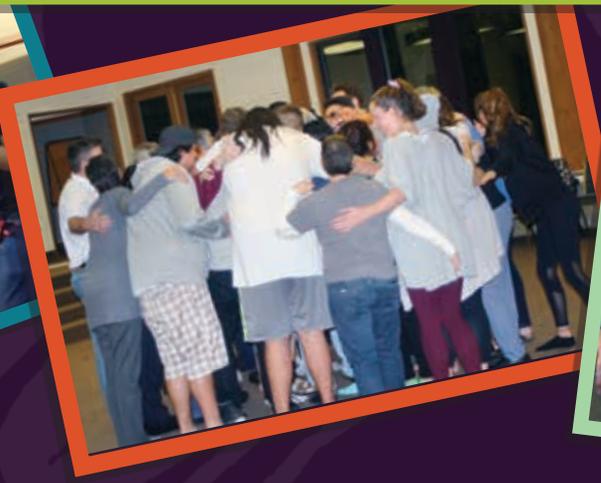




REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Annual Report 2016/17
and
Service Plan 2017/18 to 2018/19

All my life I've been waiting for a
change.



Sept. 21, 2017

The Honourable Darryl Plecas
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the 2016/17 Annual Report and the 2017/18 to 2018/19 Service Plan for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to the Legislative Assembly.

This document reports on the period April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 and covers activities underway and planned for the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2019, and has been prepared in accordance with part 5, sections 17 and 19 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Richard', written in a cursive style.

Bernard Richard
Representative for Children and Youth
Province of British Columbia

pc: Mr. Craig James
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Nicholas Simons, MLA
Chair, Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

Art on inside front and back covers was created by youth participants at *Ignite Your Spirit* in October 2016; see page 53.

CONTENTS

- A Message from the Representative for Children and Youth 3
- Office of the Representative for Children and Youth..... 9
 - Representative's Mandate 9
 - Accountability..... 11
 - Organization 12
 - Working with Others..... 13
 - Focus on Vulnerable Children and Youth..... 16
- Programs and Activities 2016/17..... 20
 - Advocacy 21
 - Critical Injury and Death – Reviews and Investigations 30
 - Monitoring..... 40
 - Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships..... 43
 - Communications 46
 - Youth Engagement..... 51
 - Community and Stakeholder Relations 62
- Looking Ahead: 2017/18 to 2018/19..... 67
 - Strategic Priorities 67
 - Representative's Office Organizational Work Plan 68
- Performance 73
 - Relevance..... 74
 - Responsiveness..... 75
 - Accountability..... 76
 - Excellence 77
- Budget and Expenditures 80
- Appendix – List of Outreach and Communication Activities 83
- Contact Information 90



Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond – Representative 2006 to 2016



Bernard Richard – Representative 2017 to present



CCCYA meeting

A MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The 2016/17 fiscal year was a period of transition for the Office of British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth. It marked the departure of the province's first Representative, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, who ended her second and final term in November 2016, as well as my own arrival as B.C.'s second Representative for Children and Youth – an appointment that was formally confirmed by the Legislative Assembly in February 2017.

The *Annual Report and Service Plan* that follows on these pages shows that 2016/17 was also another busy year for the Representative, as the Office opened more than 1,800 new advocacy cases to directly assist some of the province's most vulnerable children, youth and their families, released a total of 12 public reports on B.C.'s child- and youth-serving system, and kicked off a significant Indigenous youth engagement initiative, to name a few highlights.

This report details the work of the Office for the period of April 1, 2016 through to March 31, 2017. It also lays out our strategic priorities and work plans for fiscal years 2017/18 and 2018/19.

B.C.'s REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Since 2007, British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth has supported our province's young people and their families in dealing with the provincial child- and youth-serving system. The Representative also provides oversight to this system and makes recommendations to improve it.

The creation of the Office was a recommendation of the independent review of British Columbia's child protection system conducted by the Honourable Ted Hughes between November 2005 and April 2006 (*Hughes Review*). In May 2006, B.C. passed the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)*, establishing the Legislative Assembly's authority to appoint a new Officer of the Legislature as the Representative for Children and Youth.

In November 2006, an all-party Special Committee unanimously recommended that Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond be appointed as B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth. Ms. Turpel-Lafond was then re-appointed to a second five-year term in 2011.

On Nov. 27, 2016, Ms. Turpel-Lafond's second term ended and Bernard Richard was appointed Acting Representative for Children and Youth. On Feb. 16, 2017, Mr. Richard was confirmed by the B.C. Legislature as the province's second Representative for Children and Youth.

While the Representative's Office has undergone the first leadership change in its history, the basic focus of the organization remains the same – to advocate for B.C.'s most vulnerable children, youth and their families in a number of different ways.

These include direct advocacy – helping children, families and caregivers navigate the often complex service system – in addition to carefully monitoring the services provided to these children, as well as investigating and reporting on individual cases and larger trends in order to spur necessary improvements.

We do this work with independence, as carefully laid out by the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)*. Strong and vocal advocacy, and investigation, monitoring and oversight of government's work have been the focus of this Office for the past decade, and they will continue to be the staples of what we do.

Nevertheless, with any new leadership comes an opportunity to renew organizational priorities and refresh our approach to working with children, youth and families, government and other stakeholders.

Bernard Richard, Representative for Children and Youth

Mr. Richard is a bilingual lawyer whose early career was in social work and as Secretary General of the Société Nationale de l'Acadie. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, where he served from 1991 to 2003. During this time, he held several cabinet positions and also served as leader of the Official Opposition, Opposition House Leader and chair of the Official Opposition caucus.

In January 2004, Mr. Richard became New Brunswick's sixth Ombudsman. In November 2006, he was named New Brunswick's first Child and Youth Advocate. Mr. Richard has chaired the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman, the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Association des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie.

Since leaving the Ombudsman position in 2011, Mr. Richard has completed assignments for a variety of organizations, including the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, the City of Fredericton, the P.E.I. Auditor General and New Brunswick First Nations Chiefs.

Mr. Richard has been the recipient of numerous awards, most notably the Léger-Comeau Medal of the Société Nationale de l'Acadie, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, an Honourary Ph.D. from Mount Allison University, the Lieutenant Governor's Dialogue Award, the Learning Partnership's Champion of Public Education Award, the New Brunswick Human Rights Award and the designation of Queen's Counsel.

He is actively involved in several charitable organizations, mostly in the areas of children's rights, youth mental health and enhanced opportunities for Indigenous children.



During the next two years, one of the Office's major priorities will be to ensure that government is taking the necessary steps to reduce the highly disproportionate number of Indigenous children and youth in government care and to improve services to those Indigenous children and families who do come in contact with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

The Representative's Office will also focus heavily on significant issues related to mental health and substance use services for B.C. children, youth and their families. We will strive to bring improvement to the services and supports provided to these children and families, whose struggles have been well-documented in the province for many years.

As well, the Representative's Office will concentrate on improving the system of supports for youth who are aging out of care in B.C. It has always been the belief of this Office that children in care should not be cut off from assistance at the age of 19, and that many of them need more – rather than less – assistance when compared to their non-care contemporaries.

In addition to these main priority areas, the Representative's Office will continue to work on more effectively engaging children and youth themselves about the services they receive and search for ways we can amplify their voices effectively through projects such as our *Ignite Your Spirit* Indigenous youth engagement initiative and our Social Media Youth Team. *Ignite Your Spirit* is a particularly promising program, as it is bringing together Indigenous children and youth in care in various regions of the province to empower them and directly ask them for their views. The Representative's Office held the first *Ignite Your Spirit* event in the Fraser Valley in October 2016 and the second at Lake Cowichan on Vancouver Island in the summer of 2017. More such events will be held in other regions of B.C. during the next two years.

As an organization, we will also strive to ensure that the Representative's Office becomes more reflective of the families we serve and better equipped to understand, respect and embrace Indigenous cultures and practices in our work. Spearheading this effort is our Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships (ISP) team, formed in 2016, and an integral part of everything we do.

We will also continue to focus on a "re-set" of the way we work with the provincial government. While there will always be a healthy tension between an oversight body such as ours and the government which it oversees, we will continue to look for ways to collaborate constructively with MCFD, the newly created Ministry for Mental Health and Addictions and other ministries and agencies. To that end, during the past several months, we have participated in working groups with MCFD on how plans of care can be better monitored as well as how progress on past and future recommendations from the Representative can be more effectively tracked and addressed by government.

As mentioned, the core work that has been a hallmark of our Office since 2007 will continue. Our Advocacy program, one of three main functions of the Representative's Office, helps children and families with direct advice, information and assistance while also advocating for larger changes within the complex system of services to children, youth and young adults in B.C. Our advocates continue to work out of three offices – in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George – while serving people across the province.

The Representative's Monitoring team will continue to focus on providing oversight and review of government-funded services for vulnerable children and youth to help improve program delivery and

outcomes. The Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations (CID) program will continue to review and undertake investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services from government. This important function is conducted in order to ensure that lessons are learned and that recommendations are made to prevent similar injuries and deaths in the future.

CID and Monitoring, with input from Advocacy, ISP and Communications, combined to produce a dozen public reports in 2016/17. Among the highlights were:

- *A Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.* (May 2016) looked at publicly funded substance use treatment services for youth ages 13 to 18, focusing on services delivered by B.C.'s health authorities. It specifically examined how available these services are and how responsive they are to the needs of specific groups of youth – including Indigenous, LGBTQ+ and pregnant or parenting youth – as well as the policy and standards that guide them. The report recommended government establish a single point of leadership that would collaborate with regional health authorities on a strategic plan focusing on prevention, early intervention and residential treatment. The Representative is pleased to note the creation of a Ministry for Mental Health and Addictions and the appointment of a dedicated Minister by the provincial government in July 2017.
- *A Tragedy in Waiting: How B.C.'s mental health system failed one First Nations youth* (September 2016) told the story of a 16-year-old boy who suffered from significant mental health concerns before taking his own life. The report found that the boy received very little in the way of mental health assessment or services from the organizations that might have helped him. Once again, the creation in July 2017 of a new ministry and a dedicated minister to address mental health concerns of youth in B.C., who have been historically under-served, is a promising development from the Representative's perspective.
- *Too Many Victims: Sexualized Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth in Care* (October 2016) concluded that an alarming number of girls in the care of the provincial government – including a highly disproportionate number of Indigenous girls – have been the victims of sexualized violence. This aggregate review of critical injury reportables involving sexualized violence received from MCFD between 2011 and 2014 showed that at least 121 children and youth were the victims of sexualized violence while in government care, including 74 Indigenous girls.
- *Last Resort: One family's tragic struggle to find help for their son* (October 2016) reviewed the circumstances leading up to the death of Nick, a Métis teenager who was in a full-time attendance program on Vancouver Island as a condition of a Youth Justice sentence. This investigation found that Nick's parents were unable to access suitable, culturally specific services to help address their son's escalating substance use problem and that they turned to the Youth Justice system because they felt it was their last resort to obtain the timely help their son desperately needed. The report recommended that the provincial government develop and fund a comprehensive system of substance use services capable of consistently meeting the diverse needs of youth and their families across B.C., something the Representative believes the newly created Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions should prioritize in its planning. The report also recommended that the provincial government, in partnership with Métis leadership, coordinate the development and implementation of a strategic plan to deliver culturally responsive services for Métis children and families.

- *Broken Promises: Alex's Story* (February 2017) investigated the case of an 18-year-old Métis youth who was left to drift through foster care and group homes and who eventually committed suicide by leaping through the window of the hotel in which he had been placed for 49 days. The report found that the child welfare system failed to act on opportunities to find Alex a permanent home with family and instead left him to drift through 17 care placements over 11 years. The report recommended that MCFD bring care plans into compliance with already established standards, including ensuring that permanency is being actively pursued for every child or youth who is in continuing care and that all Indigenous children and youth in continuing care have a robust strategy connecting them to their Indigenous heritage. I am pleased to note that the Representative's Office is participating in a working table with the ministry that is addressing many of the concerns about care planning that were brought to light by this report.
- *Delegated Aboriginal Agencies: How resourcing affects service delivery* (March 2017) detailed the experiences of those who work in the agencies that deliver child and youth services to Indigenous communities and to many living outside those communities. This report documented how underfunding and inequitable funding of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) has led to chronically and unacceptably high caseloads and inadequate support services for Indigenous families. Consequently, Indigenous children have far too often been removed from their homes and placed in care simply because the funds are not there to provide support services to their families.

The document that follows outlines my approach to being accountable to the public and the Legislature to report on the activities of my Office and plans for future years. It describes the activities of the Office during 2016/17 and outlines our planned strategic initiatives for 2017/18 and 2018/19. It provides a full and comprehensive picture of the Office's accomplishments over the past reporting period, our plans for future years and how our work to achieve our mandate, vision and goals will be measured.

Sincerely,



Bernard Richard
Representative for Children and Youth



Thank you Mary Ellen

As British Columbia's current Representative for Children and Youth, I would like to recognize the outstanding work of my predecessor, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond – this province's inaugural Representative who served the maximum two terms in Office before departing in November 2016.

Under her leadership, RCY established offices in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George and opened nearly 17,000 advocacy cases across B.C., directly helping vulnerable children, youth and families to navigate the child- and youth-serving system. Mary Ellen became known as a strong voice for children's rights and an authoritative advocate for improving services to children and families, releasing 87 public reports, taking part in more than 1,800 media interviews and making nearly 200 recommendations to government.

During her two terms as Representative, the number of children in government care in B.C. declined, educational outcomes and supports for vulnerable young people improved, the issue of domestic violence and its effects on children and youth was brought to the forefront, the province's adoption system was strengthened and more than 150 former youth in care took advantage of her initiative to encourage tuition waivers at B.C.'s post-secondary institutions.

Mary Ellen was, above all, a fierce advocate for those in the system whose voices might not otherwise have been heard. I sincerely thank her for her service to this province.

– Bernard Richard

OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Representative's Mandate

The mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth is:

Advocacy	To provide information, advice and assistance to children, youth, young adults and their families who need help in dealing with designated or prescribed services or programs provided or funded by government; to help them to become effective self advocates with respect to those services; to support and promote the development of advocacy services within communities; and to comment publicly on advocacy services for children and their families with respect to designated services.
Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations	To conduct reviews and undertake investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services and to identify and make recommendations for improvements to services to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.
Monitoring	To monitor, review, audit and conduct research on the provision of government-funded designated services or programs for children and youth and their families and to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of those services.

Reviewable services are services or programs under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and *Youth Justice Act* and include mental health and addictions services for children.

Designated and Prescribed Services include but are not limited to:

- Family support
- Child protection
- Foster care
- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Children and youth with disabilities
- Early childhood development and child care services
- Mental health and addiction services for children
- Youth Justice
- Services for youth and young adults during their transition to adulthood
- Community Living BC (CLBC) services for young adults between their 19th and 24th birthdays

Vision, Goals and Values

Vision - An organization highly valued for championing the fundamental rights of children and youth and for promoting improvements in services that result in better lives for vulnerable children and youth.

Goals

1. Advocacy supports vulnerable children, youth and young adults in having their rights and interests protected and upheld, their voices heard and considered, and in being active participants in decisions affecting them.
2. The identification of opportunities for strengthening the child- and youth-serving system improves outcomes for vulnerable children and youth and the quality of services provided to them.
3. The examination of critical injuries and deaths contributes to ensuring that children and youth are safe from violence, abuse and neglect, and exposure to violence.
4. Effective operations and practices and an expert, competent and diverse staff enhance the capacity of the Office to meet its mandate.

Values



Accountability

The Representative is an independent officer of the Legislature, accountable to the citizens of B.C. through their elected officials.

The Representative reports to an all-party committee of the Legislature, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY). The SSCCY is established under the *RCY Act* with the goal of fostering greater awareness and understanding among legislators and the public about the B.C. child- and youth-serving system. The Representative meets regularly with the SSCCY, and the committee provides a public forum for discussion of all reports of the Representative for Children and Youth and other activities of the Office.



Bernard with MLAs and members of the Clerk's staff

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (SSCFGS) is responsible for reviewing the budget submission of all independent or statutory officers of the Legislature, including the Office of the Representative, and for determining the approved budget for each Office for each fiscal year.

The Representative's financial statements are audited annually by the Auditor General of B.C.

About this Report

Under the *RCY Act*, the Representative is required to prepare an *Annual Report and Service Plan* each year and to submit the report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

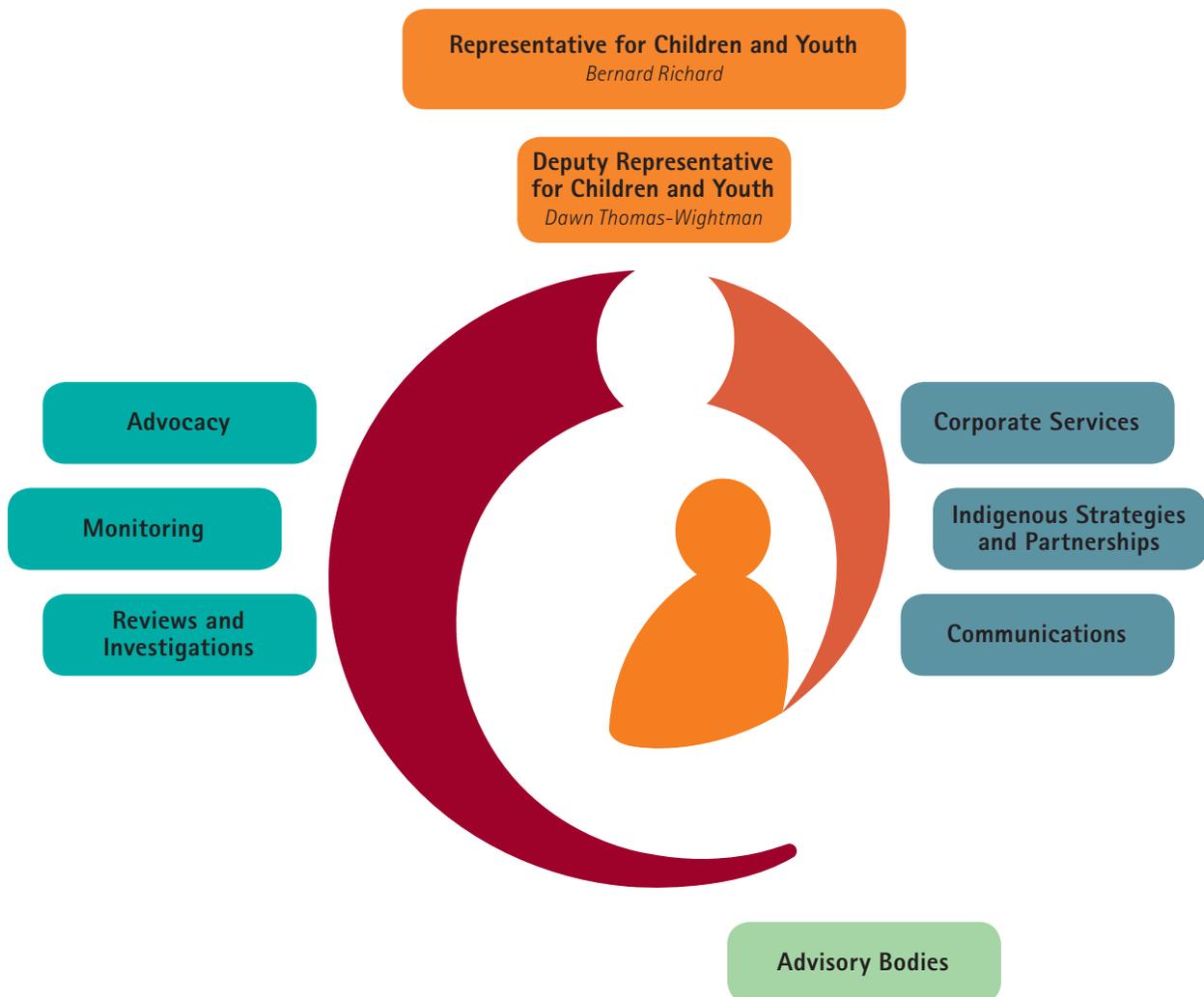
This report describes the work undertaken by the Representative for the reporting period of April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. It provides an update on key activities and initiatives during that period, reports on progress in achieving identified performance measures and outlines the priorities of the Office for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 fiscal years.

Organization

The Representative for Children and Youth has offices located in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George. Through its outreach activities, the Representative's Office connects with communities and organizations across all regions and engages with children, youth and their families province-wide.

The Representative's staff team, comprised of 61.4 full-time equivalent staff (both full-time and part-time staff), is committed to making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children, youth and young adults in B.C. Staff bring a range of experience and expertise to the Office with backgrounds in child welfare, social work, child and youth mental health, education, Youth Justice, community development, law, and social policy research and analysis.

To ensure that Indigenous experiences and perspectives are integrated into the work of the Office, the Representative employs Indigenous staff at executive and leadership levels, and efforts are underway to increase the number of Indigenous staff throughout the organization.



Working with Others

The Representative and his staff engage and collaborate with others in undertaking the work of the Office and supporting improved outcomes for vulnerable children and youth in B.C.

Joint Initiatives

In addition to several protocols and memoranda of understanding signed with other organizations since 2007 that govern the Representative's ongoing relationships and the delivery of the services of the Office, at the end of 2016/17 the Representative signed a comprehensive protocol with MCFD and the Provincial Director of Child Welfare. The *Communication and Information Sharing Protocol* updates three previous protocols and will ensure:

- a clear and mutual understanding of respective roles and mandates with respect to communication and information sharing
- that the Representative is able to exercise functions effectively and
- that both organizations achieve the best possible results for children and youth in B.C.

In the past year, the Office established two ongoing joint working groups with MCFD:

- The Care Plan Review Working Group to support the development of future assessments of care planning for children and youth in care; and
- The Recommendations Working Group to create plans for addressing outstanding recommendations made by the previous Representative to MCFD, and to update the process in the future for the development and administration of recommendations.



Bernard and former Minister of Children and Family Development Stephanie Cadieux signing protocol agreement

To assist with the development and implementation of the *Ignite Your Spirit* Indigenous youth in care forum (discussed later in this report), the Representative's Office collaborated with a number of organizations, including DAAs, MCFD offices, Indigenous leadership groups and non-profit youth-serving organizations.

As well, in the development of the May 2016, *Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.* report, the Representative consulted with an external advisory committee of experts in the field of substance use to help verify data collection methods and provide feedback on the report's findings.

Tuition Waiver Program

A priority of the Office continues to be working with post-secondary institutions, business leaders and government to support the post-secondary tuition waiver program for former youth in care. In 2016/17, 166 former youth in care benefited from tuition waivers, up from approximately 110 in 2015/16. The very low attrition rate for these students is notable, with fewer than five per cent leaving the program, illustrating the desire, determination and commitment of these young people to obtain post-secondary education. Tuition waiver students are also eligible for additional financial supports under the Youth Futures Education Fund. This fund, supported by contributions from individuals and governments, is held by the Vancouver Foundation and in 2016/17 granted \$300,000 to students on tuition waivers to help them with non-tuition living expenses.

The Representative applauds government's announcement in September 2017 that it will extend tuition waivers across all 25 public post-secondary institutions in the province.

Maintaining contact with youth about the Post-Secondary Tuition Waiver Program

Following up on the April 2015 session with students participating in the tuition waiver program, in April 2016 the Representative's Office partnered with Vancouver Island University to host another session bringing together 30 students currently in the program to hear directly from them about their experiences and to obtain their input on further ways the program could be enhanced. Common themes that emerged related to the need for improved awareness of tuition waiver and other bursary options; the challenge of covering living expenses while attending post-secondary education; the need for basic life skills and the need for emotional supports. Students at the session overwhelmingly agreed that having their tuition waived opened access to post-secondary education, paving the way for career opportunities that would not have otherwise been possible.

Collaboration

The Representative continues to participate as a member in two important collaborative bodies:

- *The Children's Forum* has been in operation since 2007 based on a recommendation in the *Hughes Review*. The Forum is a collaboration between MCFD and public bodies that have a legislated public accountability and independent reporting role with respect to MCFD. In addition to the Representative for Children and Youth, members of the Children's Forum include the Chief Coroner, the Ombudsperson, the Public Guardian and Trustee and the Provincial Health Officer. The purpose of the Forum is for members to share information, provide advice to MCFD and collaborate on common issues or matters in the interest of improving outcomes for children and youth served by the ministry. In 2016/17, the Representative or the Representative's designate attended three meetings of the Forum in June 2016, October 2016 and March 2017.
- *The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)* is an alliance of the 11 provincial and territorial children's advocates from across Canada who work together to advance the rights of children and youth and promote their voices. The members of the CCCYA identify areas of mutual concern, provide information and advice to governments and the public and together develop ways to address issues at a national level. The CCCYA hosts three meetings annually in the fall, winter and spring of each year with the Representative or Representative's delegate attending all meetings held in 2016/17.
- The Representative's Office is also an active participant in a national collaboration of advocacy organizations that work to raise awareness around the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* during Child Rights Education Week (CREW) in Canada, celebrated annually in the third week of November. The Representative and his Communications staff play an active role in planning national CREW campaigns and promoting the *UNCRC* to children and youth. As part of this collaboration, the Representative's Social Media Youth Team creates content for CREW that is shared nationally. In 2016, the team contributed both a series of original graphic images and a video entitled *Rights You Didn't Know You Have* to the CREW campaign (see examples below).



#GetItRight project images

Focus on Vulnerable Children and Youth

Although the Representative is concerned about the well-being of all children and youth in B.C., the focus of the Representative's work is on children, youth and their families who are receiving reviewable and designated or prescribed services from MCFD or other public bodies delivering child- and youth-serving programs.

Services provided by MCFD are wide-ranging and include: early childhood development and child care programs; services for children and youth with special needs; child and youth mental health programs; child safety, family, youth and children in care services; adoption services and Youth Justice services.

Some children and youth receiving services are particularly vulnerable due to their significant individual needs or their life circumstances, especially those who are living outside of the parental home because their parents are unable to meet their needs or due to a safety or protection concern.

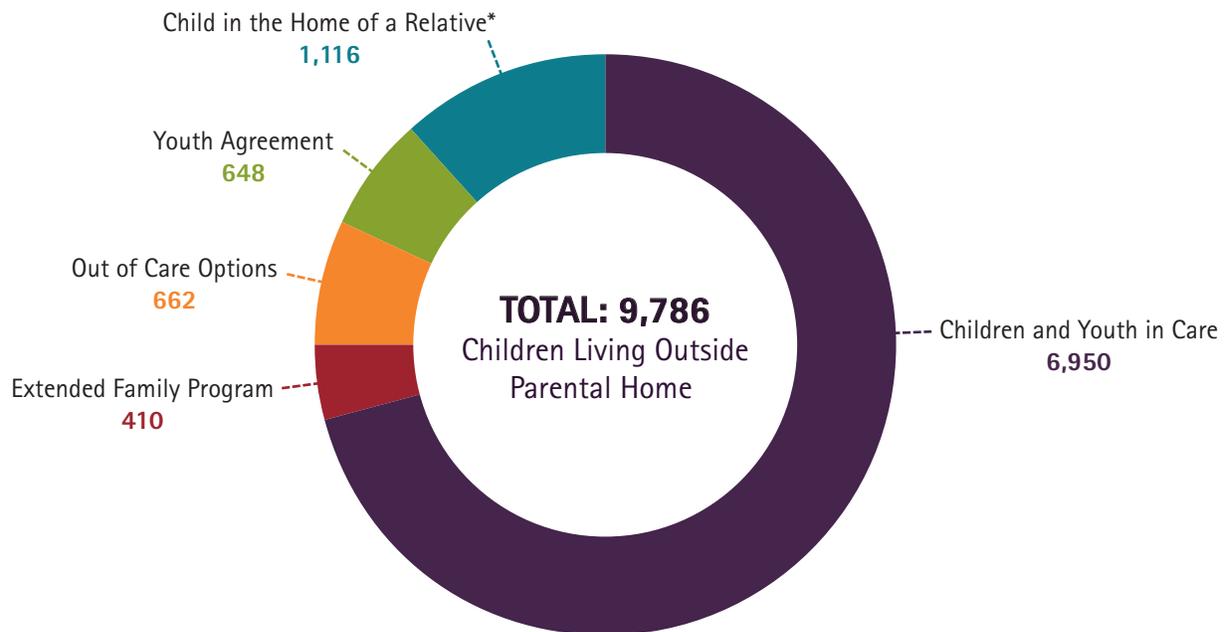
Vulnerable Children and Youth <i>By the Numbers</i>	
39,000	Approximate number of protection reports MCFD receives yearly ¹
6,950	Number of children and youth in care ²
4,339	Number of Aboriginal ³ children and youth in care ²
954	Number of children registered for adoption as of March 31, 2016 ⁴
285	Number of children placed for adoption in 2015/16 ⁴
524	Number of youth who turned 19 and aged out of care in 2016/17 ⁵
56	Number of youth in open and secure custody in March 2016 ⁶
4,798	Number of 19- to 24-year-olds receiving services from Community Living BC ⁷

Source:

- ¹ MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 8, March 2016
- ² MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse, as of March 31, 2017
- ³ The Representative uses the term "Indigenous" throughout this report with two exceptions: (1) when referencing data provided by MCFD, which uses the term "Aboriginal," as in this instance, or (2) when referencing a proper name that uses alternate terminology.
- ⁴ MCFD Adoption Management System, as of March 31, 2017
- ⁵ MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse, as of Aug. 1, 2017
- ⁶ MCFD data, received April 3, 2017
- ⁷ CLBC, as of March 31, 2017

As of March 31, 2017, a total of 9,786 children and youth were living somewhere other than with their parents. Of this group, 6,950 were children and youth in care of the provincial government. Others were living with a family member or caregiver with financial support provided through various provincial and federal programs, or were living on their own under an MCFD youth agreement that provides funding to help them support themselves.

Figure 1 – Children Living Outside of the Parental Home



** Corporate Data Warehouse data is only available until February 2017*

(Source: MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse)

Of the group of children and youth in care of the provincial government, 4,339 – or 62.4 per cent – were Aboriginal.

The huge over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in care is a significant concern of the Representative who will continue to examine services and recommend changes aimed at reducing the number of Indigenous children in care.

By the Numbers

306

Number of youth receiving funding support under the Agreements with Young Adults program on Dec. 31, 2016¹

44

Percentage of Indigenous children and youth in care being supported by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies²

12

Number of youth who died of illicit drug overdoses in 2016³

87 days

Average length of wait times for Child and Youth Mental Health services⁴

17

Percentage of B.C. students who tried at least one substance other than alcohol or marijuana⁵

21

Percentage of reported critical injuries involving children and youth in care where injuries involved sexualized violence⁶

¹ Source: MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse. The AYA program provides funding to cover the cost of things such as housing, child care, tuition and health care for some former youth in care

² Source: MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse as of March 31, 2017

³ Source: BC Coroners Service

⁴ Source: CARIS, MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse as of March 31, 2017

⁵ Source: A. Smith et al., *From Hastings to Haida Gwaii: Provincial results of the 2013 B.C. Adolescent Health Survey*, 2014

⁶ Source: Representative for Children and Youth, *Too Many Victims: Sexualized Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth in Care*, 2016

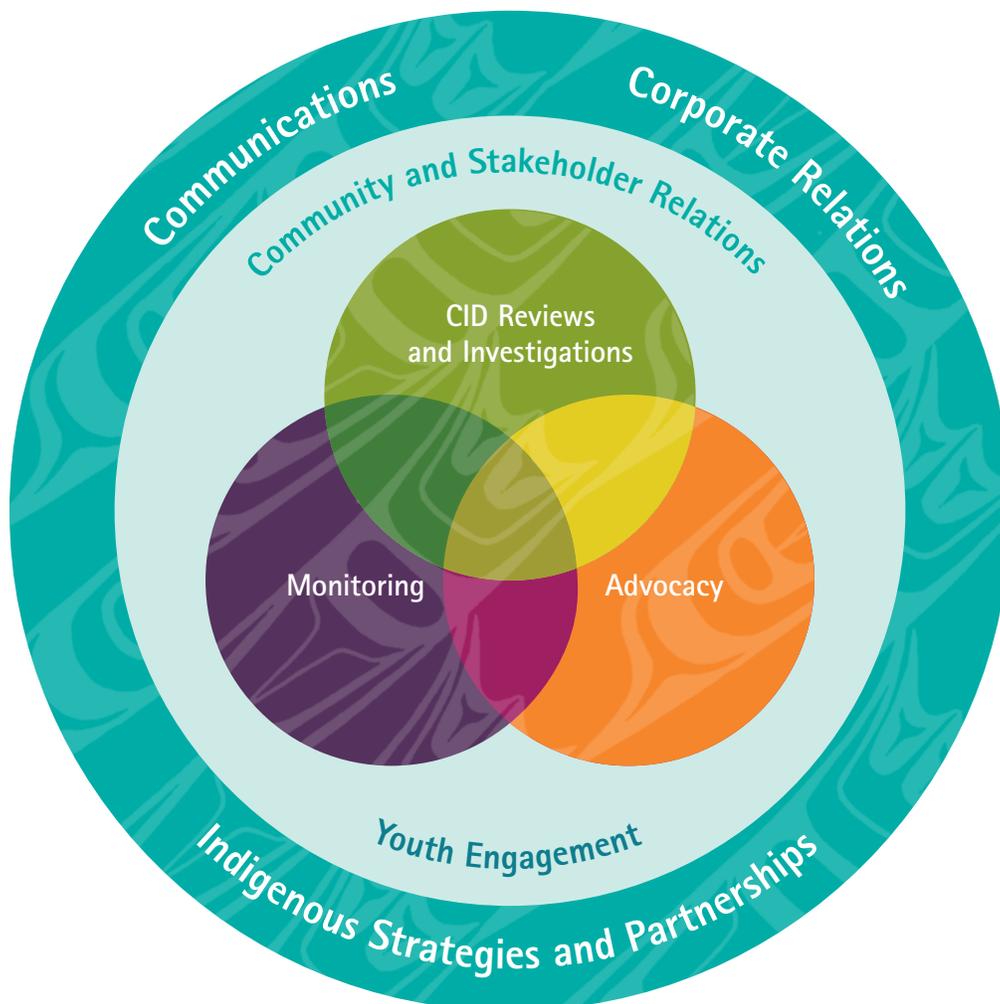
Programs and Activities

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2016/17

There are three core program areas mandated under the *RCY Act* – Advocacy, Child Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations and Monitoring. Supporting these program areas, the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships and Communications teams also work to help achieve the Representative’s mandate in serving children, youth and families and provide oversight to the child- and youth-serving system in the province.

RCY program areas and teams are highly integrated, exchanging information on trends and emerging themes, sharing expertise, supporting joint initiatives, promoting youth engagement and building community and stakeholder relations.

The Corporate Services group supports all programs and teams through the provision of human resources, technology, financial and administration services.



Advocacy

The first mandated duty of the Representative under the *RCY Act* is Advocacy. This primary function of the Representative's Office is meant to ensure that the rights of children, youth and young adults are upheld and protected and that their views are heard and considered by decision-makers.

Under this mandate, the Representative:

- provides direct support to children, youth, young adults and their families who need help in navigating the child- and youth-serving system
- identifies broad issues that need to be addressed and comments publicly on advocacy services for children, youth, young adults and their families
- reaches out to communities to build local advocacy services
- engages with youth and young people directly to help them become effective self-advocates.



Victoria advocates at National Aboriginal Day, Langford



Burnaby advocates at National Aboriginal Day, Trout Lake

Advocacy Program

Advocacy Support to Children, Youth and Young Adults and their Families

Systems of child- and youth-serving services in the province are complex and it can be challenging to identify, access and obtain needed services. The Representative's dedicated Advocacy team provides information, advice and assistance directly to:

- children, youth and their families receiving government-funded designated services, and
- young adults between their 19th and 24th birthdays who are eligible to receive services from Community Living BC (CLBC) and who received a reviewable service within 15 months of their 19th birthday.

Advocacy staff in the Representative's Office help children, youth and young adults and their families by:

- helping to make connections to services and programs they need
- discussing their rights and what to do if those rights are ignored
- providing support for them to speak up in a way that might solve their problem
- facilitating discussions about the care and services they need or receive and the decisions made about them
- assisting transitions out of MCFD care
- assisting transitions for young adults eligible for CLBC services.



Prince George teddy bears line up for Bear Witness Day

When contacted about issues outside the Representative's mandate, the Advocacy team attempts to direct them to relevant agencies or services by providing information and referrals.

Advocacy Case Example

Building support networks and re-uniting siblings

A foster parent dropped off 18-year-old David* – a youth in care – at the local Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) office, reporting that the DAA had not done enough to find another place for him to live after the foster parent gave her notice. David had been in care for 16 years and had no life skills preparation and no youth transition plan. The foster parent had concerns that he may be eligible for CLBC supports, but that appropriate assessments had not been completed.

An advocate from the Representative's Office became involved to gather and assess information to determine the full picture for this youth, and to advocate for CLBC assessment, supported independent living and a transition plan for leaving care.

As a result, the DAA coordinated a CLBC assessment for David, who was not deemed eligible for post-19 Adult Supports. David was placed in an independent living arrangement in an apartment in the same building as his social worker, who checked on him often, and who provided vouchers for food and other basic needs. A youth worker was also assigned to David to help address deficits in life skills, and his employer joined the care team to act as a mentor for him.

The DAA supported David to contact his adult biological siblings. The plan was that this sibling group would find housing and they would all live together. When the file was closed, the adult siblings were actively searching for a home.

** Youth's name has been changed to protect privacy*

Systemic Advocacy

Systemic advocacy refers to the extraction of themes from individual advocacy cases, and the use of them to identify broad changes that may be necessary in the child-, youth- and young adult-serving systems to improve overall programs and services. This may include collaborating with others, consulting with senior government officials to raise awareness of the over-arching issue, and speaking out and advocating for the resolution of the problem.

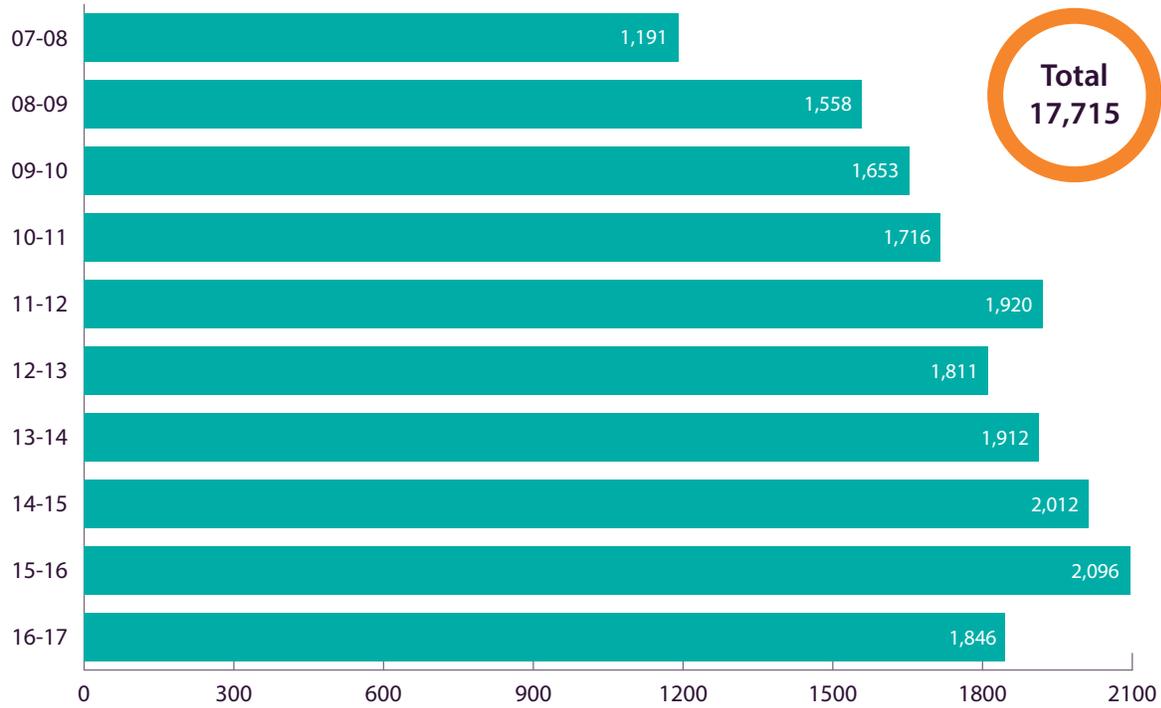
Organizationally, systemic advocacy requires coordination between program areas in identifying, defining and reporting out on the systemic issues identified. The Representative has established a Director of Systemic Issues and Quality Improvement position to coordinate systemic issues work in the Office, and to take the lead on quality assurance and quality improvement across all programs.

Highlights of Advocacy Activities in 2016/17

Advocacy Cases and Trends

Following several years of increases, there was a drop in the number of advocacy cases handled by the Representative's Advocacy team in 2016/17 to 1,846 cases from 2,096 cases the previous fiscal year.

Figure 2 – Total Advocacy Cases 2007/08 to 2016/17



Figures 3 and 4 provide detail on the origin of advocacy cases by source of initial contact and by region.

Figure 3 – Advocacy Cases by Initial Contact 2016/17

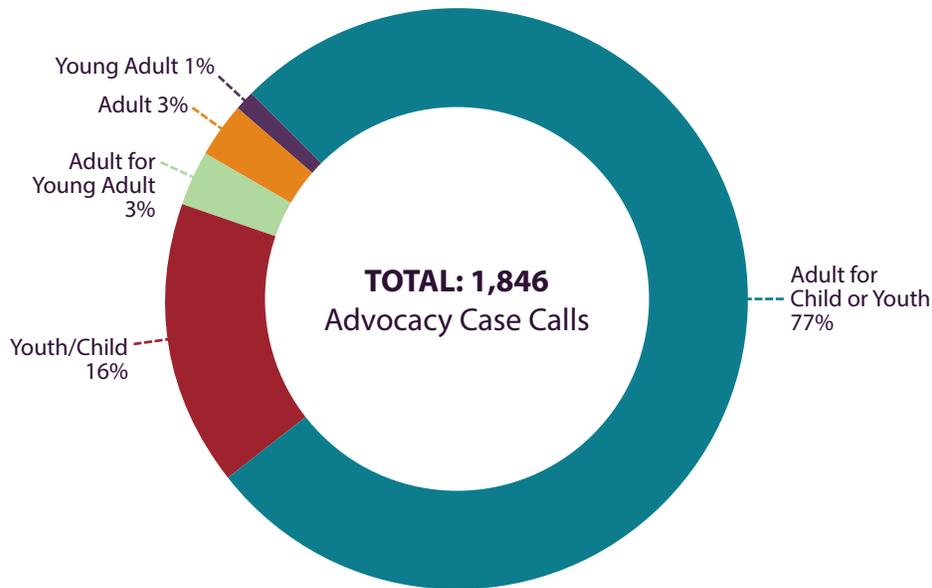
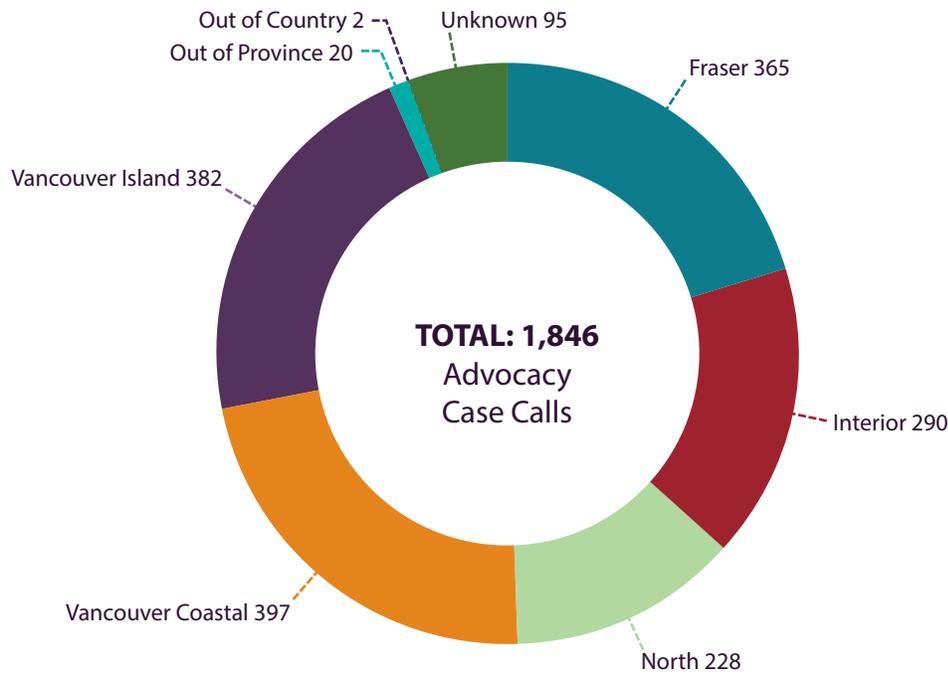


Figure 4 – Advocacy Cases by Region 2016/17



Advocacy Initiatives

Advocacy Renewal

In 2016/17, the Advocacy team completed the implementation of the results and recommendations from an Advocacy program review carried out in 2015/16. The Advocacy intake function has been enhanced with Intake Advocates now handling all child, youth, young adult and adult calls, assessing the information, assigning to Advocates for follow-up when needed as well as providing early resolution on cases.



MCFD Youth Advisory Committee members presenting to RCY staff

The Advocacy management team underwent a “leaning” process, solidifying Senior Advocate and Senior Advisor roles into two Manager positions that provide the overall operational support to the program area.

Advocacy also now has one team member working out of the Interior, close to Kamloops. This is a first for the Office and has increased the Representative’s Advocacy presence in this region. The Advocacy program looks forward to continuing to build strong ties and connections with local stakeholder groups, MCFD, DAAs and CLBC offices.

Advocacy Case Example

Accessing funding for an Indigenous youth aging out

Eighteen-year-old Shannon*, an Indigenous youth, was accessing support from MCFD via a Youth Agreement and was aging out in less than two weeks. Shannon was in her second semester of post-secondary schooling, living with mental health issues, working part-time and at risk of losing her housing and being unable to complete her school semester. She had recently applied for support through an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA), and had been denied, as the ministry believed she had been receiving band funding.

With the support of her youth worker, Shannon contacted the Representative’s Office and spoke with an advocate, sharing her views and requesting support in being heard by her social worker. The advocate connected with MCFD to discuss the case and ensure the ministry understood Shannon’s circumstances. The youth had been in need of MCFD supports for most of her teenage years and had very few family connections to draw from. The advocate wanted to know how MCFD was taking Shannon’s views into consideration in the decision-making process regarding her application for AYA support. After reviewing the case and further understanding that Shannon’s income did not exceed the allowable amount for an AYA, the ministry reconsidered the youth’s AYA application and the support was granted, allowing Shannon to complete her second semester of post-secondary education.

**Youth’s name has been changed to protect privacy*

Custody Centres

The Representative's Advocacy team continues to provide direct advocacy advice and support to youth in B.C.'s Youth Custody Centres. This is facilitated by the ongoing positive relationships the team has established with the Prince George and Burnaby Youth Custody Centres.

Advocates visit the centres on a monthly basis to meet with youth individually and discuss any concerns they have with their own planning or issues arising in the centres. Advocates encourage and support self-advocacy, assisting youth in creating opportunities to have their voices and views considered in decisions that affect them. Advocates also facilitate rights education to groups of youth at the centres and deliver training to MCFD Youth Custody staff about the services of the Representative's Office in supporting youth.

Advocacy Case Example

Preventing placement moves

The foster parents of nine-year-old Joey* were concerned with MCFD's plan to move the child from their home due to ministry allegations that the foster home was not meeting his needs. Joey had resided in the foster home since birth. He had been diagnosed with FASD, ADHD and a low IQ. A psychiatrist had assessed Joey when he was seven, but recommendations on specific strategies or actions to support his mental health needs were not provided to the foster parents, and MCFD staff had not seen the child in seven months.

An advocate supported the foster parent in connecting with MCFD and encouraged the foster parent to advocate for better supports to meet the needs of Joey, who exhibited challenging acting-out behaviours. The advocate connected with MCFD to ensure that Joey's best interests were being considered and that his needs were being met in planning.

The outcome of the case was that Joey remained in the foster home with supports from a behavioural interventionist and regular respite. The foster parents were encouraged and supported to meet with both the behavioural interventionist and the psychiatrist to learn strategies to support Joey. In addition, MCFD committed to visiting Joey in the home on a monthly basis.

**Youth's name has been changed to protect privacy*

Advocacy related to vulnerable youth across the province

The Advocacy team continues to receive hundreds of calls related to vulnerable youth across the province who face multiple barriers when trying to access supports such as housing and mental health services. Frequently, parents, service providers and health officials have expressed concern over the lack of a coordinated approach to service delivery and have identified gaps in services. Members of the Advocacy team have attended forums set up to discuss the sexual exploitation of youth and strategies to link and improve services for this group. Advocates have also participated in provincial discussions about safe/secure care.



RCY staff in Prince George

*Advocacy Case Example***Rights education and family assistance**

Layla*, a teen mother of an Indigenous infant, contacted the Representative's Office after the child's father – from whom she was separated due to concerns about domestic violence – had taken the infant from her care. The father told MCFD that he was concerned about the mother's and maternal grandmother's ability to care for the child. The mother and child had been living with the maternal grandmother.

The advocate provided information and advice to Layla to help her understand the legal situation and her rights, as well as the rights of her child. The advocate then followed up with MCFD staff involved, inquiring about how they were acting to protect the baby's rights, and how they were assessing the teen mother's situation.

MCFD reviewed its assessment of the maternal grandmother and determined that there were no safety factors preventing Layla and her baby from residing with the grandmother. However, due to concerns about both parents and their relationship, MCFD placed the baby in foster care in the community where the parents lived, provided separate contact appointments for the baby with each parent, and provided support to both parents to help build their parenting skills, and address the father's violence towards the mother, with the goal to return the child to the parents' care. At last report, the parents had worked out an arrangement to have equal parenting time and to communicate effectively around raising their child and, although the child was still in care, the child was able to spend significant time with each of the parents.

**Youth's name has been changed to protect privacy*

Critical Injury and Death – Reviews and Investigations

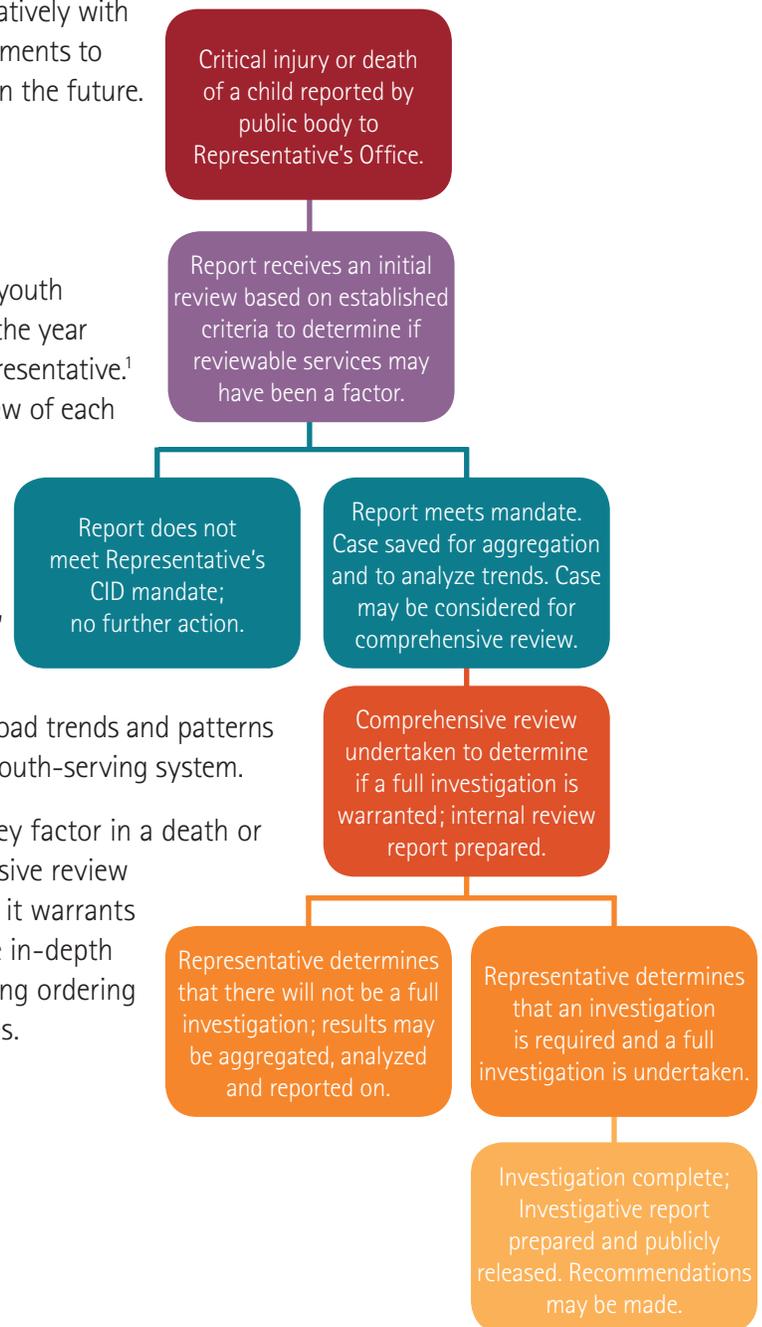
The Critical Injury and Death (CID) reviews and investigations mandate of the Representative is focused on accountability and learning.

In the tragic event that a child or youth receiving reviewable services – such as services from an MCFD program – dies or suffers a critical injury, and those services may have contributed to the incident, the Representative is responsible for working collaboratively with other public bodies in an effort to inform improvements to services to help prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.

The Reviews and Investigations Process

Critical injuries and deaths involving children and youth receiving reviewable services at the time of, or in the year prior to, the incident must be reported to the Representative.¹ The Representative's staff conducts an initial review of each report to identify whether the report meets CID's mandate.² In about 60 per cent of cases, no service delivery issues are identified. These include situations where, for example, the child was medically fragile and the death was expected, or the cause was clearly accidental. Some of these cases may be flagged for inclusion in an aggregate review, which is designed to identify broad trends and patterns that can inform improvements to the child- and youth-serving system.

Where service delivery issues may have been a key factor in a death or critical injury, the case may receive a comprehensive review at the Representative's discretion to determine if it warrants a full investigation. These reviews involve a more in-depth look at the circumstances of the incident, including ordering and examining records from various public bodies.



¹ A critical injury is one that may result in child's death or cause serious or long-term impairment of a child's health.

² For a report to be in-mandate, there must have been a critical injury or death where the reviewable service a child or youth was receiving may have been a contributing factor to the injury or death.

The Representative selects a small number of cases for full investigation based on a determination that the services received may have significantly contributed to the injury or death, that the death or critical injury was self-inflicted or inflicted by someone else, that the circumstances of the case were suspicious, or that there is evidence that abuse or neglect may have been a factor in the incident.

A full investigation involves a thorough and rigorous examination of the system of supports and services the child or youth received, including a review of all case-related records, relevant legislation, policies and standards and, typically, interviews with numerous individuals under oath. When the investigation involves an Indigenous child or youth, community members and leaders are consulted to ensure that their voices are heard and that the unique history and issues of the child and community are taken into consideration.

During the investigation process, the Representative consults with a multidisciplinary team (MDT) made up of representatives with specific subject matter expertise that may be needed during the investigation. The MDT may include representatives from MCFD, the BC Coroners Service, and experts in public health, medicine, pathology, Indigenous issues, law enforcement and education. The MDT supports the Representative by reviewing the details of the case and providing expert advice and guidance as the investigation progresses.

When the Representative undertakes a full investigation into the critical injury or death of a child, the Representative must prepare a report. Investigation reports must be provided to the SSCCY and to the public body or director responsible for the reviewable service, and may be made publicly available.

An injury or death of a child or youth can also be referred by the SSCCY to the Representative for investigation. The usual initial and comprehensive review process is followed. When the Representative determines to investigate a critical injury or death of a child referred to him by the SSCCY, an investigation report is completed. When the Representative determines not to investigate the critical injury or death of a child referred by the SSCCY, the Representative must prepare a report to the SSCCY outlining the reasons for that decision.

Highlights of CID Activities in 2016/17

Change of CID Terms, Large Volume of Critical Incidents and Three Investigative Reports

During this fiscal year, the office experienced staff changes including the arrival of the new Representative in November 2016. These changes precipitated CID's look at work flow and process in light of the *RCY Act* and the Honourable Ted Hughes' report from 2006. One adjustment made was that CID began considering the number of critical incident reports the Office receives overall, whereas previously CID only recorded the number of reports that were within CID's mandate.

Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, the Representative's Office received 2,214 critical incident reports³ and determined that, of these 2,214 reports, 754 critical injuries and 112 deaths of children and youth were within mandate for a total of 866 reports within mandate during this time period.

An updated *Reportable Circumstances Policy* was introduced by MCFD in June 2015 and training was provided to MCFD staff during that same month, resulting in a significant increase in reports to the Representative's Office since then.

Critical Injuries and Deaths Reports, Reviews and Trends

Figure 5 details the number of cases by fiscal year of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth receiving reviewable services that met mandate after an initial review for the years 2009/10 to 2016/17. There was an almost eight per cent increase in in-mandate cases from 2015/16 to 2016/17, and an almost four-fold increase since 2009/10.

Figure 5 – In-Mandate Cases (Received an Initial Review Determining In-Mandate) 2009/10 to 2016/17

In-Mandate Cases								
Fiscal Year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Critical Injuries	137	136	413	300	318	292	665	754
Deaths	93	88	101	100	99	82	138	112
Total	230	224	514	400	417	374	803	866

³ These reports detail either injuries or deaths of children and youth who were receiving reviewable services in the 12 months prior to the injury or death.

Figure 6 provides more detail on the in-mandate cases in 2016/17, showing the breakdown of critical injuries and deaths of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth and those in care as well as not in care of government. This table shows that 53 per cent of the critical injuries that met mandate involved Indigenous children in care. When expressed as a percentage of in-mandate cases of Indigenous children and youth who are critically injured both in care and not in care, the number is almost 65 per cent. This number mirrors similar administrative data showing the significant over-representation in the child-serving system of Indigenous children and youth, especially children in care.

Figure 6 – Further Detail on Cases That Met Mandate after Initial Review 2016/17

	Critical Injuries			Deaths		
	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Unknown	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Unknown*
Not in Care	81	84	3	59	28	19
In Care	180	403	3	3	2	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	261	487	6	62	31	19

* The large number of unknown Indigenous status is reflective of the fact that only after the B.C. Coroners report is released can the Representative confirm the Indigenous status of some children and youth. There can be delays in Coroners reports coming to the Representative for several reasons including police investigations that need to be concluded.

Figures 7, 7.1, 8 and 8.1 provide detail on the classification of in-mandate critical injury and death reports received by the Representative in 2016/17, broken down by gender. Critical injuries were much higher for females whereas the gender breakdown was close to even with respect to in-mandate deaths. The use of "other" as a category for gender is intended to capture children and youth who do not identify on the gender binary of male or female.⁴

Figure 7 – Number of In-Mandate Critical Injuries by Category and Gender 2016/17

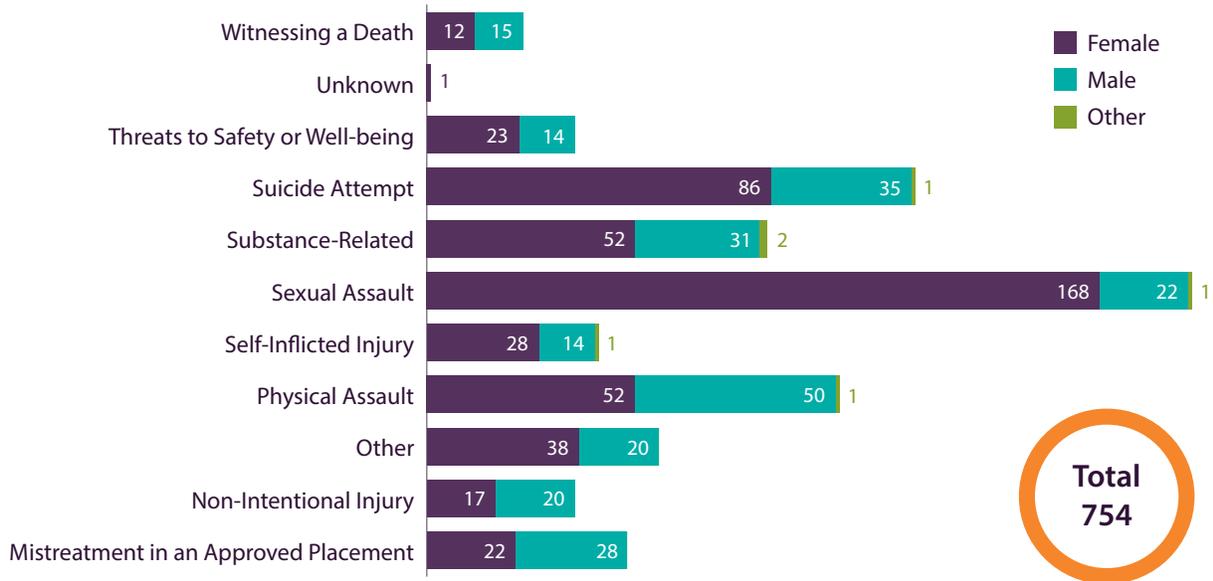
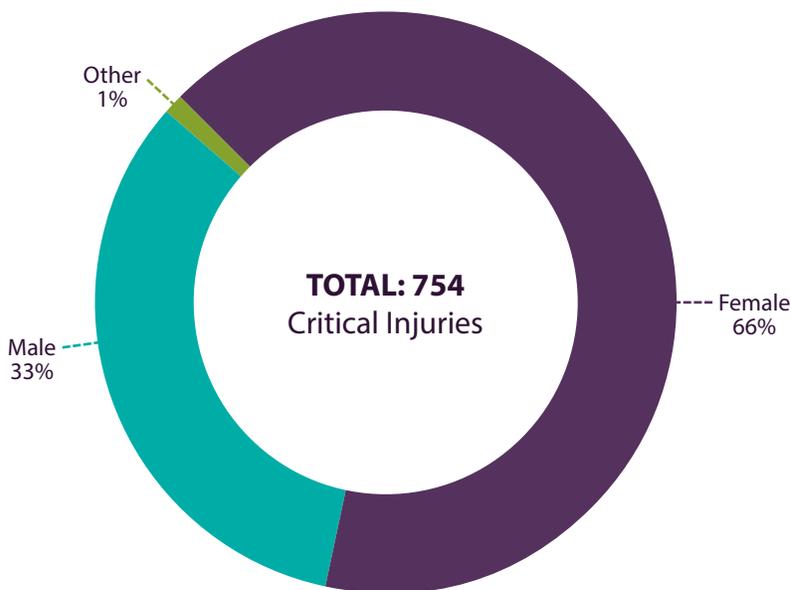


Figure 7.1 –Percentage of In-Mandate Critical Injuries by Gender 2016/17



⁴ This category is intended to capture any non-binary identities including transgender that, in this usage, is defined as a person having an identity that differs from the sex assigned at birth.

Figure 8 – Number of In-Mandate Deaths by Category and Gender 2016/17



Figure 8.1 – Percentage of In-Mandate Deaths by Gender 2016/17

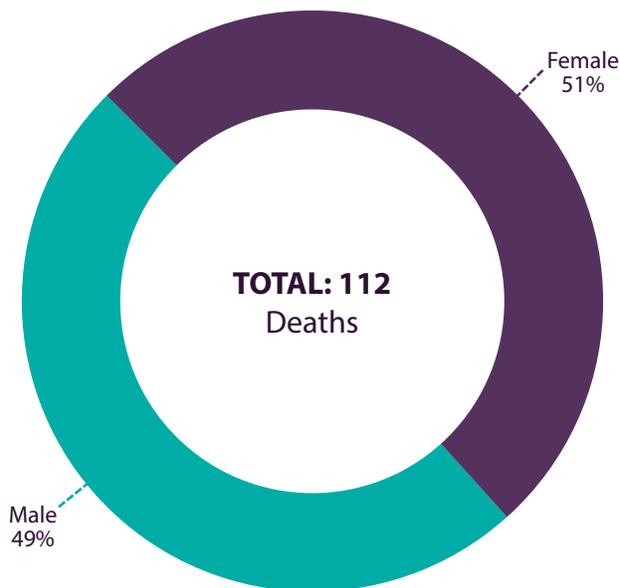
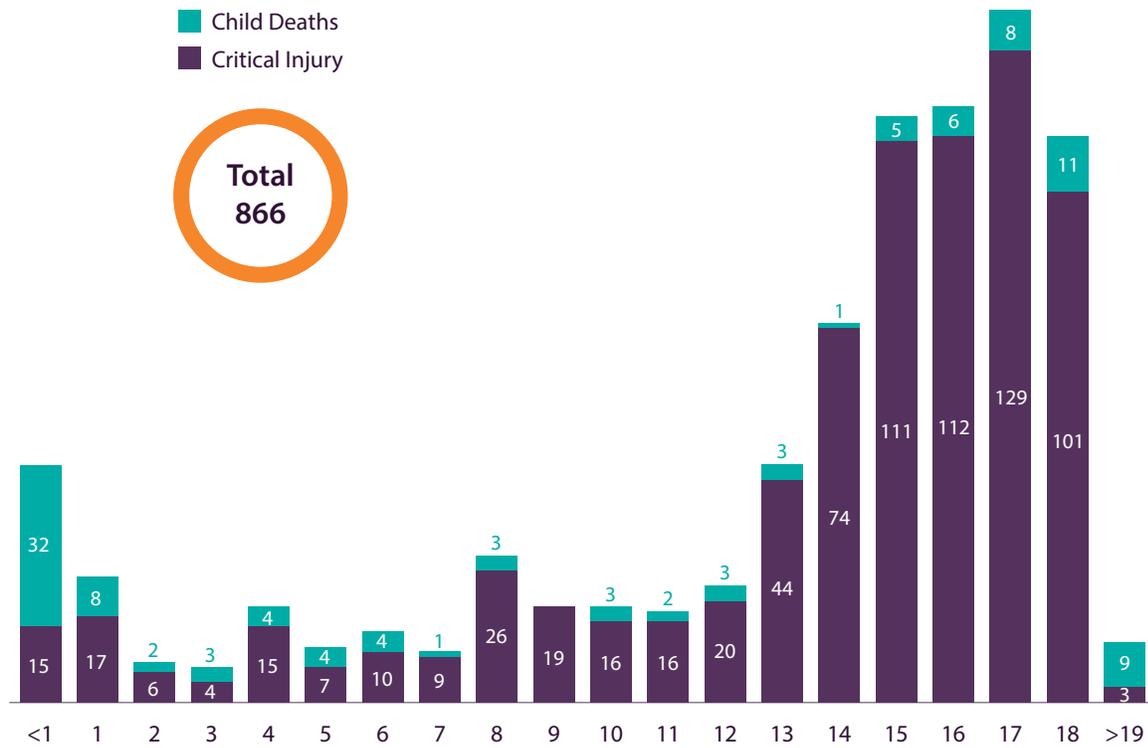


Figure 9 provides the age distribution of in-mandate critical injuries and deaths in 2016/17. Similar to past years, and consistent with historic trends, there are spikes in critical injuries and deaths of infants and teenagers reflecting the unique vulnerabilities of these two age groups.

Figure 9 – Age Distribution of In-Mandate Critical Injuries or Deaths 2016/17



CID Comprehensive Reviews and Investigations in 2016/2017

CID Updates

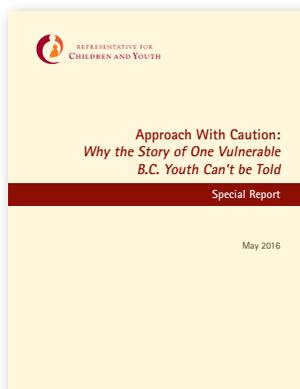
Consistent with the Representative's mandate and responsibility for reviewing child injuries and deaths, the Representative issues regular, periodic public reports on injury and death reports received and reviews and investigations undertaken.

Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, the Representative issued three reports on RCY's reviews and investigations activities:

- **April 4, 2016**, Representative's Report #26 – detailing reports received, reviews undertaken and investigations identified by the Representative for the period Oct. 1, 2015 to Jan. 30, 2016
- **Oct. 6, 2016**, Representative's Report #27 – detailing reports received, reviews undertaken and investigations identified by the Representative for the period Feb. 1, 2016 to May 31, 2016
- **Feb. 7, 2017**, Representative's Report #28 – detailing reports received, reviews undertaken and investigations identified by the Representative for the period June 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016

CID Comprehensive Reviews and Investigations Reports

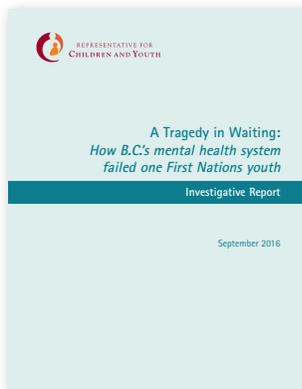
Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, CID conducted 14 comprehensive case reviews involving children and youth ages two to 19. CID also released four individual investigative reports during this time period. These four reports are listed below.



May 5, 2016, Approach with Caution: Why the Story of One Vulnerable B.C. Youth Can't be Told

This individual investigation examined four critical injuries to a youth that occurred in 2012, including a near fatality. Although the case received a full, comprehensive investigation, the Representative decided not to publicly release the detailed results out of concern for the youth's well-being as the young person was still considered to be highly vulnerable. MCFD, SSCCY and the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) of B.C. received full, confidential reports in order to inform their service provision.

The publicly released report acknowledged some similarities between the youth's story and that of Paige, who was the subject of an investigative report released by the Representative in 2015, *Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded*. The report discussed the response by MCFD to the recommendations made in *Paige's Story*, and it also suggested an urgent need for the province to consider secure care options for children and youth in crisis. The public report did not make recommendations.

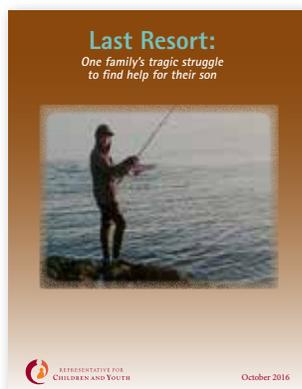


Sept. 8, 2016, A Tragedy in Waiting: How B.C.'s mental health system failed one First Nations youth

This report investigated the suicide death of a 16-year-old First Nations youth. The youth was living on reserve in an urban area. Both MCFD and the local DAA had files regarding his serious emerging mental health concerns. MCFD never made a referral to mental health services due to the perception of a lengthy wait to obtain those services, and the youth received very limited support from the DAA.

The investigation found that MCFD was aware of chronic systemic issues within the DAA, and that MCFD had the full responsibility to ensure the DAA was able to carry out its mandated services, but that appropriate actions were not taken. This inaction by MCFD led to inappropriate service provision for the youth who was the subject of this report. The investigation also found that there was an ongoing perception of inaccessibility of CYMH services stemming from lengthy wait lists for mental health services and a lack of transparency regarding how to access those services. Lastly, the investigation found that the youth's school made several calls for help for the youth to both MCFD and the DAA that did not receive appropriate responses.

Based on the investigation, the Representative made five recommendations. The first was that MCFD immediately implement and appropriately resource mental health services for Indigenous children and youth. The second was that the provincial and federal governments partner to create a proactive lead agency for the provision of Indigenous child and youth mental health services in the province. Third, the Representative recommended that the child-serving ministries prepare an immediate plan to protect the right of Indigenous children and youth with mental health concerns to learn, attend and participate in school. The fourth was that the provincial government establish a clear plan to ensure child safety procedures are maintained before any final decision is made to transfer jurisdiction over Indigenous child welfare. Lastly, the Representative recommended that MCFD develop and implement a strategy to provide immediate collaborative support for DAAs that are consistently failing to meet MCFD performance standards.



Oct. 20, 2016, Last Resort: One family's tragic struggle to find help for their son

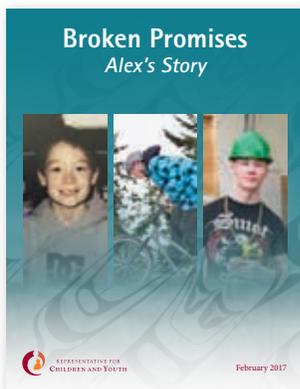
This investigation examined the life and death of a 15-year-old Métis youth. Nick died by asphyxiation while attending a Youth Justice program on Vancouver Island in June 2015. He came from a family from the Lower Mainland who had had very limited MCFD involvement, and he was not in the care of MCFD at the time of his death.

Nick's involvement in the Youth Justice system was preceded by a significant struggle with substance misuse. At age 12, he began using marijuana. In the summer of 2014, at age 14, Nick began using methamphetamine. His use quickly escalated and he became entrenched in the local drug scene. He was not able to continue at school and refused any attempts to connect him with a counsellor. In April 2015, Nick assaulted his mother with a

knife. His parents decided to support a criminal charge against Nick for the incident with the belief it would enable Nick to get the help he needed. After being sentenced in June 2015, Nick attended a Youth Justice program on Vancouver Island. Despite a rough start to the program, Nick appeared to settle in quickly and to be doing well. Less than a week later, Nick was found deceased. The coroner was unable to determine if the death was accidental or a suicide.

The investigation found that MCFD missed opportunities early on to support Nick and his family when Nick first began experiencing challenges at home and at school, and that Nick's parents felt forced to use Youth Justice to access appropriate substance use services for their son. It also found an absence of Métis-specific services for substance misuse and for Youth Justice, and overall issues with communication and information sharing between involved agencies.

The Representative reiterated a previous recommendation that the provincial government create, appropriately fund and maintain a comprehensive system of substance use services. The Representative also recommended that the provincial government partner with Métis leadership to develop and implement a strategic plan for culturally responsive services for Métis children and families, that child-serving ministries immediately plan to co-locate mental health supports in schools, and that MCFD and the Ministry of Education provide clear guidelines on information sharing for Youth Justice-involved children.



Feb. 6, 2017, Broken Promises: Alex's Story

This investigation documented the life of a Métis youth who died by suicide in September 2015 at the age of 18. Alex was a youth with a long history of involvement with MCFD whose journey through the child welfare system was marked by missed opportunities, trauma and instability. He lived in 17 placements during his time in care. His final placement was in a hotel, where he was left largely alone.

The investigation found that Alex's death was a predictable outcome of his experiences within the child welfare system. He experienced constant, destabilizing moves, lost opportunities for permanence despite multiple chances to be placed with family, and social workers who ignored him due to urgent demands on their caseloads. The investigation found that the reviewable services Alex received, or did not receive, clearly contributed to his death.

The Representative also found that there was a complete lack of oversight by MCFD and by the responsible DAA of the contracted residential agency that was meant to be caring for Alex, a lack of attention paid to Alex's cultural identity and a failure by CYMH to connect Alex to appropriate services despite his clear need for them.

The Representative recommended that MCFD create a robust support model to provide extended family members with services to support placements of children in their care, that MCFD take action on fulfilling previous recommendations to bring care plans into compliance with the standards already called for in legislation and policy, that MCFD ensure children and youth in care with identified mental health needs receive timely and uninterrupted mental health services, and that MCFD allocate resources to enhance the provision of oversight and financial accountability for contracted residential agencies.

Monitoring

The Monitoring mandate of the Representative is focused on providing oversight and review of government-funded services for vulnerable children and youth to improve program delivery and outcomes.

In undertaking this Monitoring function, the Representative's primary goal is to inform how service systems can be strengthened and results improved in the areas of safety, health and well-being for vulnerable children and youth.

The Monitoring Process

The work of the Monitoring program is carried out in three ways:

- *Oversight* – monitoring government's activities and its performance in providing services to children, youth and their families. This includes a particular focus on key subject matter areas such as child and youth mental health and substance misuse. Ongoing monitoring activities involve identifying, tracking and analyzing specific service delivery issues of concern, tracking and assessing quality assurance and quality improvement processes in place for service delivery systems and tracking select indicators of service quality and outcomes.
- *Research and Evaluation* – undertaking evidence-based research, analysis and evaluation, including collaboration with other independent bodies and research institutions to identify well-being outcomes of vulnerable children and youth and to inform how these can be improved.
- *Review and Audit* – conducting reviews and audits to assess the effectiveness and responsiveness of programs and services to children, youth and their families. This includes measuring compliance with standards, policies and legislation, assessing services against evidence-based research and best practice and gauging the adequacy of government quality improvement and quality assurance activities for specific programs and services.

The Representative may issue public reports based on this research, evaluation and audit work including comprehensive research reports on the well-being of children and youth and reviews of the child- and youth-serving system. Review and audit reports include recommendations to government service providers and partners about ways to strengthen services for vulnerable children and youth. The team monitors how and whether child and youth services and systems are adopting the Representative's recommendations and the Representative has issued public reports on the status of recommendations made.

Engaging with key stakeholder groups to ensure that reviews and research are relevant and well-informed and communicating with stakeholders about findings and recommendations is core to the work of the Monitoring program.

Highlights of Monitoring Activities 2016/17

Monitoring and Special Reports in 2016/17

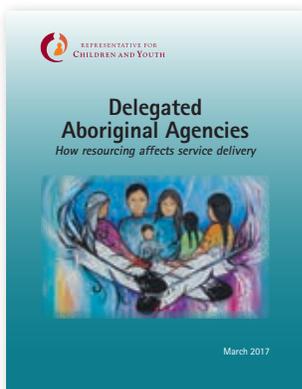


May 26, 2016, Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.

This review of publicly funded youth substance use services in B.C. found that there is no actual "system" of services. Across the B.C. health authorities, substance use services for youth are piecemeal, often with no clear navigational path for youth and their families to follow. Youth can also face specific barriers when they try to access services, such as a lack of flexibility in hours of operation, lack of accessible locations, lack of transportation and lack of flexible or developmentally appropriate service options. Youth from vulnerable or marginalized populations are underserved due to a lack of programs that are culturally appropriate or sensitive to a diversity of gender and sexual identities.

The findings of this review also point to numerous other gaps in the system of youth substance use services. There are too few adequately resourced low-barrier community-based services to address youth needs before they become a crisis and too few withdrawal management and treatment beds available when youth are ready to seek help. This review also found that, despite the efforts of many dedicated and skilled professionals in this field, the province still does not provide adequate leadership or an accountable strategic plan for a robust system of youth substance use services in B.C.

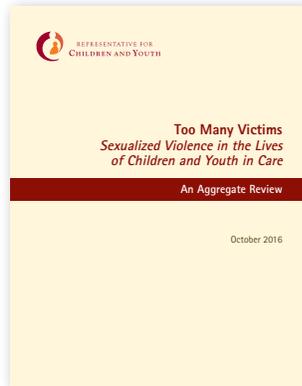
This report's recommendations include establishing a single point of leadership and accountability within the provincial government to address youth substance use and mental health issues, developing and implementing a five-year strategic plan to create a comprehensive system to prevent and treat these issues, and undertaking a broad-based educational effort to eliminate stigma and discrimination toward youth with substance use problems.



March 30, 2017, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies: How resourcing affects service delivery

This review examined staffing and other resources available to the 23 DAAs serving Indigenous children and their families in B.C. The review found that the funding levels and practices by both the federal and provincial governments present significant hurdles for DAAs and their staff resulting in high workloads, inadequate wages and benefits and lack of professional development. This lack of funding has created a system of inequitable supports, services and protection for vulnerable Indigenous children in B.C. compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. In fact, federal funding models for DAAs are flawed and discriminatory, and do not provide adequate support for prevention services, leading to more children ending up in care. Inequitable and inconsistent funding arrangements between the B.C. government and DAAs has also resulted in significant differences in the level and types of support available for Indigenous children, depending on where in the province

they live and which DAA serves them. This report also found that all levels of government have failed to adequately address the long-term impacts on families of Canada's colonial history including the intergenerational effects of residential schools



Oct. 4, 2016, *Too Many Victims: Sexualized Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth in Care*

This report was the result of a collaboration between the Representative's Monitoring and CID programs. Overall, the findings of this review were disturbing. Children and youth in government care are highly vulnerable to sexualized violence. This review found that an alarming number of girls in the care of the provincial government – including a highly disproportionate number of Indigenous girls – have been the victims of sexualized violence while in care. And yet, this report found that not one specific policy or set of practice standards exists to guide social workers in their roles as guardians of children or youth who are sexually assaulted while in care. Consequently, the actions of social workers in the cases of the 121 youth in this review were, not surprisingly, varied and inconsistent, leaving children and youth potentially at risk for further abuse and long-lasting harm.

The findings of this review resulted in the Representative's recommendation to create and implement a broad strategy, adequate policy, standards, and training for the prevention and treatment of children and youth in care victimized by sexualized violence, with a particular focus on Indigenous girls.

In response to broader gaps in services identified in the report, the Representative recommended the creation and implementation of a five-year strategy for preventing and responding to sexualized violence against children and youth in B.C., as well as the creation of a network of specialized child advocacy centres across the province to better meet the needs of child and youth victims of sexualized violence.

Other Monitoring Activities in 2016/17

Review of Supports for Education Outcomes of Children and Youth in Care

During 2016/17, this review in progress examined academic achievement data for children and youth in care in B.C. and gathered and analyzed information on supports that can help children and youth in care succeed in school. This data collection included surveys of youth in and from care and adults who support them, including foster parents, social workers, teachers, principals and Indigenous education staff.

Research support for other program areas

The Monitoring program often supports activities and initiatives of other program areas through the provision of research and analysis expertise. One example of this is the work noted above where Monitoring collaborated with CID on the report on sexualized violence against children and youth in care.

Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships

Indigenous Focus

The Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships (ISP) team provides a specific Indigenous focus to the work of the Representative's Office and helps to strengthen the Representative's work on behalf of Indigenous children, youth and young adults.

ISP works with all program areas to ensure that the Office is culturally safe and responsive and is guided by relationships that are based on respect and reconciliation, equity, accountability, Indigenous voices and best practices.

Highlights of Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships Activities in 2016/17

Strengthened Indigenous Cultural Safety Framework

In 2016/2017, ISP played a key role in fostering Indigenous cultural safety and building knowledge and staff engagement at the Representative's Office. The team developed a cultural framework for the Office, including amendments to training and recruitment that support a developing Indigenous staff strategy, and mandatory Indigenous Cultural Competency staff training. All RCY staff are required to complete San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training provided through the Provincial Health Services Authority.

ISP also worked with the Monitoring and CID program areas along with Communications on research and reports, developed policies around compensating elders and cultural teachers and began to involve Indigenous artists in the work of the Representative's Office.

A key part of ISP's work was engaging collaboratively with Indigenous and Métis leadership, agencies and communities to advocate for culturally grounded and effective support for children, youth and family services.



Indigenous Youth Leadership Team and ISP staff



RCY staff and youth presenting on youth engagement at a Washington, D.C. workshop

Amplified Youth Engagement

In 2016/17, ISP provided significant support to the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team (IYLT) responsible for planning and hosting a youth forum for Indigenous youth in care or in an out-of-care arrangement. The *Ignite Your Spirit: Transforming Youth Voices and Dreams into Action* forum in the Fraser Valley created a platform to support Indigenous youth voices around services for Indigenous youth in care. (For more information on the forum itself, see the Youth Engagement section of this report and the fold-out section on *Ignite Your Spirit*.)

Members of the ISP team presented learnings about Indigenous youth engagement at the Child Welfare League of America conference in Washington, D.C., in March 2017.

Strengthening Indigenous community engagement

Another major undertaking by the ISP team in 2016/17 was to increase communication, coordination and partnerships with

Indigenous leadership, agencies and communities, and to involve partners in project consultation and information-sharing regarding cultural best practices and systemic issues.

During the year, ISP, along with other program areas in the Representative's Office, attended several meetings and participated in various committees and working groups to discuss Indigenous concerns, services to Indigenous children, youth and their families and opportunities for further collaboration. (See the Community and Stakeholder Relations section in this report for further information.) Other community engagement by the team included attendance at multiple initiatives supporting Indigenous children and youth. (See the Appendix for details.)



RCY Indigenous Youth Leadership Team member Brianna Dick drumming and singing



National Aboriginal Day feast with elder Joan Morris

Elders

Marjorie White

Marjorie White, a member of Huu-ay-aht First Nation, was instrumental in preparing the *Ignite Your Spirit* youth team by providing guidance, encouragement and inspiration. Her interest in *Ignite Your Spirit* stems from wanting to hear directly from young people about their experiences, the challenges they face, their ideas and their hopes for the future. Throughout the forum, she passed along traditional teachings, gave one-on-one and group support and was a calm and grounding presence.

Marjorie has been a life-long advocate for children, youth and their families. She is interested in child welfare issues and works to make sure that children and youth are safe and feel connected to culture and community. She helped to establish the first friendship centre in Canada and continues to be involved with the National Association of Friendship Centres through her participation at committee meetings and at Gathering Our Voices, where she is part of a workshop "Elders Don't Bite," which provides an opportunity for Indigenous youth to connect with and learn from elders. Though Marjorie has been living in the Lower Mainland for many years, she remains strongly connected to her First Nations community and was recently awarded Citizen of the Year honours by Huu-ay-aht First Nation. Marjorie is also a 2016 recipient of the Order of British Columbia.



Seis^^lom

Seis^^lom is a citizen of the Stl'atl'imx Nation and was raised on the Mount Currie reservation, where he learned the language and customs of the the Lil'wat peoples. At *Ignite Your Spirit*, Seis^^lom ensured that each day began and ended in a good way by sharing teachings, songs and medicine. He also offered one-on-one and group support to youth participants throughout the forum.

Through the years, Seis^^lom has worked with various school boards, social service agencies and the federal and provincial corrections systems. A survivor of the residential school system who has overcome his own personal challenges, he is passionate about helping Indigenous peoples seeking recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction and family violence. Seis^^lom continues to work as an advocate to elders, spiritual leaders and Indigenous organizations that help to provide services that involve healing and justice for Indigenous peoples at all levels. Currently, Seis^^lom works with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Native Court Worker and Counselling Association of British Columbia.



RCY's open house in Kamloops

Communications

The Communications team provides a variety of supports to the work of the Representative and the entire Office by coordinating and handling both external and internal communications.

Communications Activities

External Communications

The Communications team supports the Representative by managing and responding to media requests, organizing report releases and media availability appearances and writing speeches.

The team also provides support in many other forms. Communications is represented at the executive level of the organization, contributing to decision-making on the strategic direction of the Representative's Office and taking part in meetings with MCFD staff and other stakeholders. The team also closely monitors developing issues concerning children and youth, including subsequent debate and media coverage, and provides advice to the Representative on public responses.

The Communications team serves as "managing editor" for all public reports of the Representative, from the initial planning stages, through to the post-release process. The team collaborates with the Representative, executive, report authors and stakeholders on developing report recommendations.

External communications activities also include writing news releases and statements; preparing materials for public appearances and speaking engagements, including appearances before the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth; maintaining the Representative's website and six social media accounts; organizing RCY external events; contributing to stakeholder publications such as newsletters; overseeing the production, style and editing of all printed and promotional materials; as well as maintaining contact with both MCFD and stakeholder communications teams.

As well, the team assists with and often leads promotional activities, initiatives and events for the Representative's Office.

Internal Communications

The Communications team manages internal communications, authoring a weekly internal staff newsletter, the *RCY Update*. In addition, the team organizes staff functions including awareness days such as Pink Shirt Day and Orange Shirt Day, and significant days or weeks of recognition such as National Aboriginal Day and Child Rights Education Week. The team photographs internal and external events involving the Representative and staff, to be posted on social media and used in publications such as the *Annual Report and Service Plan*.

Highlights of Communication Activities in 2016/17

Media Activities

The Representative regularly communicates with provincial, national and international media about reports and positions of the Representative and broader child welfare issues, as well as responding to questions concerning children and youth in B.C.



Victoria staff celebrating Pink Shirt Day



Burnaby staff donning the orange to recognize residential school survivors for Orange Shirt Day



Media conference for release of Broken Promises: Alex's Story report

In 2016/17, the Representative's Office responded to 214 requests from the media. Topics covered a broad range of issues, and included investigations undertaken by the Representative, end-of-term interviews with the outgoing Representative, introductory interviews with the incoming Representative, individual advocacy cases, youth aging out of care, youth foster placements and numbers of moves, youth mental health supports, adoptions, MCFD and DAA funding and staffing, child care, poverty and homelessness in B.C. with a particular focus on youth homelessness, secure care, and government implementation of the Representative's recommendations.

Website and Social Media



Social media is a key tool used by the Representative's Office to reach and maintain a public presence among stakeholders and youth. There are two separate social media streams – adult and youth – and a total of six RCY social media accounts. The Representative's youth social media strategy is informed by the Social Media Youth Team, which advises and creates content for the youth channels. (See the Youth Engagement section and feature on Social Media Youth Team on p. 60 for more information.)

Through RCY's adult-oriented social media channels, the public is kept informed about reports, releases, statements and job opportunities, as well as topical issues within the sphere of child welfare, especially as they relate to Indigenous child welfare issues, child and youth mental health, and aging out of care.

The RCY website – both in its desktop and mobile formats – is a cornerstone of the Representative's online presence. The Communications team maintains and updates this site, ensuring it is current and accurate. In 2016/17, the website was heavily visited, logging 4,168,124 hits, an increase of more than one million hits over the previous year.

Promotional Materials

In 2016/17, the Communications team oversaw the creation and production of a series of fact sheets on a number of topics reflecting the work of the Office. This project also included the development of new materials for children and youth, informing them about the advocacy services available through the Representative's Office, and the creation, production and province-wide distribution of a brochure aimed at young adults eligible for CLBC services that describes the advocacy services offered by RCY. The team also oversaw the development of a poster that illustrates child rights under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, with the goal of distributing it province-wide.



RCY banners

Advocacy brochure

Newsletters

As part of the Office's outreach efforts, the Representative regularly contributes to several stakeholder newsletters, updates and publications. In 2016/17, the Representative's Communications team wrote and coordinated articles for eight publications.

Speaking up on Issues of Importance to Children and Youth

In 2016/17, the first Representative's second term ended and a new Representative was appointed by the B.C. Legislature. But the Representative's commitment to speaking up on issues of importance to children, youth, young adults and their families in B.C. did not change

In 2016/17, this included:

Speeches

- March 31, 2016 – keynote speaker on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder at the Squamish Indian Band office
- April 7, 2016 – speaker at the 7th National Biennial Conference on Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Vancouver
- April 25, 2016 – speaker at Tuition Waiver/Bursary discussion event organized by Representative's Office at Vancouver Island University



Bernard Richard and Jerry Nussbaum after awarding Cindy Blackstock the Janus Korczak medal

- Sept. 16, 2016 – presentation to B.C. Teachers Federation executive committee meeting on *Tragedy in Waiting*
- Feb. 9, 2017 – presentation to House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs on the topic of suicide among Indigenous peoples and communities
- Feb. 17, 2017 – Pecha Kucha presentation for British Columbia School Trustees Association in Vancouver

Statements

- June 9, 2016 – the Representative issued a statement in support of the Premier's op-ed that acknowledged her personal experience with sexual violence as a youth, and urged increased support for children and families dealing with sexual violence
- July 7, 2016 – the Representative issued a statement urging the province to implement recommendations from the Representative's report *Still Waiting: First-hand Experiences with Youth Mental Health Services in B.C. (2013)* to support child and youth mental health
- July 8, 2016 – the Representative issued a statement commending MCFD's plans for broader consultation on the development of a multi-year plan to improve child welfare in British Columbia
- Nov. 15, 2016 – the outgoing Representative issued a statement commending the appointment of Bernard Richard as acting Representative



Victoria staff show off their teddy bears for Bear Witness Day

Youth Engagement



RCY staff at a Victoria Native Friendship Centre youth conference

In order to be effective in achieving the mandate of the Office, the Representative needs to hear directly from youth about the issues affecting them and how services and programs can best meet their needs.

Youth engagement is the "meaningful participation and sustainable involvement of young people in shared decisions in matters which affect their lives and those of their community – including planning, decision making and program delivery."⁶

With that goal in mind, ensuring that youth voices are heard and considered has been and will continue to be a priority of the Office. The Representative's Office strives to create opportunities to hear directly from youth about their issues and to involve them in working toward solutions.

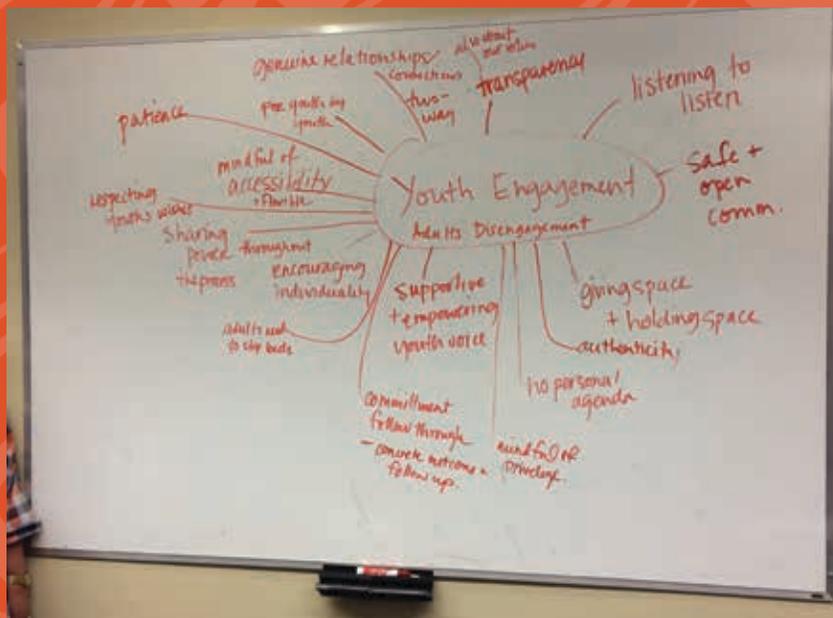
Positive youth engagement provides the Office with valuable youth perspectives and improved understanding of youth needs and concerns, promoting creativity and innovation and informing the activities of the Office as well as recommendations made by the Representative. This in turn benefits youth through enhanced health and well-being, higher self-esteem and improved relationships with adults and connections to community.



Two members of RCY's Indigenous Youth Leadership team attend an open house at the RCY Burnaby office

⁵ Source: A. Smith, M. Peled, C. Hoogeveen, S. Cotman, & the McCreary Centre Society, *A Seat at the Table: A Review of Youth Engagement in Vancouver*, 2009.

Highlights of Youth Engagement Activities in 2016/17



RCY youth engagement training

The 2016/17 year was important for the Representative's Office in developing a new youth-led process with the creation of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team (IYLT) to lead *Ignite Your Spirit: Transforming Youth Voices and Dreams into Action*. This was a forum that brought together 25 Indigenous youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who were in care or in an out-of-care arrangement in the Squamish, Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley regions. The Representative's Office recruited and supported the youth leadership team to plan and lead the youth forum, which offered insights into the unique challenges faced by the youth participants, as well as their

strengths and dreams. As part of the October 2016 forum, youth presenters provided their suggestions for improvement to the foster care system to their peers, staff from the Representative's Office and government and Indigenous decision-makers. Since then, a new IYLT was established to lead a forum on Vancouver Island in August.

See the fold-out section on the following pages for more on *Ignite Your Spirit*.

Another unique youth engagement initiative of the Representative's Office is the Social Media Youth Team (SMYT). Recruited and guided by the Communications team, the Social Media Youth Team provides advice on RCY's social media presence and creates social media content for youth.

See p. 60 for more on the Social Media Youth Team and its work.



IGNITE YOUR SPIRIT

October 15-18, 2016





Ignite your Spirit

The Representative believes that to create positive change in the lives of youth, youth must be heard and their opinions respected. In October 2016, RCY held the first in a series of forums for Indigenous youth who are in care or receiving government services.

Ignite Your Spirit was led by five passionate Indigenous youth who formed the Representative's first Indigenous Youth Leadership Team (IYLT). The team was tasked with developing a forum that would empower Indigenous youth and educate those working in support of youth in care about the challenges, goals and dreams of youth receiving government services.

The IYLT created workshops on cultural identity, reconciliation, wellness, and rights and advocacy. The forum was held at Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem, located on the Sts'ailes reserve outside Agassiz. Twenty-five youth in government care participated, courageously sharing their experiences in hopes of ultimately effecting change.

The forum culminated with a witnessing table to which decision-makers from Indigenous leadership and agencies, provincial government and key partners were invited.

The IYLT summarized the youth's experiences and recommendations in a report that was shared with decision-makers from participating Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agency offices in the Lower Mainland.





"The weekend made me want to become a youth advocate. Now I'm joining an advisory team."



"I don't like talking in front of people but it was good to hear voices and see the impact on guests."



"The aging out process is scary and you need so much preparation for this."

"It's been amazing."



"There should be a way to ensure youth voices are used in informing decisions, and that positive notes and achievements are being recorded into their files."



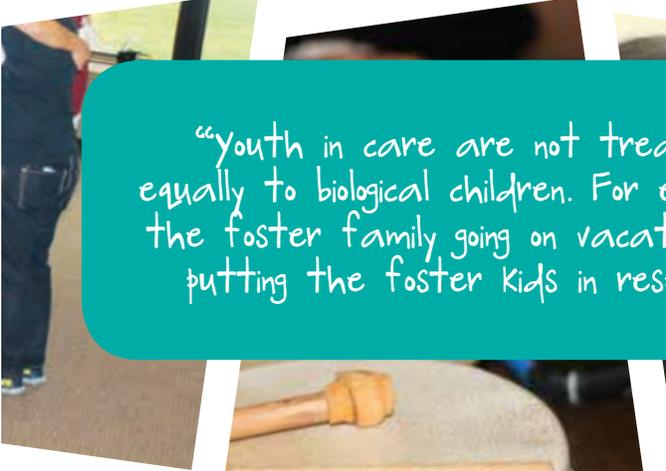
"I liked letting everyone know what being in care is actually like, bringing up issues and informing people."

"Criminal record checks for friends' families are not necessary and prevent kids from making friends for things like sleepovers at a friend's house. It's embarrassing and alienating."

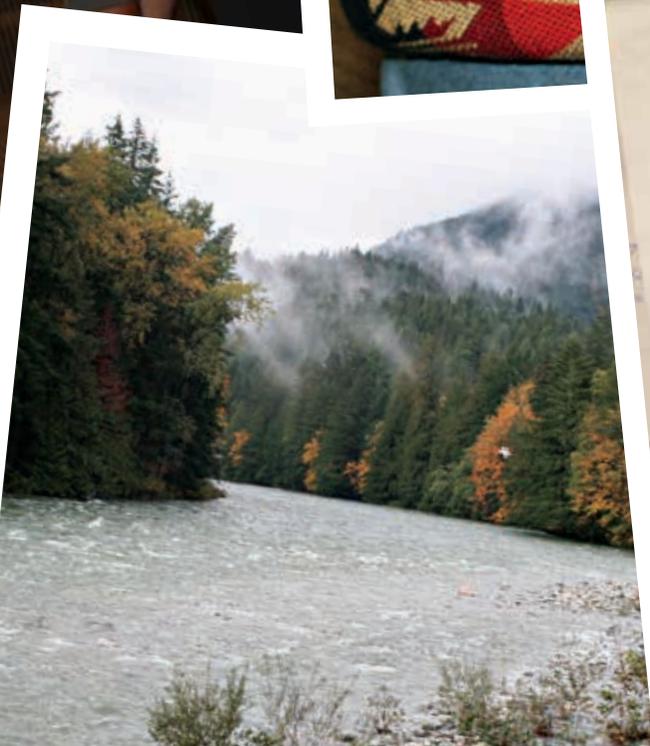
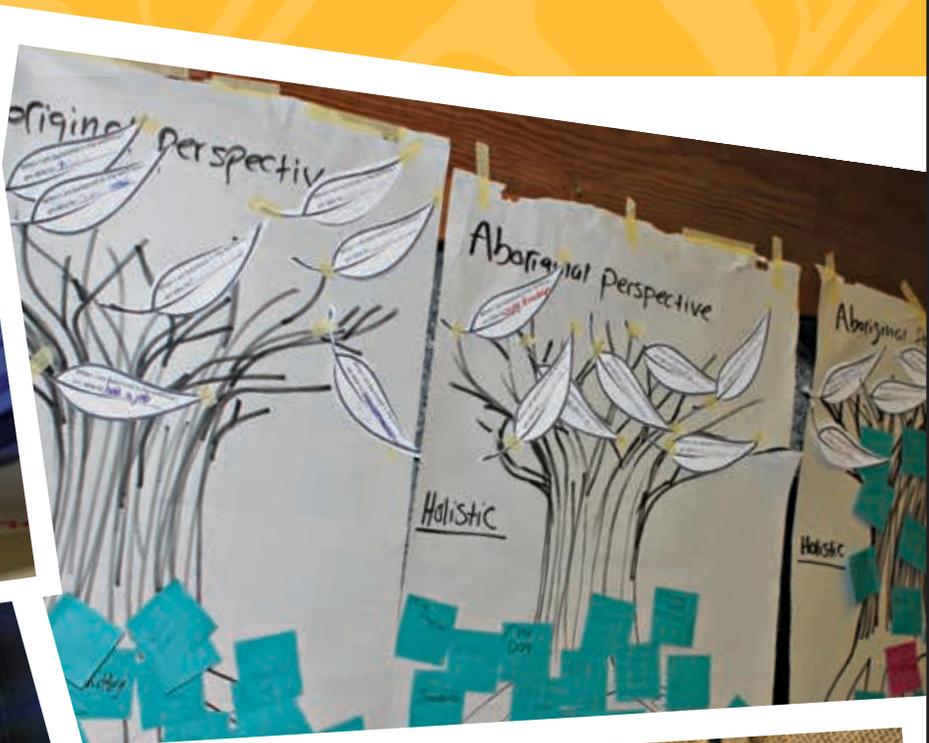
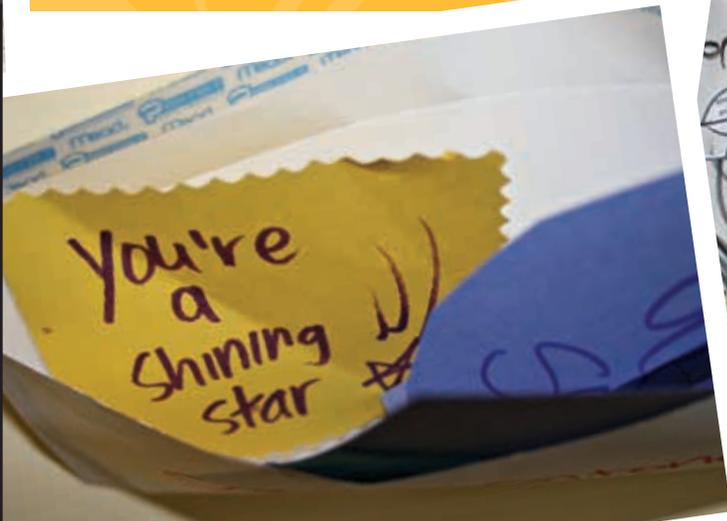


"I think it's a great idea for the youth to actually be heard (I like how there was no judgement about people's sexualities and habits)."

"youth in care are not treated equally to biological children. For example, the foster family going on vacation and putting the foster kids in respite."







Other youth engagement activities included:

- participation by the Representative and staff of the Representative's Office in *Gathering Our Voices* Indigenous youth conference that took place over four days in March 2017 in Kelowna. The largest Indigenous youth conference in Canada, *Gathering Our Voices* typically has about 1,000 youth participants. At the conference, the Representative's staff hosted a display booth connecting with and distributing educational materials to more than 200 youth attending.
- regular attendance by the Representative's Advocacy team members at the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks Steering Committee meetings at which Advocacy team members were available to provide support to youth in and from care and to learn about their concerns and issues.



National Aboriginal Day in Langford

SOCIAL MEDIA YOUTH TEAM



The Representative's Social Media Youth Team (SMYT) is the first of its kind in Canada. Established in 2015, it exists both to advise the Representative and Communications staff on social media outreach for youth, and to create content designed to appeal to youth.

A key activity for the SMYT during 2016/17 was the creation and release of videos *What is the Representative for Children and Youth?*, *Rights You Didn't Know You Have*, *So Your Friend Needs Help*, and *Meet the Advocates* on the Representative's YouTube account (Rep4Youth) and website. These videos feature some SMYT members as well as RCY advocates and have received national exposure.

In the fall of 2016, the SMYT developed the #GetItRight hashtag project for Instagram, youth Twitter and youth Facebook. The project illustrated specific rights of the *UNCRC* and was shared with advocates' offices and non-governmental organizations nationally. In addition, the Representative's Office developed a poster made up of *UNCRC* rights images created by the SMYT, to be distributed to all middle and secondary schools in the province. The SMYT continues to develop graphics for social media to recognize and mark awareness days/weeks or other important events, such as Youth in Care Week and National Aboriginal Day.

Winter 2016 saw the conception of a podcast featuring SMYT member Louis, a Métis youth with primarily high-functioning autism-Aspergers Syndrome, as well as other invisible disabilities. *Welcome to My World* is designed to provide an authentic glimpse of life from the point of view of a young person living with developmental disabilities.

The SMYT continues to be an active youth force in the Office, and has a number of projects lined up for 2017/18 including videos, podcasts and graphic production.



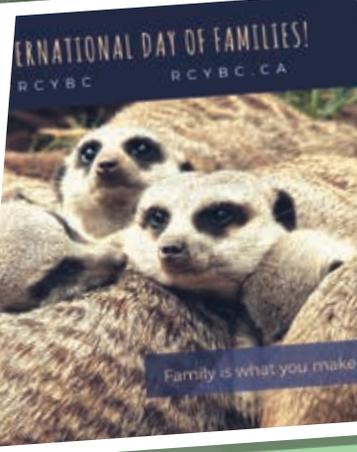
Happy Youth Week!!
Celebrate by spending your time doing the things that make you smile



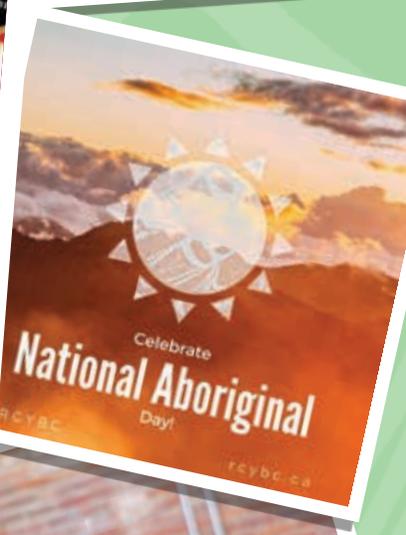
Know your rights.
If you need help, call us.
1-800-476-3933

REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO...
- BE GIVEN GUIDANCE BY YOUR PARENTS AND FAMILY
- CHOOSE YOUR OWN FRIENDS AND JOIN OR SET UP GROUPS, AS LONG AS IT ISN'T HARMFUL TO YOU
- LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS
- GET INFORMATION THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR WELL-BEING
- LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS
- BE GIVEN GUIDANCE BY YOUR PARENTS AND FAMILY
- CHOOSE YOUR OWN FRIENDS AND JOIN OR SET UP GROUPS, AS LONG AS IT ISN'T HARMFUL TO YOU
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- LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS
- GET INFORMATION THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR WELL-BEING



Community and Stakeholder Relations

The Representative's Office undertakes a broad range of community relations activities and initiatives to

- raise awareness of services provided by the Representative's Office
- provide education about the rights of children
- establish connections with child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations including MCFD, CLBC and DAAs and community organizations to enhance awareness of children's rights and to facilitate the development of community-based advocacy services and supports.



Disability Pride Parade 2017

The Representative and his staff meet with community child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations throughout the province, attending community events and hosting information booths to distribute information about the rights of children and youth and the services of the Representative's Office. Staff also facilitate workshops on child and youth rights and make presentations at conferences and forums.

Building and supporting strong relationships with stakeholders is also critical to supporting the work of the Office. In 2016/17, the

Representative's Office sought out and engaged with stakeholders to share information on systemic issues; discuss approaches to delivery of services to children, youth and their families; identify areas for possible collaboration and establish partnerships and working relationships on matters related to improving outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and their families.

The Monitoring and CID programs engage with stakeholders as part of their research and monitoring activities and their reviews and investigations to ensure that their work is comprehensive. Both programs also undertake a variety of follow-up activities with stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of the findings and recommendations contained in the Representative's reports.

Highlights of Community and Stakeholder Relations Activities in 2016/17

In 2016/17, the Representative's Office visited 30 communities throughout the province, participating in 55 community and stakeholder events and conferences and one or more meetings with 144 organizations or groups.

The map on the following page shows the communities visited. The Appendix includes a list of all community and stakeholder relations activities that the Representative and staff of the Representative's Office undertook, participated in or attended in 2016/17.

Communities Visited

The Representative and RCY staff travel around British Columbia to carry out advocacy work, youth engagement and community relations activities and investigations as well as attending speaking engagements and other events. Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, the Office of the Representative visited 30 communities in B.C.



Abbotsford	(Sto:lo)
Alkali Lake	(Esk'etemc)
Burnaby	(Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh)
Campbell River	(Ligwilda'xw)
Chehalis	(Sts'ailes)
Chemainus	(Stz'uminus)
Chilliwack	(Skwah, Sto:lo)
Cranbrook	(Ktunaxa)
Duncan	(Cowichan)
Esquimalt	(Esquimalt)
Grand Forks	(Sinixt)
Harrison Mills	(Sto:lo)
Hope	(Sto:lo)
Kamloops	(Secwepemc)
Kelowna	(Syilx/Okanagan)
Langford	(Lukwungen)
Langley	(Katzie, Tsawwassen)
Maple Ridge	(Katzie)
Merritt	(Nlaka'pamux)
Nanaimo	(Snuneymuxw)
New Westminster	(Musqueam, Qayqayt)
Port Alberni	(Hupacasth, Tseshaht)
Penticton	(Syilx/Okanagan)
Quesnel	(Lhtako Dene)
Prince George	(Lheidli T'enneh)
Richmond	(Musqueam)
Surrey	(Musqueam, Katzie)
Victoria	(WS'ANEC, Lukwungen, Esquimalt)
Vancouver	(Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, Katzie)
West Vancouver	(Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh)

In addition to these ongoing activities, following the permanent appointment of the new Representative in February 2017, the Representative's Office held three successful open houses in March 2017 at each of the Office's three locations: Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George. During these events, the Representative met with nearly 100 stakeholders from varied backgrounds. The open houses provided an opportunity for the Representative to meet with, and become known to, stakeholders in the community. Further open houses in other parts of the province are planned for 2017/18.



Hon. Ted Hughes, Helen Hughes, Bernard and Deputy Representative Dawn Thomas-Wightman at RCY's Victoria open house



RCY's Prince George open house

Priority stakeholder relations activities in 2016/17 included enhanced engagement with Indigenous leadership, communities and organizations. The Representative's Office hosted or attended a number of meetings or committees with First Nations leadership groups, the First Nations Directors Forum (Directors of DAAs), MCFD, DAAs and others to discuss Indigenous concerns and approaches to child and family services. This included the BC First Nations Leadership technical working group; the BC Assembly of First Nations Internal Children and Families Working Group; MCFD Leadership on family preservation, permanency and adoption; Ending Violence Against Women; First Nations Education Steering Committee K-12 partners and the First Nations Caring Society of Canada.

The Representative's Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships and Advocacy teams attended First Nations community meetings in Alkali Lake and the Cowichan Valley, as well as meetings with the Métis Nation, Métis Commission, delegated agency and service providers, Nuuchahnulth, and Okanagan Nation Alliance to discuss systemic issues and possible future collaborations.

RCY Year In Review

1,000

Youth with whom Rep
and staff engaged

12

Reports

23

Report
Recommendations

214

Media Inquiries

6

Appearances before
Parliamentary
Committees

866

Injury and death
reports received

2,623

Advocacy Calls

4

Videos released

4,168,124

Website Hits

14

Youth employed
by RCY

*Looking
Ahead*

LOOKING AHEAD: 2017/18 TO 2018/19

Strategic Priorities

Since becoming B.C.'s Acting Representative in November 2016, followed by his permanent appointment in February 2017, the Representative has observed B.C.'s child welfare landscape and consulted with staff, stakeholders, Indigenous leaders, B.C. children and youth and their families to determine the strategic priorities for the Office over the next two years.

Through that process, the Representative has identified a number of priorities on which the Office will continue to focus its work. These include working to:

- improve supports and services provided by government to Indigenous children and their families with the goal of reducing the number of Indigenous children in government care
- improve the system of supports and services to address mental health and substance use concerns of B.C. children and youth
- improve the planning, supports and services for B.C. youth aging out of care
- improve care planning for children in care by developing and implementing a qualitative review process that focuses on permanency planning, cultural plans for Indigenous children and transitional planning for adolescents
- further examine the system of residential services to B.C. children and youth in care or receiving services and determine how they can be improved
- further examine the adequacy of rural and remote services in B.C. – most notably in the North – and determine how they can be improved
- examine in detail the adequacy of services and supports for children, youth and their families with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- listen to and amplify child and youth voices about all of the above and more
- develop and implement a plan to ensure that the Representative's Office is more responsive to, culturally safe for, and reflective of the over-represented Indigenous children, youth and families we serve.



RCY strategic planning session

With those priorities now identified, the Office of the Representative is in the process of developing a detailed strategic plan that will be drafted and disseminated to stakeholders, including youth, in October 2017. The Representative will make that plan public when it is finalized.

Representative's Office Organizational Work Plan

The Representative's Strategic Priorities, as laid out in the previous section, will be carried out through the following organizational work plan during 2017/18 and 2018/19:

Monitoring

- Release a report on education supports and outcomes for B.C. children and youth in care
- Release the fourth in a series of updates on adoption service quality and outcome indicators as a follow up to the 2014 Representative's report *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*
- Review the services and supports for children and youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and lead the development and release of a public report on this topic
- Conduct an assessment of the Agreement with Young Adults program
- Review the issue of supports to youth aging out of care and, in conjunction with CID and Advocacy, facilitate the preparation and release of a youth-led public report on the issue
- Develop tools and processes for assessing the quality of care planning for children and youth in government care, and share information and exchange knowledge through a joint working group with MCFD
- Create plans for addressing outstanding recommendations made to MCFD by the previous Representative and update the process for the development and administration for future recommendations of the Representative through a joint working group with MCFD.

CID

- Release an investigative report on a youth with severe mental health concerns who took his own life while living in a hospital
- Release a report on an investigation into critical injuries to a child with severe special needs
- Lead an aggregate review and report examining the opioid crisis in relation to vulnerable children and youth in B.C.
- Investigate and report on the circumstances leading to the overdose death of a young man and what role government services may have played in this tragic outcome
- Investigate and report on the circumstances leading to the suicide of a teenage girl in a rural and remote community and what role government services may have played in her demise.

Advocacy

- In collaboration with ISP, develop and implement an over-arching youth engagement strategy for the Representative's Office
- Continue to explore opportunities for engaging with young adults, ages 19 to 24, who are eligible for Advocacy services through the Representative's Office
- Work in partnership with CID and Monitoring to inform reviews and reports, including on the issues of youth aging out of care, the opioid crisis and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships

- Plan and hold further *Ignite Your Spirit* Indigenous youth engagement events, gathering input from children and youth in care across the province for the purpose of informing MCFD and other service providers of this input and ultimately making recommendations to government
- Strengthen relationships with Indigenous leadership, communities and service providers and work with them to encourage better services from government for Indigenous children and families
- Promote knowledge of Indigenous rights, cultural permanency and prevention strategies through activities such as booths at Indigenous events, rights workshops and interactions with governments and stakeholders
- Support the Representative's Office to be a better informed and better equipped workplace in terms of helping Indigenous individuals, families and groups through the Representative's Indigenous Cultural Safety Framework
- Work with the Representative's CID, Advocacy, Monitoring and Communications teams to ensure that Indigenous values and experiences are reflected in the Representative's work.

Communications

- Organize Representative's open houses throughout B.C. to engage with youth, families and stakeholders
- Create and post video series profiling different aspects of the Representative's Office and illustrating how we can help children, youth and families
- Increase use of social media tools to engage youth and all sectors of the public
- Distribute a youth-created poster on UNCRC rights to all secondary and middle schools in B.C.
- Ensure that communication products of the Representative's Office, public comments and social media posts reflect strategic priorities of the Representative
- Ensure that Indigenous values and perspectives are reflected in all reports and communications products released by Representative.

Corporate Services

- Work with ISP and Executive to support recruitment, retention, training policies and internal development for staff as related to Indigenous cultural competencies and composition of staff.
- Ensure that the Representative's Office is a healthy workplace for all, with special recognition of and efforts to ensure that it is a safe and respectful place for Indigenous employees and visitors.

In addition, the Representative's Office will prepare a submission to the SSCCY as part of the SSCCY's legislated requirement to undertake a comprehensive review of the *RCY Act* to determine whether the statutory functions of the Representative are still required to ensure that the needs of children and young adults are met (*RCY Act*, section 30).

RCY Staff



Performance

PERFORMANCE

The Office measures its performance in achieving its outcomes of relevance, responsiveness, accountability and excellence by tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated performance targets. In addition to KPIs, the Office also tracks a number of secondary indicators for each outcome.

Measuring Performance

The Representative's Office measures its performance in meeting its mandate and achieving its vision and goals through assessing the following outcomes:

- **Relevance** – means that the Office:
 - addresses issues and areas of concern within its mandate and of interest to the Legislature and the public;
 - is aware of and reacts readily and appropriately to issues brought to its attention through its monitoring and reviews and investigations activities, its liaison and collaboration with public bodies, and by legislators, stakeholders and the public;
 - produces reports that are useful to, accessible and understood by the public, stakeholders, and Legislature; and
 - makes recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of designated programs and reviewable services with the goal of improving the child- and youth-serving system.
- **Responsiveness** – means that the Office:
 - addresses requests from children, youth, young adults and their families for support, assistance, information and advice in a timely and sensitive way;
 - analyzes and takes timely and appropriate action in relation to reported critical injuries and deaths of children and youth receiving reviewable services; and
 - reaches out to children, youth, young adults and their families, the child- and youth-serving system and communities to build awareness of the rights of children, youth and young adults and the services of the Office.
- **Accountability** – means that the Office:
 - reports regularly and in an open and transparent way about its activities to the Legislature and British Columbians; and
 - provides information on its plans, activities and performance to the SSCCY for review and scrutiny.
- **Excellence** – means that the Office meets high standards of professional and corporate conduct through:
 - a competent, ethical and diverse staff; and
 - rigorous application and compliance with established requirements in all its operations.

Relevance

The Representative ensures relevance in meeting his oversight and accountability role by addressing areas of concern within his mandate that are of interest and importance to the Legislature and public. This is measured by the extent to which the work of the Office responds to concerns or matters brought to the attention of the Representative through his oversight activities and liaison and collaboration with public bodies and other stakeholders, illustrating that the Representative is alert to issues, is in touch with the system and stakeholders and reacts accordingly.

Key Performance Indicator:	2016/17 target	2016/17 result	2017/18 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of the work of the Office, as reflected in public reports, papers, submissions and statements of position, that was in response to a concern or matter arising from an external source or stakeholder 	50%	64%	50%

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2016/17 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public accountability for the reviews and investigations of critical injuries and deaths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring the regular preparation and production of public updates every four months outlining the number of reports received, reviews undertaken and cases identified for investigation by the Representative 	In 2016/17, the Representative released three reports detailing reports received, reviews undertaken and investigations identified for the period of the report (Report #26, issued April 4, 2016 for the period Oct. 1, 2015 to Jan. 31, 2016; Report #27 issued Oct. 6, 2016 for the period Feb. 1, 2016 to May 31, 2016 and Report #28 issued Feb. 7, 2017 for the period June 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing monitoring and tracking of action taken on recommendations made to public bodies by the Representative on improvements and enhancements to child- and youth-serving services and programs⁷ 	In 2016/17, a working group of staff from the Representative's Office and MCFD was formed to create a plan to address outstanding recommendations made by the Representative and a future process for the development and administration of recommendations made by the Representative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitoring the public's interest in the work of the Office by tracking the number of times information and resources on the Representative's website are viewed by the public 	In 2016/17, the Representative's website received 4,168,124 hits. In total, 117,821 users accessed 741,285 pages on the site

⁶ Whether or not recommendations are implemented is not in the control of the Representative; progress on recommendations does, however, provide some measure of the Representative's success in influencing public bodies to make improvements.

Responsiveness

Timely and effective response to requests for assistance and support from vulnerable children, youth and their families, as well as timely and effective reviews and investigations of incidents of critical injury or death are essential for the Representative to meet his mandate.

Key Performance Indicator:	2016/17 target	2016/17 result	2017/18 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of adult callers requesting advocacy services the Office responds to within the established three-day response timeline 	100%	97%*	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of screening and review of reports of child and youth critical injuries or deaths that are completed by the Office within the established two-month timeframe 	100%	100%	100%

* Due to high call volumes and operational considerations related to staffing resources, Advocacy instituted a 5-day call turnaround response timeline on an exceptional basis for a brief period of time; despite the special 5-day call turnaround timeline, all calls were responded to within 4 days

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2016/17 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsiveness to advocacy requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the percentage of youth requests for service responded to within 24 hours. The goal is to ensure that all youth in contact with the Office receive an initial response to their request for service within this period 	In 2016/17, 100% per cent of calls from youth were responded to within 24 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and stakeholder relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tracking the number of appearances or presentations by Office staff at stakeholder and community events, the number of community relations and engagement activities and the number of communities visited with the goal of ensuring that the Representative is engaging with and reaching out to children, youth and their families and stakeholders across the province 	In 2016/17, the Representative and his staff participated in 212 community engagement activities. This included attendance at events and conferences, participation in workshops and meetings and speaking engagements. The Appendix includes a list of outreach and community engagement activities undertaken by the Representative and his staff in 2016/17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of interactions and engagement activities with youth to raise awareness about their rights and the services of the Office. The goal is to steadily increase the awareness of youth and young adults through increased events and interactions 	In 2016/17, the Representative and his staff directly engaged with approximately 1,000 youth through such activities as attending community events, hosting information booths and facilitating child and youth rights workshops

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2016/17 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of collaborative efforts or initiatives with Indigenous communities and organizations on mutually identified issues of shared concern 	<p>In 2016/17, the Representative and his staff met with 38 Indigenous organizations and individual First Nations and participated in 22 Indigenous events, conferences and speaking engagements. Increasing collaboration and partnerships with Indigenous groups and organizations is a key goal of the Representative in coming years</p>

Accountability

A key outcome for the Representative is to be accountable to the Legislature and British Columbians for the work of his Office. A broad measure of how the Representative demonstrates his accountability is through the public release of reports and papers (including periodic reports on child injuries and death reviews and investigations) and comments and statements about the findings of his work.

Key Performance Indicator:	2016/17 target	2016/17 result	2017/18 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of reports and papers publicly released and the number of public comments and statements made by the Representative 	5 reports & statements	12 reports, 13 statements	10 reports & statements

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2016/17 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of times the Representative makes presentations to SSCCY and the SSCFGS 	<p>The Representative appeared before the SSCCY four times – in April 2016, May 2016, October 2016, and January 2017. The Representative reported on the joint report <i>Growing Up in B.C. – 2015</i> along with the Provincial Health Officer; co-presented with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on cyberbullying; and presented on Monitoring and CID reports and the <i>2015/16 Annual Report and 2016/17 to 2017/18 Service Plan</i></p> <p>The Representative appeared before the SSCFGS two times – in April 2016 and November 2016</p>

Excellence

Excellence in service delivery is achieved and maintained through competent and skilled staff. A key indicator of the Office's achievement of excellence is the extent to which staff undertake ongoing professional development to ensure that they stay current and up-to-date on emerging issues and trends, expand their knowledge and skills base and promote their own personal development.

Key Performance Indicator:	2016/17 target	2016/17 result	2017/18 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of full-time and part-time staff who participate in ongoing professional development 	95%	95%	95%

Professional development included in-service training, workshops and consultation sessions on topics such as cultural safety and building capacity in Indigenous relations; managing crisis and dealing with difficult situations; adolescents/adults with FASD; child and youth mental health; youth transitions; social media engagement; domestic violence; advocacy and youth rights and child welfare.

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2016/17 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff contribution to meeting mandate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the degree to which staff are engaged in their work and perceive that they contribute to the achievement of the Office's mandate 	Staff through CREW (see text box on page 78) are actively engaged and contribute to ensuring a positive work environment and the effectiveness of the organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health, safety and well-being of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Office addressing any health and safety matters immediately and effectively in compliance with occupational health and safety laws and meeting the needs of staff and ongoing support for and facilitation of activities and programs to support staff well-being 	There were no major health and safety incidents in any of the three Office locations. The Office's active and engaged Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee welcomed new members this year and focused on working with other program areas on safety policies, such as identifying safety strategies for Advocacy staff when meeting with or transporting youth clients to balance accessibility and build trust while protecting staff and clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing compliance with core policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office policies and procedures adhering to applicable core government policies, standards and practices and meeting budgeting and audit standards and requirements 	In 2016/17, the Office was found to be in full compliance with core government policies, standards and practices in its annual financial audit, conducted by the Office of the Auditor General as required by legislation

Staff Contribution and Engagement

Based on staff feedback regarding how staff engagement and contribution could be enhanced, the Committee for an Engaged and Respectful Workplace (CREW) was created in 2014/15. CREW continued to be active in 2016/17 and instrumental in following up on important recommendations for improvements to the Office work environment and human resource practices. A total of 17 members, representing all three office locations and all program areas, served voluntarily on CREW during this third year of the committee's operation. The committee was pleased to see the reinstatement of the Representative for Children and Youth University, creation of a staff development strategy, the re-design and reinstatement of the staff survey and the reinstatement of "all-staff" meetings on a regular basis. In addition, CREW had opportunities to provide input into organizational values, HR practices related to hiring and appointments and engagement in a strategic vision undertaking. For the 2017/18 year, CREW is looking at new priorities including staff recognition, opportunities for training and development and strategic planning.

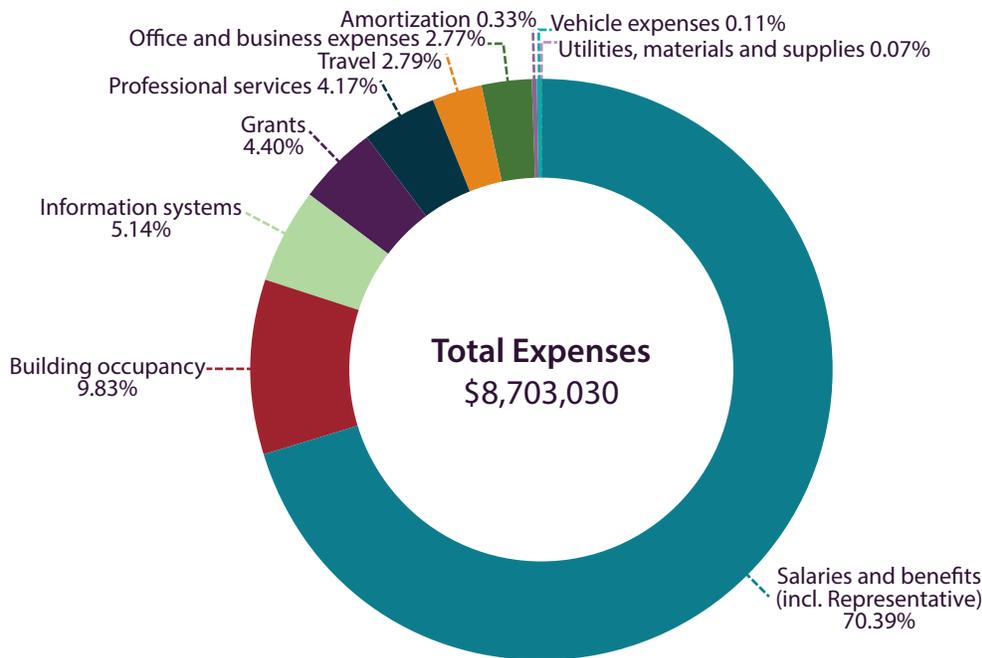
Budget and Expenditures

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

2016/17 Actual Expenditure and Budget

Expense Type	2016/17 Actual	2016/17 Budget
Salaries and benefits (incl. Representative)	6,124,561	6,199,000
Building occupancy	855,368	940,000
Information systems	447,305	477,000
Grants	383,086	5,000
Professional services	362,526	437,000
Travel	242,426	280,000
Office and business expenses	241,457	418,000
Amortization	28,949	43,000
Vehicle expenses	9,793	4,000
Utilities, materials and supplies	5,890	7,000
Advertising	965	–
Other	704	20,000
Total Expenses	8,703,030	8,830,000

Actual Expenditures by Expense Type – 2016/17



Looking to the future – approved and planned budget for 2017/18 to 2018/19 and 2019/20

The table below illustrates operating and capital budgets approved for 2017/18 and planned for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Operating	Note	2017/18 Estimates	2018/19 Planned	2019/20 Planned
Salaries and benefits	1	6,312,000	6,322,000	6,318,000
Travel	2	300,000	300,000	300,000
Professional services	3	437,000	437,000	437,000
Information systems	4	500,000	500,000	500,000
Office and business expenses	5	421,000	421,000	421,000
Utilities, materials and supplies	6	7,000	7,000	7,000
Vehicle expenses	7	8,000	8,000	8,000
Amortization	8	43,000	43,000	43,000
Building occupancy	9	920,000	920,000	920,000
Grants	10	5,000	5,000	5,000
Other Expenses	11	20,000	20,000	20,000
Recoveries	12	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)
Total operating		8,970,000	8,980,000	8,976,000

Capital	Note	2017/18 Estimates	2018/19 Planned	2019/20 Planned
Information systems	13	30,000	30,000	30,000
Office furniture and equipment	14	20,000	20,000	20,000
Total capital		50,000	50,000	50,000

Note 1 Base salaries, supplementary salaries (first aid allowance, maternity / parental leave, auxiliary health & welfare, etc.) and benefits (including relocation) for all regular and auxiliary staff including the Representative.

Note 2 Travel includes employee travel costs for staff on official Office business, including prescribed allowances.

Note 3 Professional services includes fees and expenses for professional services rendered directly to the Office for the provision of services in the delivery of our program and/or, the provision of services required by statute or legislation and are billed directly to the Office, and the provision of services that will assist the development of policy and/or programs or improve / change the delivery of programs, such as management consulting services.

Note 4 Information systems (operating) – includes all contract fees and costs related to data, voice, image and text processing operations and services such as data and word processing, data communications, supplies, repairs, maintenance and short-term rentals of information processing equipment.

Note 5 Office and business expenses include supplies and services required for the operation of the Office.

Note 6 Utilities, materials and supplies include the cost of services such as the supply of water and electricity, materials and supplies required for normal operation of government services.

Note 7 Vehicle expenses include the costs associated with the repair and maintenance of Office vehicles.

Note 8 Amortization includes the amortization of the cost of capital assets and prepaid capital advances over their useful lives.

Note 9 Building occupancy includes payments for the rental and / or maintenance of office accommodation, including tenant improvements that do not meet the criteria for capitalization.

Note 10 Grants include payments to individuals, businesses, non-profit associations and other entities which may include stipulations as to the use of the funds and which are not entitlements or shared cost arrangements.

Note 11 Other expenses include expenses such as financing costs, valuation allowances, and other expenses, which cannot be reasonably allocated to another category.

Note 12 Internal and external recoveries include the recoveries of costs from ministries, participants and / or sponsoring organizations.

Note 13 Information systems (capital) include the purchase or capital lease cost of mainframe and other systems hardware, software and related equipment.

Note 14 Office furniture and equipment includes the cost or capital lease cost of office furniture and equipment.

Appendix

APPENDIX – LIST OF OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Community and Stakeholder Events and Conferences

- 7th National Conference of Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Vancouver (April 2016)
- Abbotsford Special Needs Advisory Committee – Bridging the Gap Transition Fair, Abbotsford (March 2017)
- BC Aboriginal Child Care Society's 20th Anniversary Celebration, Richmond (November 2016)
- BC Assembly of First Nations 13th Annual General Meeting, Victoria (October 2016)
- B.C. Early Years Conference, Vancouver (January 2017)
- B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association Conference, Vancouver (May 2016 and November 2016)
- BC School Counsellors Association Convention, Richmond (October 2016)
- BC Teachers' Federation Conference, Kamloops (August 2016)
- BCW Indigenous Health Community Event, Vancouver (October 2016)
- Building Aboriginal Reconciliation in the B.C. Public Service, Victoria (June 2016)
- Canadian Mental Health Association Conference, Vancouver (October 2016)
- CASEY (Communities Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth) Conference, Prince George (March 2017)
- Child and Youth Mental Health & Substance Use Collaborative, Vancouver (March 2017)
- Child Welfare League of America National Conference, Washington, D.C. (March 2017)
- Collaborating Across Systems Domestic Violence Conference, Richmond (October 2016)
- Cowichan Community Gathering at Red Willow Womyn's Society, Cowichan (January 2017)
- FASD Roundtable – Asante Centre and Partners, New Westminster (November 2016)
- FASD Through the Criminal Justice System Workshop, Vancouver (February 2017)
- Federation of Community Social Services of BC Policy Forum, Victoria (February 2017)
- First Call BC Gala Honouring Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Vancouver (February 2017)
- First Nation Education Steering Committee Annual First Nations Education Conference, Vancouver (November 2016)
- First Nations Children and Families Forum, Richmond (May 2016)
- Fostering Change Report Launch – Vancouver Foundation, Vancouver (September 2016)
- Foundry Funding Announcement, Prince George (January 2017)
- Gathering Our Voices, Kelowna (March 2017)
- Hope and Health at Musqueam, Vancouver (June 2016)

- Hope and Health Vancouver Island, Nanaimo (August 2016)
- Ignite 2016 – Inclusion BC Annual Conference, Prince George (June 2016)
- International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) Conference, Calgary, AB (August 2016)
- LGBTQ2 Conference, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Victoria (November 2016)
- Marijuana Legalization and Regulation Roundtable, Vancouver (September 2016)
- Métis Youth Forum, Victoria (January 2017)
- Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council's Leadership to Action: Strengthening Our Collective Impact, Vancouver (February, 2017)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development Adoptions Update Event, Vancouver (April 2016)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development Permanency Forum, Richmond (September 2016)
- Movie and Art Show Hosted by Society for Children and Youth BC, First Call BC, and Vancouver Foundation, Vancouver (January 2017)
- National Aboriginal Day, Langford (June 2016)
- National Aboriginal Day at Trout Lake, Burnaby (June 2016)
- Natu'sa Mawt Tribal Council Promising Practices Conference, Vancouver (March 2017)
- Our Place Event, Vancouver (June 2017)
- Promoting Mental Health and Fostering Resilience in our Children and Youth, CRD Healthy Schools Forum, Victoria (May 2016)
- Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre 40th Anniversary Open House, Vancouver (November 2016)
- Representative's Office Ignite Your Spirit Youth Forum, Sts'ailes Lhawhathet Lalem, Agassiz, B.C., (October 2016)
- Representative's Office Open Houses, Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George (March 2017)
- Secure Care Forum, Vancouver (December 2016 and March 2017)
- Society for Children and Youth of BC and Vancouver Foundation's photo and art events, Vancouver (September 2016)
- Strong Roots, Strong Families 20th Anniversary Event, Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services, Nanaimo (July 2016)
- Tuition Waiver Event for Former Youth In Care at Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo (April 2016)
- University of British Columbia Summer Institute 2016 – Promoting Mental Wellness in Schools, Vancouver (August 2016)
- Urban Native Youth Association Christmas Event, Vancouver (December 2016)
- Vancouver Friendship Centre's Urban Youth Meeting, Vancouver (August 2016)
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre – One Heart, One Mind, One Spirit Conference, Victoria (November 2016)
- Write the Future, Fostering Change Workshop – Vancouver Foundation, Vancouver (May 2016)

Meetings

Child-, Youth- and Young Adult-Serving Organizations

Adoption Centre of British Columbia	Federation of Community Social Services of BC
Adoption Council of Canada	Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks
Adoptive Families Association of BC	Janusz Korczak Association of Canada
Advisory Committee on Children and Youth with Special Needs	Langley Youth Hub
Atira Women's Resource Centre	McCreary Centre Society
Axis Family Resources	Newfoundland – Child and Youth Advocate
BC Association of Social Workers	New Zealand Children's Commissioner
BC Council for Families	PLEA Community Services Society of BC
BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations	Prince George Youth Custody Centre
Boundary Family and Individual Services Society	Representative's Multidisciplinary Team
Boys and Girls Club of Victoria	Saskatchewan – Child and Youth Advocate
Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre	Shiseido Social Welfare Foundation
Canadian Council of Child & Youth Advocates	Society for Children and Youth of BC
Canadian Mental Health Association	St. Leonard's Youth and Family Services
CEED Centre Society	Strive Living Society
Child Development Centre of Prince George & District	Success by 6
Children's Forum	Sunrise Family Services
Choices Adoption	The Global Child Team
Collective Impact TRRUST and Aged Out	Threshold Society
Ending Violence Association of British Columbia	YouthCare
Family Services of Greater Vancouver	Youth Futures Education Fund Committee
	Yukon – Child and Youth Advocate

Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations

Aboriginal HIPPIY Canada	BC First Nations Leadership Technical Working Group
Aboriginal Justice Council	Boundary All Nations Aboriginal Council
Aboriginal Mother Centre Society	Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services
Ayas Men Men Child and Family Services	Cowichan Tribes
BC Aboriginal Child Care Society	Delegated Aboriginal Agency Executive
BC Assembly of First Nations	Esk'eteme First Nation Council
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	

First Nations Caring Society of Canada
 First Nations Directors Forum
 First Nations Health Authority
 First Nations Health Council
 First Nations Education Steering Committee
 First Nations Summit
 Indigenous Perspectives Society
 IndigenEYEZ
 K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners Table
 Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services
 Métis Commission
 Métis Nation BC
 Native Courtworker and Counselling Association
 of British Columbia

Government Organizations

BC Coroners Service Death Review Panel
 BC Corrections
 B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development
 B.C. Ministry of Education
 B.C. Ministry of Health
 B.C. Ministry of Justice
 City of Victoria
 City of Vancouver
 Community Living BC
 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
 Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
 Members of Her Majesty's Official Opposition
 Northern Health Authority
 Office of the Auditor General

Nezul Be Hunuyeh Child & Family Services Society
 Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
 Okanagan Nation Alliance
 Reconciliation in Action/Youth Matters
 Snuneymuxw First Nation
 Sts'ailes Nation
 Spirit of the Children Society
 Surrounded by Cedar
 Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs
 Urban Native Youth Association
 Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family
 Services Society
 Xyolhemeylh (Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children
 and Family Services Society)

Office of the Chief Coroner
 Office of the Information and Privacy
 Commissioner
 Office of the Ombudsperson
 Premier of B.C.
 Provincial Health Officer
 Provincial Health Services Authority
 Public Guardian and Trustee
 Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth
 Select Standing Committee on Finance and
 Government Services
 Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities
 (STADD)
 Vancouver Island Health Authority

Other

Adult Basic Education Youth Program	Inclusion BC
Advocate for Service Quality	Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
BC Centre for Ability Association	Medtech Event Medical Services
BC Government and Service Employees' Union	Our Place Society - Choices Transitional Home
B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association	Prince George Association for Community Living
BC School Superintendents Association	Prisoners' Legal Services / West Coast Prison Justice Society
BC School Trustees Association	Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre
BC Teachers' Federation	RCMP
Board Voice Society of BC	Seattle Police Department
Canadian Red Cross	Social Ventures Partners
Children's and Women's Health Centre of British Columbia	Trudeau Foundation
Continuing Legal Education Society of BC	UNICEF Canada
Covenant House Vancouver	United Way of the Lower Mainland
Doctors of BC	University of the Fraser Valley
Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver	University of Northern BC
First Call – BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition	University of Victoria
Framework for Enhanced Student Learning	Vancouver Community College
The Honourable Ted Hughes, Q.C.	Vancouver Foundation
Hull Services	Victoria Police Department

Speaking Engagements

Child-, Youth- and Young Adult-Serving Organizations

BC Social Work Week Lecture, Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops (March 2017)

Janusz Korczak Medal for Children's Rights Advocacy (April 2016)

First Call BC Coalition Meeting (March 2017)

Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations

First Nations Children and Family Gathering (May 2016)

Reconciliation in Action (June 2016 and January 2017)

Government Organizations

Canadian Union of Public Employees BC 53rd Annual Convention (April 2016)

BC Legislative Interns (January 2017)

Academic Organizations

Royal Roads University – Fall Convocation (November 2016)

University of British Columbia – Research on Adolescents and Adults: If Not Now, When? (April, 2016)

Simon Fraser University – Spring Convocation (June 2016)

University of Victoria – School of Child & Youth Care Class (July 2016)

Other

BC School Trustees Association (February 2017)

Peter Lougheed Award for Leadership in Public Policy (November 2016)

A spark of knowledge, a fire of hope

The foster care system is dark, But look, a spark!!!

A fire of hope is lighting. Spirits are igniting.

Voices are being heard, kids are learning rights

An ideal world is nearly in sight

People are learning who they are, raising the bar, fighting back,

Hold on a little longer it's not that far

The future is lighting, people are fighting, Spirits are igniting.



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for Children and Youth
and RCYBC Youth



Rep4Youth



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@rcybcyouth



REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH