



Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

March 6, 2014

**Alberta Association of Services to
Children and Families**

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Child and Youth Advocate

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA)

The ***Child and Youth Advocate Act***
was proclaimed
April 1, 2012

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Child and Youth Advocate Act cont'd...

Preamble

- Recognizes children and youth are our greatest resource
- Committed to ensuring the rights, interests, and viewpoints of the most vulnerable children and youth in provincial government systems are considered
- Recognizes the importance of continual improvement in the provision of services to vulnerable children and youth

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Child and Youth Advocate Act cont'd...

the **role** of the Advocate
is to represent
the rights, interests
and viewpoints of children

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Child and Youth Advocate Act cont'd...

- The Advocate serves children receiving a designated service(s):
 - Under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)*
 - Under the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act (PSECA)*
 - In the youth criminal justice system

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Children and Youth served by the OCYA

- To provide a context:
 - In Alberta, over 11,000 are involved in the child intervention system
 - More than 7,900 are in care
 - More than 3,100 are involved with child intervention but not in care
 - The youth justice system has over 4,200 youth who are involved with community corrections or are in custody
 - About one-third of youth are involved with both the child intervention and youth justice systems

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Overview of the OCYA

- Annual Budget
 - \$12.2 million
- Current staff complement
 - 58 full-time positions
- Offices
 - Northern Alberta (Edmonton) – 45 positions
 - Southern Alberta (Calgary) – 13 positions

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Overview of the OCYA cont'd...

- Organizational Structure
 - Reorganized to:
 - separate from Human Services Ministry
 - meet new legislated mandate
 - To do this, four functional divisions have been formed:
 - Individual Advocacy
 - Systemic Advocacy and Outreach
 - Legal Representation and Quality Assurance
 - Strategic Support

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Individual Advocacy

Individual Advocacy is focused on:

- Educating young people to ensure that they:
 - understand their rights and are able to exercise them;
 - have opportunities to identify problems and the solutions they want to achieve;
 - participate in decision-making processes affecting them; and
 - are heard and taken seriously.
- For those young people who are unable to express their interests, advocacy efforts are to bring the child's interests to the forefront of decision makers

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Systemic Advocacy and Outreach

Systemic Advocacy involves:

- Issues affecting more than one person
- Issues that will likely reoccur unless changes are made
- Resolution of the issues require policy or legislative changes

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Systemic Advocacy and Outreach cont'd...

Outreach involves:

- **Public Education** to ensure the public and key stakeholders are informed about issues affecting young people receiving services
- **Collaborative Research** to improve services and address the needs of young people
- **Community Advocacy Partnerships** to increase advocacy resources available to young people
- **Engaging** with Aboriginal stakeholders and communities to strengthen our capacity to advocate for Aboriginal young people in ways that recognizes their unique circumstances

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Legal Representation and Quality Assurance

Legal Representation involves:

- Appointing lawyers for young people involved in *CYFEA* and *PSECA* matters
- Ensuring young people's legal rights are respected
- Ensuring young people's voices are heard in court proceedings

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Legal Representation and Quality Assurance cont'd...

Quality Assurance involves:

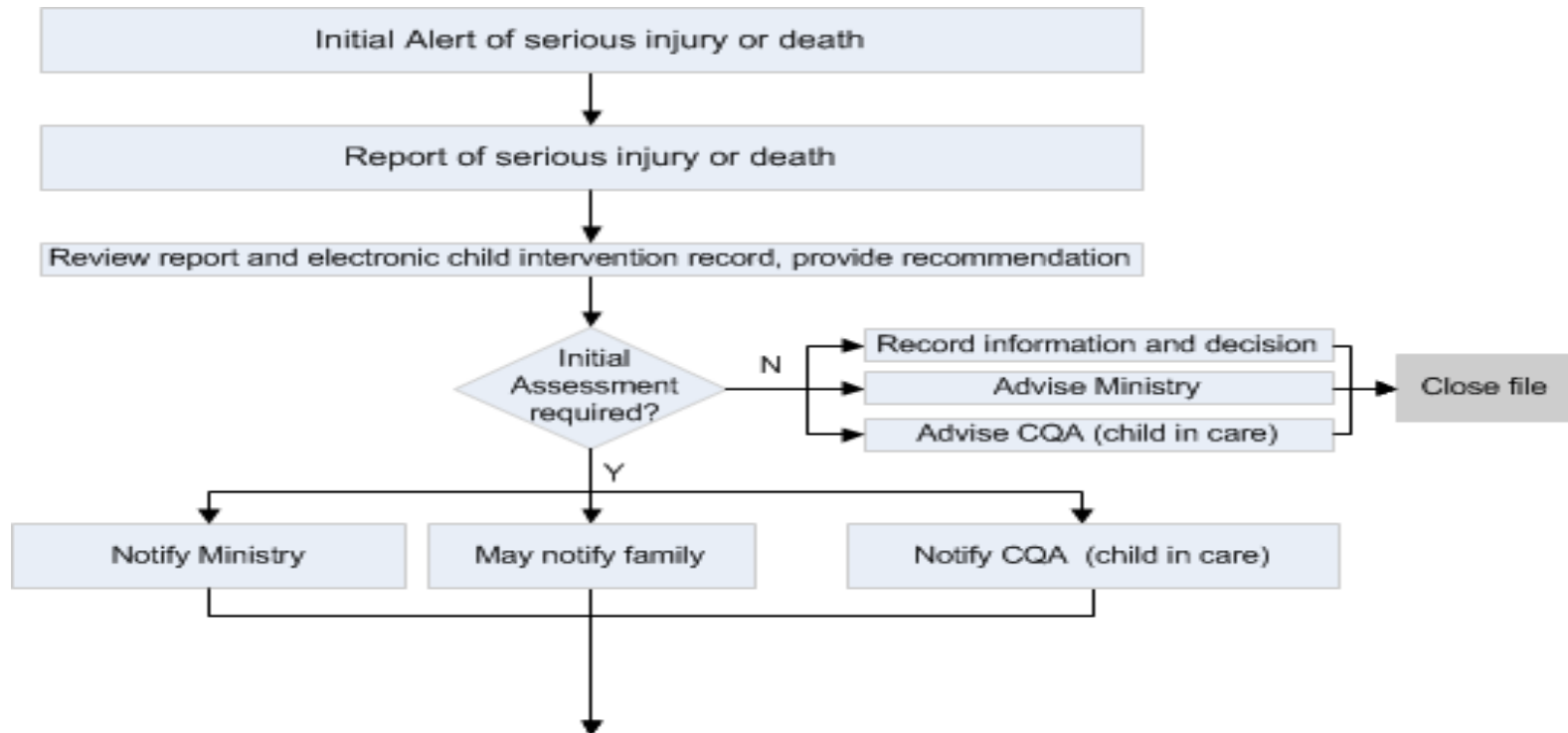
- Ensuring quality assurance processes are developed and implemented across divisions of the OCYA
- Reviewing systemic issues arising from a serious injury to or death of a young person receiving designated services
- The review process includes four stages:
 - Reviewing notifications
 - Completing an initial assessment
 - Conducting an investigative review
 - Writing a report

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OCYA Investigative Review Process

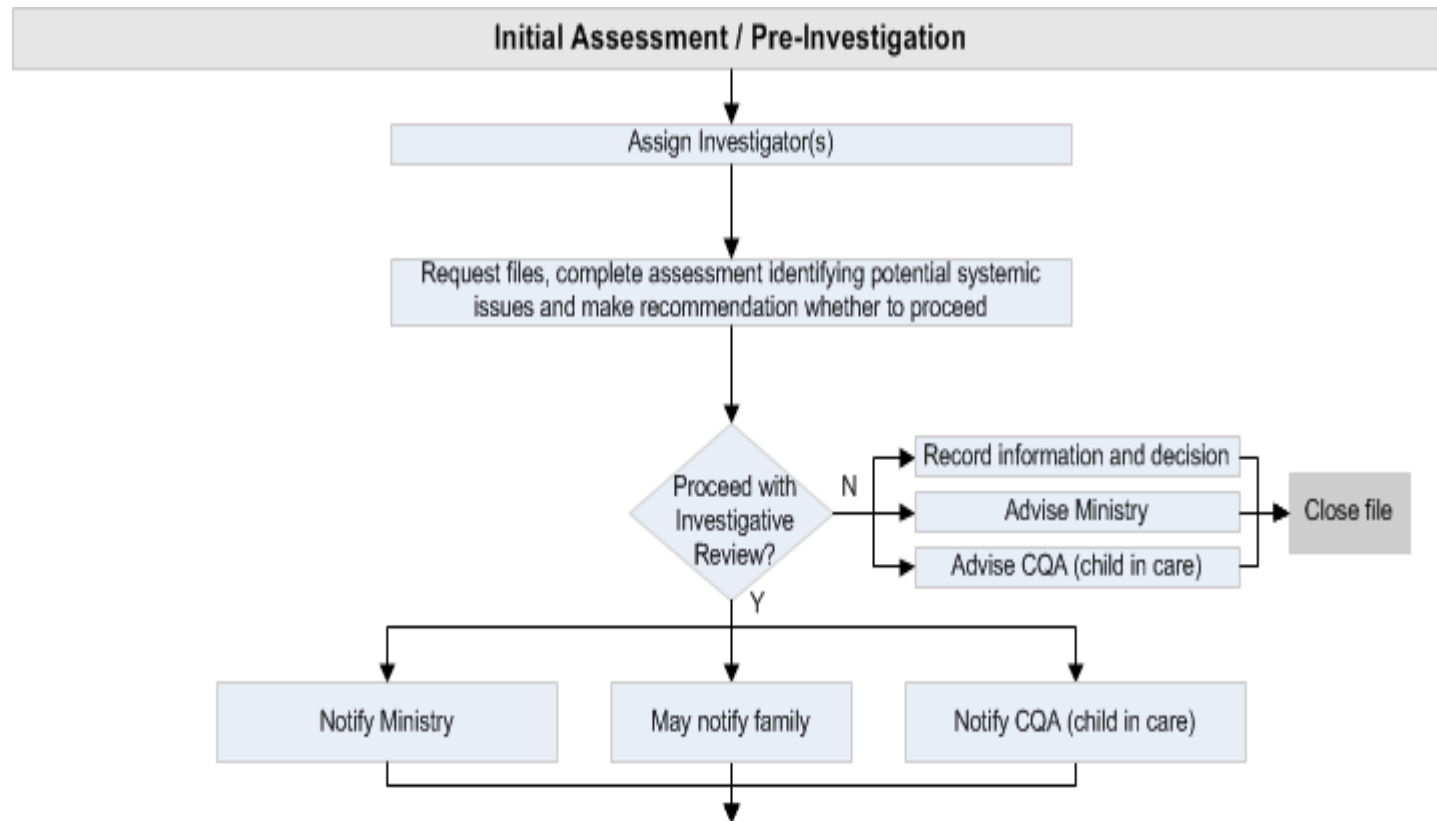
Notification



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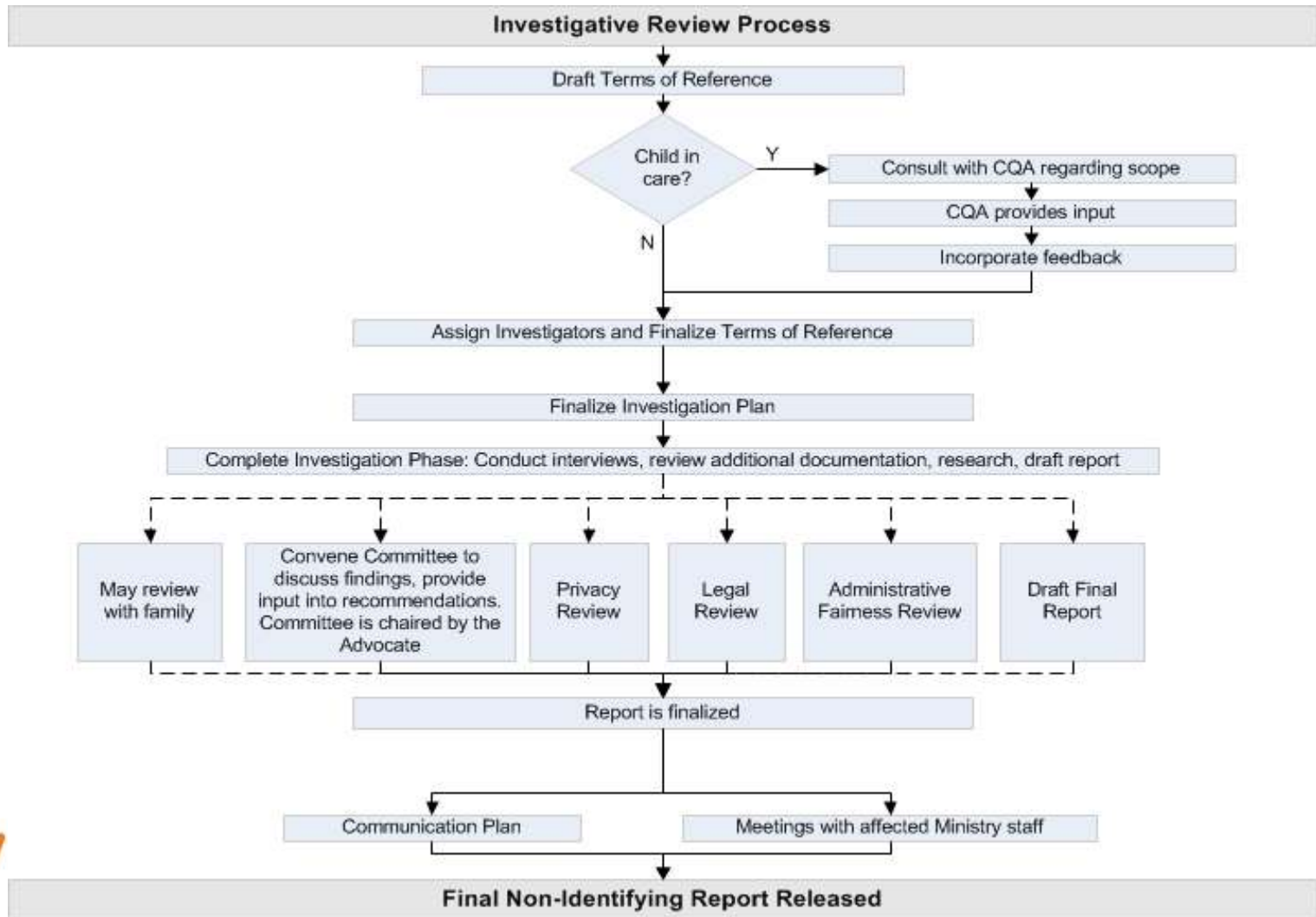
OCYA Investigative Review Process



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OCYA Investigative Review Process



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Strategic Support

Strategic Support ensures the OCYA has the appropriate systems and resources to support the daily operations for:

- Administrative support
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Business and operational planning

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Reporting

The purpose of **Reporting** is to:

- Inform the Legislature, appropriate Ministries, stakeholders and public on activities of the OCYA
- Raise issues of relevance for young people receiving designated services
- Make recommendations for improvements to services

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Reporting cont'd...

Types of **Reports**:

- Annual Report
 - To summarize the yearly activities of the OCYA
- Special Reports
 - To identify key issues relevant to young people
- Service Reports
 - Communication tool with designated service providers (currently under revision)
 - Outline all activities of the OCYA in geographic areas
 - Provide updates about Provincial activities / recommendations



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For more information contact:

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