

MEDIA RELEASE

August 28, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Committee Appoints Acting Representative for Children and Youth

VICTORIA- The all-party Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth today unanimously appointed Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth as Acting Representative for Children and Youth. Dr. Charlesworth will commence her position on August 31, 2018.

Dr. Charlesworth has dedicated her career to British Columbia's social services sector, including work with Indigenous organizations and communities. She was unanimously recommended for appointment as Representative on July 16, following a competitive process by the Special Committee to Appoint a Representative for Children and Youth. The Special Committee will present its recommendation to the Legislative Assembly when the Legislature resumes in October.

The current Representative, Bernard Richard, announced his resignation earlier this year, effective August 31, 2018. The appointment of Dr. Charlesworth as Acting Representative will provide leadership continuity and support a smooth transition for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, an independent office of the Legislature.

The Representative for Children and Youth is responsible for: providing advocacy services to children, young adults and families regarding designated services; monitoring, reviewing, auditing and publicly reporting on the effectiveness of designated services; and reviewing, investigating and reporting on the critical injuries and deaths of children.

The Special Committee's report is available at: www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/rfcay

A biography follows.

The members of the committee are:

Nicholas Simons, MLA Powell River-Sunshine Coast (chair)

Michelle Stilwell, MLA Parksville-Qualicum (deputy chair)

Sonia Furstenau, MLA Cowichan Valley

Rick Glumac, MLA Port-Moody-Coquitlam

Joan Isaacs, MLA Coquitlam-Burke Mountain

Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA Courtenay-Comox

Rachna Singh, MLA Surrey-Green Timbers

Laurie Throness, MLA Chilliwack Kent

Teresa Wat, MLA Richmond North Centre

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Biographical Information – Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth

Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth has worked in the British Columbia social and health care sectors since 1977. From 1980 through 1992, she served in frontline child welfare, social policy, program management and executive roles within government, and was engaged in formative work on deinstitutionalization, community inclusion for people with disabilities, women's and girls' health, mental health and youth services. She served as the Secretary to three Cabinet Committees, including Social Policy and Aboriginal Relations, and was appointed to lead Cabinet Operations and facilitated a smooth transition between governments in 1991. Dr. Charlesworth also supported the implementation of the Gove Inquiry recommendations and was a member of the executive team during the formation of the Ministry for Children and Families. She left government in 1997 to complete her PhD on the power of women's voice in the face of adversity, teach child and youth care at the University of Victoria, and grow her consulting practice.

In 2006, Dr. Charlesworth transitioned into the non-profit sector and became the Executive Director of the Federation of Community Social Services of BC. During her tenure, the Federation grew in size, scope and influence, and worked with Indigenous organizations to co-create new ways to support Indigenous children, youth and families. Dr. Charlesworth also co-led a comprehensive review of child and youth residential care in collaboration with the Ministry for Children and Family Development.

Since leaving the Executive Director role at the Federation, Dr. Charlesworth has been immersed in developing the leadership, innovation, and cultural awareness of the community-based social care sector. She is the founder of the Leadership 2020 program for the Federation, has served on numerous community board and provincial advisory committees, and was a member of the Premier's Advisory Council on Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. She has examined the possibility of human-centered design in advancing social care in BC and, in 2017, became the Organizational Change lead at InWithForward - Canada's first social research and development collective that integrates person-centered social science research and design to generate meaningful social innovation. For the past two years, Dr. Charlesworth has also been working with Chief Wedlidi Speck and many other leaders to inspire culturally safer workplaces and services for Indigenous staff and people served.

Dr. Charlesworth has a PhD in Child and Youth Care from the University of Victoria, and an MBA from Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, England. She is an award-winning teacher, author, activist, and a parent of two vibrant young women who remind her daily of the power and promise of young people.