



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

# 10 Years of Advocacy

*Representative's Report Card*

Annual Report 2015/16

and

Service Plan 2016/17 to 2017/18

**ARTICLE 1**

**If you are under 18, you have these rights**

reybc.ca #RCYBC #UNCRC

**32 Article**

You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

**#RCYBC**

reybc.ca

**#RCYBC**

**Article 41**

**IF THE LAWS** of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, **THOSE LAWS SHOULD APPLY.**

reybc.ca

**“**

If you live with a disability you have the right to special care and education to help you develop and lead a full life.

**”**

**ARTICLE 23 - UNCRC**

**ARTICLE 11**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT**

**TO BE PROTECTED FROM KIDNAPPING**

**#RCYBC #RCYOUTH WWW.RCYBC.CA**

**You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.**

**#RCYBC UNCRC Article 15 www.rcybc.ca**

**You have the right to privacy.**

**#RCYBC UNCRC Article 16 www.rcybc.ca**

**#RCYBC**

**Article 39**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO HELP IF YOU'VE BEEN HURT, NEGLECTED OR BADLY TREATED**

reybc.ca

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED FROM BEING HURT OR BADLY TREATED.**

**ARTICLE 19 - UNCRC**

reybc.ca #RCYBC

reybc.ca #RCYBC

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPECIAL PROTECTION AND HELP IF YOU CAN'T LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS.**

**Article 20 - UNCRC**

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you

**Article 35**

**#RCYBC**

reybc.ca

**Article 26**

**If you are poor or if you are in need you have the right to get help from the government**

reybc.ca #RCYBC

Oct. 24, 2016

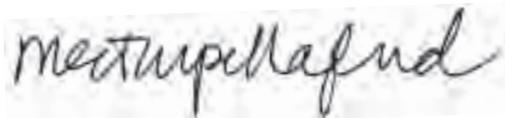
The Honourable Linda Reid  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Suite 207, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the *Annual Report 2015/16 and Service Plan 2016/17 to 2017/18* of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to the Legislative Assembly.

This document reports on the period April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 and covers activities underway and planned for the period April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2018, 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 that reads "meturpellafond". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name of the sender.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth  
Province of British Columbia

pc: Mr. Craig James  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Ms. Jane Thornthwaite, MLA  
Chair, Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

*Images on inside front and back covers were created by the Representative's Social Media Youth Team to illustrate articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

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2009 Awards of Excellence, with award winner Chris Tait



2015 release of Cyberbullying report, with Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham



2015 release of *Paige's Story*, with Paige's aunt



2013 Awards of Excellence, with winner Charles "Chuck" Fraser



Chief's Gathering, 2016



Youth in Care Week, 2012

# TEN YEARS OF ADVOCACY

## A message from the outgoing Representative for Children and Youth

The *Annual Report and Service Plan* that follows on these pages is the last report I will present during my second and final term as British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth. It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since 2006, when we initiated this Office, a key recommendation of the Hon. Ted Hughes' *B.C. Children and Youth Review*. It has been my honour and distinct privilege to serve as B.C.'s first Representative and, before I depart, I wanted to offer this assessment of the first decade of work by this Office.

## What has Worked

Let's begin with the positive. I believe that the Representative for Children and Youth's Office has accomplished a great deal of good for B.C.'s most vulnerable kids, through our advocacy work one-on-one with children and their families, through our careful oversight of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and through applying strategic pressure on the government and its agencies to effect considerable change that has helped those who need it the most.

The following are what I would consider five of the Office's most important accomplishments during that time:

### 1 Direct Advocacy

RCY's public profile is often focused on our reports, which have drawn considerable media coverage during the past 10 years and brought about some significant change. But the largest single component of our work – with the biggest staff complement in our Office – is dedicated to advocacy.

Working out of three locations – Victoria, Burnaby and Prince

### Creation of Representative for Children and Youth

In November 2005, the Honourable Ted Hughes was appointed to conduct an independent review of B.C.'s child protection system (Hughes Review). More than 70 individuals with special expertise and more than 300 child welfare groups and other stakeholders contributed to the review. In April 2006, Mr. Hughes submitted his report, the *BC Child and Youth Review*, to government. The report made 62 recommendations for changes to the B.C. child welfare system. The creation of the Representative for Children and Youth as an independent advocacy and oversight body was a central recommendation of the report.

In May 2006, the B.C. government passed the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* establishing the Legislative Assembly's authority to appoint an 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. Mary Ellen was reappointed in November 2011 to a second five-year term.

## Message from the Representative

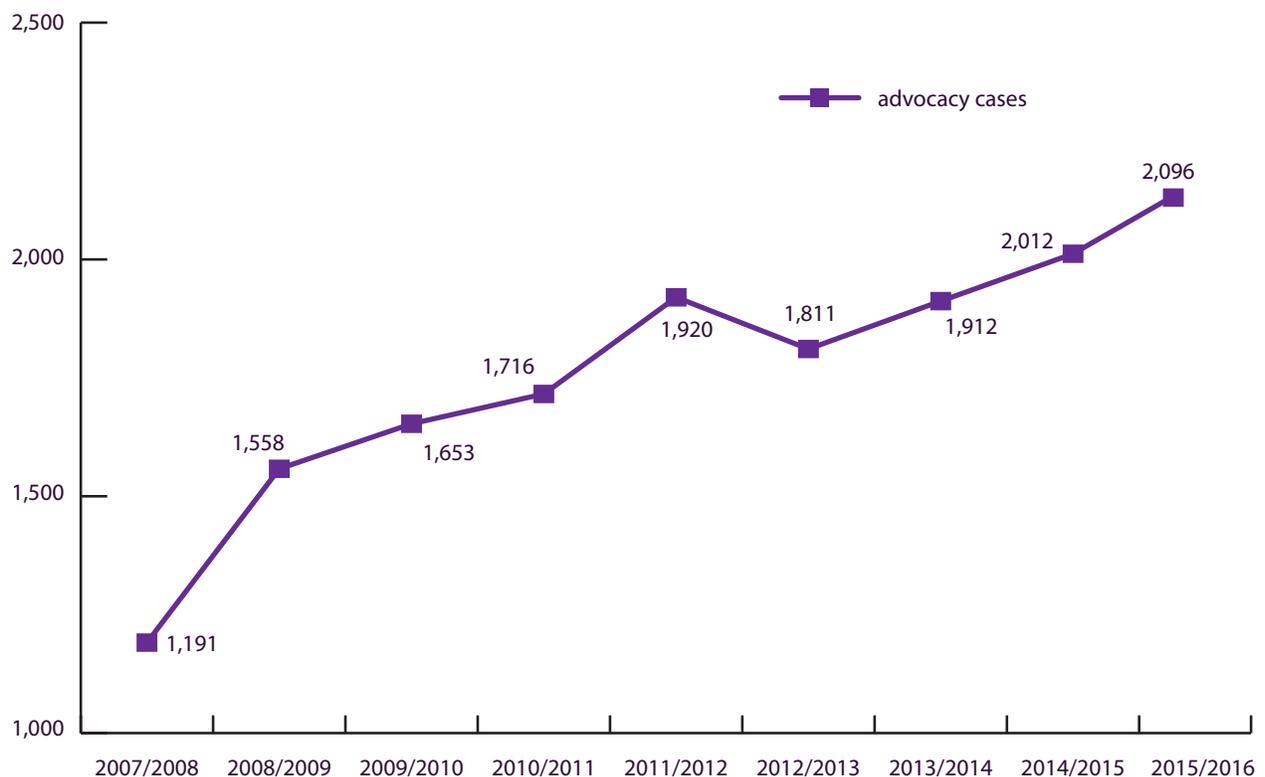
George – our advocates have opened nearly 17,000 cases since 2007, assisting children, youth and their families across B.C. While RCY doesn't deliver direct services, our advocates help children and families navigate what can be an extremely confusing system of services delivered by the provincial government and its designates, all the while with a primary focus of educating children and youth about their rights and helping to ensure that those rights are upheld throughout the process.

Some of the more common concerns we help with include services denied or unavailable to children and youth, quality of practice or care by those working in the system, ineffective or inadequate planning for children and youth, and children and families feeling as though they have not been treated with proper respect or dignity.

While this remains a more quiet function of our Office, it is actually the one that matters the most. As awareness of our Office and this function have grown, RCY advocacy cases opened per year have nearly doubled from an initial 1,191 in 2007/08 to 2,096 in 2015/16 (see graphic).

Children, youth and their families in B.C. who are frustrated or stalled by the system are often able to find their voice – and in many cases find better services and outcomes – working with our advocates. I am extremely proud of the fine people we have working directly with kids in advocacy and some of the most satisfying work that I have done during my two terms as Representative has come from my own direct involvement in individual advocacy cases.

### Total Number of Advocacy Cases by Fiscal Year, 2007/2008 to 2015/2016



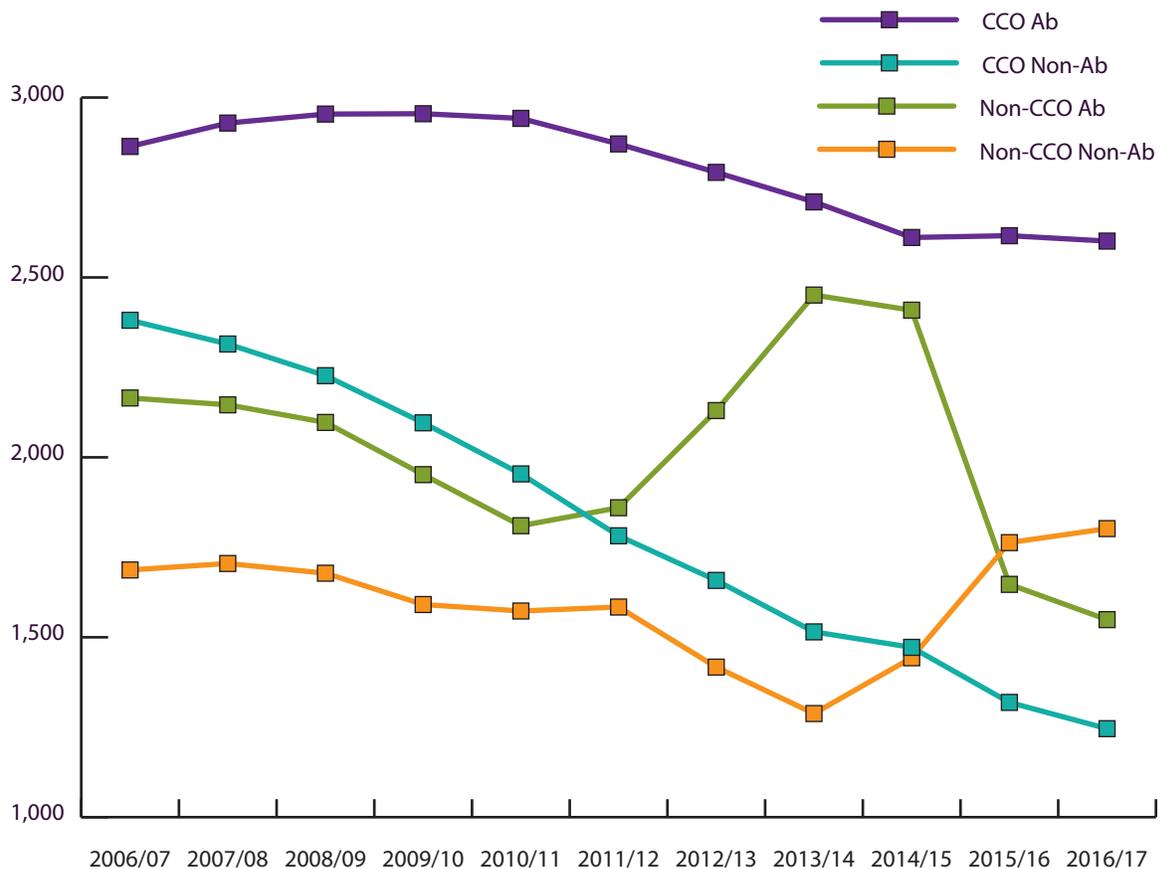
## 2 Fewer Children and Youth In Care

Since 2006, when our Office began its work, there has been a significant reduction in children and youth in the care (CYIC) of the B.C. government.

In 2006/07, there were 9,097 children and youth in care in the province. By 2016/17, that number had shrunk to 7,197. The total number of CYIC on a Continuing Custody Order has also declined by nearly 1,400 during that span, meaning that fewer children are being removed from their homes on a permanent basis and therefore more families are being kept together (see graphic).

While this is a positive development, the number of CYICs who are Aboriginal has not changed significantly – slipping from 4,551 in 2006/07 to 4,403 in 2016/17.

**CYIC with and without CCO, by Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal Fiscal Year Averages 2006/07 to 2016/17**



Tellingly, the percentage of CYICs who are Aboriginal has actually increased significantly. In 2006/07, just over 50 per cent of children and youth in care in B.C. were Aboriginal. For the current year, the percentage of Aboriginal CYICs is more than 61 per cent. This despite the fact that Aboriginal children and youth comprise only about nine per cent of B.C.'s total child and youth population.

### 3 Better Education Outcomes and Supports for Children and Youth in Care

Since our inception, the RCY has placed a major focus on improving education for children and youth who are in government care. In fact our report, *Growing up in BC – 2015*, placed a primary focus on education as it is seen as one of the most effective ways to help level the playing field for vulnerable children and youth.

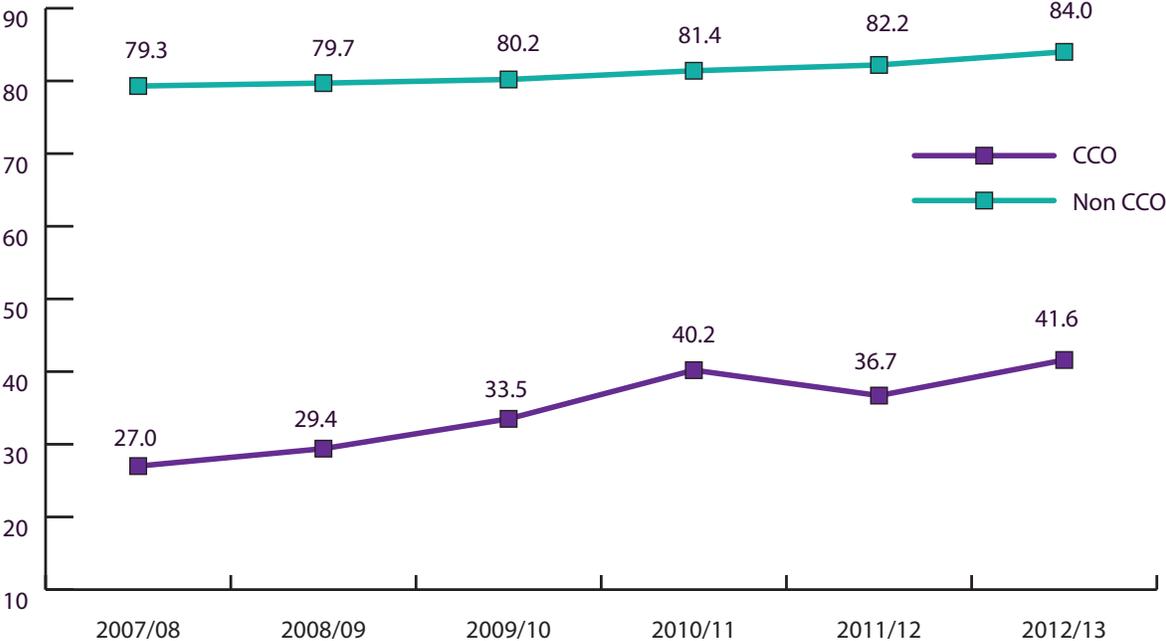
One of the best indicators for educational outcomes is the six-year completion rate – the percentage of students who manage to complete high school within six years. I'm pleased to note that six-year completion rates for children and youth in care in B.C. have improved significantly during the past 10 years.

The six-year completion rate for children and youth in care on a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) has climbed from a shockingly low 27 per cent in 2007/08 to 41.6 per cent in 2012/13, the most recent year for which full statistics are available (see graphic). And the Ministry of Education's report *How are We Doing?* (2015), shows that six-year completion rates for those with a CCO actually rose to 45 per cent in 2013/14 and to a high of 50 per cent in 2014/15.



Representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond at the Victoria Office Open House, 2007

Six-Year Completion Rate for Students with and without a CCO



The Representative receiving an honorary doctorate at Simon Fraser University, 2016

## Message from the Representative

This is certainly progress, but it comes with a major caveat. The gap between children with a CCO and those without one, while shrinking, still remains far too wide. In 2012/13, for example, the six-year completion rate for non-CCOs was 84 per cent or more than double that of children and youth with a CCO.

The opportunity to attend post-secondary school is another way of improving the lives of former children and youth in care. Increasing these opportunities in a direct way has been a focus of RCY since 2013, when I challenged all of B.C.'s post-secondary institutions to offer tuition breaks to students who have formerly been in care.

**"My voice can and should be heard."  
—Youth Voice**

The response, led by the incredible first steps of Vancouver Island University, has been heart-warming. Today, 12 of B.C.'s 25 post-secondary institutions offer some type of tuition waiver or reduction for former CYICs. And in the 2015/16 school year, more than 150 students took advantage of these programs with even more expected to do so this year.

On top of that, I'm proud to say that RCY has helped to initiate a fund, with the tremendous leadership of Coast Capital Savings, to provide former CYICs with aid for other expenses while they attend school, such as food, accommodation and books. The Youth Futures Education Fund, held at the Vancouver Foundation, has now topped more than \$1 million and, last November, made its first disbursement of \$200,000 to former CYICs at eight B.C. colleges and universities.



The Representative at the release of a Fostering Change report on aging out of care, 2016

## 4 Progress on Responding to Domestic Violence

The issue of domestic violence and how children are too often collateral damage in such occurrences was brought to light in two important investigative reports by our Office – *Honouring Christian Lee – No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living With Domestic Violence* (September 2009) and *Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now* (March 2012), which examined a pair of B.C.'s most high-profile and horrific cases.

Since the release of those reports, there has been a sea change in government's attitude toward addressing domestic violence. While there is certainly much more work to be done, the biggest improvement has been the creation of the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV) in 2012, an initiative that directly followed RCY's 2012 report.

Operating within the ministry, PODV's goal is to coordinate and strengthen services for children and families affected by domestic violence. It has supported the start-up of specialized domestic violence units within B.C. police forces, invested in programs that support Aboriginal women, men and children affected by domestic violence, provided support and intervention services for abusers and helped with housing and transportation costs for women and children who are victims of domestic violence in rural communities.

## 5 Adoption and Permanency Improvements

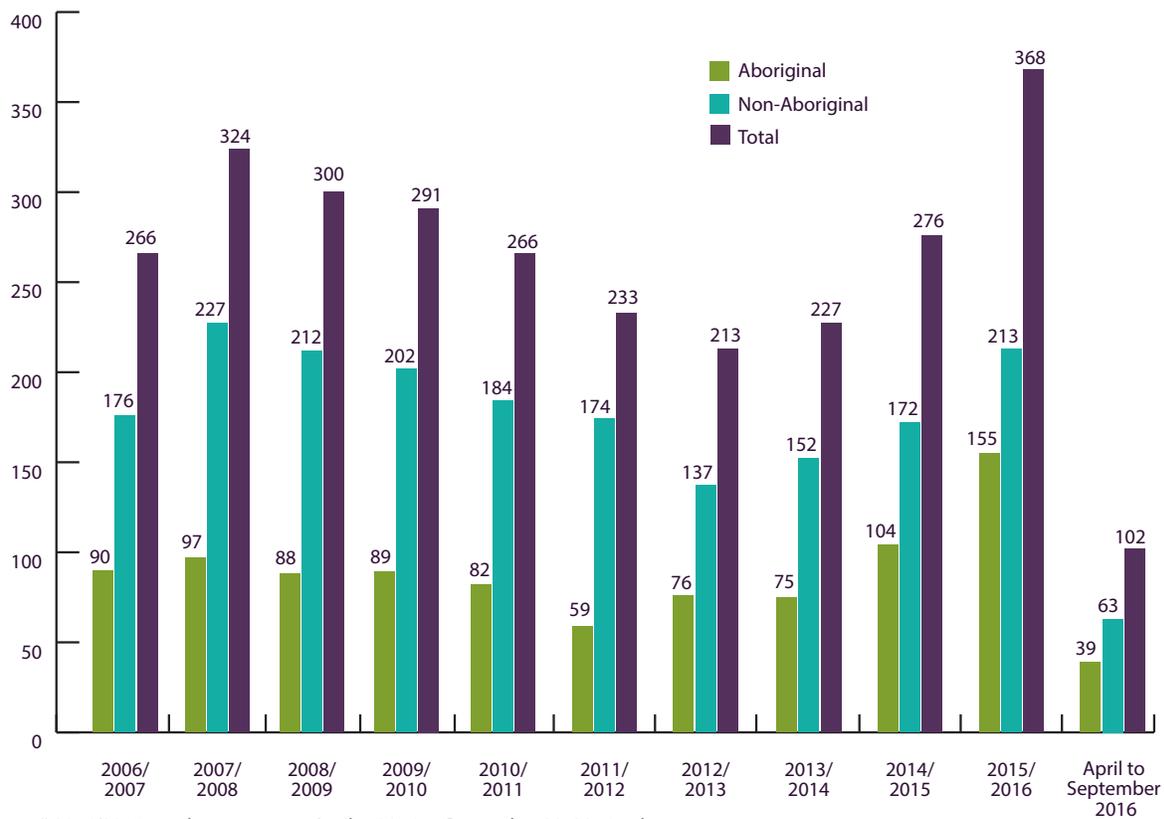
In June 2014, RCY released the report *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption Program*. It found that, at any given time, more than 1,000 children and youth in care in B.C. were waiting to be adopted. The report revealed that the provincial adoption program had seriously lagged over the previous seven years, going from a high of 324 adoptions in 2007/08 to a low of 213 in 2012/13.

Current Minister of Children and Family Development Stephanie Cadieux took part in RCY's report launch and pledged to lead a revitalization of MCFD's adoption program. With a renewed focus, an injection of one-time funding and an ambitious public awareness campaign, adoptions climbed to 276 in 2014/15 and increased to a high of 368 in 2015/16.

In addition, the minister and senior staff, along with a number of Indigenous leaders, took part in an RCY-organized adoption and permanency forum in April 2015 in Nanaimo that delved into the often contentious issue of Aboriginal adoptions.

As well, in September 2015, Premier Christy Clark appointed Grand Chief Edward John as a senior advisor on Aboriginal child welfare to Minister Cadieux, with the goal of helping more Aboriginal children and youth find permanency outside of government care.

Number of Adoptions by Aboriginal Status and Fiscal Year, 2006/2007 to 2016/2017\*



\* 2016/2017 numbers represent April 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016 only

These are all positive developments in the move to find more B.C. children a permanent and loving family. But they also come with a caveat.

First, after reaching its adoptions high in 2015/16, MCFD appears to be sliding on the commitment to keep up those numbers. From April to September of this fiscal, only 102 adoptions were made, putting the ministry well off pace to match last year's total.

In addition, the number of Aboriginal children and youth finding permanency remains troublingly low. Despite representing more than 60 per cent of the children and youth in care, Aboriginal adoptions have continuously lagged well behind adoptions of non-Aboriginal CYICs. For example, of last fiscal's 368 adoptions, only 155 were Aboriginal children, well below the more than 60 per cent of the CYIC population they comprise. Meanwhile, Grand Chief John's long-awaited report on Aboriginal permanency has yet to be released.

## What Requires Urgent Work

The next Representative will decide what areas will receive the most focus but, after 10 years on the job, I have been able to assess the areas I think still require the greatest attention.

Here is a look at the five areas in which there is much immediate work to be done:

### 1 More Help for Youth Leaving Foster Care

The tuition-waiver campaign has helped, but youth who have spent years in foster care need increased long-term support as they transition out of care. A special report from RCY *On Their Own, Examining the Needs of B.C. Youth as They Leave Government Care* (April 2014), explained the need for this additional support for the average 700 youth a year in the province who "age-out" of care.

Many youth leaving care have no parents or extended family on whom to rely for help with post-secondary school, housing, living expenses, emotional support and advice. Youth leaving care also often face other significant challenges – many have had adverse and often traumatic life experiences that can affect their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. They often need more help than their non-care peers, not less.

Without supports, youth leaving care are less likely to attend post-secondary school and more likely to have trouble finding work, to become homeless, to run afoul of the criminal justice system and to have mental health or substance use issues.

The cost of our government and our society not helping these youth is far higher than the cost of providing adequate support to them during this critical period.

Government has taken some small steps, including contributing to the Youth Futures Education Fund and recently extending the coverage of MCFD's Agreements with Young Adults program to age 26. But the AYA investment represents an increase of only \$1.3 million to that program. A report released by the Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change initiative in September 2016 estimated that an annual investment of \$57 million would be



The Representative with students at Cape Horne School, Coquitlam, 2007

required to improve outcomes and reduce longer-term costs for government for this same cohort. So much more investment is needed.

One of the key recommendations of *On Their Own* was for amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* to permit, on a case-by-case basis, the extension of foster care up to age 25 for young people who are attending post-secondary institutions or apprenticeship programs. Government has not yet acted on this.

## 2 Improve Indigenous Child Welfare Services

More than 60 per cent of the children in government care are Aboriginal despite the fact that Aboriginal children and youth make up only about nine per cent of the total child and youth population in B.C. Both the provincial and federal governments can and should do more to help Aboriginal children and youth.

A recent Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision ruled that the Canadian government has discriminated against Indigenous children living on-reserve by spending far less on child welfare services for them. The federal government has yet to comply with the terms of this decision.

On the B.C. front, report after report issued by RCY has documented poor service to Indigenous children, often with horrible consequences, including *Out of Sight* (September 2013), *When Talk Trumped Service* (November 2013), *Lost in the Shadows* (February 2014), *Paige's Story* (May 2015), *A Tragedy In Waiting* (September 2016), *Too Many Victims* (October 2016) and *Last Resort* (October 2016).

Given what we know about intergenerational trauma and the harmful effects on Indigenous families of colonial policies such as residential schools and the 60s Scoop, Indigenous children are in need of better services and more investment than their non-Indigenous peers, not less.

First Nations have a right to self-government and I respect that right. But I am also wary about the provincial government's recent stated intention to explore transferring jurisdiction for child welfare to individual First Nations. Without proper planning, support and resources, this could have devastating effects and cause an already significant deficit in services to grow larger for Indigenous children and youth and their families.

## 3 Improve Services and Supports to High-Needs Children and Youth

Recent RCY reports – *A Tragedy in Waiting* (September 2016) and *Last Resort* (October 2016) – have examined cases of individual youth who didn't receive the mental health or substance use services they needed when they needed them. In both cases, the results were heartbreaking for their families.

A lack of supports and services for children with mental health issues has been a recurring theme for RCY over the past decade with no solutions. Our report *Still Waiting: First-Hand Experiences with Youth Mental Health Services in B.C.* (April 2013) showed that finding mental health help can be a confusing and traumatic experience that often ends in a revolving door through the hospital Emergency Room.

Sadly, things have not changed much since that report. As the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth's subsequent report *Concrete Actions for Systemic Change* reflected in January of this year: *"Children, youth, young adults, and their families are suffering as a result of significant weaknesses and gaps in services. Improvements to the delivery of mental health services are urgently needed."*

The Select Standing Committee recommended that *"targets be established to ensure that children, youth, and young adults identified as exhibiting signs of behavioural, emotional, or mental health issues are assessed within 30 days and begin receiving treatment within the next 30 days."*

I urge government to follow the recommendations of both RCY and the Legislative committee when it comes to better supporting children and youth with mental health issues and their families.

Better supports and services are also desperately needed to deal with substance use by children and youth in B.C., particularly the fairly recent onset of fentanyl overdoses in the province. As RCY's *A Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.* (May 2016) found, youth with substance use issues in this province are faced with a piecemeal service system that can leave them for long periods of time without adequate or available services as they try to access treatment.

As our most recent report, *Last Resort*, shows, some parents have even opted to have their children charged and put through the youth justice system in order to access adequate and timely services for substance use.

As I have recommended to government twice now, B.C. urgently needs a comprehensive system of services to deal with youth substance use. The system should include community-based and residential treatment up to and including the selective use of secure care when necessary to keep a youth safe.

The province must also look to improve its services to children, youth and young adults with special needs and developmental disabilities. Too often, these children are not adequately considered in school settings and, once they turn 19, programs and supports for them and their families often prove difficult or impossible to find.

In addition, children with special needs who are in foster care are often placed in settings that do not match their unique needs. As well as a comprehensive system of substance use treatment, B.C. needs a system of care that can offer therapeutic foster care when and where it is needed.

## 4 Introduce a Government-Wide Children's Plan

Children's issues cannot be accommodated within one ministry. Their needs, and those of their families, cross into many ministerial areas besides MCFD – Health, Education, Justice, Social Development, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation among them.

As such, any sound strategy to do the best for children and youth must be cross-ministerial in a real sense. The actions of one ministry may affect another's ability to deliver services to children and youth or to keep them healthy or safe. B.C. needs a comprehensive children's plan – a table at which the primary focus beyond all else, is the well-being of children and youth.

The need for a children's plan is evident when one considers that the recommendations made by RCY that have been most difficult to get government to act on have been the ones calling for cross-ministry planning and co-operation.

Many British Columbians have called for a province-wide poverty plan and I have echoed that call. Poverty can have a crushing effect on a child's growth and development and on his or her future prospects. B.C. is the only province in Canada without one.

### **5 Put Children at the Centre and be Accountable**

There is no resource more precious in B.C. than its children. Few would argue that and, yet, children have not been the focus of government in B.C. for many years.

MCFD's budget has often been starved in the years since my Office opened. An RCY report, *Not Fully Invested* (October 2014) showed that the ministry's annual budget had been reduced by nearly \$100 million in real dollars between 2008/09 and 2013/14 when inflation was taken into account.

Over the past five years, MCFD's budget has remained relatively flat, going from just over \$1.3 billion in 2010/11 to slightly under \$1.4 billion in 2015/16.

Government's talking point on this matter has basically been that, once the economy has improved and resources become available, more money will be spent on services for vulnerable children. How do we explain that concept to children and youth and their families who need more help now?

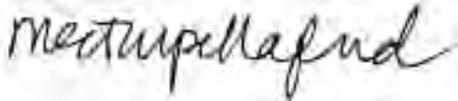
Government must be accountable for its actions on this file and show an urgent interest in improving the services it offers to children, youth and their families. Unfortunately, that hasn't always been the case and, over the past year, things have gotten worse.

The minister has recently shown a reluctance to work with our Office. Despite a mandate to meet with the Representative a minimum of four times per year, the minister has refused to meet with me at all during the past 12 months. This government must work on its ability to own up to its shortcomings and to address them. B.C.'s children deserve that much.

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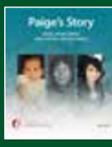
This document outlines the approach to meeting my accountability to the public and the Legislature to report on the activities of my Office and plans for future years. It describes the activities of the Office during 2015/16 as well as outlines our planned strategic initiatives for 2016/17 and 2017/18. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "m. turpel-lafond". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth  
October 2016

# Representative's Reports 2007 to 2016\*

			 Special Report: Reporting of Critical Injuries & Deaths to the Representative			 Lost in the Shadows: How a Lack of Help Meant a Loss of Hope for One First Nations Girl	 BC Adoption Update April 2015	 The Placement of Children and Youth in Care in Hotels in British Columbia (RCY & MCFD)	
 Overview of the Child Critical Injury & Death Investigation & Review Process in B.C.		 Final Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of "Hughes Review"	 Fragile Lives, Fragmented Systems: Strengthening Supports for Vulnerable Infants		 Who Protected Him?: How B.C.'s Child Welfare System Failed One of Its Most Vulnerable Children	 On Their Own: Examining the Needs of B.C. Youth as They Leave Government Care	 Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded	 Implementation of the Plecas Review, Part One: Decision Time	
 Monitoring Brief: System of Services for Children & Youth with Special Needs	 Kids, Crime & Care: Youth Justice Experiences & Outcomes	 Growing Up In B.C. 2010 (RCY & PHO)	 Phallometric Testing & B.C.'s Youth Justice System	 Final Submission for the Representative for Children and Youth Act Five-year Review	 Much More than Paperwork: Proper Planning Essential to Better Lives for B.C.'s Children in Care	 Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption Program	 Growing Up in B.C. 2015 (RCY & PHO)	 Approach with Caution: Why the Story of One Vulnerable B.C. Youth Can't be Told	
 Health & Well-Being of Children in Care in B.C.: Educational Experience & Outcomes (RCY & PHO)	 Amanda, Savannah, Rowen & Serena: From Loss to Learning	 Housing, Help & Hope: A Better Path for Struggling Families	 Update: System of Services for Children & Youth with Special Needs	 Isolated & Invisible: When Children with Special Needs are Seen but Not Seen	 Honouring Kaitlynn, Max & Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now	 Still Waiting: First- hand Experiences with Youth Mental Health Services in B.C.	 Children at Risk: The Case for a Better Response to Parental Addiction	 A Forum for Change	 A Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

 2007 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of "Hughes Review"	 Issue Report: Medical Assessments in B.C.'s Youth Justice System & Report Appendices	 Honouring Christian Lee - No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living with Domestic Violence	 Issue Report: Sexual Abuse Intervention Program	 Champions for Change: A Guide for Effective Advocacy	 The Impact of Criminal Justice Funding Decisions On Children in B.C.	 Out of Sight: How One Aboriginal Child's Best Interests Were Lost Between Two Provinces	 Not Fully Invested: A Follow-up Report on the Representative's Past Recommendations to Help Vulnerable Children in B.C.	 The Thin Front Line: MCFD Staffing Crunch Leaves Social Workers Over-burdened, B.C. Children Under-protected	 A Tragedy in Waiting: How B.C.'s mental health system failed one First Nations youth
	 Update: System of Services for Children & Youth with Special Needs		 No Shortcuts to Safety: Doing Better for Children Living with Extended Family	 So Many Plans, So Little Stability: A Child's Need for Security	 Trauma, Turmoil & Tragedy: Understanding the Needs of Children & Youth at Risk of Suicide & Self-Harm	 When Talk Trumped Service: A Decade of Lost Opportunity for Aboriginal Children and Youth in B.C.	 B.C. Adoption Update Nov. 2014	 Cyberbullying: Empowering Children and Youth to be Safe Online and Responsible Digital Citizens	 Too Many Victims: Sexualized Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth in Care
	 2008 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of "Hughes Review"		 Hearing the Voices of Children and Youth (RCY & Ombudsman)	 The Representative for Children and Youth Act Five-year Review			 Who Cares? B.C. Children with Complex Medical, Psychological and Developmental Needs and Their Families Deserve Better	 B.C. Adoption Update Dec. 2015	 Last Resort: One family's tragic struggle to find help for their son

\* Does not include standard serial reports such as annual reports/service plans and CID updates

# OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## Representative's Mandate

The mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth is:

<b>Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations</b>	To conduct reviews and undertake investigations of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth who have received reviewable services; to identify and make recommendations for improvements to services to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.
<b>Monitoring</b>	To monitor, review, audit and conduct research on the provision of government-funded designated services or programs for children and youth and their families; to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of those services.
<b>Advocacy</b>	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 comment publicly on advocacy services for children and their families with respect to designated 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, youth and young adults 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 for Children and Youth is an Officer of the Legislature appointed by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia on the unanimous recommendation of a Special Committee. The Representative is accountable to British Columbians through their elected officials for the performance of her responsibilities and duties in advocating for children, youth and young adults and for providing oversight to the child- and youth-serving system.

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 *Representative for Children and Youth Act (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 her Office.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services reviews the budget submission of the Representative (as well as all other independent or statutory officers of the Legislature) and makes a recommendation about the Representative's approved funding for each fiscal year.

The Auditor General of B.C. audits the accounts of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth annually.

### *About this Report*

Each year, the Representative is required to submit an *Annual Report and Service Plan* to the Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly. The *Annual Report and Service Plan* are combined within one document and describe the work undertaken by the Representative and the attainment of identified performance measures over the past fiscal year, and outline the goals and strategic priorities and performance measures for the current and coming fiscal years.

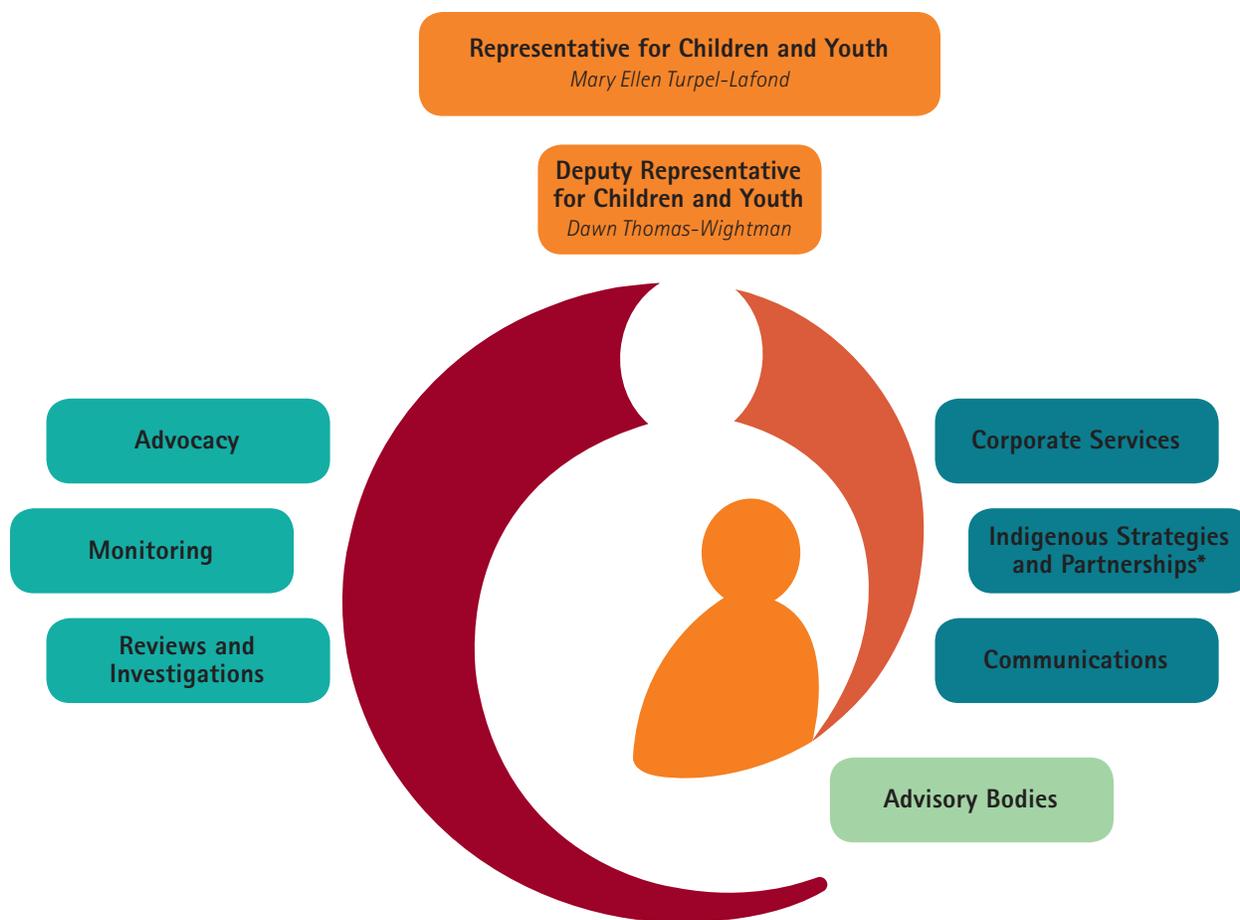
This combined *Annual Report and Service Plan* highlights the key activities undertaken by the Representative during the reporting period of April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 and outlines the priorities and performance measures for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 fiscal years.

## Organization

The Representative for Children and Youth has offices located in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George. All three locations have staff providing Advocacy, Community Relations and Youth Engagement services. Staff responsible for Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations, Monitoring, Communications and Corporate Services are located in Victoria. Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships staff are based in the Burnaby office.

The Representative's team of dedicated staff is passionate about the work they do and about making a difference to the young people served by the Office. Staff come from diverse educational, employment and cultural backgrounds, ensuring a broad range of perspectives. Staff have experience and expertise in child welfare, social work, child and youth mental health, education, youth justice, community development, law, law enforcement and social policy research and analysis.

The importance of bringing an Indigenous perspective to the work of the Representative is demonstrated through ensuring Indigenous leadership on staff in the Office.



*\*Formerly Aboriginal Initiatives*

## Working with Others

The Representative actively seeks out opportunities to partner and enter into collaborations with others to carry out her mandate.

In the 2015/16 fiscal year, the Representative collaborated in the preparation of three public reports:

- June 2015 – *Growing Up in B.C. – 2015*, a joint report prepared with the office of the Provincial Health Officer, provides a snapshot of child health and well-being. *Growing Up in B.C. – 2015* is an update to the *2010 Growing Up in B.C.* report, also prepared jointly.
- November 2015 – *Cyberbullying: Empowering Children and Youth to be Safe Online and Responsible Digital Citizens*, prepared collaboratively with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, examines the issue of cyberbullying and its impacts.
- January 2016 – *The Placement of Children and Youth in Care in Hotels in British Columbia*, a joint report with MCFD, reviews hotel placements and outlines a new policy governing such placements.

The Representative is a member of two important, ongoing collaborative bodies:

- *The Children's Forum* – Established in 2007 under the leadership of the Representative for Children and Youth in response to a recommendation of the Hughes Review, the Forum is a collaboration between MCFD and the Chief Coroner, the Ombudsperson, the Public Guardian and Trustee, the Provincial Health Officer and the Representative for Children and Youth. In April 2015, the Representative stepped down as Chair of the Forum, a position she had held since it was established, and MCFD took over the Forum's leadership. Following a review of the Forum in June 2015, members renewed the Forum's Terms of Reference and its purpose 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.
- *The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)* – 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 voice. 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 Representative is also supported on an ongoing basis by the *Advisory Committee on Services to Special Needs Children and Youth*. Comprised of individuals who have specialized knowledge or experience with services to children and youth with special needs, the committee keeps the Representative abreast of current trends and developments and provides advice on related issues and matters.

The Representative has entered into several protocols and Memoranda of Understanding that govern her ongoing relationships with others and the delivery of services. These include:

- Memorandum of Understanding with the Métis Nation of British Columbia, signed Oct. 30, 2013
- Joint Advocacy Protocol with Community Living British Columbia, signed Sept. 26, 2013
- Memorandum of Understanding with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, signed July 8, 2011
- Joint Advocacy Protocol with Ministry of Children and Family Development, signed April 4, 2011
- Memorandum of Understanding with the First Nations Delegated Agencies (known collectively as the First Nations Directors Forum), signed Dec. 8, 2010.



Signing Memorandum of Understanding with First Nations Education Steering Committee, July 8, 2011



Signing joint advocacy protocol agreement with Minister McNeil, April 4, 2011



During signing of the Métis Nation of British Columbia Memorandum of Understanding, Oct. 30, 2013

A priority for the Representative is to continue to work with others including post-secondary institutions, business leaders and government to expand the post-secondary tuition waiver program in which participating post-secondary institutions provide free tuition for former youth in care, and to develop additional ways to support former youth in care to pursue post-secondary education and fulfill their educational goals.

	# Post-secondary institutions offering tuition waiver program	# Former youth in care receiving post-secondary tuition waiver
2014/15	10	Approximately 80
2015/16	12	Approximately 110

A key development in 2015/16 was the establishment of the Youth Futures Education Fund that provides former youth in care who are pursuing post-secondary education on a tuition waiver or bursary with funding for non-tuition living expenses to help them successfully attain post-secondary education. Originally established by Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, the Youth Futures Education Fund is now supported through contributions from Coast Capital Savings, MCFD, the Vancouver Foundation and others. The fund is guided by a third-party committee.

### Hearing from young people about the tuition waiver program

In April 2015, staff from all programs of the Representative's Office held a day-long meeting in the Burnaby office with 10 recipients of a tuition waiver or bursary, representing five post-secondary institutions. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about students' experience with the tuition waiver program and to gather information on additional supports that these students need in order to succeed.

Students were unanimous that access to free tuition opened up the opportunity for post-secondary education and a brighter future. Other supports identified by the group were additional funding for living expenses, access to robust wellness and emotional supports and personal and academic mentorship.

The Office plans to convene a further gathering of tuition waiver recipients next year to continue this important work.

## Focus on Vulnerable Children and Youth

Every child and youth in B.C. has the right to be healthy, safe, educated and supported to grow into adulthood and meet his or her potential. Most of the more than 900,000 children living in B.C. grow up with their parents and in their community, with the care and support they need and deserve.

Some children and youth and their families, however, require extra supports and services either due to life circumstances or to meet their individual needs. At times, significant intervention may be required to ensure a child or youth's health and safety.

In 2015/16, about 153,000 children and youth and their families, or about 18 per cent of children and youth living in B.C., received some form of service from MCFD.<sup>1</sup> These services included early child development and child care subsidy and services, child and youth mental health services, services for children and youth with special needs, child safety and family support and children in care services, adoption services and youth justice services.

Because of the impact these services can have on the lives of vulnerable children and youth, ongoing oversight and monitoring is crucial to knowing if these services are effective. Monitoring and oversight can also help identify ways that government can improve these services to better support positive outcomes for children, youth and their families.

### Vulnerable Children and Youth BY THE NUMBERS

**38,000**

**Approximate number of protection reports MCFD receives yearly<sup>1</sup>**

**7,216**

**Number of children and youth in care<sup>2</sup>**

**4,387**

**Number of Aboriginal children and youth in care<sup>2</sup>**

**876**

**Number of children registered for adoption as of March 31, 2016<sup>3</sup>**

**368**

**Number of children placed for adoption in 2015/16<sup>3</sup>**

**700**

**Approximate number of youth who turn 19 and age out of care each year<sup>4</sup>**

**63**

**Number of youth in open and secure custody in March 2016<sup>5</sup>**

**5,356**

**Number of 19 to 24 year olds receiving services from Community Living BC<sup>6</sup>**

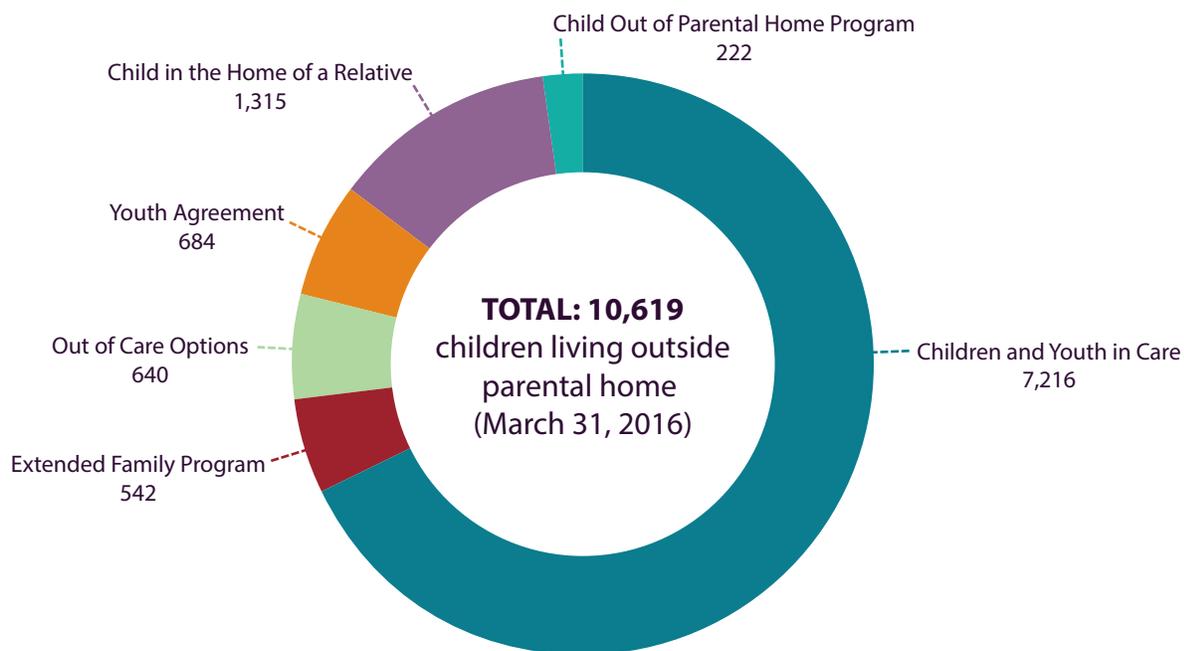
**Source:**

- <sup>1</sup> MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 7, September 2015
- <sup>2</sup> MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse, as of March 31, 2016
- <sup>3</sup> MCFD Adoption Management System, as of March 31, 2016
- <sup>4</sup> MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 6, March 2015 and Volume 7, September 2015
- <sup>5</sup> MCFD, April 1, 2016. This is an average on any given day.
- <sup>6</sup> CLBC, as of March 31, 2016

<sup>1</sup> MCFD Performance Management Report, Volume 7, September 2015.

Of the children and youth receiving services from MCFD, some are particularly vulnerable and warrant special regard. At times throughout 2015/16, more than 10,000 children were living somewhere other than with their parents. Some were living with a family member or caregiver with financial support provided through various provincial and federal programs. Others were in the care of the Province living with a foster parent or were living on their own under an MCFD youth agreement that provided them with some funding support. Of the 7,216 children and youth in care of the Province (as of March 31, 2016), 3,870 or 54 per cent were under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO),<sup>2</sup> which means they were permanently under the care and responsibility of the government.

**Figure 1 – Children Living Outside of Parental Home**



(Source: MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse)

Of this vulnerable group of children living outside the parental home, Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented. Although the total number of Aboriginal children and youth in care has been relatively stable since 2001, the number of Aboriginal children in care remains disproportionately high with Aboriginal children and youth making up 61 per cent of children and youth in care.

Evidence shows that children and youth in care can have poorer education, social, health and well-being outcomes. The poorer outcomes experienced by youth in care can extend into adulthood with youth leaving care more likely to be unemployed, receive social assistance, experience homelessness, have mental health problems and substance use issues or be involved in the criminal justice system.

<sup>2</sup> MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse, current to April 22, 2016

# DID YOU KNOW?\*

## BULLYING

Youth who had been in government care were significantly more likely to be a victim or perpetrator of bullying in school or on the way to school

7%

of children and youth in care said they often or always went to bed hungry compared to 1% of children and youth who have never been in care

73%

decrease in rate of youth ages 12 to 17 charged with a serious property crime between 2000 and 2012

## SUICIDE

Youth who have been in government care were significantly more likely to have considered or attempted suicide compared to youth who were never in care

<HALF

Fewer than half of students with a Continuing Custody Order completed high school within the expected six years

11%

of youth indicated they had used prescription pills without a doctor's consent at least one or more times in their lifetime

\*All figures from *Growing Up in B.C. - 2015*

# PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The three core or mandated program areas of the Representative for Children and Youth – Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations, Advocacy and Monitoring – are supported by the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships and Communications teams. The Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships program ensures that Indigenous values and perspectives are interwoven into all aspects of the work of the Representative's Office. The Communications team plays a key role in the production and delivery of reports, builds awareness of services provided by the Office and supports program areas in their activities.

All program areas are highly integrated, working closely together to share information on developing issues, trends and emerging themes to meet the Representative's mandate in supporting families needing help in dealing with the child- and youth-serving system and for providing oversight and advocating for improvements to those services.



## Critical Injury and Death – Reviews and Investigations

The critical injury and death (CID) review and investigation mandate of the Representative is focused on accountability and learning.

In the tragic event that a child or youth receiving services from an MCFD program dies or suffers a critical injury, particularly where abuse and neglect are factors, 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.

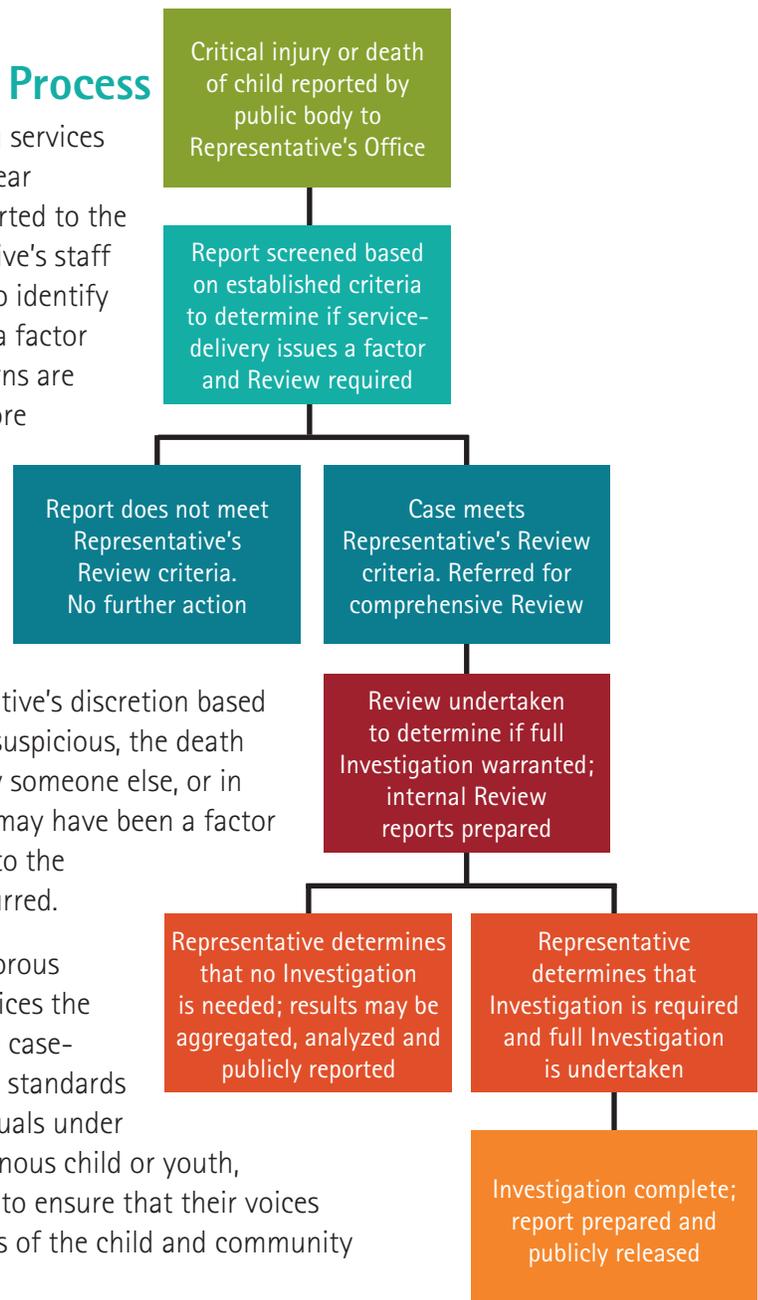
### The Review and Investigation Process

Incidents involving children and youth receiving services from MCFD programs at the time of, or in the year previous to, the critical injury or death, are reported to the Representative by the ministry. The Representative's staff screen each report against established criteria to identify whether service-delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury. When such concerns are identified, the case becomes the subject of a more intensive review.

When service issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury, the case is reviewed to determine if it warrants a full investigation.

Only a small number of cases are selected for full investigation. This is done at the Representative's discretion based on a determination that the circumstances are suspicious, the death or critical injury was self-inflicted or inflicted by someone else, or in the presence of evidence that abuse or neglect may have been a factor or that services received may have contributed to the circumstances in which the injury or death occurred.

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.



## Programs and Activities

A Multidisciplinary Team made up of representatives from MCFD, the BC Coroners Service and experts in public health, medicine, pathology, Indigenous issues, law enforcement, education and the child-serving system support the Representative in reviewing evidence and analyzing information gained through reviews and investigations.

The Representative may prepare reports aggregating information and findings obtained from reviews and investigations. When the Representative undertakes a full investigation of the critical injury or death of a child, she must prepare a report. All reports are reviewed by the SSCCY and are 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 screening and review process is followed. When the Representative determines to investigate a critical injury or death of a child referred to her by the SSCCY, an investigation report is completed. When the Representative determines not to investigate the critical injury or death of a child referred to her by the SSCCY, she must prepare a report to the SSCCY outlining her reason.

The Representative's reviews and investigations must not inhibit the progress of other proceedings such as police investigations, MCFD reviews, criminal justice proceedings and inquests.

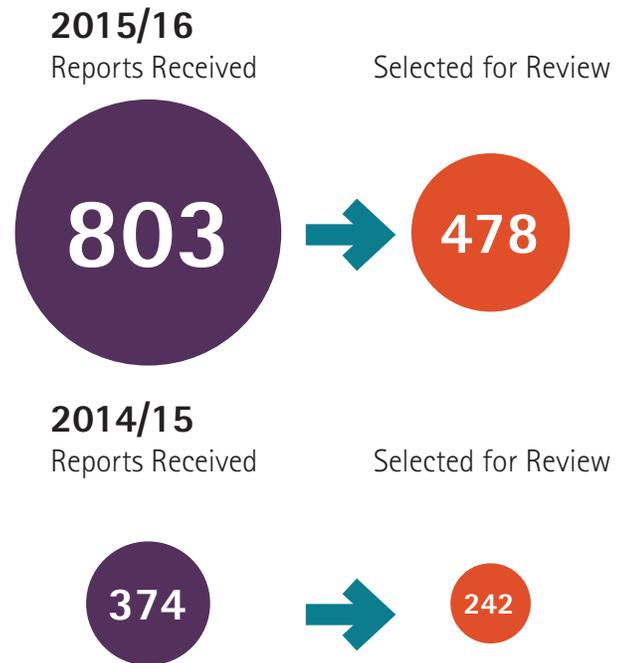
## Looking Back: Highlights of CID Activities in 2015/16

### *Increase in Reports in 2015/16 and Impact on CID Workload\**

Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, the Representative's Office received reports of 138 deaths and 665 critical injuries of children and youth for a total of 803 reports. This is more than a 53 per cent increase in reports leading to a 46 per cent increase in cases selected for review from the 2014/15 to 2015/16 fiscal year and a more than three-fold increase since March 2011.

The increase in reports is the result of a Special Report of the Representative issued in December 2010 in response to the Representative's concern that MCFD was not reporting all of the critical injuries and deaths to the Representative in order for her to fully exercise the critical injury and death review and investigation function under the *RCY Act*. The Representative recommended in the report that MCFD develop and implement a critical injury and death notification policy to ensure the comprehensive, consistent and timely reporting of critical injuries and deaths to the Representative's Office. Since March 2011, MCFD has been reporting critical injuries in a number of areas that were not historically reported to the Representative. An updated policy was introduced in June 2015 and training completed on the updated *Reportable Circumstances Policy* in that same month, resulting in a significant increase in reports to the Representative's Office.

As a result of the doubling of the CID unit's workload, the Representative requested and received from government an increase in funding for the 2015/16 fiscal year to ensure the Representative could continue to carry out her mandated duties. The increased funding allowed the Representative to hire a deputy chief investigator, two additional full-time investigators and a temporary research officer to join the CID team of three investigators, three research officers, two administrative support staff, manager and chief investigator.



\*Due to an initial error, numbers presented in this section have been updated since original release of this report.

### *Critical Injuries and Deaths Reports, Reviews and Trends*

The following Figure 2 outlines the number of reports of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth receiving reviewable services and the number of reports based on the initial screening that met the criteria for further review for the years 2009/10 to 2015/16. The table reflects the increase in reports and the cases selected for further review between 2010/11 and 2011/12 and between 2014/15 and 2015/16 as a result of the change in MCFD policy and practice.

**Figure 2 – Reports and Reviews 2009/10 to 2015/16**

Reports and Reviews														
	Reported to RCY							Selected for Review						
	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
<b>Critical Injuries</b>	137	136	413	300	318	292	665	63	82	237	193	229	217	446
<b>Deaths</b>	93	88	101	100	99	82	138	37	34	29	32	32	25	32
<b>Total</b>	230	224	514	400	417	374	803	100	116	266	225	261	242	478

Figure 3 provides more detail on the cases selected for review in 2015/16 showing the breakdown of reviews of critical injuries and deaths of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and of those in care and not in care of government. This table shows that almost three-quarters of the critical injuries selected for review involved Aboriginal children in care and well over half involved Aboriginal children not in care but receiving reviewable services. This reflects the vulnerability of this population of youth and their over-representation in the child welfare system.

**Figure 3 – Further Detail on Cases Selected for Review 2015/16**

Cases Selected for Review						
	Critical Injuries			Deaths		
	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Unknown	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Unknown
Not in Care	42	51	2	11	15	2
In Care	110	239	2	2	2	0
Total	152	290	4	13	17	2

Figures 4 and 5 provide detail on the causes of critical injury and deaths reviewed by the Representative in 2015/16 broken down by gender. Critical injuries were much higher for females whereas more male than female deaths were reviewed.

**Figure 4 – Number of Critical Injuries by Category and Gender 2015/16**

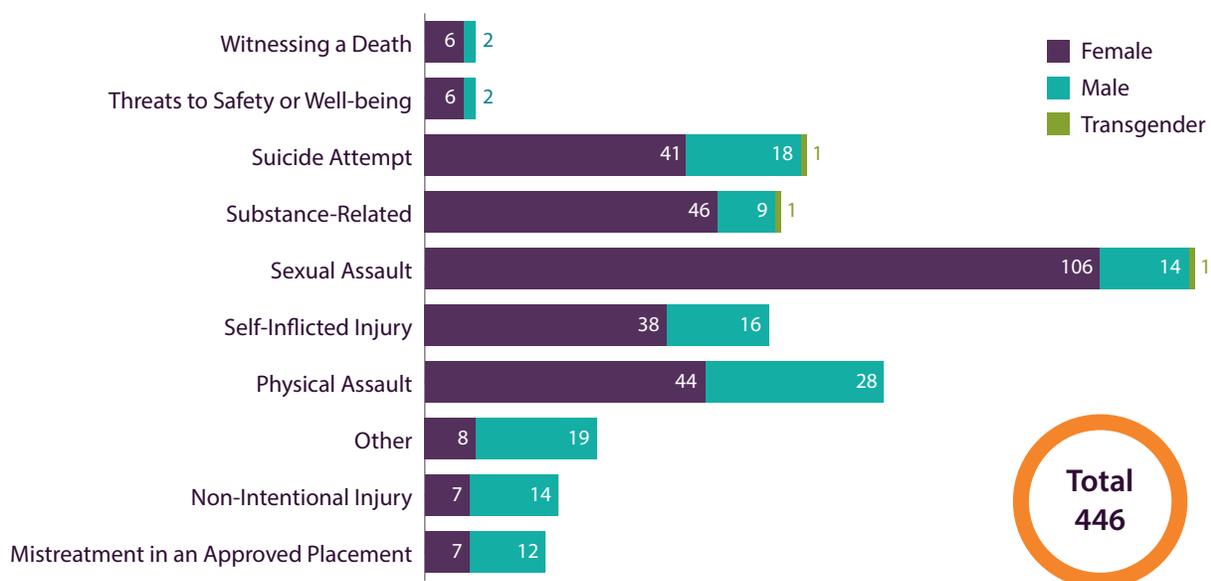


Figure 5 – Number of Deaths by Category and Gender 2015/16

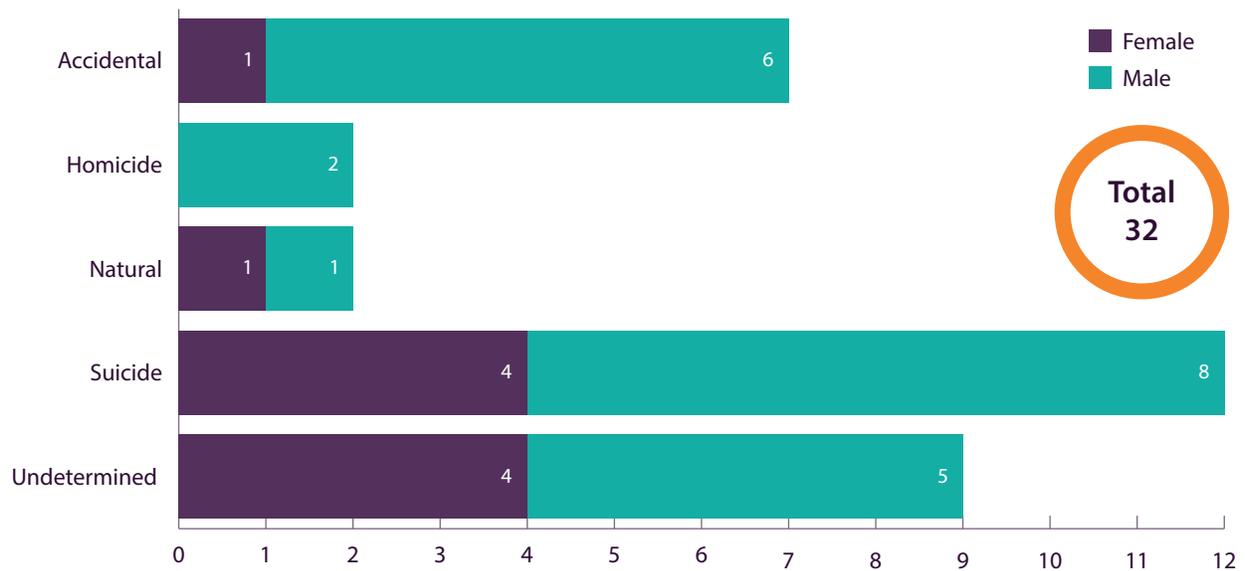
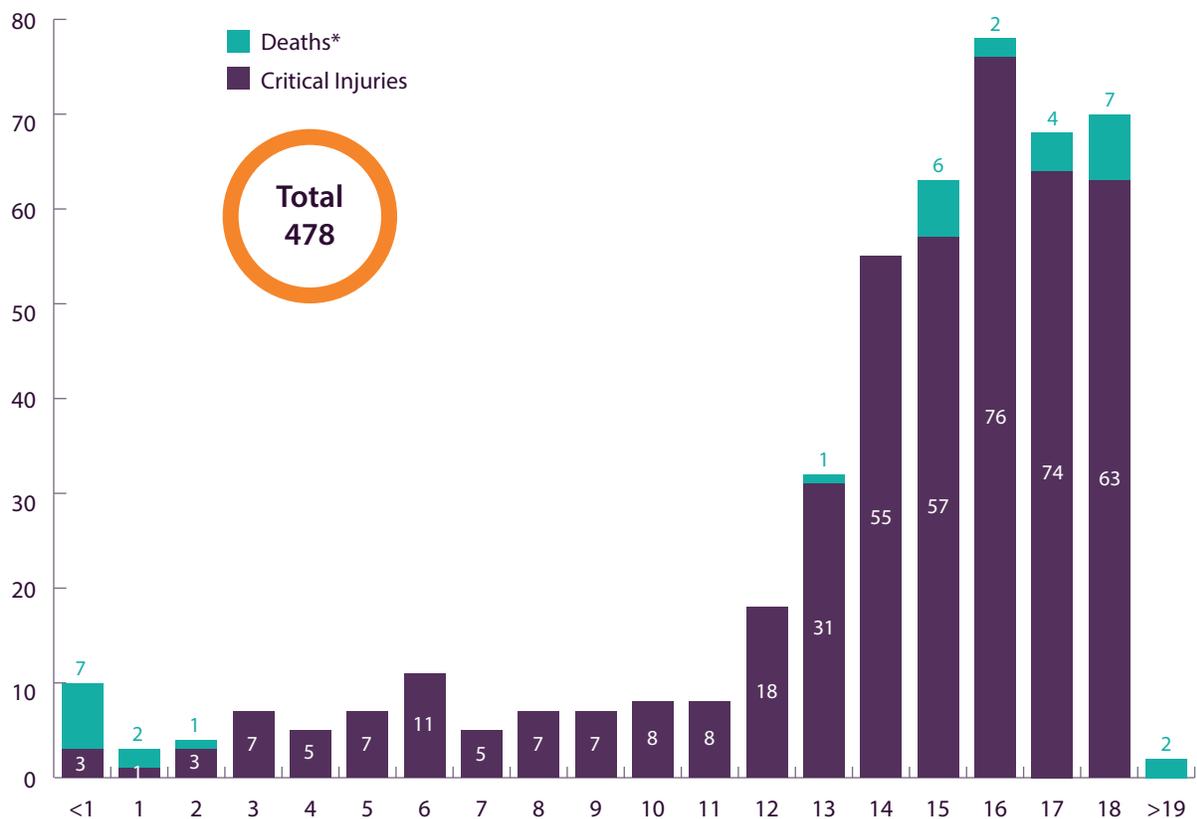


Figure 6 provides the age distribution of critical injuries and deaths reviewed by the Representative in 2015/16, again broken down by gender. Similar to past years, and consistent with historic trends, there are spikes in deaths of infants and teenagers reflecting the unique vulnerabilities of these two age groups.

Figure 6 – Age Distribution of Reported Critical Injuries or Deaths 2015/16



## CID Reviews and Investigations in 2015/2016

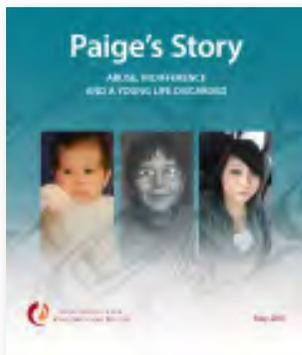
### CID Updates

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

Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, the Representative issued three reports on her review and investigation activity:

- May 6, 2015 - *Representative's Report #23* detailing reports received, reviews undertaken and investigations identified by the Representative for the period Oct. 1, 2014 to Jan. 31, 2015;
- Oct. 19, 2015 - *Representative's Report #24* for the period Feb. 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015;
- Jan. 28, 2016 - *Representative's Report #25* for the period June 1, 2015 to Sept. 30, 2015.

### CID Reviews and Investigation Reports



#### May 14, 2015, *Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded*

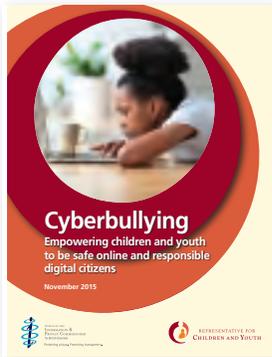
This investigation, one of the largest and most comprehensive ever undertaken by the Representative's Office, documented the life of Paige, a young Indigenous woman who died in April 2013 from a drug overdose in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Her death was the result of years of abuse and neglect, compounded by persistent inaction from front-line professionals and an indifferent social care system. Following her mother into the Downtown Eastside, Paige shuttled between homeless shelters, safe-houses, youth detox facilities, foster homes and a number of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels.

Predictably, Paige herself struggled with alcohol and substance use. Although health care professionals, police and social workers were aware of her circumstances, failures to communicate and respond appropriately left her in situations of continuing harm.

The Representative called on the provincial government to take immediate steps to address the persistent professional indifference shown to Aboriginal children and youth and to ensure that no children in care or receiving services were residing in SROs in the Downtown Eastside. The Representative also repeated her previous recommendation to the Attorney General, calling for a review of the reasons why the failure to report child abuse in B.C. had never resulted in a prosecution.

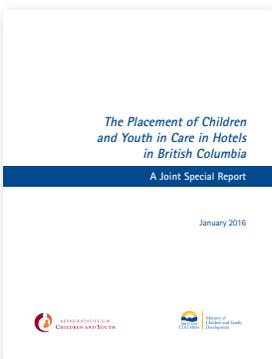
## Programs and Activities



### November 13, 2015, *Cyberbullying: Empowering Children and Youth to be Safe Online and Responsible Digital Citizens*

This joint report, undertaken with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, illustrated the complexity of the problem of cyberbullying, using first-hand input from B.C. youth, a review of relevant literature and a review of the response in other jurisdictions.

The report called for a comprehensive cross-ministry strategy to prevent and mitigate the effects of cyberbullying and educate children and youth on digital citizenship. The report also recommended the Attorney General develop prosecution guidelines that would reflect a child-centred approach to prosecution and consider the impacts of criminalizing children and youth.



### January 13, 2016, *The Placement of Children and Youth in Care in Hotels in British Columbia*

This joint report, the first ever undertaken with MCFD, was initiated following the September 2015 death of a youth in care who had been placed in a hotel for a lengthy stay.

The report found that between November 2014 and October 2015, a total of 117 children and youth had been placed in hotels. The report resulted in a new written ministry policy mandating hotel placements be used only in exceptional circumstances when no other option is available, as well as establishing strict reporting requirements for each placement.

## Looking Ahead: CID Strategic Priorities for 2016/17 and 2017/18

The CID team is completing work on three reports expected to be released in the fall of 2016. One focuses on the suicide of an Indigenous youth, with particular attention to the mental health supports that should have been available to assist him. The second is an aggregate review of the prevalence of sexualized violence directed at children and youth in care or receiving reviewable services, and changes that could both reduce vulnerability and better support youth who are victimized. The third investigation examines the death of a young man engaged in a youth justice program, with a focus on how youth justice deals with clients with substance use issues and their families.

There are currently two additional investigations underway, both of which began in spring 2016. The first concerns the death of a young man who had been in a long-term placement in a hotel – the tragedy that triggered the joint Representative and MCFD examination of hotel placements.

The second concerns the death of a young man with complex mental health needs who died while staying in a hospital setting, with a focus on the capacity of existing residential services to support children and youth who present with similar challenges.

It is anticipated that the Representative will identify at least one more investigation to be commenced before the end of 2016.

# 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, education and well-being for vulnerable children and youth.

## 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, with particular focus on key subject matter areas such as child and youth mental health and permanence for children in care. The monitoring team also tracks key service-delivery issues and assesses government's progress towards addressing those issues.
- **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.

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 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.

## Looking Back: Highlights of Monitoring Activities in 2015/16

### *Monitoring and Special Reports in 2015/16*

June 18, 2015, *Growing Up in B.C. – 2015*

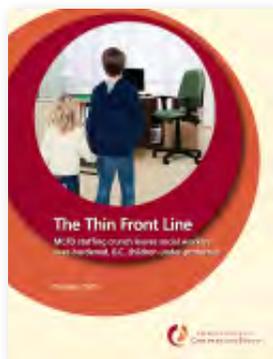


This joint report between the Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer examined the question, “How are our children and youth doing right now?” The report found that while there have been some improvements, vulnerable children and youth, especially Indigenous children and those in government care, continue to lag behind their peers. In addition, it found that with changes to the way governments are collecting data, it is getting harder to get a clear picture of the well-being of B.C. children and youth.

As a follow-up to the first *Growing Up in B.C.* issued in 2010, *Growing Up in B.C. – 2015* documents six areas of child health and well-being, with the voices of experts and youth prominent throughout. While there are some positive findings, the results paint a picture of the struggles vulnerable children and youth continue to face with poverty, education, health concerns, safety, risky behaviours and maintaining connections to their families and communities.

*Growing Up in B.C. – 2015* produced two infographics: one on education outcomes of children and youth in B.C., including children and youth in care, and a second designed for youth and with youth input featuring key data in the report’s six domains of well-being.

Oct. 8, 2015, *The Thin Front Line: MCFD staffing crunch leaves social workers over-burdened, B.C. children under-protected*



This report revealed a dramatic mismatch between expectations placed on child protection social workers and the number of staff province-wide available to do the work. Despite the demands and complexity of the job increasing in recent years, there were fewer front-line child protection workers in B.C. in 2015 than there were in 2002. As a result, the timelines set out in child protection standards routinely go unmet and children and youth are too often left in unsafe situations while social workers are increasingly disillusioned and burned out.



### Dec. 9, 2015, *B.C. Adoption Update*

This report was the third update to the Representative's 2014 report *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption Program*, and provided key statistics for the fiscal year to date and for the two previous fiscal years. Numbers showed improvement in some areas of B.C.'s provincial adoption process, including an increase in the number of approved adoptive homes per month and the number of available Indigenous adoptive homes.

## Looking Ahead: Monitoring Strategic Priorities for 2016/17 and 2017/18

### A Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.

During the early part of this time period, the Representative completed a review of publicly funded youth substance use services in B.C. This review included gathering information about specialized youth substance use services and interviewing key informants in the service system to determine the availability and accessibility of specific types of programs and to assess the overall functioning of the system.

### Adoptions Update

The Representative's fourth report on adoptions in B.C. will update statistics on the adoption of children and youth in care, take stock of government progress on recommendations from the Representative's 2014 report *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System* and assess the sustainability of the 2015/16 increases in the number of adoptions achieved.



Representative at adoption celebration, 2016

### Review of Delegated Aboriginal Agency Staffing

During the upcoming year, the Representative will complete a review of staffing issues in B.C.'s 23 delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs). These agencies provide a range of child welfare supports to Indigenous children, youth and their families. This review will consist of interviews with staff who provide child protection services as well as interviews with executive directors of the DAAs. The findings of this review will complement the findings from the Representative's October 2015 report, *The Thin Front Line*, regarding staffing issues at MCFD.

### Education Supports for Children and Youth in Care

The Representative has initiated a review of supports for the education outcomes of children and youth in government care. This review will examine:

- data on education outcomes of children and youth in care with a Continuing Custody Order
- what is working to support education outcomes of children and youth in care
- challenges that make it difficult to support education outcomes of children and youth in care
- what would improve support for education outcomes for children and youth in care.

The review will give particular attention to Aboriginal children and youth in care as well as children and youth in care who have special needs. It will update provincial data on education outcomes of children and youth in care and will gather input from people who play important roles in supporting education outcomes of children and youth in care, including youth in and from care themselves, foster parents, MCFD and DAA social workers, and teachers and principals.

### Advocacy

The advocacy mandate of the Representative is about ensuring 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 and dealing with 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.

"I do have a voice and a right to be listened to and consulted about big decisions that affect me."  
– Youth Voice

### Advocacy Program

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

The system of child and youth services in the province is 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, from their 19th to 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 the 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.

When contacted by individuals outside the Representative's mandate, the Advocacy team will try to direct them to the relevant agency or service by providing information and referrals.

### **Listening to and considering the voice of youth in decisions affecting them**

Catharine\* reached out to the Representative's Office to get help for her daughter, who was experiencing ongoing mental health issues. Jane was 15 years old and living in a staffed residence. She was engaging in unsafe behaviour and self-harm and Catharine was worried that MCFD was not addressing her daughter's complex needs. As well, Jane was repeatedly running away and had been placed in custody a few times. Jane did not trust MCFD workers and had expressed many times that she was not happy in her current residence.

On Jane's behalf, the advocate from the Representative's Office contacted and met with a number of MCFD staff, including MCFD's Child and Youth Mental Health team. The advocate met with Jane to learn about what she wanted for her life and attended planning meetings regarding Jane to facilitate MCFD meeting directly with her. The advocate worked to ensure that Jane was included in planning and searching for a home in which she felt safe and comfortable. MCFD began meeting with Jane directly and was able to slowly build trust with her. MCFD found a home for Jane that incorporated therapy with animals. The animals at the home were all rescue animals, which Jane related to well. For the first time, Jane was excited about a plan and willing to engage positively with her social worker to make it happen. Over time, Jane transitioned to this new home where she now resides.

*(\*names have been changed to protect privacy)*

### **Systemic Advocacy**

Individual advocacy cases may reveal broader issues of a systemic nature requiring further research and consideration. Systemic advocacy extracts themes from individual advocacy cases, and from those themes, identifies broad changes in the child-, youth- and young adult-serving system to improve overall programs and services to benefit children, youth and their families. This may include collaborating with others, consultation with senior government officials to raise awareness of the over-arching issue and speaking out and advocating for the resolution of the problem.

The Systemic Advocacy Working Group in the Representative's Office, made up of staff from all program areas, meets regularly to share information with the goal of identifying, monitoring and analyzing emerging issues and trends arising from individual advocacy cases, and comparing them against issues and themes arising from CID reviews and investigations and Monitoring work.

### *Outreach – Community Relations and Youth Engagement*

Outreach to communities and direct engagement with youth is essential to raising awareness and creating understanding of children's rights. It also works to build capacity within communities and within youth and young people themselves for speaking out to ensure those rights are met.

The Representative undertakes a broad range of community relations activities and initiatives to raise awareness about the advocacy services provided by the Representative's Office, to provide education about the rights of children, to build relationships with child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations including MCFD, CLBC and DAAs, and to facilitate the development of community-based advocacy services and supports. Outreach activities also allow the Representative to hear directly from youth about how services and supports can best meet their needs.



Plan Your Path tour, 2015

## Looking Back: Highlights of Advocacy Activities in 2015/16

### *Advocacy Initiatives*

#### **Working with Youth Custody Centres**

The Representative's Advocacy team has established an ongoing positive relationship with Youth Custody Centres in Prince George and Burnaby to provide direct advocacy advice and support to youth in the centres.

Advocates visit the centres on a monthly basis to meet with youth individually and discuss any concerns they may have with their planning or issues arising in the centres themselves. Advocates encourage and support self-advocacy, assisting youth in having the opportunity 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.

### Assisting with transitioning out of care

Alice,\* an 18-year-old Indigenous girl, was making plans and preparing for when she would age out of care in four months. After some growing pains, she was eager to enter into a Youth Agreement with MCFD so that she could access supports that would help her make the transition into adulthood. She was also interested in a Youth Agreement so that she would be eligible for the Agreements with Young Adults program that would help to cover the cost of post-secondary education. Because of her past behaviour, however, MCFD was unwilling to enter into a Youth Agreement with Alice.

Alice contacted an advocate at the Representative's Office for help in dealing with MCFD. She was now ready to work positively to prepare for her own future but she needed supports to achieve her goals. The advocate spoke with MCFD staff, Alice's youth worker and support staff at the shelter where Alice was staying and arranged a meeting with Alice and those key players involved in her case. Alice demonstrated her commitment to work collaboratively with MCFD and other support staff and entered into a Youth Agreement with MCFD. Through her determination and with the support of the Representative's advocacy, Alice is now getting both the financial and life skills support to help her achieve her goals and become a healthy adult.

*(\*names have been changed to protect privacy)*

### Advocacy related to vulnerable youth across the province

The release of *Paige's Story* in May 2015 sparked interest and concern across the province for youth receiving services from MCFD. Community members and youth called and spoke with Advocacy staff about the multiple barriers youth face when trying to access supports like housing, treatment options and mental health services. In response, the Representative's Advocacy program has been tracking its involvement in cases involving youth receiving MCFD services and working closely with the ministry and staff of DAAs to ensure that a coordinated and caring systems approach is taken in working with these youth.

### Advocacy Renewal

This year also saw a focus on renewal within the Advocacy program area. The Advocacy staff and management team worked to refine and revise Advocacy policies, procedures and best practice guidelines. The Advocacy program's management team amended the internal quality assurance audit tools to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and practice for all team members. In addition, the Office engaged an external evaluator to review the Advocacy program's current resources, organizational structure, caseloads and practices.

#### Meeting a youth's needs and maintaining connections to family

John,\* a youth with developmental disabilities and several diagnosed mental illnesses, was in care under a special needs agreement for the past five years as his family was unable to meet his needs. Initially, this arrangement had been successful in providing John with a place to live where he was happy and well-supported. However, John's family had moved to another community in another region of the province, and visits were limited to once per month, leaving John lonely and isolated. John started acting out negatively. Moving John to a residence closer to his family had been requested, but the process had become stalled.

The family sought the help of an advocate at the Representative's Office in moving things forward. The advocate met with John directly to ensure that this move was what he wanted. The advocate also contacted MCFD staff in the community where John currently lived and in the community where his family lived and that was his planned destination. The situation was brought to the attention of the managers in the two offices involved who committed to resolving the issue in a timely way. Within two months, a specialized resource had been created for John in the same community as his family. John's family brought him to his new home in his new community.

*(\*names have been changed to protect privacy)*

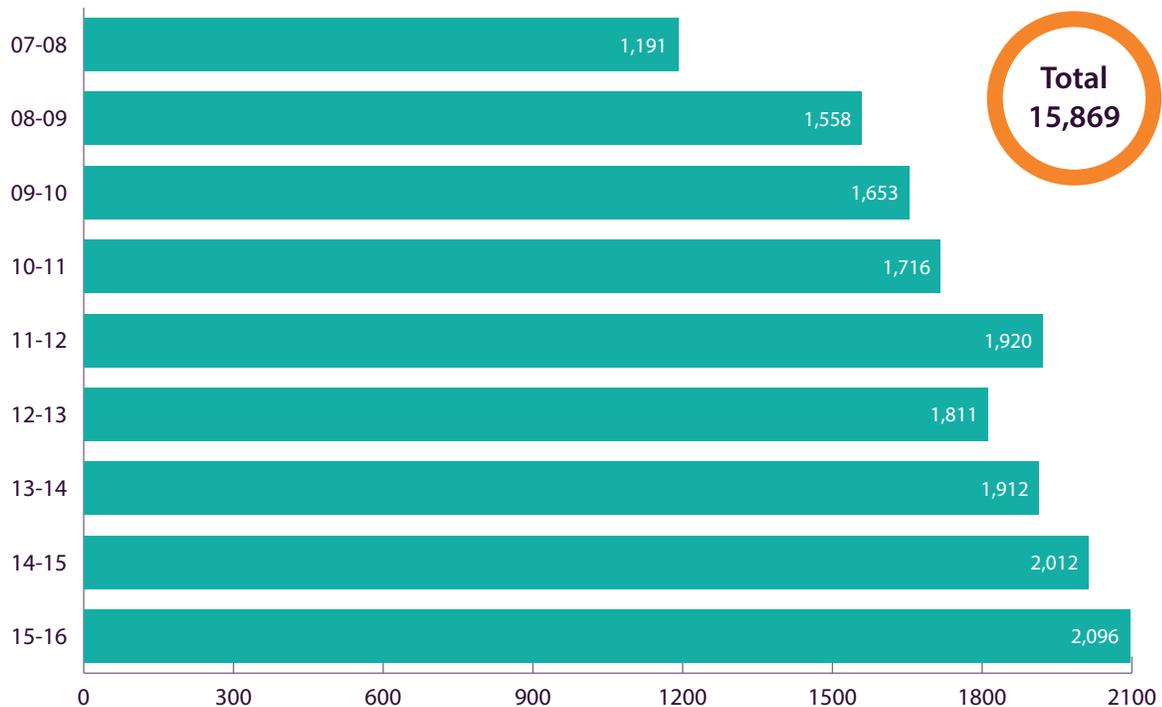


### Advocacy Cases and Trends

For the third year running, there was an increase in advocacy cases handled by the Representative's Advocacy team. Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, the Representative's Advocacy team dealt with 2,096 cases – the largest number of advocacy cases dealt with in a single year in the Office's history.

Advocates in the Representative's Office also had more direct contact this year with children, youth and young adults in providing individual advocacy support.

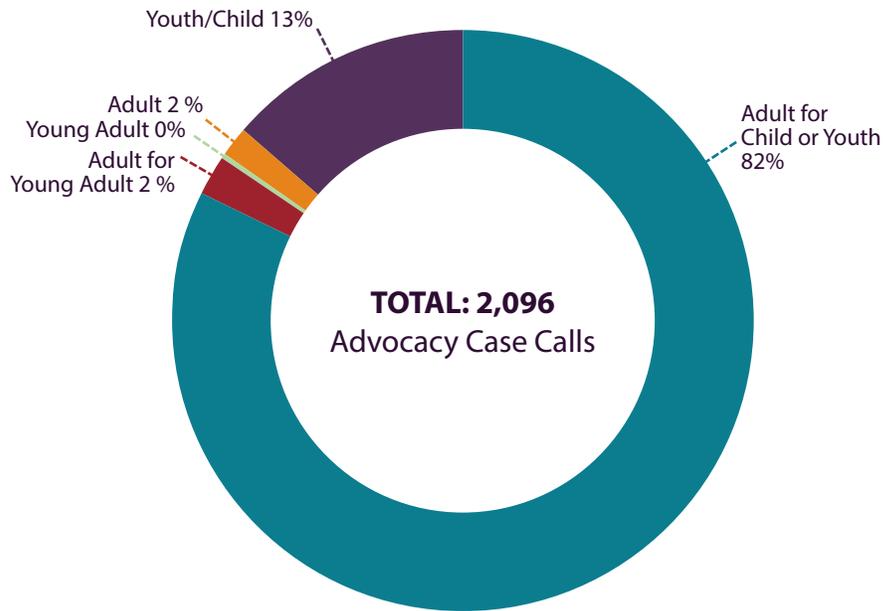
**Figure 7 – Total Advocacy Cases 2007/08 to 2015/16**



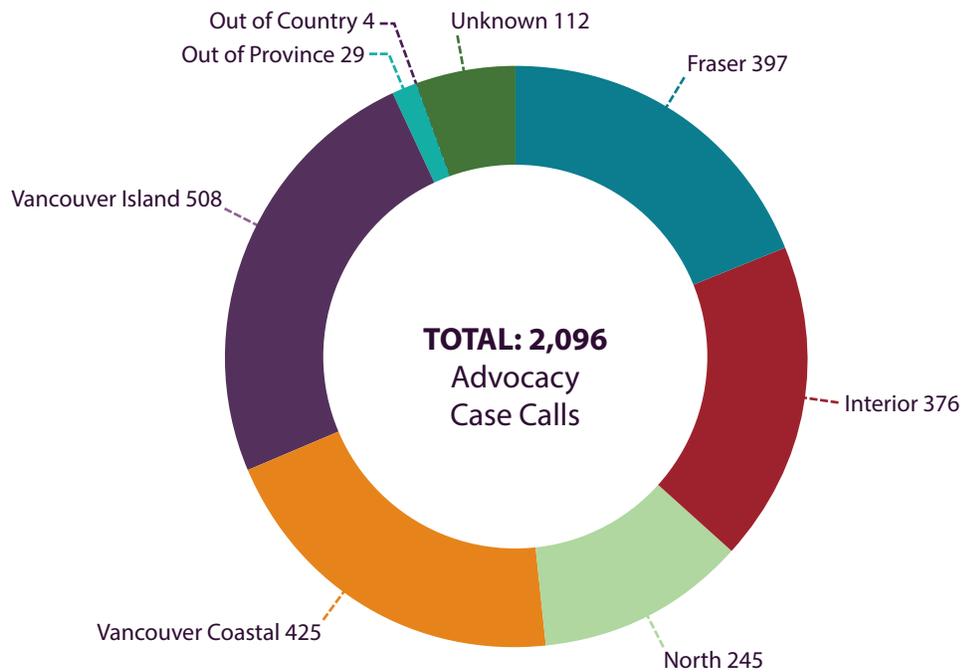
## Programs and Activities

Figures 8 and 9 provide detail on the origin of advocacy cases by source of initial contact and by region.

**Figure 8 – Advocacy Cases by Initial Contact 2015/16**



**Figure 9 – Advocacy Cases by Region 2015/16**



### *Community Relations*

In 2015/16 the Representative and her staff continued to reach out to communities through a range of activities including: hosting information sessions with community child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations and groups; making presentations at conferences and forums; attending community events and hosting information booths to distribute information about the rights of children and youth, as well as the services of the Office; and facilitating workshops on child and youth rights.

In 2015/16, the Advocacy team participated in more than 100 community relations events and activities.



Plan Your Path tour, 2015

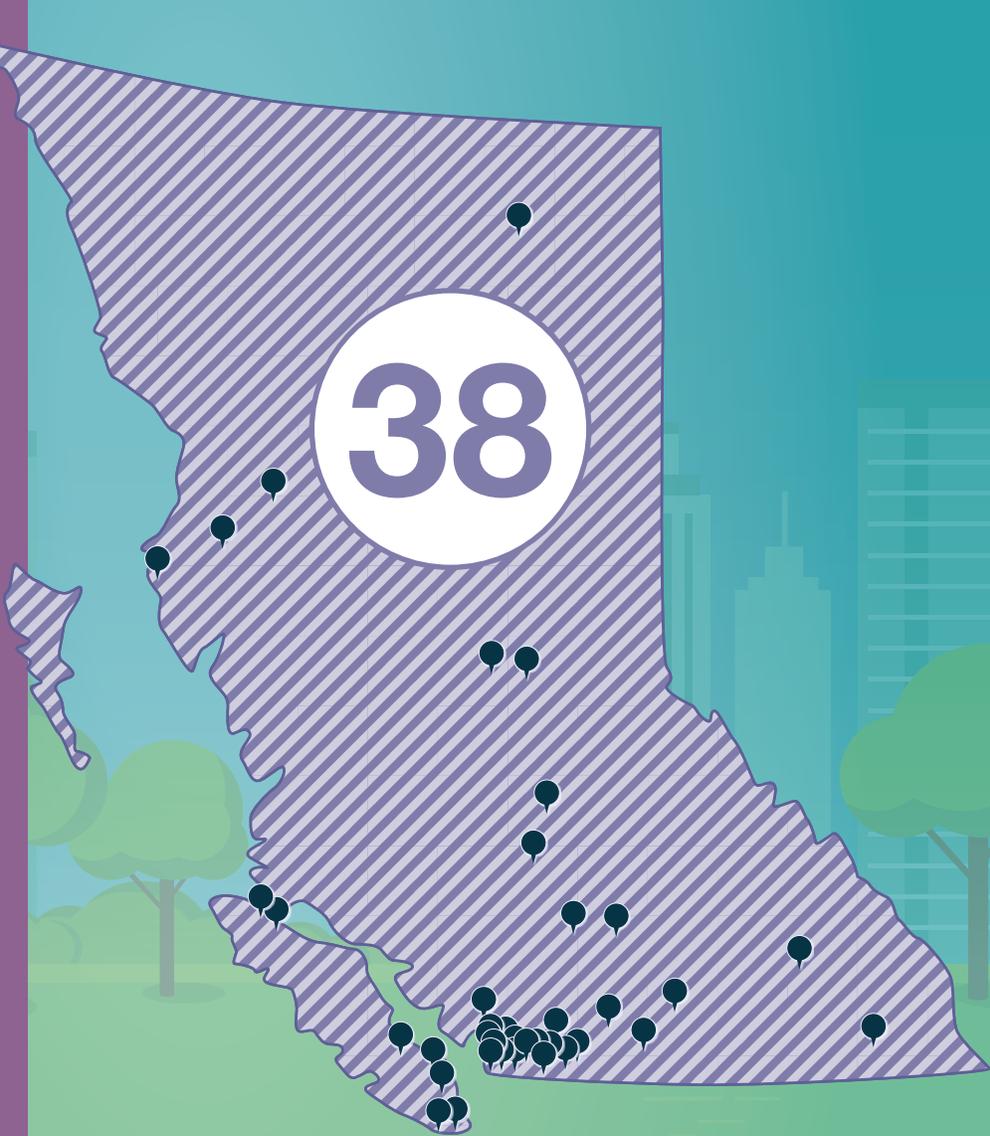
# Communities Visited



## Regional Visits

The Representative and staff of the Representative's Office travel around British Columbia to carry out advocacy work, youth engagement and community relations activities and investigations. The Representative and staff also visit and engage with communities through speaking invitations and other events. Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, the Office of the Representative visited 38 communities in B.C.

- Abbotsford
- Alert Bay
- Alkali Lake
- Burnaby
- Chehalis
- Chilliwack
- Coquitlam
- Cranbrook
- Duncan
- Harrison Hot Springs
- Hazelton
- Kamloops
- Kelowna
- Langford
- Langley
- Lytton
- Maple Ridge
- Merritt
- Mission
- Nanaimo
- New Westminster
- North Vancouver
- Port Alberni
- Port McNeill
- Princeton
- Prince George
- Prince Rupert
- Richmond
- Squamish
- Surrey
- Terrace
- Trout Lake
- Tsawwassen
- Vancouver
- Vanderhoof
- Victoria
- West Vancouver
- Williams Lake



## Youth Engagement

A key focus of the Representative's Office in the past year was to reach out to young people directly to educate them about their rights and empower them to speak out for themselves.

The Advocacy program worked with Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships staff to establish the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team that is working with the Office to plan and host an Indigenous Youth Forum in October 2016. (Learn more about the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team, and meet two of its members, on pages 54 and 55.) The Advocacy program also worked closely with the Communications team to establish the Social Media Youth Team comprised of youth representatives from throughout the province to provide advice on how the Representative can best connect with youth through social media to inform them about the Office's advocacy services. (Learn more about the Social Media Youth Team on pages 60 and 61.)

The Representative and her staff participated in the Gathering Our Voices Indigenous youth conference that took place over four days in March 2016 in Victoria. The largest Indigenous youth conference in Canada, Gathering Our Voices had more than 1,200 youth participants. The Representative's staff hosted an information booth connecting with and distributing educational materials to more than 600 youth participants. Advocacy and Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships program staff also delivered two arts-based Indigenous child rights workshops to 54 youth.



The Representative with youth at launch of Fostering Change Write the Future campaign, 2016

Advocacy staff regularly attended the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (BCFYICN) Steering Committee meetings at which Advocacy team members were available to provide advocacy support to youth in and from care. Advocacy staff also led a consultation session with youth to get their feedback on Advocacy program materials.

Advocacy staff from the Burnaby office delivered numerous advocacy workshops to youth and young adults, ages 17 to 24, as part of YWCA's Strive Program, a 12-week program for youth transitioning or who have transitioned out of foster care. Advocacy staff led workshops on self-advocacy, rights and "mapping your advocates," an exercise where youth identify and map the advocates and supports in their lives to whom they can go for help and assistance.

### Looking Ahead: Advocacy Strategic Priorities for 2016/17 and 2017/18

The focus of the Advocacy program for children, youth and young adults and their families over the next two years will be on:

- continuing efforts to increase direct contact with children, youth and young adults in individual advocacy cases. Increasing the percentage of advocacy clients who have direct contact with Advocacy team members and the percentage of face-to-face, client-related advocacy meetings is a key objective
- increasing the percentage of calls the advocacy program receives from young adults and the adults who support them. Enhanced outreach to organizations that work with this client group to increase awareness of the Representative's services, as well as direct face-to-face contact with young adults through community events and presentations or one-on-one meetings are key objectives
- supporting the work of the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team and creating opportunities for collaboration in working with Indigenous children, youth and young adults. Increased community outreach and youth engagement opportunities with Indigenous communities and youth to increase awareness of the services and supports of the Representative's Advocacy program are key objectives.

Implementing the results and recommendations from the Advocacy program review undertaken in 2015/16, including modifications in program structure, job profiles, practice standards and accountability, will also be a priority in 2016/17.

The Advocacy team will continue to work in concert with the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships and Communications teams to coordinate the planning and delivery of community relations and youth engagement activities. The priorities are:

- to establish and improve relationships with community and government agencies serving children, youth and young adults. The Office will continue to foster strong working relations with BCFYICN, BC People First, Indigenous-serving organizations and DAAs, the Family Support Institute, Inclusion BC, community-based youth-serving organizations and local MCFD offices.
- to continue to implement strategies to promote meaningful engagement with youth and young adults, including through creative events and activities to raise awareness
- to educate children, youth and young adults about their rights and the advocacy services of the Representative's Office and to build their self-advocacy skills.

## Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships

The Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team works with all members of the Representative's Office to ensure that the Office is culturally safe and responsive and that its work is guided by relationships based on respect and reconciliation, equity, accountability, Indigenous voices and best practices. The team is intentional and specific in its efforts to provide an Indigenous focus to the work of the Representative's Office and to strengthen the Representative's work on behalf of Indigenous children, youth and young adults.

### Looking Back: Highlights of Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships Activities in 2015/16

#### *Operational Renewal*

In 2015/16, the Representative undertook a review of what has previously been known as the Aboriginal Initiatives team to consider ways to enhance its services and supports to other program areas and the work of the Office in advocating for and working with Indigenous communities and agencies. Moving forward, Aboriginal Initiatives has been renamed Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships and will play a key role in ensuring that Indigenous values and perspectives are reflected in all aspects of the work of the Representative's Office. The Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team will:

- work with Indigenous leadership, agencies and communities to advocate for culturally grounded and effective support for Indigenous children, youth and families receiving services funded by government within the Representative's mandate
- support, engage and educate Indigenous communities, children, youth and families on child rights
- support and advocate for best practices within MCFD, DAAs and other Indigenous organizations to improve services and programs for vulnerable children, youth and families
- support research findings of the Representative and advocate for culturally supportive permanency planning for children and youth in care.



Staff members Lise Haddock and Amanda Willis at the Never Again Memorial in Penticton, Syilx territory

### *Amplified Engagement with Indigenous Youth*

The 2015/16 year was pivotal for the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team in working to inform youth about the work of the Representative's Office and directly involve youth in that work.

In February 2016, the Representative established the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team, comprised of five young adults between the ages of 19 and 24 of Indigenous ancestry who are knowledgeable about and/or have lived experience with being in care or in an out-of-care arrangement. Working with the Representative's Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team and other staff of the Office, the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team is responsible for designing and organizing a forum to be held in October 2016 in the Lower Mainland. The purpose is to listen to young people talk about their needs and experiences and work in partnership with them to effect change in the system of services designed to meet their needs.



## Meet Landon and Jessica – Members of the Representative's Indigenous Youth Leadership Team

Hadih, my name is Landon Gregg, and I am Carrier from the Nak'azdli Reserve in Fort St. James, B.C. I am a member of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team in the Burnaby RCY office. The experience has been wonderful as we go through the process of creating a youth-focused event, striving to create real, positive change in the lives of our young people. Highlights include going into the community to reach out to local Indigenous youth in care, receiving hands-on training from a variety of sources and collaborating with many passionate people. Being a member of our team means a lot to me as I'm fortunate enough to help those who need it most while developing my own skills. It is also a chance to create lasting friendships, try new things, and have fun! Going forward, I am extremely excited to help create necessary changes in the care system, and continuously aid our youth in using their strong voices. Musi!



My name is Jessica Savoy and I was raised on the east side of Vancouver. I am Nisga'a, Acadian French and Italian. As part of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team with the Representative's Office, I am currently organizing a forum for Indigenous youth aged 14 to 18, who are in care or receiving services from MCFD, or a delegated Aboriginal Agency. Being a part of this process has been very meaningful in my life. I am an inter-generational survivor of residential school. I have seen first-hand the lasting effects that it has had on our peoples. I have witnessed the fracture of my family, and seen many peers go down the wrong path. I am here breaking the cycle. I am fortunate to have been raised around the love and teaching of my grandmother. I want to give back to my community and support youth the way I have been supported.

## Programs and Activities

The Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships Team continued its efforts to promote child rights through workshops held at key Indigenous events and activities. In 2015/16, the team developed a youth rights workshop for Indigenous youth that focuses on culture and identity and offered it for the first time at the March 2016 Gathering Our Voices conference.

The team also completed the "Plan Your Path" rights tour for youth in care of DAAs and visited and held workshops in Terrace, Hazelton, Alert Bay, Port McNeill and Williams Lake.

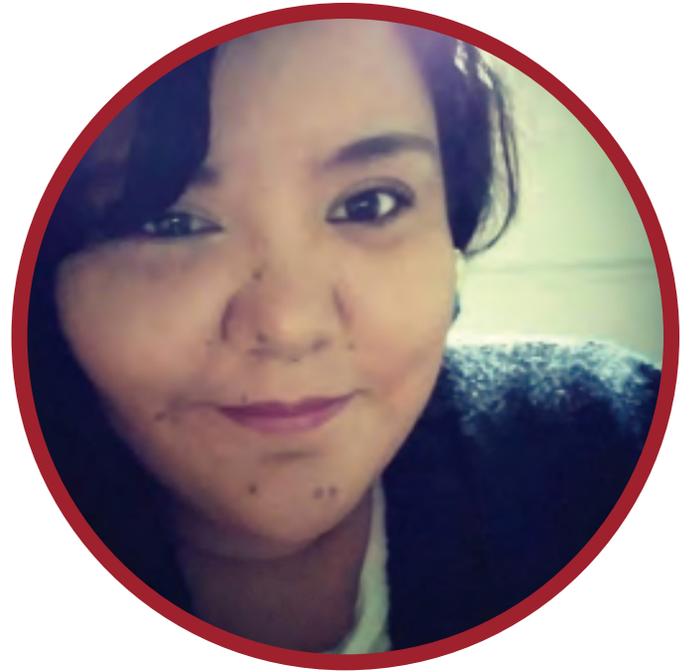
This was also the second year that the Representative's Office employed an intern under the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program. The intern helped to support the Representative's Social Media Youth Team, developing social media material and advising the Representative's Communications team on strategies for reaching youth.

### *Strengthening Indigenous community engagement*

Another major undertaking this year was to increase communications, coordination and partnerships with Indigenous leadership, agencies and communities to encourage culturally grounded support for Indigenous children and youth receiving services.

A particular highlight was the Indigenous permanency forum, A Forum for Change, co-sponsored by the Representative, the Directors Forum of 23 DAAs and MCFD and held in Nanaimo in April 2015. Joined by a number of elders, First Nations and Métis chiefs and leaders and representatives from Indigenous organizations and communities, the purpose of the Forum was to advance and instigate real and concrete change in the lives of First Nations, Métis and other Indigenous children in care through movement into forever families.

Working with other program areas in the Representative's Office, the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team also supported project consultation, information-sharing about cultural best practices and systemic issues, and partnerships with Indigenous leadership and communities. The team supported the work of the Monitoring team by assisting with research and analysis related to staffing of DAAs and stakeholder engagement for an ongoing review of educational outcomes.



I want to honestly say thank you to each and every one of you for helping me in my own journey of learning and growing my skills in the time that I have been here.

— Brianna  
*Aboriginal Youth Internship Program*

## Looking Ahead: Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships Strategic Priorities for 2016/17 and 2017/18

The priorities for the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team over the next two years are based on three main strategies: building internal organizational capacity to work with Indigenous peoples in a way that respects and is informed by Indigenous world views; strengthening relationships with Indigenous leadership, communities and service providers; and supporting Indigenous rights and cultural permanency.

- *Building internal capacity by:*
  - working with the Representative's Human Resources staff to help strengthen the cultural competencies and responsiveness of all staff members to Indigenous cultures and customs in order to improve services and programs to Indigenous children, youth and their families
  - working with the Representative's CID, Advocacy and Monitoring programs and Communications team to ensure that Indigenous values and perspectives are reflected in the Representative's work.
- *Strengthening community relationships and youth engagement through:*
  - continuing to provide First Nations-based support visits and attending major Indigenous community events where possible
  - working with the Indigenous Youth Leadership team to develop and host the October 2016 Indigenous youth forum, Ignite Your Spirit
  - continuing to build relationships with delegated Aboriginal Agency leadership including consulting with agency leadership on issues related to child welfare and cultural permanency.
- *Building our permanency and Indigenous child rights profile through:*
  - developing and coordinating an Indigenous child rights tour focusing on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to support and engage Indigenous communities, children, youth and families about child rights
  - undertaking research and analysis on cultural permanency, custom and kinship placement and tribal adoptions.



Staff member Linda Hughes attended Kw'umut Lelum's Strong Roots, Strong Families 20th Anniversary Celebration

## Communications

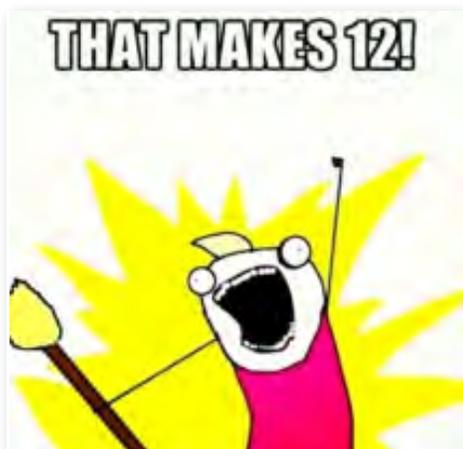
The Communications team helps to build awareness of the Office and its work throughout B.C., supports the Representative and Senior Executive members at speaking engagements and public appearances, plays a major role in the editing, design and production of the Representative's reports and assists with all promotional activities and initiatives of the Representative's Office.

The Communications team also manages and responds to media requests, organizes and runs media events for the Representative, supports executive members by keeping them aware of current topics in the media, and facilitates the contribution of articles and information by the Representative to stakeholder newsletters.

The team monitors issues for the Representative and provides strategic advice to her and the rest of executive, coordinates a weekly staff newsletter, and organizes awareness days such as Pink Shirt Day (recognizing anti-bullying awareness) and Orange Shirt Day (bringing awareness to the residential school experience and committing to reconciliation).

To help fulfill the Representative's objective of reaching as many British Columbians as possible, the Communications team maintains a growing social media presence.

The Communications team also supports the Representative in her ongoing efforts to ensure that youth who have been in care have access to post-secondary education. In response to the challenge made by the Representative in 2014 to



all 25 B.C. post-secondary institutions to waive tuition for former youth in care, 12 colleges and universities now either waive tuition or are offering tuition bursaries for former youth in care. Communications works to build awareness among stakeholders and the public of the challenges former youth in care face, and of the long-lasting positive social and economic impact colleges and universities can have on the lives of these students. The team also works to facilitate dialogue with young people receiving free tuition to find out what works, what doesn't and what is needed to improve their lives and chances of success.



Staff getting into the spirit of Pink Shirt Day 2016

As we are growing up, we need someone who tells us that we can achieve our career dreams.

— Former Youth in Care about Tuition Waiver

## Looking Back: Highlights of Communications Activities in 2015/16

### Media activities

In 2015/16, the Representative's Office responded to 285 requests from the media.

Topics covered included investigations undertaken by the Representative, high-profile court cases, individual advocacy cases, youth aging out of care, tuition waivers for former youth in care, adoptions, MCFD staffing, MCFD funding, the Bob Plecas report for MCFD (*Decision Time*) and the Representative's own report in response, Victoria's tent city, homelessness across the province and youth homelessness in particular, youth mental health supports, child care expenses and the age at which a child can be left alone, autism supports in B.C., domestic violence, cyberbullying and the use of hotels as placements for children and youth in care.



The Representative being interviewed by APTN, 2016

### Website and Social Media

The Representative's Communications team uses social media to raise awareness about the Office and its services among distinct audiences and to engage the public and stakeholders on various topics of interest.

The Office has active Facebook and Twitter accounts aimed at adult stakeholders such as media, government and opposition staff and MLAs, social workers and those who work with children and youth in many capacities, advocacy groups, law enforcement and those involved in youth and family justice, adoption agencies, advocates and the general public.

The Representative also uses social media to reach children and youth directly and has launched a number of new initiatives in 2015/16 to connect with these groups and those who work with them. The Office now has an Instagram account, a YouTube channel and youth-focused Twitter and Facebook pages. A dedicated Social Media Youth Team advises and creates content for the Representative's social media youth accounts, including production of graphics illustrating legislated and United Nations youth rights, videos on the Representative's advocacy services and rights education, photographs and sourced content (see next page for more on the Social Media Youth Team).

### *Social Media Youth Team*

In 2015/16, the Representative's Office formed its first ever Social Media Youth Team. The mission? To help the Office spread the word about its advocacy services through social media to all youth in B.C., especially youth in care and Indigenous youth. The Representative strongly believes that youth views must inform the work of the Office and the Social Media Youth Team has proven to be a valuable addition.

The six-member team was recruited from the three areas in the province in which the Representative has office space: Victoria, Vancouver and Prince George. The team is comprised of a cross-section of dynamic and motivated youth with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

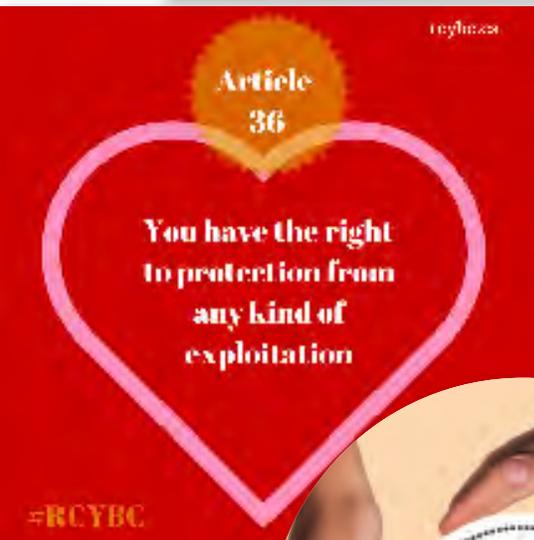
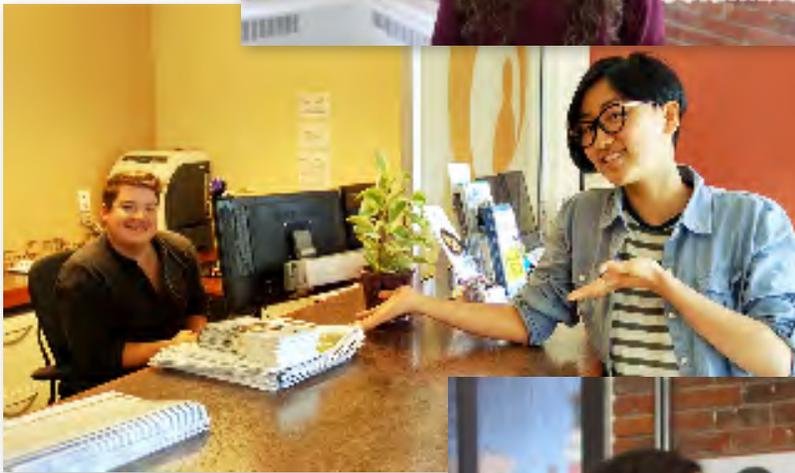
The project launched with a two-day orientation at the Representative's Victoria office in December 2015 and remains active to the present. Team members are hands-on, and both advise and create content for the Representative's youth-oriented social media accounts. In addition to providing advice and recommendations, they have created videos, designed images, provided photos and written content.

Since the formation of the Social Media Youth Team, the Representative's Office has launched a youth Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/RCYBCyouth](http://www.facebook.com/RCYBCyouth)) and revitalized its Instagram account (@RCYBCyouth) and youth Twitter page (@RCYBCyouth).



I'm quite proud to have the opportunity to benefit my community with the work I do at RCY.

— Louis Parnell  
Member, Social Media Youth Team



## Programs and Activities

The Representative's website and its mobile-friendly version, launched in 2014, continue to play a central role in disseminating information. In 2015/16, the Office launched a Legal Resources webpage in conjunction with the Law Foundation containing resource information in several areas, including criminal and family law, legal rights, cyberbullying and other Internet issues, health, police, school and legal representation services (<http://www.rcybc.ca/legal-resources>).

The Office posts all of the Representative's reports, statements, updates and editorials to the website. In 2015/16, the website recorded nearly three million hits.

### Speaking Up on Issues of Importance to Children and Youth

The Representative continues to speak up on issues that matter in the lives of children, youth, young adults and their families. In 2015/16, this included:

- *Speeches:*
  - May 15, 2015 – keynote speaker at the Access to Justice for Children Conference in Vancouver
  - May 29, 2015 – speaker at the Inclusion B.C. Conference in Vancouver on the Representative's advocacy and oversight role
  - Sept. 21, 2015 – participant in a news conference in Vancouver about the importance of reuniting divided families caught up in a global refugee crisis
  - Nov. 5, 2015 – keynote speaker at the Adoption Council of Canada National Summit on exploring best practices around permanency
  - Jan. 21, 2016 – speaker at UBC's Janusz Korczak Lecture Series on the human rights of Aboriginal children and youth.



The Representative at the release of the *Growing Up in B.C. - 2015* report at École Lansdowne Middle School in Victoria, June 18, 2015

- *Statements:*

- June 2, 2015 – the Representative issued a statement during B.C.'s Child and Youth in Care Week focusing on the importance of education, transitions to independence and supports for Indigenous children and youth in care
- Sept. 9, 2015 – the Representative's statement on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day focused on FASD as a collective societal problem that affects all of us
- Dec. 14, 2015 – the Representative made a statement in response to the Bob Plecas report (*Decision Time*) asserting the importance of continued independent oversight over MCFD
- Nov. 20, 2015 – the Representative joined with the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) on National Child Day to call on federal and provincial/territorial governments to come together and address the dire situation of Indigenous child welfare in Canada
- March 13, 2016 – the Representative and the Minister of Children and Family Development issued a joint Opinion-Editorial in celebration of Social Work Week to share thanks and appreciation for the challenging and important work done by social workers.

On June 9, the Representative was honoured by Simon Fraser University at its Spring Convocation with an Honourary Doctorate in recognition of her advocacy for children and youth in British Columbia.



The Representative leads a group of youth who receive tuition waivers for post-secondary education in a chorus of "Make it 25!", 2016

## Looking Ahead: Communications Strategic Priorities for 2015/16 and 2016/17

The Office of the Representative will continue to focus on expanding its outreach activities to reach children and youth in B.C., and the Communications team will continue to work in support of those projects. In addition to attending stakeholder events, presenting at conferences and engaging with the public and media, the Office will continue to focus on informing and engaging youth. Key strategic Communications activities underway and to be initiated over the coming year include:

- Distribute province-wide newly created brochure on advocacy services offered by the Office for young adults under the age of 24 who are receiving or are eligible to receive CLBC services
- Create YouTube videos to illustrate the functions of the Office and the services offered
- Work with youth to develop videos for youth explaining their rights under the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, how advocates in the Representative's Office can help and how to self-advocate
- Finalize update of materials used by advocates and other staff to bring awareness to child and youth rights and the supports offered by the Representative.



# RCY Milestones 2006 to 2016

## Advocacy Cases

16,209

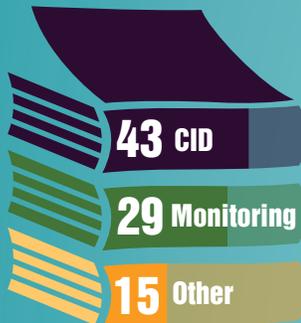


Media  
Inquiries

1,800+

## Public Reports

87  
Reports



## Youth Summits



5

## Partnership Agreements

- ✓ Métis Nation British Columbia
- ✓ First Nations Education Steering Committee
- ✓ First Nations Directors' Forum
- ✓ Ministry of Children and Family Development
- ✓ Community Living B.C.

## Representative's Speeches

190



## Report Recommendations

189



47

Presentations to  
Legislature Committees

## Injury and Death Reports Received

Injuries 2,591

Deaths 903

3,494



12

Post-secondary schools with  
free tuition for former youth in care



150+

Students with tuition waiver



3

Youth Advisory Groups

# 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. The Office uses three primary data sources to measure its performance: internal management information systems, publicly available reports and third-party survey data.

The Office uses its performance management information to understand how effective its strategies are in terms of meeting its legislated mandate to advocate for children and youth and to provide independent oversight to the child- and youth-serving system. Based on the results, the Office will alter or enhance its strategies and approaches to providing services and delivering programs.

## Intended Outcomes

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 review and investigation 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 the 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 and 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 her oversight and accountability role by addressing areas of concern within her 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 her oversight activities and liaising 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:	2015/16 target	2015/16 result	2016/17 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	50%	54%	50%

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2015/16 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public accountability for the review and investigations of critical injuries and deaths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p>In 2015/16, the Representative released three reports detailing reports received, reviews undertaken and investigations identified for the period of the report (Report #23 issued May 6, 2015 for the period Oct. 1, 2014 to Jan. 31, 2015; Report #24 issued Oct. 19, 2015 for the period Feb. 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015 and Report #25 issued Jan. 28, 2016 for the period June 1, 2015 to Sept. 30, 2015)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress on recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 programs<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p>As of March 31, 2016, the following progress has been made by MCFD and other public bodies on the implementation of recommendations made by the Representative during her current term between December 2011 and March 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Implemented - 14.1%</li> <li>– Substantial Progress - 16.7%</li> <li>– Some Progress - 30.8%</li> <li>– No Progress - 38.5%</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance to the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 is viewed by the public</li> </ul>	<p>In 2015/16, the Representative's website received 2,947,279 hits. In total, 74,897 users accessed 317,546 pages on the site</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance to stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the percentage of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the Office, perceive that the Office addresses issues of significance that fall within the Representative's mandate and that the Representative's reports are credible, independent and objective</li> </ul>	<p>The October 2015 Representative for Children and Youth Stakeholder Awareness Survey found that 95 per cent of respondents had some knowledge of or knew a great deal about the Representative's mandate and duties, with 88 per cent very aware or somewhat aware of the Representative's three mandated core functions. A significant number agreed or somewhat agreed that the Representative's reports were credible (81 per cent), independent (84 per cent) and useful (76 per cent). Respondents also believed that the Representative addresses issues of significance that fall within her mandate (89 per cent) and makes a difference for vulnerable children and youth (75 per cent)</p>

<sup>1</sup> 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 responses to requests for assistance and support from vulnerable children, youth and their families, as well as timely and effective review and investigation of incidents of critical injury or death are essential for the Representative to meet her mandate.

Key Performance Indicator:	2015/16 target	2015/16 result	2016/17 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of adult callers requesting advocacy services the Office responds to within the established three-day response timeline</li> </ul>	100%*	88%	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 time frame</li> </ul>	100%	100%	100%

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2015/16 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsiveness to advocacy requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	In 2015/16, 100 per cent of calls from youth were responded to within 24 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the degree of satisfaction from those served as to the amount of time taken to respond to their inquiry and their general overall experience and interaction with Advocacy program staff</li> </ul>	In 2015/16, the Advocacy survey was not undertaken in favour of internal quality assurance processes. The Office is now focusing effort on updating policy and enhancing practices including case audits. A survey may be considered in the future to assess the impact of the quality assurance initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community relations and stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	In 2015/16, the Representative and her staff participated in 189 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 her staff in 2015/16

\* At points during the 2015/16 fiscal year, advocacy call volume increased significantly, exceeding capacity for addressing calls within the three-day response timeline. During this period of high volume, the three-day response timeline was temporarily adjusted upward to five days. The five-day response was achieved in 97% of cases. Callers were informed of the five-day response timeline when they requested service.

## Performance

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2015/16 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p>In 2015/16, the Representative and her 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</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of collaborative efforts or initiatives with Indigenous communities and organizations on mutually identified issues of shared concern</li> </ul>	<p>In 2015/16, the Representative and her staff met with 34 Indigenous organizations and individual First Nations, had seven speaking engagements, and participated in 16 Indigenous events and conferences. 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 her Office. A broad measure of how the Representative demonstrates her 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 her work.

Key Performance Indicator:	2015/16 target	2015/16 result	2016/17 target
• Number of reports and papers publicly released and the number of public comments and statements made by the Representative	5 reports & statements	11 reports, 9 statements	10 reports & statements

Other Indicator of Performance	Measured by	2015/16 Results
• Reporting on activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of times the Representative makes presentations to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY) and the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (SSCFGS)</li> </ul>	<p>The Representative appeared before the SSCCY two times – in May 2015 and November 2015 – and presented on Monitoring and CID reports as well as the <i>2014/15 Annual Report and 2015/16 to 2016/17 Service Plan</i>.</p> <p>The Representative appeared before the SSCFGS three times – in May 2015, November 2015 and January 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:	2015/16 target	2015/16 result	2016/17 target
• Percentage of full-time and part-time staff who participate in ongoing professional development	95%	97%	95%

Professional development included in-service training, workshops and consultation sessions on topics such as youth resiliency, sexual exploitation, addressing the needs of LGBTQ youth in foster care, identifying services and gaps for youth transitioning to adulthood and Indigenous cultural safety.

## Performance

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2015/16 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff contribution to meeting mandate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the degree to which staff are engaged in their work and perceive that they contribute to the achievement of the Office's mandate</li> </ul>	<p>Staff through CREW (see text box on following page) are actively engaged and contribute to ensuring a positive work environment and the effectiveness of the organization</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health, safety and well-being of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Office addresses 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</li> </ul>	<p>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&amp;S) Committee focused on committee training, emergency preparedness (including Victoria office emergency wardens working with building management on building safety planning), and a review of OH&amp;S policies and procedures with particular focus on violence prevention</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing compliance with core policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office policies and procedures adhering to applicable core government policies, standards and practices and the Office meeting budgeting and audit standards and requirements</li> </ul>	<p>In 2015/16, 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</p>

## Staff Contribution and Engagement

Based on staff feedback on how staff engagement and contribution could be enhanced, the Committee for an Engaged and Respectful Workplace (CREW) was created in 2014/15. A total of 16 members, representing all three office locations and all program areas, serve voluntarily on CREW, which is responsible for discussing, developing and forwarding ideas to the Representative and her executive team about how the work environment can be improved and the organization can be made more effective.

During the 2015/16 fiscal year, CREW met regularly and forwarded a total of nine recommendations to Executive, most of which have been implemented. These included: the implementation of a flexible workplace policy that supports employees in balancing their work and home responsibilities while meeting operational requirements; the implementation of an electronic staff suggestion/complaint box that allows for anonymous postings should staff feel uncomfortable expressing their views on any topic; initiation of a process by which all staff of the Representative's Office have an opportunity to offer feedback on report recommendations before a report is published; implementation of regular "position" meetings during which staff can ask questions of executive and offer input about positions taken by the Representative on various topics; and the drafting and implementation of a Representative for Children and Youth Office bullying and harassment policy.

CREW is currently working on ideas for reintroducing an annual staff survey, suggestions for how staff can be more involved in the strategic planning process, and carefully examining the organization's vision and goals to determine whether and how these need to be updated.

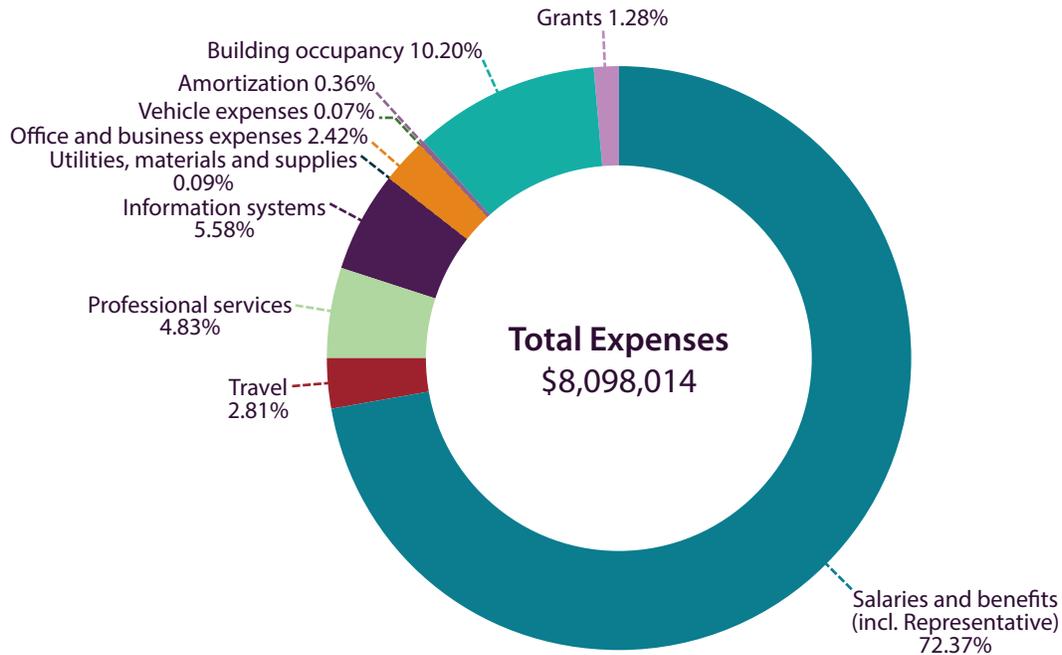


Mary Ellen and Office staff participating in the Times Colonist 10K, 2010

OVERVIEW – Office of the Representative for Children and Youth Strategic Performance Measurement Framework						
Mandate	Values and Principles	Immediate Outcomes	Key Performance Indicators	2015/16 target	2015/16 result	2016/17 target
<p><i>Representative for Children and Youth Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> </ul>	<p><i>Values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child and Youth Centred</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of work undertaken by the Office in response to external oversight, issues raised, matters brought to the Office's attention, or questions from MLAs, the public and stakeholders</li> </ul>	40%	54%	50%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of cases in which the Office responds to requests for adult calls for advocacy services within the established three-day response timeline</li> </ul>	100%	88%	100%
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of screening and review of reports of child and youth critical injury or deaths reported to the Office that are completed by the Office within established two-month time frame</li> </ul>	100%	100%	100%
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of reports/statements publicly released by Representative</li> </ul>	5 reports & statements	11 reports; 9 statements	10 reports & statements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of permanent, full- and part-time staff who participate in professional development activities</li> </ul>	95%	97%	95%

# 2015/16 APPROVED BUDGET

## 2015/16 Operating actual expenditure by type



## 2015/16 Capital actual expenditure by type

The Office made no capital purchases during the 2015/16 fiscal year.

## Looking to the future (2016/17 – 2018/19)

The table below illustrates operating and capital budgets approved for 2016/17 and planned for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Operating	Note	2016/17 Estimates	2017/18 Planned	2018/19 Planned
Salaries and benefits	1	6,199,000	6,199,000	6,199,000
Travel	2	280,000	280,000	280,000
Professional services	3	437,000	437,000	437,000
Information systems	4	477,000	477,000	477,000
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	4,000	4,000	4,000
Amortization	8	43,000	43,000	43,000
Building occupancy	9	940,000	940,000	940,000
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)
<b>Total operating</b>		<b>8,830,000</b>	<b>8,830,000</b>	<b>8,830,000</b>

Capital	Note	2016/17 Estimates	2017/18 Planned	2018/19 Planned
Information systems	13	30,000	30,000	30,000
Office furniture and equipment	14	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>Total capital</b>		<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>

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 include fees and expenses for professional services rendered directly to the Office for the provision of services in the delivery of our programs, the provision of services required by statute or legislation and that 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) include 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 includes 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 include the cost or capital lease cost of office furniture and equipment.

# APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

## Community and Stakeholder Events and Conferences

A Consortium for Change: Reconciliation for Today's First Nation & Aboriginal Children through Custom Adoption and Permanent Placements, Nanaimo (April 2015)	Claiming Full Citizenship: Self Determination, Personalization and Individualized Funding 2015 International Conference, Vancouver (October 2015)
Aboriginal Youth Internship Program Year 9 Traditional Welcoming Ceremony, Victoria (August 2015)	Custom Adoption Forum, Vancouver (March 2016)
Adult Autism Initiative Lunch & Launch, Prince George (April 2015)	The Early Years Conference, Vancouver (January 2016)
AgedOUT Launch – Community Event, Prince George (June 2015)	Family Support Institute Training Weekend, Princeton (June 2015)
Asante Centre – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Workshop, Surrey (March 2016)	Feathers of Hope Forum, Thunder Bay, ON (May 2015)
BC Collaborative for Child & Youth Mental Health, Vancouver (October 2015 and March 2016)	Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks Steering Committee Meeting, Prince George (June 2015)
BC Teachers' Federation Project of Heart: Illuminating the Hidden History of the Residential School System Launch, Vancouver (September 2015)	The Federation of Community Social Services of BC Policy Forum, Victoria (February 2016)
Being Trauma Informed in the Social Service Sector, Vancouver (October 2015)	First Nations Education Steering Committee Conference, Vancouver (November 2015)
Boys & Girls Club Barbeque, Williams Lake (May 2015)	Fostering Change Community Consultation, Vancouver (June 2015)
Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates Conference, St. John's, NL (Sept 2015)	Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association Forum (December 2015)
Carrier-Chilcotin Tribal Council – Adult Rights Workshop (May 2015)	From Wound to Wellness, Calgary, AB (March 2016)
Children of the Street Society – Sexual Exploitation Workshop, Vancouver (May 2015)	Gathering Our Voices Conference, Victoria (March 2016)
	Health Forum on Children and Youth, Port McNeill (April 2015)

## Appendix – List of Outreach and Communication Activities

Honouring Our Youth's Journey to Adulthood, Tsawwassen (April 2015)	RCMP Youth Resiliency Workshop, Duncan (May 2015)
Inclusion BC Conference, Vancouver (May 2015)	Reconciliation in Action event, Vancouver (September 2015 and February 2016)
Joint Gathering – First Nations Leadership Council and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Vancouver (November 2015)	Thriving on Change Workshop, Victoria (May 2015)
LGBTQ2S Aboriginal Youth Conference: Two Spirits, One Heart, One Mind, One Nation, Victoria (November 2015)	T'lisalagi'Lakw School Workshop, Alert Bay (April 2015)
B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development, Guardianship Forum, Richmond (June 2015)	Turning Statistics into Stories Workshop, Victoria (March 2016)
B.C. Ministry of Health Announcement on Mental Health, Victoria (May 2015)	UBC – Janusz Korczak Lecture Series, Vancouver (November 2015 and January 2016)
Nechako Valley Community Services Society – Workshops (January and February 2016)	Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Open House, Vancouver (August 2015)
Pink Shirt Day Event: Cyberbullying and How We Can Help Stop It event, Vancouver (February 2016)	Vancouver Foundation – Fostering Change Luncheon, Vancouver (July 2015)
Prince George Youth Custody Services National Aboriginal Day event, Prince George (June 2015)	Williams Lake Association for Community Living - Workshop, Williams Lake (May 2015)
Prince George Youth Custody Services – Open and Secure Custody Youth Rights Workshops (July 2015)	Williams Lake Pregnancy Outreach Program – Youth and Adult Rights Workshop, Williams Lake (May 2015)
Provincial Family Gathering on Missing and Murdered Women, Prince George (February 2016)	Williams Lake Secondary School Health Fair, Williams Lake (May 2015)
	Youth Futures Education Fund event, Victoria (November 2017)

## Meetings

### *Child-, Youth- and Young Adult-Serving Organizations*

Adoptive Families Association of BC	McCreary Centre Society
Advisory Committee on Children and Youth with Special Needs	Kids Help Phone
BC Federation of Foster Parents Association	Ontario Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth – Feathers of Hope
Broadway Youth Resource Centre	Pemberton Youth Centre
Canadian Council for Children & Youth Advocates	Representative for Children and Youth's Multidisciplinary Team
Canadian Mental Health Association	Right to Play
Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative – Vancouver Local Action Team	Success by 6
Child Welfare League of Canada	Youth Futures Education Fund Committee
Federation of Community Social Services	Yukon Child and Youth Advocate
Federation of Youth in Care Networks	

### *Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations*

Aboriginal Live in Vancouver Enhancement Society	Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia
Aboriginal Mothering Centre Society	Nil/tu,o Child and Family Services
BC Aboriginal Child Care Society	Nisga'a Child and Family Services
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council USMA Family and Child Services
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Cowichan Tribes	Partnership Forum
First Nations Health Authority	Reconciliation in Action/Youth Matters
First Nations Education Steering Committee	Sts'ailes Nation
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society	Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services
Gitxsan Child & Family Services	Tillicum Lelum Friendship Centre
Grand Chief Ed John	Tsawwassen First Nation
Indigenous Perspectives Society	Tsilqot'in Leadership
Knucwentwecw Society	Tsleil-Waututh Nation
K'wak'walat'si Child and Family Services	Union of BC Indian Chiefs
Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services	Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society
Métis Child and Family Services	
K'wak'walat'si ('Namgis) Child and Family Services	

## Appendix – List of Outreach and Communication Activities

### *Government Organizations*

B.C. Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women	Community Living BC
B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development	Foreign Affairs Canada
B.C. Ministry of Education	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
B.C. Ministry of Health	Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia
B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority	Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, Government of BC
Child Health BC/BC Provincial Health Officer, Advisory Committee	Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Government of BC
City of Vancouver	

### *Academic*

Simon Fraser University	University of Victoria
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### *Other*

Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment Graduation Program	MAC Support Community of Practice
BC Children's and Women's Hospital	Members of Her Majesty's Official Opposition
B.C. Coroners Service Panel	Office of the Chief Judge – Provincial Court
BC Government and Service Employees' Union	Prince George Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Clinic
BC Psychiatric Association	Privacy Smart Community of Practice
B.C. Principals' and Vice Principals' Association	Rapid Response Team
B.C. School Superintendents Association	Ray Cam Co-Operative Centre
B.C. Teachers' Federation	Renewal Partners
Dr. Kate Kaukinen – Domestic Violence	Right Honourable Paul Martin
East Side Planning Table	Sea to Sky Community Services Society
First Call BC	Security & Terminal Operations, Victoria Airport
Graham Boeckh Foundation	UNICEF Canada
Information Technology Collaboration Committee	Vancouver Foundation
K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners Table	Victoria's "Tent City" (January–March 2016)
The Law Foundation of BC	YWCA

## Speaking Engagements

### *Child-, Youth- and Young Adult-Serving Organizations*

Adoption Council of Canada – Panel Presentation: Provincial Advocates (November 2015)	Distinguished Year of Research in Education (April 2015)
BC Council for Families Conference (October 2015)	Inclusion BC Conference (May 2015)
Broadway Youth Resource Centre (July 2015)	Privacy and Access 20/20 Conference: The Future of Privacy (November 2015)
Canadian Mental Health Association (May 2015)	
Continuing Legal Education Society of BC – Access to Justice for Children (May 2015)	

### *Aboriginal Leadership/Organizations*

Ending Violence Association – BC Collaborates to Stop Sexual and Domestic Violence (December 2015)	Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC – For Our Children...For Our Future with Love and Compassion (March 2016)
Gathering Wisdom for Shared Journey VII (May 2015)	Reconciliation in Action/Youth Matters Forum (September 2015)
Indigenous Perspectives Society: Special Needs (November 2015)	Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Appreciation Dinner (October 2015)
Musqueam Indian Band: Safe Home Proposal (September 2015)	

### *Government Organizations*

Aboriginal Youth Intern Program (April 2015)	City of Vancouver Child, Youth and Families Advisory Committee (December 2015)
BC Government and Service Employees' Union (October 2015)	City of Vancouver Immigrant Services Society (September 2015)
B.C. Legislative Interns (January 2016)	
Vancouver City Council (July 2015)	Prince George Youth Custody Services New Recruit Orientation (September 2015)

### *Academic Organizations*

University of British Columbia – Janusz Korczak Lecture Series (January 2016)	University of Victoria – Counselling Psychology Program Guest Lecture (November 2015)
University of the Fraser Valley – Social Work Students (October 2015)	University of Victoria – Children and Youth in Care Class on Ethical Decision-Making in Child & Youth Care (February 2016)
University of Victoria – Introduction to Law in Child and Youth Care Contexts (December 2015)	

## Appendix – List of Outreach and Communication Activities

### *Other*

Greater Victoria Area Police Chiefs (September 2015)	Social Emotional Enhancement and Development Conference (April 2015)
B.C. Association of Police Chiefs (November 2015)	Special Education Association of British Columbia – Crosscurrents 2016 (February 2016)
BC Children's Hospital (June 2015 and December 2015)	Sunny Hill Salberg Ethics Panel (May 2015)
BC Women's Hospital (February 2015)	Tri-Cities Best Practice Committee (February 2016)
BC Teachers' Federation Winter Representative Assembly (January 2016)	Vancouver Foundation's Honourary Governors Council (June 2015)
BC Teachers' Federation Workshop (August 2015)	Rotary Club of Victoria (May 2015)
Community Network Meeting, Maple Ridge (April 2015)	YMCA (August 2015)
Fraser Heights Secondary, First Nations 12 Class (December 2015)	YWCA Strive Program (August 2015, November 2015 and March 2016)
Reconciliation in Action – Community Celebration (June 2015)	

**ARTICLE 24 - UNCRC**

You have a right to the best health possible and to medical care and to information that will help you to stay well.

rcybc.ca #RCYBC

**Article 25**  
If you live in care or in other situations away from home

**you have the right**  
to have your living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are most appropriate for you.

rcybc.ca #RCYBC

You have the right to get **information** that is important to your well-being.

#RCYBC  
UNCRC Article 17  
www.rcybc.ca

rcybc.ca #RCYBC

**Article 30**

You have the right to practice your own culture your own religion and your own language

Minority and indigenous groups have special protection for these rights.

**Article 4**

You have the right to have the government make your rights a reality

rcybc.ca #RCYBC #UNCRC

#RCYBC  
rcybc.ca

**Article 34**

You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

ARTICLE 8

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT**

TO PRESERVE YOUR **IDENTITY** INCLUDING NATIONALITY, NAME, AND FAMILY RELATIONS. NO ONE SHOULD TAKE THIS AWAY FROM **YOU**

#RCYBC #RCYYOUTH RCYBC.CA

rcybc.ca

**Article 36**

You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation

#RCYBC

#RCYBC

**Article 37**

No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way

rcybc.ca

#RCYBC

**Article 38**

You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

rcybc.ca

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee. A refugee is someone who has had to leave their country because it is not safe for them to live there.

**ARTICLE 22 - UNCRC**

rcybc.ca #RCYBC

**Article 2**

Regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status

**You have these rights**

rcybc.ca #RCYBC #UNCRC

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Phone

In Victoria: 250-356-6710  
Elsewhere in B.C.: 1-800-476-3933

## E-mail

[rcy@rcybc.ca](mailto:rcy@rcybc.ca)

## Fax

Victoria: 250-356-0837  
Prince George: 250-561-4624  
Burnaby: 604-775-3205

## Websites

[www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca)

## Offices

Suite 400, 1019 Wharf St.  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 3Y9

1475 – 10th Avenue  
Prince George, B.C.  
V2L 2L2

#150 4664 Lougheed Hwy.  
Burnaby, B.C.  
V5C 5T5



B.C.'s Representative  
for Children and Youth  
and RCYBC Youth



Rep4Youth



@rcybc and @rcybcyouth



@rcybcyouth



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH