



Statement

June 2, 2019

For Immediate Release

This is the ninth consecutive year that British Columbia is marking Child and Youth in Care Week, a time to honour young people living in the care of the government. As it is the first such occasion for me as your Representative, I want to pass on this important message directly to the more than 6,000 of you in various forms of care:

We greatly value your voice, your ideas and your hopes and dreams. We want to hear from you about your successes, your challenges and the things you think would make B.C.'s care system better for you and other young people like you. We are *your* Office, and we are here to help.

How can we do that? The most obvious and direct way is through our team of RCY advocates who are available to listen. Our advocates can help with things like knowing your rights and what to do if those rights are being ignored; connect you with the services and programs you need; help you to be part of discussions about the care and services you receive and decisions made about you; and help you transition out of MCFD care or assist you in transitioning to Community Living BC services.

Even if you're not sure we can help, please call us anyway at 1-800-476-3933. I promise we'll listen and do our best to assist or to link you with somebody who can.

There are other ways our Office helps young people and there are ways you can be involved in this important work, too. As part of our role, we conduct investigations and research into systemic issues that affect the quality of care you receive. We're always looking for your input on issues that we should be examining – things like substance use and mental health services, quality of residential care services and programs to help you age into healthy adulthood. You can pass on your suggestions by calling us or via social media. We have accounts on Instagram (@rcybcyouth), Twitter (@rcybc and @rcybcyouth), YouTube (Rep4Youth) and Facebook (@rcybc and @rcybcyouth), and it's easy to follow and contact us through those.

Please reach out to us. We are here to listen and to help.

Jennifer Charlesworth
B.C. Representative for Children and Youth