



Statement

Nov. 20, 2018

For Immediate Release

On National Child Day, Canada celebrates the rights of all children and youth under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*. At my Office, we too celebrate this groundbreaking treaty that was ratified by Canada in 1991.

But as we celebrate, we need to consider this: How many children and youth aren't aware of this treaty? How many children and youth in B.C. and Canada who are in vulnerable situations, including children in care, youth in the justice system, children and youth with special needs, and Indigenous children living in remote areas, know that they have rights that are enshrined in law and that governments are legally obligated to uphold? The fact is that too many children who need to know still don't know that they have rights. And without that knowledge, they are even more vulnerable.

In B.C., we are working to change that in several ways. In May, we launched an 18-month #Rep4Rights tour that is visiting communities around the province to educate children and youth in care and the people who care for them about child rights under the *UNCRC* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

In addition to this specialized outreach tour, our advocates give workshops on child rights on a regular basis to children, youth, foster parents, Ministry of Children and Family Development staff and Delegated Aboriginal Agency staff. We also visit youth in B.C.'s two youth correctional facilities regularly to assist and inform. And we have an RCY Social Media Youth Team who develop creative, original content to educate their peers about child and youth rights via social media.

This week is Child Rights Education Week in Canada, and our Social Media Youth Team has created a series of memes for sharing on social media to let kids across Canada know that they have rights. We will be sharing these graphic memes all week on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts using the youth-generated hashtags #OurVoiceMatters and #KidsHaveRights, and we would be delighted if you would share them as well. Getting the word out is an ongoing task that requires the participation of all of us.

So many young people in care have told us they wish they had known about their rights years earlier, so that they could have spoken up with confidence. Our youth team believes that knowledge is power. So on this National Child Day, let's make a collective commitment to spread the word and help educate children and youth – and everyone who works with them – about their rights. If we can help children become informed, they become empowered, and that truly is something to celebrate.



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