

Report Challenges Inequities and Disadvantages for Children in Special Designation of Care

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Dr. Lisa Broda, releases her special investigative report – *In Their Sufficient Interest?* – pertaining to children in the Person of Sufficient Interest program of out-of-home care under the Ministry of Social Services.

The Person of Sufficient (PSI) program is one pathway of care used by the Ministry of Social Services to place children with extended family when removed from their parental home. “While we support Ministry efforts to place children with appropriate extended family, this program has unique features that do not afford children sufficient oversight and access to critical rights and entitlements,” states Broda.

This report was named *In Their Sufficient Interest?* to highlight the uncertainty for children in PSI care who do not have access to the same standards and oversight as children who are in other types of out-of-home placements. This program investigation was conducted after years of observing children in PSI care struggling due to unmet needs and, at times, experiencing significant maltreatment. “While the aim of this program is positive, substantive changes are required to ensure equitable services and supports for the children being served by the PSI program,” said Broda.

This report includes eight recommendations to improve policies and procedures, evaluate the program’s effectiveness, and amend legislation. The Ministry has accepted and has started making progress on seven of the eight recommendations. “I am pleased the Ministry has agreed to these recommendations as I believe that, if fully implemented, they will lead to changes that place the best interests of the child at the centre of all decisions made for PSI care,” said Broda.

The eighth recommendation, which asks for a legislative amendment to raise the age that a child in PSI care can receive supportive services to 21 (as is available to children in other types of out-of-home placements), has been declined by the Ministry. “My ongoing concern is that without the weight of legislative reform, children in PSI care will continue to be unnecessarily disadvantaged and not receive the ongoing care that meets their needs and safeguards their rights into their young adulthood,” said Broda.

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an Officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. She leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province’s young people independent and apart from government. The Office’s vision is that the rights, well-being, and voices of children and youth are respected, valued, and supported to assist young people to reach their full potential.

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