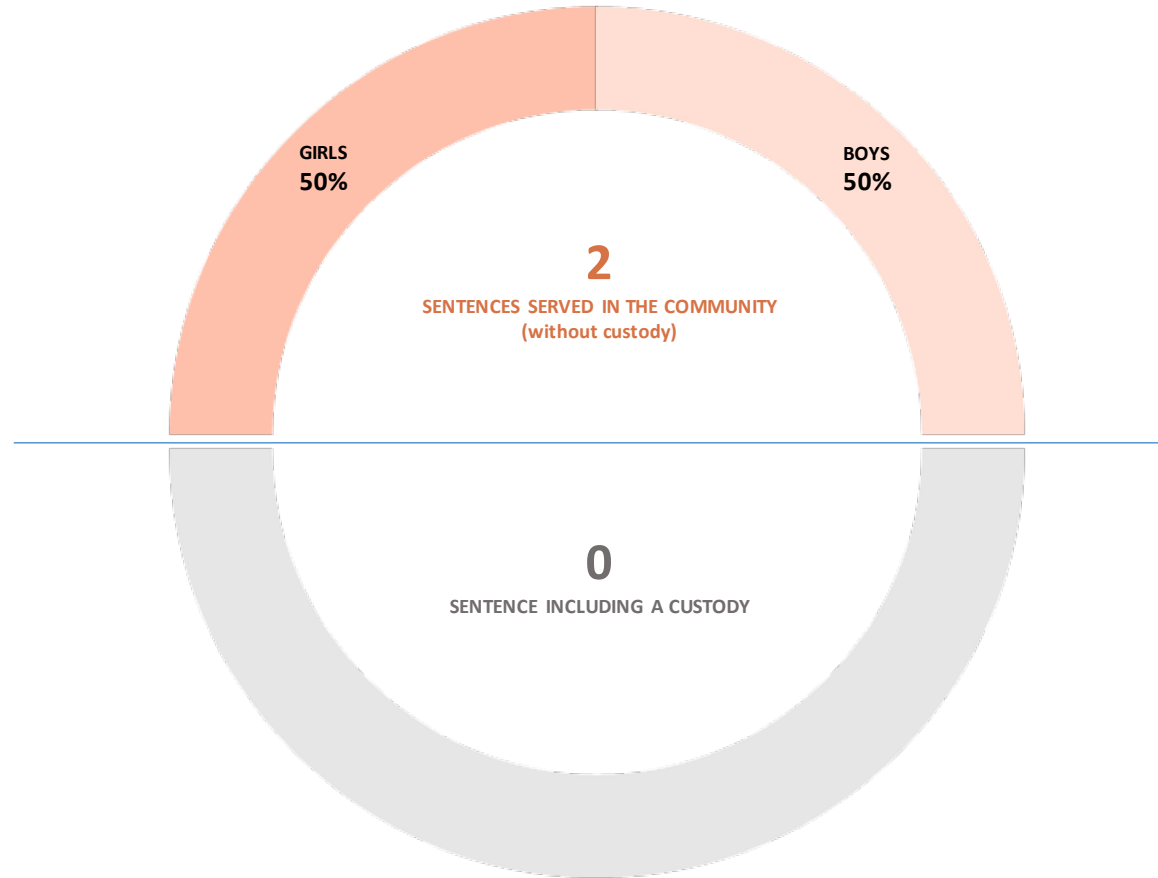


YCJA COMPLETION OF EXTRAJUDICIAL SANCTIONS IN 2024-2025



In 2024-2025, **4** extrajudicial sanctions were applied after evaluation of adolescents. **7** teenagers were concerned by extrajudicial sanctions.

YCJA SENTENCES ORDERS DURING THE YEAR INVOLVING THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR IN 2024-2025



5. Current Cree DYP Practices vs. the Declaration on the Rights of the Cree Child



1. Cultural Foundations & Identity

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Children have the right to Cree culture, language, land-based knowledge, and identity.	Cultural considerations are included in case planning; Cree foster homes are prioritized; some land-based programs exist.	Partial – Cultural elements are present but not consistently embedded in every intervention.
Systems must reflect Cree laws, values, and ways of life.	DYP still operates primarily under Quebec’s Youth Protection Act, with Cree adaptations.	Partial – Structure is still Western; Cree legal principles are not fully integrated.

2. Child Participation & Voice

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Children must participate in decisions affecting their lives.	Children are consulted, but participation varies by worker, age, and case complexity.	Partial – Participation is encouraged but not systematically ensured.
Children must understand their rights.	Rights are explained, but not always in Cree language or child-friendly formats.	Partial – Needs more consistent, culturally grounded tools.

3. Connection to Land, Family, and Community

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Children have the right to remain connected to their land, family, and community.	Community-based placements are prioritized; kinship care is used when possible.	Strong but inconsistent – Good intentions, but limited foster homes and resources create gaps.
Land-based healing is a right.	Sporadic programs exist, but not systematically integrated into case plans.	Partial – Needs formalization and expansion.

4. Safety, non-Discrimination & Well-Being

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Children must live free from violence and discrimination.	DYP responds to abuse/neglect; collaborates with EEPF and community services.	Strong – Core mandate aligns well, though systemic discrimination outside Cree systems remains a challenge.
Safety includes emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being.	Focus is still primarily on physical safety and Western clinical models.	Partial – Holistic Cree definitions of safety need stronger integration.

5. Access to Health, Mental Health & Social Services

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Children have the right to timely, appropriate care.	Access exists but delays are common due to staffing shortages and remoteness.	Partial – Systemic barriers limit timely access.
Services must reflect Cree culture and values.	Some integration of traditional healing; varies by community.	Partial – Not yet standardized or guaranteed.

6. Justice, Fairness & Timeliness

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Processes must be fair, just, timely, and reflect Cree values.	DYP follows provincial timelines; court delays are common; Cree justice principles are not fully embedded.	Weak to Partial – Structural barriers limit alignment.
Governments must advocate for children’s rights.	DYP advocates within its mandate but is constrained by provincial legislation.	Partial – Advocacy is present but limited by jurisdiction.

7. Governance, Law & Policy Alignment

Declaration Expectations	Current Cree DYP Practices	Alignment Level
Policies must align with Cree Constitution, UNDRIP, and the future Charter.		Partial – Full alignment requires legislative and policy reform.
Accountability mechanisms must ensure Cree rights are upheld.		Weak to Partial – Opportunity for major development.

6. Moving Forward



Recommendations moving forward

- By-Law 12 which governs Cree DYP to be reviewed to ensure the “the Eeyou/Eenuu way” is included.
- Provide Community Statistics to support program planning.
- Support in the development of a Cree Youth Protection Program to redesign the system “the Eeyou/Eenuu way.”
- Cree Commission (aah chishtipistihch Awash-Uschiniichisuu sikischaayimuwinui) with the same CDPDJ powers is proposed to be considered.
- Further analysis on the Division of Measures.
- Youth Aging out of Care – Independent Living Environments.

FEEDBACK AND CLOSURE

Comments, questions, suggestions?

THANK YOU!

