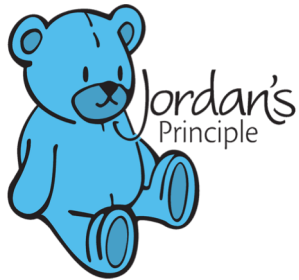


E.A.G.L.E. Urban Transition Centre

(Encouragement, Advocacy, Goal Setting, Language, Empowerment)



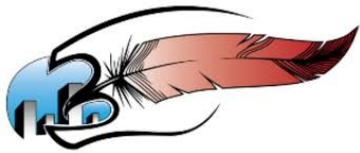
Jordan's Principle Off Reserve Advocate Office

Serving Indigenous people with disabilities during the COVID 19 pandemic



Presented by: Ryan Mckay and Selena Kern

E.A.G.L.E. Urban Transition Centre



- ▶ Under the umbrella of Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)
- ▶ The E.A.G.L.E. Urban Transition Centre (EUTC) continues to be a valuable resource to Manitoba's sixty-four First Nations and Metis communities.
- ▶ It is recognized as a primary source of service and referrals to individuals relocating to Winnipeg for reasons such as; housing, education, employment, addictions, legal, family, health
- ▶ The primary goal of the EUTC is to assist First Nation people with transitioning into an urban centre and to assist with accessing the appropriate resources to become independent.
- ▶ The EUTC achieves this goal by providing a welcoming and culturally appropriate environment for our First Nation people;
- ▶ The Jordan's Principle Off Reserve Advocate Office (JPORAO) is one of the many resources that EUTC utilizes to enhance Indigenous peoples capabilities to adapt to the City of Winnipeg.
- ▶ Jordan's Principle Off Reserve Advocate Office is the EUTC's response to the complexities of children living with disabilities within the city of Winnipeg.

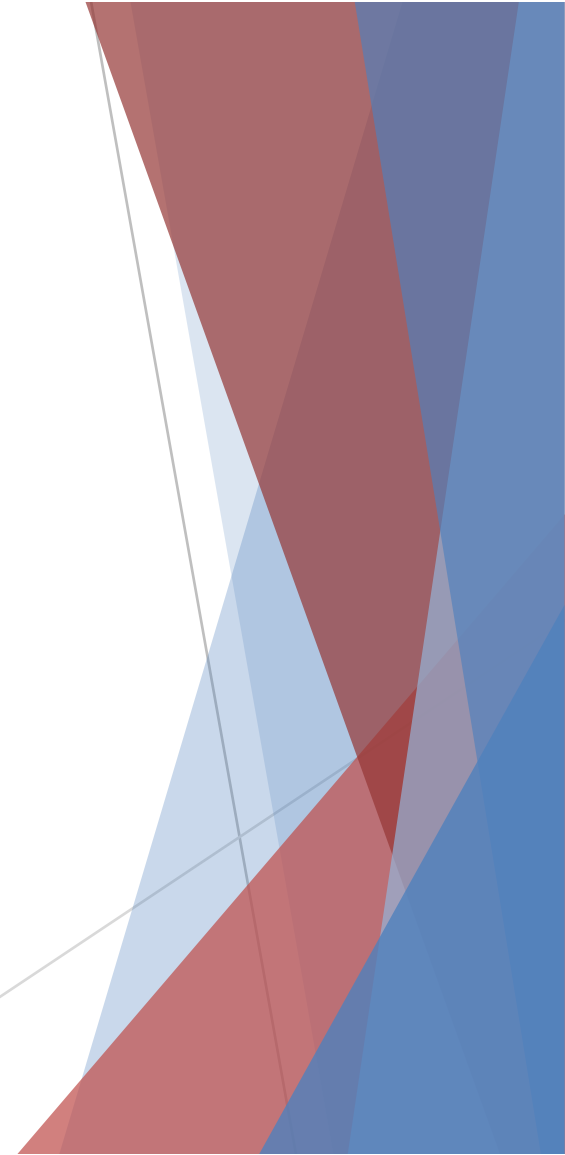
Jordan's Principle Off Reserve Advocate Office

The goal of this office is to implement the service coordination function in Manitoba, to provide families of First Nations children with a knowledgeable resource to help them navigate existing federal and provincial health and social programs to address a child's special needs and disabilities through service deliverables

- ▶ Identify children with unmet needs, assist families to secure access to needed services and supports comparable to those available to other children living in the same jurisdiction, in a timely manner.
- ▶ Collaborating and building relationships across community-based programs and services; service providers; and First Nations, federal, provincial programs and services.
- ▶ Ensuring children receive quality and culturally appropriate health and social services and supports across all stages and levels of care.
- ▶ Supporting data collection and analytical activities to better understand the scope of children's needs and nature of service gaps.
- ▶ Each person, family or case is approached in a holistic and collaborative manner in order to lessen the many contributing factors as possible.

Main support services requested

- ▶ Referral services
- ▶ Communication bridge with family, between service providers, family & service providers
- ▶ Correspondence and collaboration with partners, on & off-reserve staff
- ▶ Family support to families
- ▶ Navigate systems (federal and/or provincial)
- ▶ Assist with Transportation (EUTC van etc..)
- ▶ Status Registration (eligible, bill S-3)
- ▶ Short-Term Respite



Jordan's Principle Off Reserve Advocate and Jordan's Principle Off-Reserve Support Services Team

- ❖ Ryan Mckay - Lead Advocate
- ❖ Vacant - Jordan's Principle Off-Reserve Support Services Manager
- ❖ Selena Kern - Jordan's Principle Off-Reserve Support Services Program Assistant
- ❖ Vacant - Intake and Admin Support
- ❖ Sharon Wilson - Advocate
- ❖ Chris Sutherland - Advocate
- ❖ Rachel Apetagon - Advocate
- ❖ Cheryle Dreaver - Advocate
- ❖ Matt Usenko - Advocate
- ❖ Markie Lambert - Advocate



JPORA & Challenges faced during COVID-19 Pandemic 2020-21

Communication & Family

One of the main challenges faced by the JPORA office was maintaining open communication with the families that we work with. Staff with laptops were met in a ZOOM/Teams meeting whenever possible. Majority of communication was through phone in which the advocates would drop off paperwork to be signed or filled and wait for or pick up the next day after review from the family. At times, phone calls were made while advocate waited outside the family's home and questions in regard to paperwork were discussed. Emails were also effective and proved to assist the advocates in maintaining communication with the families even further.

Finding alternative community resources

Another significant challenge faced by our office was finding community resources that were able to accommodate the family's request for services. A lot of the community services had to shut down because of the COVID-19 mandates set out by the province. The advocates had to research alternatives for these families in regard to therapy/counselling services which some offices quickly adapted to online Zoom/Teams sessions. A lot of the schools in the province were switching to online learning and that meant that each student was required to access the online learning with a laptop. The majority of the family's that our office works with cannot afford a laptop and sometimes internet. Our office currently has provided an/or assisted in providing over 100 laptops and internet access for low-income families residing in the City of Winnipeg.

JPORA & Challenges faced during COVID-19 Pandemic 2020-21

Provision of PPE (personal protective equipment)

At the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for PPE was one of the main requests from families on a daily basis. The JPORA office went ahead and researched PPE distributors that would be able to assist in the development and delivery of a PPE kit that would provide the main essentials required to fight COVID-19 through these kits. These kits included hand sanitizer, plastic gloves, soap, and of course face masks. Once received, the advocates handed out these kits to every family that we came into contact with and included some of the other EUTC office programs as well.

Working from home

One of the greatest but least known to the family's that we work with was the JPORA staff working from home. This caused anxiety and made morale an all time low at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a typical day, the JPORA staff would be able to bounce ideas off each other and provide positive feedback and alternatives for the different issues that each family was dealing with. This option became increasingly harder as the only option for communication was through phone or Zoom meetings. As Lead Advocate, Ryan took it upon himself to "check in" with each JPORA staff on a weekly basis to provide positive feedback and ensuring that each staff member was taking weekly steps toward self care initiatives and maintaining their own family responsibilities.

JPORA & Challenges faced during COVID-19 Pandemic 2020-21

Delivery of Requests and equipment

One of the most challenging issues that the JPORA office had to deal with in regard to the pandemic was the delivery of equipment and other requests that the family's we work with had. Advocates had the option to deliver the requested services directly to the family at their home or to have a courier deliver them. Most occasions, a courier was used to deliver the request, but in some situations, the advocate using PPE, would deliver to the family. Our office also created partnerships with different business' to deliver some of the equipment that the family requested.

Respite

Our office had the most difficult time in trying to assist families in accessing respite during the pandemic. If the family seeking respite did not have an immediate family member to provide respite, they would ask our office for assistance in finding someone. This was very difficult because no one wanted to possibly expose themselves to anyone that might possibly have the COVID-19 symptoms. Our office had to work with what we had and to complete another community call out and we were fortunate enough to find enough respite providers at that time to fulfill most our family's requests for assistance.

JPORA & Challenges faced during COVID-19 Pandemic 2020-21

Mental Health

The greatest challenge that the JPORA office faced during the pandemic was the issue of mental health not only for the families that we assist, but for the JPORA staff. We had an outstanding number of requests for mental health assistance from the families that we work with, especially with those families that have children between the ages of 13- 18 years old. In addition, our own staff who have children that have certain health conditions of their own and the issue of not having childcare or children not being in school. This had a tremendous impact on our staff and the strength that they had to keep during these times is commendable and needs to be highlighted.

With weekly check ins and ensuring staff had proper self care routines in place to alleviate stress was a major factor in alleviating the mental health stress that was incurred during this time. Additional time off for staff was also granted whenever requested and work from home accommodations was also beneficial in assisting staff from any additional stress.

