

More than just words
**A statistical backgrounder to the 2008
State of our Children and Youth address**



Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

November 24, 2008
Fredericton, New Brunswick

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and the House of Commons unanimously resolved to eliminate child poverty in Canada. Almost 20 years later, our national child poverty rate stands at 11.7%, exactly the same as it was back in 1989. And yet, neither our country nor our province has gotten poorer. This fact, the need to improve child protection, obesity rates, the lack of adequate mental health services for children and youth and crushing student debt loads are all indicators of our collective failure to ensure that kids do actually come first.

In the coming months, as North American citizens contribute hundreds of billions of dollars to save the banking sector, the financial sector, the auto sector and the list goes on; our goal will be to make sure that vulnerable children and youth in New Brunswick are not forgotten.

That is why we believe it makes sense to measure if we are keeping our promise to children and youth.

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"The child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world there will not be, another child like him."

Pablo Casals

The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Literature is full of pithy quotes about children. From ancient times to our own, law codes, religious codes and literature speak authoritatively about a consistent underlying goal of advancing the best interests of the child. Whether expressed in terms of legal obligation or a societal ideal, a preoccupation with the best interests of the child and a yearning to offer one's own child every opportunity in life are instinctive impulses that count as universal descriptors of the human condition.

That is why the central role of the family, special measures of protection and assistance to motherhood and children, the emphasis on accessible universal primary and secondary education and the guarantee of an adequate standard of living for oneself and one's family have found such an important place in our Universal Bill of Rights. It may also explain why the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is the most widely endorsed human rights convention in history, with ratifications from every country in the world save two.

This Report, and the ones which will follow it in subsequent years, will attempt to measure and promote the condition of children in our province. Of course, the measures, goals and targets which will follow may be expressed in terms of pupil achievement, improved health and nutrition, sports participation rates or a reduction in poverty and behaviours that place children or youth at risk. However, our goal is the best interests and optimal development of every child and it is one we would encourage everyone to take seriously. Our premise is that given the right conditions children will be less likely to engage in activities that place youth at risk and will be far more successful in achieving their goals in life and in contributing to the growth of their society.

The following pages contain a variety of statistical measures that help inform us as citizens and decision-makers about the quality of life enjoyed by children and youth in our province. These measures were identified and pulled together rather summarily from public agencies, census data, and provincial government departments over the past two months. They are offered without a great degree of analysis or pruning, because we feel it is important to launch this initiative on the occasion of National Child Day this fall and to lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive state of the Child Report in New Brunswick in November 2009 and in subsequent years.

What we are hoping to produce is an annual report based upon the model of UNICEF's State of the World's Children reports. Like UNICEF, we want to take the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* as our template and measure in statistical, demonstrable terms how effectively we are fulfilling the commitments that Canada has undertaken by

ratifying the Convention. We also want to raise awareness with respect to the plight of the world's children. By comparing and contrasting our issues and the concerns and challenges we face in keeping our promises to children with the reality of children the world over we will have a stark reminder of the economic disparities from which our society and our children have benefited.

At this stage, we would define success as initiating a public discussion among youth, child welfare advocates, public officials, civil society and government leaders on what are the relevant measures of children's condition and well-being in New Brunswick in 2008. Our work to date this fall has helped us form a partial picture of New Brunswick children and youth in terms of their demographics, their health, their family situation, their scholastic attainment, recreational activities, as well as their social condition and behaviours which may place them at risk. We have been able to identify some gaps in information reported and are continuing to identify data and indicators available that could help us complete the picture. The work of analysis, of trying to compare our data to other Canadian and foreign jurisdictions, of measuring these indicators against legal obligations under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, of setting goals and targets against which our future progress can be measured, of adding in qualitative measures to assist in actually getting a handle on well-being underscores the great deal of work which lies ahead.

I want to emphasize from the outset what encouraging support we have had to date from public officials and community groups in undertaking this task. I am hopeful that from the attendance and participation of so many youth and so many interveners at the launch of this initiative that the process will be very welcome and productive. I remain confident that in having a better picture of the State of Children and Youth in this province available and debated on an annual basis that we will have better advocacy and better decision-making in areas affecting child welfare.

What is also encouraging is the progress that is apparent from our review of even some of the partial indicators and measures collected to date. Day in and day out, teachers, nurses, social workers, day care workers, teacher assistants, doctors, lawyers, coaches, community volunteers, parents and many others are making a wealth of difference in the lives of New Brunswick's children and youth. Their progress is charted in lower teenage pregnancy rates, in lower tobacco, alcohol and drug consumption rates and higher participation rates in community sports and recreational activities.

Currently, we have grouped statistics available broadly according to the government department from which the data was available. We have highlighted this data in the following pages under the following categories: demographic data, health, education (pre-school to grade 12), post-secondary, youth employment, labour and workplace injury, youth in care, youth and justice and youth recreation and wellness.

We encourage everyone to read through the report, to reflect on the questions to which it gives rise and on the manner in which they can improve the quality of life and opportunities for children and youth in their families and their communities.

Demographics

Under this rubric, we have attempted to capture general demographic data showing what percentage of the province's total population children and youth represent and how it varies by gender, along with statistics on births and deaths in the province for this age group and data on family type. Year over year it would be helpful to be able to report on age cohorts variance by official language group, rural/urban divide and more complete statistics on aboriginal status and ancestry. The data shown below for family type is also very sketchy and does not show the number of children in stable family relationships as opposed to the number of children and youth experiencing divorce, separation, reconstituted families or subsequent break-up of reconstituted families.

Population Grouped by Category					
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total
Children (0-14)	60,655	8%	57,595	8%	118,250
Youth (15 - 24)	46,775	6%	45,560	6%	92,335
Seniors (65+)	46,485	6%	61,150	8%	107,635
Baby Boomers (45 - 64)	105,830	14%	108,995	15%	214,825
Other Adults (25 - 44)	95,740	13%	101,200	14%	196,940
Deaths by Sex and Age, New Brunswick, 2006					
	<5	5-14	15-24		
Male	18	4	45		
Female	14	8	15		
Total	32	12	60		
Births for Canada, provinces and territories, 2005 and 2006					
	2005	2006	Change	% Change	
Canada	342,176	354,617	12,441	3.6	
New Brunswick	6,892	7,030	138	2	
Fetal deaths (20 weeks or more of gestation) and late fetal deaths (28 weeks or more of gestation)					
	20 weeks or more	Percentage of Total	28 weeks or more	Percentage of Total	
Canada	2,272		1,078		
New Brunswick	34	1.5%	16	1.5%	
Live births, by geography — Mean age of mother					
Canada	29.3				
New Brunswick	27.9				

Live Births and Stillbirths by Age of Mother, New Brunswick, 2006						
Age Group	All births		Live Births		Still Births	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<15	3	0.04	3	0.04	0	0
15-19	433	6.09	431	6.08	2	7.69
Total	436	6	434	6	2	8

Single Parent Households

One parent households with children (0 - 19) 36,290

Percentage of male led single parent households 16.70%

Percentage of female led single parent households 83.30%

Total percentage of children living in lone parent households 22.40%

Statistics on Deaths (0-19 years old) for 2006

Type	Males	Females	Total	% of Total Population	
Accidental Deaths	18	7	25	11.5%	*
Suicide	2	1	3	3%	**
Homicide	1	1	2	22.20%	***
Natural Deaths	11	11	22	1.70%	****
Undetermined	-	1	1	25%	*****

* 18 by Trauma of Vehicle Collision; 2 by Trauma of Recreational Vehicle Collision; 1 by Fire - Structural; 1 by Hanging; 1 Caught in Machinery; 2 by Drugs

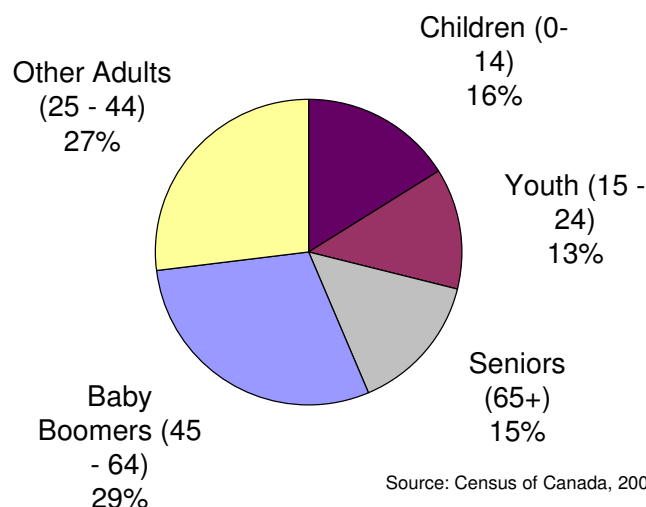
** 1 by Drugs; 2 by Asphyxia

*** 1 by Trauma of Vehicle Collision; 1 by Blunt Trauma

**** 19 by Natural Disease; 3 at Live Birth (one day);

***** 1 by Sudden Unexpected Death Syndrome

Population by Major Category



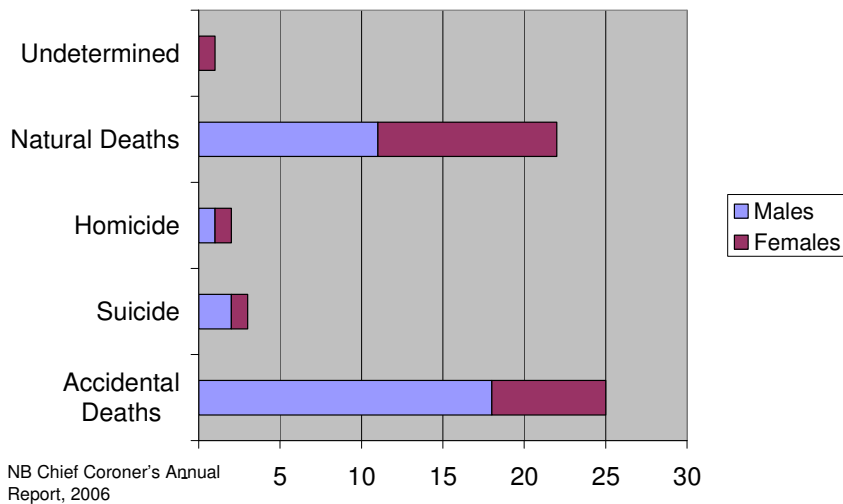
In 2006, according to the census by Statistics Canada, there were 165,955 children aged 0 to 19 in New Brunswick, which accounts for 23% of the total New Brunswick population. If we

include youth aged 20 to 24 in this demographic, adding another 44,630 New Brunswickers, the child and youth population represents just under 30% of our population, the same proportion as the Baby-boomers “me generation”. The census also reported that there were 80,835 females (48.7%) compared to 85,120 males (51.3%) in the 0 to 19 age bracket.

Statistics collected show further that the children and youth population in New Brunswick, considering only those aged 0 to 19, has decreased by an astounding 27.4 % between 2006 and 2001. And in 2006, in New Brunswick there were 1695 youth between 15 and 19 years old (3.5 % of that age group) that identified themselves as aboriginal.

Perinatal deaths, meaning deaths occurring between the twentieth week of gestation to the twenty-eighth day of newborn life, have remained relatively constant from 2002 to 2006: at 34, 26, 28, 30, and 32 deaths per year for each consecutive year.

Statistics on Deaths (0-19 years old) for 2006



Nearly half of all deaths in the 0-19 age bracket in 2006 arose as a result of accidental causes and fully 80% of those fatalities, or 20 of the 25 deaths from accidental causes recorded, were due to motor vehicle accidents.

In New Brunswick, in 2006 there were 36,290 lone-parent families with children between the ages of 0-19. This means that at that time 22.4% of children between the ages of 0 to 19 years old lived in a lone-parent family. 30, 245 of those lone-parent families, 83.3%, were female-headed, compared to 6,045, 16.7%, that were male-headed.

Finally, the vast majority of New Brunswick youth report having a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to their community.

Health

Over time, the health profile of the State of Our Children and Youth Report may become the most comprehensive and informative set of measures available. At the current time, there is a great deal of data available, but public officials have been ill-equipped to analyse the data and turn it into meaningful information to guide public policy. Greater

attention to these tasks will surely help identify much needed savings in our health care, educational, correctional and child welfare systems.

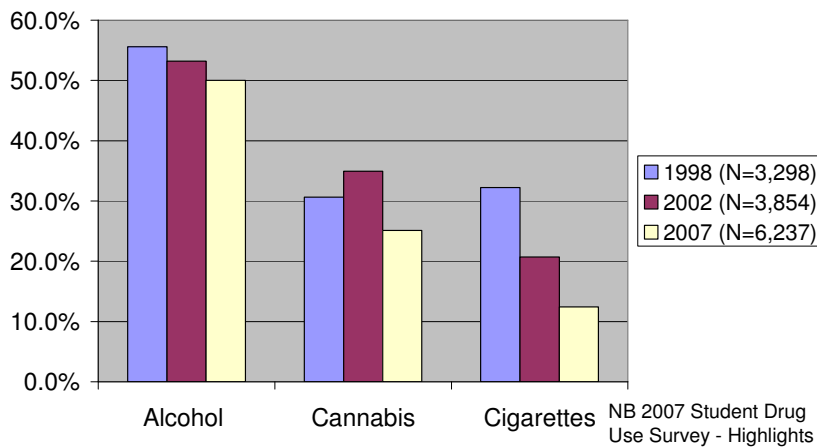
Currently, the health statistics reported below speak to activity levels, alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption rates, second-hand smoke exposure and teen-age pregnancy rates. In the short to medium term, we hope to be able to report and track publicly aggregate diagnostic information with respect to the prevalence of inherited metabolic diseases in newborns, numbers of New Brunswick youth suffering from mental illness by type of disorder, statistics by age group on other childhood diseases and physical health conditions generally, data regarding physically disabled children and youth, data regarding child and youth nutritional habits, safe drinking water, hygiene and sexual activity. Some of this data is available and discussed in the commentary below from regional wellness profiles, but the reporting of the data should be improved to facilitate year over year comparisons across all age brackets.

Recreational Activity (% of Population – Ages 12-17)		
	Active	Moderate
Male (12 - 17)		51%
Female (12 – 17)		45%
Source: Statistics Canada, CCHS Cycle 3.1, 2005.		
Type of Smoker – (% of Population – Ages 12-17)		
	Daily / Occasionally	Not at all
Male (12 - 17)	9%	91%
Female (12 – 17)	6%	94%
Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in the year prior to the survey among Grades 7, 9, 10, and 12 students in		
Percentage of substance use		
Substances	1998 (N=3,298)	2002 (N=3,298)
Alcohol	55.6%	53.2%
Cannabis	30.6%	34.9%
Cigarettes	32.2%	20.7%
Someone Smokes Inside Home – (% of Population – Ages 12+)		
Male	Yes	
	No	
Female	Yes	
	No	
Exposed to Second-Hand Smoke – Private Vehicle (% of Population – Ages 12+)		
Male	Yes	
	No	
Female	Yes	
	No	

Regional Wellness Profiles for 2005 provide some data that is helpful to illustrate the health of children and youth in New Brunswick. The youth surveyed by the Regional Wellness Profile were aged 12 to 17 only.

In 2005, fewer than half of the youth surveyed ate fruits and vegetables more than 5 times a day. The majority of the youths surveyed were categorized as being either active or moderately active. Of the males surveyed, 50.5% described their physical activity level as active, 25% described it as moderate, and 24.5% described it as inactive. In comparison, of the females surveyed, 44.6% described their physical activity level as active, 23.5% described it as moderate, and 31.9% described it as inactive.

Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among Grade 7, 9, 10, and 12 students

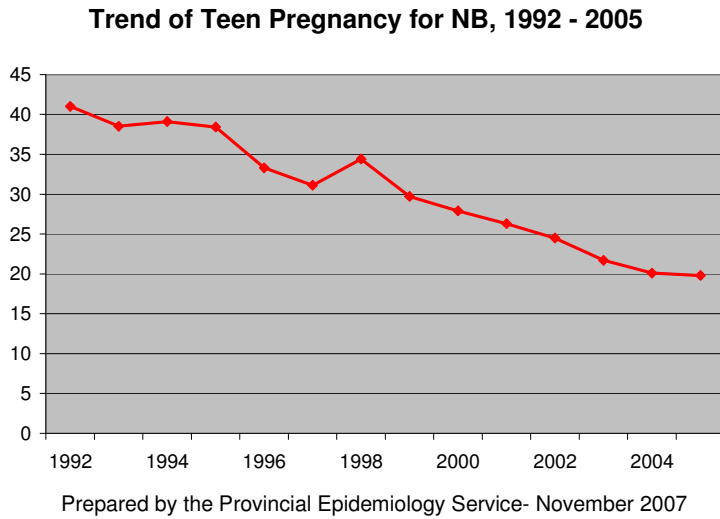


Moreover, the Regional Wellness Profiles for 2005 show that close to 27% of the youth surveyed reported a height and weight that classified them as being overweight or obese (as compared to 60% of adults). Eleven percent of New Brunswick youth surveyed reported binge drinking at least once per

month, where binge drinking is defined as having five drinks or more. A further eleven percent of New Brunswick youth surveyed reported using illicit drugs at least once where the definition of illicit drug excluded one time cannabis use and included cocaine/crack, speed, ecstasy or similar drugs, cannabis, hallucinogens, glue, gasoline or solvents, heroin, and steroids. Statistics from the Student Drug Use Survey however show an overall decrease in alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among Grade 7, 9, 10, and 12 students. The pronounced drop in tobacco usage reflected in this survey is encouraging and worth monitoring closely.

Data obtained also shows that in 2007, 59% of students reported engaging in some gambling. Forty-five percent of students reported engaging in sexual behaviour, and 27% of this was unplanned sex. Teen pregnancy rates for the province have dropped over 50% from 1992 to 2005.

In 2005, the teen pregnancy rate was 19.8 per 1000 females.



The highest rate of teen pregnancy in New Brunswick at that time was in the County of Saint John with a rate of 33.2 pregnancies per 1000 females.

Education

The Educational profiles are also an area where we hope to have better reporting over the short to medium term. Here again, the difficulty lies in accessing, reporting and interpreting the vast amount of data available. The basic data reported in this area includes overall school enrollment data and school drop-out rates, with some comparison in aboriginal schools, per pupil spending on public education and summary data from international student achievement scores by official language system.

Subsequent reports will seek to include in addition to comparative data to the above for future years, better and more detailed data with respect to pupil and school academic achievement by district, an indication of the number of pupils on individual education plans and special education plans, the number of pupils engaged in enrichment programs, in extra-curricular school sports, drama and music programs, teacher pupil ratios by school district and similar ratios for teacher assistants and other classroom supports and data on school nutrition programs. Students and parents often ask for this type of data for comparative purposes, and as most of it is readily available, it would be convenient to make it available on an annual basis as part of this report.

What is still missing from departmental data that we have reviewed is reporting on the number of children who are no longer in school. We have annual drop-out rates, but we need better reporting on when, where and why kids are dropping out. A number of children and youth who we have met in the course of Child and Youth Advocate investigations have suggested that they want in to the Educational system, but that the system has dropped them. These are statistics we would prefer to not have to record, but we cannot afford to overlook or ignore such cases.

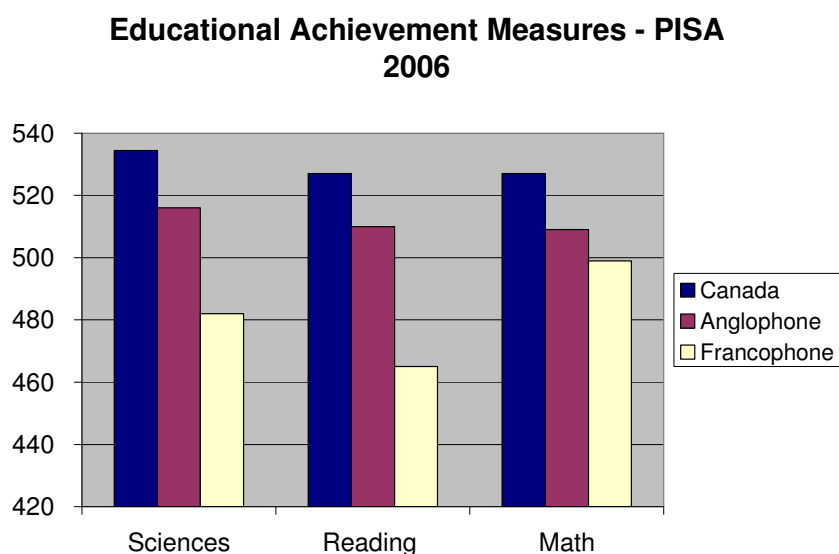
School enrolment and drop out rates		
All Figures as of Sept 30, 2007		
	2007-2008	
Provincial enrolment	110,288	
Anglophone enrolment	78,525	71%
Francophone enrolment	31,763	29%
Total dropouts (grades 7 -12), 2006 – 2007	1,389	
Percentage of Aboriginal School drop out rates (gr.7 - 12) for 2006-2007	7.20%	
Spending per pupil on public education (K-12)	\$7,360	

A total of 1,389 students dropped out in grades 7 to12, for the school year 2006 – 2007. Unfortunately, the drop out rate for that same period among aboriginal youth was roughly three times higher. Greater efforts are needed to help further reduce this discrepancy.

There are a total of 326 public schools in New Brunswick. The breakdown of this number among Francophone and Anglophone school systems is consistent with the student enrollment data. A total of 814 children and youth attend independent schools and 562 are home schooled. The ratio of pupils to educators was 13.9 and the spending per pupil was \$7,360.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores for 2006 were recorded for Science, Reading and Math. The Canadian score for Science was 535, with New Brunswick Anglophone students averaging a score of 516 and Francophone students averaging a score of 482.

The Canadian score for Reading was 527, with New Brunswick Anglophone students averaging a score of 510 and Francophone students averaging a score of 465.



The Canadian score for Math was 527, with New Brunswick Anglophone students averaging a score of 509 and Francophone students averaging a score of 499.

Educational Achievement Measures – PISA 2006	Canada	Anglophone	Francophone
Sciences	535	516	482
Reading	527	510	465
Math	527	509	499

Child Welfare

Child welfare is an area where a good number of helpful indicators and statistical measures were readily available with respect to existing government services and programs. Better communication and sharing of this information with community agencies and researchers will only improve the quality of care provided in child welfare matters. At the same time more efforts should be deployed to monitor the changing picture of family types in New Brunswick and facilitate research into the incidence and impact of marital break-up on children and youth in the province. What is also needed is better tracking of the extent to which children and youth in care and youth at risk are making multiple approaches to various public service agencies for assistance and also measurements regarding the extent to which available services are not being accessed, particularly early intervention services.

Most importantly, we hope in future versions of this report to include better data and information in relation to youth transitioning out of care. Few Canadian studies have been done on how youth in the permanent care of the government make the transition to independent living, in the years following their discharge from care. Research that has been done here and in the United States shows that this population continues to be at considerable risk in terms of its social condition and resiliency. Cases that have come to our attention in New Brunswick in the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate point to the same conclusion. A dedicated focus on prospects and outcomes for this vulnerable sector of children and youth is very much needed. In significant respects, the issue is very much about how the Province, that is to say, how do we collectively, measure up as a parent.

Adoption	2006-2007	2007-2008
Infants placed for adoption	11	12
Private adoptions processed	3	19
International adoptions	60	48
Referrals to Child protection		
Child protection referrals	6840	6632
Average monthly active child files	1587	1601
Average monthly children under the age of 16 receiving child protection services	2975	2863

Average age of children under 16 receiving child protection services	7.9	8.1
Total Cost of Child Protection Services		14,711,462
Total Investment in Youth Care		34,562,871
Children in Care		
Number of foster / provisional families	766	668
Number of group homes	36	35
Monthly average number of children in care	525	546
Number of children in permanent care	787	774
Average monthly no. of youths receiving post-guardianship services	97	110
Early Childhood – number of daycare spaces		
Number of Approved Day Care facilities	431	470
Total Child Care Spaces	14,170	15,506
**As of March 2008, 61% of regulated day cares maintained a wait list (infants -24%; preschool - 44%; after school - 33%)		
Children served by Daycare Assistance Program	3,730	5,624
2007 - 2008		
% of Children in Care on Psychotropic drugs:	30.2%	
Combinations: out of 230 children on psychotropic drugs, 45 take two or more	19.5%	

In fiscal year 2007-2008, the department placed 12 infants for adoption and processed 19 private adoptions and 48 international adoptions. Since 2002, 1001 adoptive applicants have participated in adoption training. Between January 2002 and March 2008, there have been 679 older, special needs children placed with adoptive families.

As of March 2008, there were 668 foster homes/provisional families and 35 group homes. In 2007–2008, there were 6,632 child protection referrals over the course of the year and an average of 1,601 active family cases each month. The average number of referrals was 553 each month, resulting in a monthly average of 63 newly opened cases and 17 reopened cases. Each month an average of 76 cases were closed.

The average monthly number of children under the age of 16 receiving child protection services was 2,863. The average age of children under age 16 years receiving child protection services is 8.1 years. The total cost of Child Protection Services for the province was \$14,711,462.

In 2007-2008, 546 children were in temporary care each month on average. In 2007-2008, 774 children were in permanent care and 110 youths receiving post-guardianship services on average per month.

We were advised by the Department of Social Development that they do not specifically track the number of children who are First Nations living off reserve in receipt of child protection services.

The percentage of children in care on psychotropic drugs is 30.2%. Out of the 230 children in care on psychotropic drugs 19.5% take two or more types of medications.

The total investment in youth care was \$34,562,871, which included the costs for children in care services, health services, child residential facilities, and certain services to youth aged 16 to 18.

The Early childhood day care stats as of March 31, 2008 were as follows:

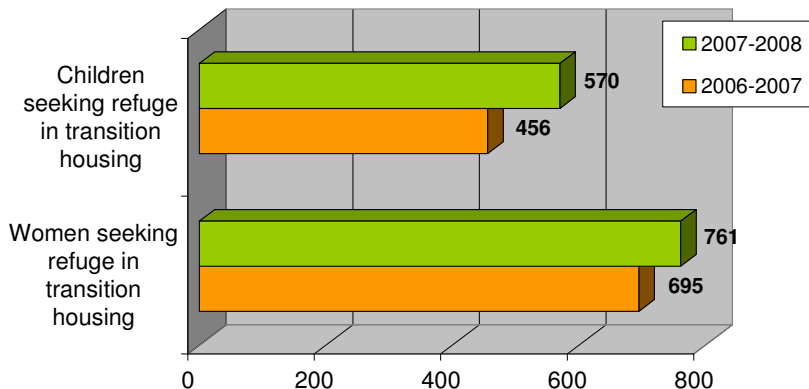
- 470 approved child care facilities (415 centres and 55 community day care homes)
- 39 new facilities opened in 07-08
- The total number of child care spaces was 15,506:
 - 933 spaces for infants
 - 7,293 for Preschool children
 - 7,280 for School aged children

There were an estimated 2,511 educators employed at regulated child care facilities in 2007-2008. In March 2008, 61% of regulated day cares maintained a wait list. The regions most affected with wait lists are Moncton, Restigouche and Fredericton.

In 2007-2008 5,624 children benefited from the Day Care Assistance program and 273 preschool age children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) benefited from intensive evidence-based intervention.

The total estimate of the number of children in subsidized housing annually is 11,700 based on 6,500 family units in the portfolio including non-profits.

Transition Housing



Youth Criminal Justice & Children Victims of Crime

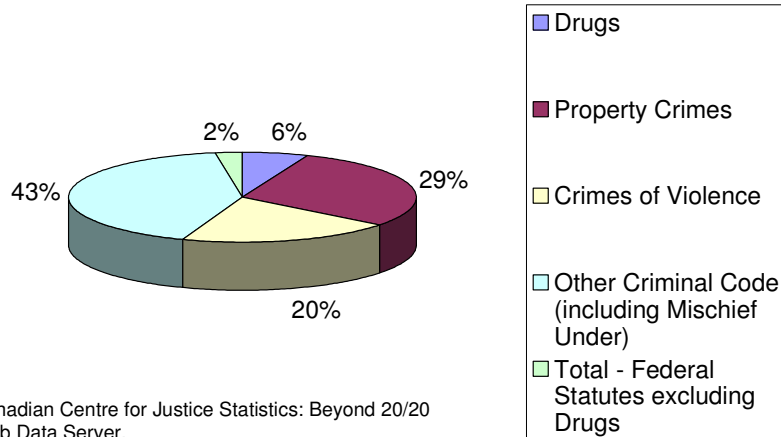
This section is intended to present data both with respect to youth involved in the youth criminal justice system and data regarding crimes targeting children and children and youth as victims of crime. Somewhat unfortunately, the data from the youth correctional system is much fuller than the data regarding child abuse, neglect or child exploitation.

This year's National Child Day was focused on the need to improve law enforcement efforts in relation to the first protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which deals with child exploitation. The Child and Youth Advocate's Office will concentrate through the following year on obtaining better tracking and reporting of child abuse, neglect and child exploitation offences and law enforcement efforts in this area.

Youth Incarceration	Total	Male	Female		
Secure custody - sentenced	104	76%	24%		
Secure custody - remanded	300	83%	17%		
Open custody	71	80%	20%		
New Brunswick - Youth charged by offences 2007					
Offences	Total	Youth Males Charged	Youth Females Charged	Youth not charged	Percentage of Total
TOTAL ALL INCIDENTS	5,166	1,564	437	3,165	
Drugs	310	103	15	192	6%
Property Crimes	1,521	437	119	965	29%
Crimes of Violence	1,032	327	104	601	20%
Other Criminal Code (including Mischief Under)	2,179	618	184	1,377	42%
Federal Statutes excluding Drugs	124	182	30	222	2%
Child Pornography					
	2006	2007			
Charged with Production / Making - s.163.1(2)	-	2			
Charged with Distribution, Making Available, Possession for the purpose - s.163.1(3)	-	1			
Charged with Possession - s.163.1(4)	6	9			
Charged with Possession - s.163.1(4)	1	-			
Charged with (Luring and communication in order to facilitate) - s.163.1(4)	2	-			
Source: JISNB					

In 2007, 5166 incidents relating to criminal offences by minors were reported. Of those incidents, 1564 male youth were charged with an offence, 437 female youth were charged with an offence, and 3165 youth were not charged.

New Brunswick - Youth charged by offences 2007



Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics: Beyond 20/20 Web Data Server.

Offence statistics were gathered and classified by the most

serious offence, meaning that if a youth was charged with more than one offence the statistics reflect only one charge per youth and it is the most serious charge.

Based on the statistics categorized by the most serious offence, 20% of the charges reflect crimes of violence, 29% of the charges reflect property crimes, 6% reflect drug crimes, 2% of charges involved federal statutes excluding drugs, and 43% of the remaining charges were other Criminal Code violations including mischief

Youth incarceration rates for 2007 show that of a total of 104 youth sentenced to secure custody, 76% were male and 24% were female. For 2007, 300 youth were remanded to secure custody, 83% of which were male and 17% were female. Seventy-one youth were in open custody, 80% of which were male and 20% were female.

Funding for the New Brunswick Youth Centre (NBYC) has remained consistent based on the statistics we received. Based on the 2006-2007 Public Accounts, the actual funds to run NBYC were \$3,984,356. Based on an average daily count of 42 beds, the per diem was \$260, and the annual cost per bed was \$94, 866. Based on the 2007-2008 Main Estimates, the budget for NBYC is \$4,579,700. This figure is based on an average daily estimated bed count of 40 beds, projecting a per diem rate of \$314, and an estimated annual cost per bed of \$114,700.

Based on the 2008-2009 Main Estimates, the budget for NBYC is \$4,306,969. This figure is based on an average daily estimated bed count of 38 beds, projecting a per diem rate of \$310, and an estimated annual cost per bed of \$113,300 per bed.

Youth Labour and Employment Profiles

The current statistical profile regarding youth participation in the labour force appears encouraging, although it is in part a factor of the declining ratio in our youth population. Here again we hope to have a better and more complete picture of youth labour in subsequent reports detailing data on youth wages and earnings, average number of hours worked per week by high school and post-secondary aged students and percentage of youth combining part-time or full-time work with part-time or full-time studies. Given the high incidence of youth workplace injuries in recent years, we are also hoping that these statistics will be available moving forward on an annual basis.

Youth Employment	2006	2007	Variation
Population 15-24 Years Old ('000)	95.8	94.9	-0.9%
Labour Force ('000)	63.3	62.7	-1.0%
Employment ('000)	54.5	55.3	1.4%
Full-Time ('000)	33.6	32.9	-2.1%
Part-Time ('000)	21	22.4	6.2%
Unemployment ('000)	8.7	7.4	-17.6%
Unemployment Rate (%)	13.7	11.8	-16.1%
Participation Rate (%)	66.1	66.1	0.0%
Employment Rate (%)	56.9	58.3	2.4%
15 to 19 years	Total	Aboriginal population	
Total - Labour force activity	47,730	1,690	
Labour force	24,045	620	
Employed	19,760	455	
Unemployed	4,280	160	
Not in the labour force	23,685	1,075	
Participation rate %	50	37	
Unemployment rate %	18	26	
Employment rate %	41	27	

Labour market conditions were collected for youths aged 15 to 24. Statistics show that labour market conditions for young people improved in 2007; however, the decrease in the youth population of New Brunswick continued in 2007, as there were almost 1,000 fewer young people in the province than the previous year. Despite this drop in population, almost 1,000 more young people held jobs.

The employment rate among young people rose by 1.4 points, to a record level of 58.3%. Furthermore, there were about 1,300 fewer unemployed young people, which led to a 1.9-point dip in the unemployment rate. It dropped to 11.8%, the lowest level ever recorded for the province's youth.

Work Safe New Brunswick reports that in 2004, there were 54,400 workers aged 15 to 24. In 2003, 15.8% of the New Brunswick workforce was represented by workers aged 15 to 24. In 2004, 1,550 workers aged 15 to 24 suffered a workplace accident. Eleven

workers aged 15 to 24 died as a result of a workplace accident from 1998 to 2005.

Between 2000 and 2004, 9,385 claims for benefits under the Worker's Compensation Act were submitted by workers aged 15 to 24; however, research shows that two out of three accidents suffered by workers in this age group are not reported.

Post-Secondary Education and Training

Under this rubric the data reported focuses mainly on some disquieting numbers in relation to student debts, loans and assistance and includes summary data regarding average tuition costs. These figures will become more meaningful when comparisons and analysis with previous and future years and with other jurisdictions in Canada and abroad are available. At the same time other data and reports are needed with respect to annual number of New Brunswick youth seeking post-secondary education and training, including numbers accepted and numbers refused by institution, detailed data regarding faculty and program enrollments and projected labour requirements, data on research and development funding and work carried out in post-secondary institutions, data on scholarship and bursary programs available and offered and data on graduate program enrollment and research in New Brunswick.

Student Debt	2007-2008
Average amount borrowed annually	\$ 9,254.00
Average debt in final year for all NB post-secondary students	\$ 23,670.00
Average debt in final year for all NB university students	\$ 34,277.00
Student Loans	
Number of student loan applications received	17,316
Number of student loan applications approved	15,629
Percentage of applications approved	90%
Student Assistance	
Total students under 25 receiving assistance	12,728
University students	67%
Community college students	19%
Private institution students	13%
Number of applicants approved for NB Bursaries	
	5,059
Total NB Bursaries	\$9,859,813.00
Number of applicants approved for NB Student loans	
	15,629
Total NB Student Loans	\$59,276,845
Tuition (Average)	
Private Institution	\$ 7,520.00
University	\$ 5,038.00
Community College	\$ 3,050.00

Before reviewing the statistical data collected by Post-Secondary Education and Training, it is worth noting that the data collected is not delineated by age groups. The data collected applies to all student loan applicants, and includes data and averages for persons over the age of 19.

For the year 2007-2008, the province received 17,316 applications for Canada Student Loans, New Brunswick Student Loans, Canada Study Grants and New Brunswick Bursaries. The number of applications approved was 15,629, which amounted to a total of \$151,088,578 disbursed. Approximately 90% of all applicants received student financial assistance. Of the students receiving financial assistance, 82% were under the age of 25.

The average total debt in final year for all New Brunswick university, community college and private institution students was \$23,670. The average total student loan debt for all undergraduate students in their final year of a Bachelor's degree was \$34,277. The average annual cost of tuition to attend a private institution is \$7,520, to attend a university it is \$5,038, and a community college is \$3,050.

Youth Recreation and Wellness

Finally, only very summary data is offered at this time in relation to recreation and wellness profiles. To obtain a true measure of child and youth achievement and well-being, far more attention must be paid to data collection and analysis in this area. We hope in subsequent years to present detailed data with respect to New Brunswick child and youth participation rates in sports and leisure activities, through community or school-based programs, by age group, by sport discipline, cultural activity, leisure or recreational activity, as well as general activity measures. We also want to obtain a much better picture of child and youth participation in the volunteer sector and to measure this contribution by annual hourly contribution and sector of activity. And we want to create an inventory of volunteer placements and agencies where children and youth are actively engaged and welcome to serve in their community or abroad.

Percentage of NB Children (5-17) that participate in sport	71%
Percentage of of those children that participate in organized sport (56% of population)	79%

73% of Canadian Children are not active enough to achieve a healthy Body Mass Index
91% of Canadian children do not achieve enough daily steps to meet the recommended healthy guidelines
Source: Physical Activity Among Canadians, 2005

Conclusion

As stated at the outset, the information outlined in the previous pages is an invitation to reflect at greater length upon the need for better and regular reporting on the status of our children and youth. As so much data is readily available, the key is to find a mechanism through which it can be collected and turned into meaningful information. Better information will help us set targets in light of our own needs and priorities and in light of how our indicators of child and youth well-being measure up against our counterparts across the country and around the world.

As a suggested process officials in my office will continue to work over the next several months with public and private stakeholders in improving the template and baseline information presented in this report. We consider it a very modest start that will be greatly improved with the feedback from other stakeholders interested in child welfare matters. Much more information is currently available and needs to be identified, standardized and selected for inclusion in an annual report such as the present one. Also in the foregoing pages we have attempted to highlight areas where we have noticed our reporting and information gathering is lacking and have suggested areas for improvement. Finally in the presentation of these materials we want to be able to measure our progress against our peers in Canada and elsewhere and also against the international legal obligations to which we have committed ourselves.

By undertaking these tasks with diligence and seriousness we can then report to global authorities on our progress in terms of our promises to our own children under international human rights instruments. In so doing, we would set an example for other nations in terms of their reporting obligations, and we would also be reminded of our advantaged position economically within this world and of the responsibilities which that entails.