



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



**Annual Report 2018/19**  
*and*  
**Service Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22**



Sept. 30, 2019

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

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present to the Legislative Assembly the 2018/19 Annual Report and the 2019/20 to 2021/22 Service Plan of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

This document reports on the period April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 and covers activities underway and planned for the period April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022, and has been prepared in accordance with part 5, sections 17 and 19 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth  
Province of British Columbia

pc: Ms. Kate Ryan-Lloyd  
Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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



The Representative and staff would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with gratitude and respect on the traditional territories of the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia.

*Indigenous designs throughout this report, including the front cover, were created by SEMATSE Jordan.*

*Inside front and back cover photographs were taken by RCY advocates at #Rep4Rights tour stops in Surrey and Burns Lake.*



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## Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth, Representative for Children and Youth

Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth has worked in the B.C. social and health care sectors since 1977. From 1980 through 1992, she served in front-line child welfare, social policy, program management and executive roles within government, and was engaged in formative work on deinstitutionalization and community inclusion for people with disabilities, women's and girls' health, mental health and youth services.

Dr. Charlesworth also supported the implementation of the 1995 Gove Inquiry into Child Protection recommendations and was a member of the executive team during the formation of the Ministry for Children and Families.

She left government in 1997 to complete her PhD on the power of women's voice in the face of adversity, teach child and youth care at the University of Victoria, and grow her consulting practice.

In 2006, Dr. Charlesworth transitioned into the non-profit sector and became the Executive Director of the Federation of Community Social Services of BC. During her tenure, the Federation grew in size, scope and influence, and worked with Indigenous organizations to co-create new ways to support Indigenous children, youth and families.

After leaving the Federation, Dr. Charlesworth was immersed in developing the leadership, innovation and cultural awareness of the community-based social care sector. She was the founder of the Leadership 2020 program for the Federation, served on numerous community board and provincial advisory committees, and was a member of the Premier's Advisory Council on Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. In 2017, she became the Organizational Change lead at InWithForward – Canada's first social research and development collective that integrates person-centred social science research and design to generate meaningful social innovation. Dr. Charlesworth has also worked with Chief Wedlidi Speck and many other leaders to inspire culturally safer workplaces and services for Indigenous staff and people served.

Dr. Charlesworth lives in the traditional territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples. She has a PhD in Child and Youth Care from the University of Victoria, and an MBA from Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, England. She is the parent of two vibrant young women who remind her daily of the power and promise of young people.



# A Message from the Representative for Children and Youth

If I had to choose just three words to describe my first year as British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth, they might well be: "Listening," "Learning" and "Launching."

Listening is the most important of the three, and that's what my staff and I have been doing ever since I arrived in September 2018 to take on my dream job and the privilege of working every day toward improving the lives of B.C.'s children, youth and young adults.

In order to listen to as many voices as possible, we knew that we had to constantly be in community, engaging with young people, families, caregivers, service providers, First Nations and Métis organizations and leadership, and many, many others. We have heard a wide range of ideas about how we can be more effective as an independent office of the B.C. Legislature; how we can better push for improvements to the child-, youth- and young adult-serving systems in this province.

The pages of this *Annual Report and Service Plan* document where we have been and with whom we have met. These visits and meetings are extremely important to create more awareness of our Office amongst young people in B.C., their families and those who serve and support them. But such outreach is also crucial because it allows us to hear first-hand about the issues that are most concerning to the people we are trying to help.

On page 66, you'll find an interesting graphic that details the most common concerns expressed during our community outreach in the first year of my term. Without going into full detail in this space, we were advised by many that the following areas should be among the cornerstones of our work going forward:

- **Family supports and preventative measures** – Parents and family members told us they need more help to address the issues that are preventing them from safely raising their children so that, with safety still prioritized, fewer young people are ultimately raised in government care. Those who work with families echoed that call for a change in emphasis in the B.C. child welfare system from removal to support and prevention.
- **Self-determination** – We have heard from First Nations, Métis and urban Indigenous leaders that RCY can be a strong ally in the resumption of Indigenous jurisdiction over their own child, youth and family services. Self-determination promises to help address the harms that many First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children and youth currently experience within the child, youth and family care system.
- **Youth voice** – The importance of including meaningful youth participation and input in any project that we are undertaking can never be over-estimated. RCY, like any organization whose goal is to help youth, has heard from young people that we must live up to the principle of *"nothing about us, without us."*

- **Transitions** – We have an important role to play in advocating for better supports for youth as they transition from care into healthy adulthood. But we also need to pay attention to other key transition points, such as transitions from MCFD into Community Living BC services, transitions between different placements and various forms of care, and transitions between youth custody, mental health or substance use treatment and the community. We have heard loud and clear that when these transitions aren't done well, children and youth are harmed.
- **Early interventions** – We've also heard, and I firmly believe this to be true, that a key to improving the lives of vulnerable children and youth is to act early. I am interested in "backing up the bus" to refocus some of our work on early intervention, in areas such as early years support, Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN), alternative care models and wraparound supports for children and families.

The above points are a sampling of some of the learning we have done during the past year, which leads us to the third of our "Three Ls" – Launching. Truthfully, the term "re-launching" might be more appropriate as we have listened, learned and begun to re-launch our work at RCY in some key ways.

We have maintained the core functions of our Office, which I believe have served B.C. well since RCY's inception. Our three mandated areas – Advocacy, Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations, and Monitoring – have been busier than ever this past year. And we have solidified our fourth major team – the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships unit that serves to establish and nurture relationships with Indigenous partners and communities in B.C. and to advocate for culturally grounded and effective supports for Indigenous children, youth and families receiving government services.

As you will read in this report, our Advocates opened nearly 1,600 new cases in 2018/19. Our CID team reviewed more than 2,700 reports of critical injuries or deaths of children and youth in care or receiving services. And our Monitoring team conducted research, audit, evaluation and oversight of public entities providing important services to children and youth in the province.

However, while some key functions have remained intact, the focus of our work has shifted in many ways as a result of the things we've heard and learned. For example, we have recommitted to featuring the participation and voices of youth in our work and to finding new ways to foster that participation. We have also shifted toward a greater focus on aggregate reporting – highlighting trends and patterns detected through the study of multiple cases. This is in line with what the Hon. Ted Hughes foresaw in his seminal 2006 report that gave birth to our Office. We are also moving toward incorporating more systemic analyses into our investigations to ensure that our recommendations aren't solely based on single stories but are reflective of systemic problems.

During the past year, we have continued to navigate the tension that exists between an independent oversight body such as ours and the entities it oversees – in RCY's case, primarily the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). But we know that independence doesn't mean isolation and that we need to better understand the workings and challenges of a number of government ministries in order to be able to give proper context to our work and recommendations. To that end, we have engaged in extensive meeting and briefing sessions with MCFD and others, including Health, Education and Mental Health and Addictions. And there are various ways for us to push for change – whether it be through report recommendations or through "quieter" means, working behind the scenes to help inform and improve policy and practice.

Relationships are extremely important, not only with government bodies but with service providers and, perhaps more now than ever, with First Nations, Métis and urban Indigenous people and communities. With the currently shifting landscape of Indigenous child welfare, we are exploring ways we can be most helpful to these communities as many plan to reclaim jurisdiction over child welfare services. This includes moving to a practice of ethical data gathering and sharing and true engagement and partnership in our relevant reports and projects so that our work is done in a good way and so that communities benefit from the data and research that is gathered.

Helping us to build those relationships is our ISP team, which is also responsible for researching the many key developments related to Indigenous child welfare. The ISP team also works collaboratively with all RCY program areas to help ensure that our own Office is culturally safer, respectful and responsive to the people we interact with as well as to our own employees.

The systems that serve our young people have inherent challenges and flaws. Part of our job is to bring attention to those things and advocate for change. But another part of our new direction is to "bright spot" or highlight instances where exceptional work is being done in B.C. You'll consistently see examples of these bright spots in our work, including this report.

Our Office continues to report to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, an all-party committee of the Legislature, and that relationship is evolving as well. We are working with the Committee to be able to present our reports to Members in a much timelier way than has occurred in the past – a change that will keep the Committee better informed and engaged in our work.

The RCY released two major reports this fiscal year and they, too, reflect some of our changing practices. *Time to Listen: Youth Voices on Substance Use* offered the first-hand perspectives of

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

Since 2007, British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth has supported our province's young people and their families in dealing with provincially operated or funded child- and youth-serving systems, including the child welfare system. The Representative also provides oversight to these systems and makes recommendations to improve them.

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

In November 2006, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was appointed as B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth. She was reappointed for a second and final five-year term in 2011. On Nov. 27, 2016, Turpel-Lafond's second term ended and Bernard Richard was appointed Acting Representative for Children and Youth. On Feb. 16, 2017, Richard was confirmed by the Legislature as the province's second Representative. Richard resigned from the position effective the end of August 2018 to return to New Brunswick.

On July 12, 2018, the Special Committee to Appoint a Representative for Children and Youth unanimously recommended Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth as the new Representative. Dr. Charlesworth was appointed Acting Representative on Aug. 31, 2018 and was confirmed as B.C.'s third Representative for Children and Youth by the Legislature effective Oct. 1, 2018.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

100 young people in B.C. with lived experience. It also drew on lessons learned from an aggregate review of substance use-related injury and death reports received by RCY in 2017. This report made five recommendations to government ministries, all of which were directly driven by youth input.

The other significant RCY report released in 2018/19 was *Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family*. And although this report focused on the story of one boy and his family, its recommendations were aimed at helping thousands of children and youth with special needs and those who care for them. The chief recommendation from that report called for an overhaul of the system of services to support children with complex needs in B.C. I'm pleased to say that MCFD has begun that work and that RCY has been kept up to date and will continue to monitor its progress.

We have a number of exciting projects underway that we will share in the coming months, including a report on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder which will include the participation of five families with lived experience, and a report on youth homelessness in B.C. offering potential solutions, which is being written by a young woman with lived experience and informed by input gathered from many youth who have experienced homelessness. Both projects will highlight voices not typically captured in such reports, something that we are committed to do more of going forward.

In July of 2019, a change to the Regulation for the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* expanded our Advocacy mandate to enable us to advocate for young adults up to their 24th birthdays who are on, or eligible for, an Agreement with Young Adults or a provincial tuition waiver. We anticipate further expansion of our mandate in future changes to the Act itself that will allow us to help more youth from care through what often is a difficult transition phase.

RCY is an evolving institution, which is a healthy thing. I am sure our work will progress and change further during the next few years, but one thing is certain: We will continue to listen and learn from British Columbians about how we can help improve the well-being of our most precious resource – our young people – and we will continue to launch ourselves with energy and commitment into this important work.

The document that follows outlines the approach to meeting my accountability to the public and the Legislature to report on the activities of the Office and plans for future years. It describes the activities of the Office during 2018/19 and outlines RCY's planned strategic initiatives for 2019/20 through 2021/22. It provides a full and comprehensive picture of the Office's accomplishments over the past reporting period, plans for future years and how RCY's work to achieve its mandate, vision and goals will be measured.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth



# Who We Are

# Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

## Representative's Mandate

The mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth is:

<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 to comment publicly on advocacy services for children and their families with respect to designated services.
<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 and 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 and to identify and make recommendations for change to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of those services.

*Reviewable services* are services or programs under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCS 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays
- Services under the Agreement with Young Adults program and the provincial tuition waiver program for young adults between their 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays who have previously been in care\*

\* On July 3, 2019, a change to the *Representative for Children and Youth Regulation* was made to expand the advocacy mandate of the Representative to include young adults who are on or eligible for an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA) or who are on or eligible for a provincial post-secondary tuition waiver. The *Regulation* was also changed to clarify the Representative's mandate in relation to services to children and youth with special needs. See the Looking Ahead section for further information on legislative changes.

# Vision, Goals & Values

## Vision

A province in which children and youth are healthy and safe, and their interests and viewpoints are heard and acted upon.

## Goals

1. RCY helps to improve services to children, youth and young adults who are in receipt of, or eligible for, designated or reviewable services.
2. RCY champions the rights of children, youth and young adults.
3. RCY promotes services and supports that will address and reduce the over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children and youth, and their families and communities.
4. RCY supports First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities in reassuming jurisdiction over child and family services.
5. Children, youth and young adults are engaged in informing the work of the RCY.
6. RCY is committed to being a culturally attuned and culturally responsive organization.
7. RCY is working with integrity in an informed, effective and collaborative manner.

## Values



## Organization

The Representative for Children and Youth has offices in Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George. Through its outreach activities, RCY engages with children, youth and their families, and connects with organizations and communities province-wide.

The Representative's staff bring a wide range of experience to the Office. With backgrounds in child welfare, social work, child and youth care, psychology, education, youth justice, counselling, community development, law, and research and analysis, staff have the diverse expertise necessary to support the Representative in meeting her mandate.

To ensure that the Office is responsive to, culturally safe for, and reflective of the Indigenous children and youth it supports, RCY initiated an Indigenous recruitment and retention strategy in 2017/18, which is being reviewed and refreshed. As of March 31, 2019, 21 per cent of the Representative's Office staff identify as Indigenous, with 17 per cent of permanent positions being held by Indigenous employees.





*Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth signs  
Oath of Office October 1, 2018*

## Accountability

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

The Representative reports to an all-party committee of the Legislature, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY). The SSCCY is responsible for fostering greater awareness and understanding among legislators and the public about the B.C. child- and youth- serving system. Every one of the Representative's reports is reviewed by the Committee, thereby providing a public forum for discussion.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (SSCFGS) is responsible for reviewing annual reports, rolling three-year service plans and budgets of all independent or statutory officers of the Legislature. Under this authority, the SSCFGS considers and makes recommendations on the annual report, service plan and budget for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth for each fiscal year.

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



## Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

The Representative is a member of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA), an association of government-appointed advocates, representatives and ombudspersons for children and youth from the 10 provinces and two territories: Alberta, B.C., Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan and Yukon. The 12 members of the CCCYA have mandates to support the rights of children and youth and work together to identify areas of mutual concern and to develop ways to address issues at a national level. The B.C. Representative's Office has traditionally taken a lead role in the activities of the CCCYA, in particular with the development of joint communiqués on behalf of the national organization.

## Focus on Children and Youth with Vulnerabilities

The Representative advocates for the rights of all children and youth in B.C.

However, a major focus of the Representative's work is those children, youth and young adults who are receiving reviewable and designated services from MCFD or other public bodies delivering child-, youth- or young adult-serving programs including:

- Family, youth and children in care services delivered under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*
- Early childhood development and child care programs
- Services for children, youth and young adults with special needs
- Child and youth mental health programs
- Substance use services for children and youth
- Adoption and guardianship services
- Youth justice services.

To understand the conditions and circumstances of those children and youth needing supports and services, and to most effectively meet its mandate, the Representative's Office collects and analyzes a wide range of data. The data informs the work of the Office and is essential to identifying trends and issues and setting RCY's strategic priorities for the coming years.

Children and Youth in B.C. BY THE NUMBERS	
<b>6,263</b>	Number of children and youth in care as of March 31, 2019
<b>4,075</b>	Number of Indigenous children and youth in care as of March 31, 2019
<b>908</b>	Number of youth who aged out of care in the fiscal year 2018/19
<b>13,688</b>	Number of children and youth who received an autism funding payment in fiscal year 2018/19
<b>6,050</b>	Number of 19- to 24-year-olds receiving services from Community Living BC as of March 31, 2019
<b>84,000</b>	Number of children and youth in B.C. with a mental health disorder diagnosis
<b>18</b>	Number of suspected drug overdose deaths in 2018 among youth between the ages of 10 and 18
<b>242</b>	Number of children and youth in care placed for adoption in fiscal year 2018/19
<b>32</b>	Average daily number of youth in B.C.'s two youth custody centres in March 2019

Sources: MCFD, CLBC, Coroners Service, CMHA, RCY data





# Programs & Activities

# Programs and Activities 2018/19

The three core mandated program areas under the *RCY Act* – Advocacy, Child Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations, and Monitoring – work closely together to achieve the Representative's mandate in advocating for children and youth and providing oversight to child-, youth- and young adult-serving systems in the province.

The mandated program areas are supported by Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships and Communications with all programs collaborating and coordinating activities to deliver effective, highly integrated programs, and to promote youth engagement and build community and stakeholder awareness of the Office and its services.

Corporate Services supports the entire Office through the provision of human resources, technology, financial and administrative services.



## Working Together – Office Teams and Committees

The Representative has a number of standing and ad hoc teams, committees or groups, composed of members from across the organization, who work collectively to develop integrated approaches or methods and ensure effective and efficient program and service delivery.

This includes:

- Indigenous Research Methodologies – a community of practice with the mission to examine Indigenous research methodologies that will maximize effectiveness for Indigenous peoples and stakeholders and align the work of RCY with the populations the Office serves.
- Systemic Issues Working Group – responsible for identifying, analyzing, responding to and reporting out on systemic concerns to improve the lives of children, youth and young adults receiving designated services in B.C. through
  - collecting, coordinating, disseminating and using organizational knowledge in a practical manner
  - highlighting examples of innovative ideas and practices working well within child-serving systems
  - informing the work of RCY program areas through systemic learning
  - seeking out and including youth voice when addressing systemic issues
  - developing recommendations to address systemic issues for RCY Executive review.
- The Committee for an Engaged and Respectful Workplace (CREW) – comprised of volunteer members from all program areas and position levels within the Office and is responsible for creating a work environment that is focused on a positive workplace culture and effective human resources practices and communication processes.
- Occupational Health and Safety – a committee mandated to ensure staff safety and education on health and safety issues while at work.
- Managers Working Group – an information-sharing group comprised of managers from every area of RCY responsible for identifying organizational issues and sharing resources, maximizing organizational effectiveness and minimizing working in "silos".
- Annual All-Staff Meeting Design Team – includes representation from every RCY area with a mandate to design and plan RCY's in-person All-Staff meetings.
- Social Committee – a staff committee that organizes social gatherings including holiday parties, pot-lucks and social events to promote and encourage engagement of staff at all levels.



# Advocacy

## Overview

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

- children, youth and their families in relation to government-funded designated services
- young adults between their 19th and 24th birthdays who are eligible to receive services from CLBC and who received a reviewable service within 15 months of their 19th birthday, and
- as of July 3, 2019, young adults up to their 24th birthdays who:
  - are on, or eligible for, an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA), or
  - are on, or eligible for, a provincial post-secondary tuition waiver.

Under its Advocacy mandate, the Representative's Office reaches out to communities to build awareness about the rights of children and youth and to support and promote the development of local advocacy services. The Representative may also identify broad issues that need to be addressed and comment publicly on Advocacy services and issues for children, youth, young adults and their families with respect to designated services.

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

Advocacy staff help children, youth, young adults and their families by:

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

When contacted by individuals about issues outside the Representative's mandate, the Advocacy team provides referrals to appropriate agencies or services.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## Lisa Donaldson – Advocacy

Lisa Donaldson has seen a lot during her three years at RCY, but rarely has she been as powerfully impacted as she was at a recent meeting where she witnessed generations of Indigenous women working together toward resolution of family tensions, with the full support of their community.

As an RCY advocate, Lisa's role was to support the Indigenous teen at the centre who was estranged from her family and living in an unhealthy situation. The youth's family and community members wanted, ultimately, to bring her home.

*"Grandma was there. Mom was there. The youth was there. I saw three generations of really strong women. And the message through the entire meeting from both Mom and Grandma was, 'We just want you to be happy.'"*

Lisa describes it as probably *"the coolest meeting"* that she's ever been to as an advocate.

*"Grandma didn't say much through the meeting, but at the end, she spoke – and it was eloquent. Her messages were, 'I love you and I want to see you.' What started out as a tense meeting ended up with Mom and daughter hugging. And in the end, the youth went home."*

Lisa is of Haida and Okanagan ancestry and supporting Indigenous children and youth is the thing that motivates her every day. She has been steadfast in that focus throughout her career, first with the Surrey School District, then with MCFD, and now with RCY.

*"One of the things about being Indigenous is that we value our kids. They are considered gifts. That's always been what I believe. What better way to give back than to work with kids in some capacity? So, thank goodness, RCY hired me!"*

She has a confident clarity around her role that is as firm as her focus on Indigenous children and youth:

*"What makes RCY different is that we focus on the rights of the child. My role as an advocate is to ensure the adults are listening. I'm a conduit to allow the child to speak."*

Of course, with a naturally exuberant personality, she always makes room for humour.

*"This is what I've always wanted to do. I've never wanted to do anything else – unless it was be a dog walker. So, it was this or dog walker,"* she says with a laugh.



Many of those contacting the Representative's Advocacy team are assisted at the initial intake stage through the provision of information, advice and referrals to services and programs. This support might include coaching or advising an individual on ways to approach a service provider to resolve an issue or how to access or use complaint processes.

Should a caller's situation require further support, the intake advocate will assign the file for additional follow-up and open a case file.

### *Advocacy case example*

#### **Assisting a Child with Special Needs**

RCY became involved in 12-year-old Justine's life when a caller requested that she receive the support of an advocate. Justine,<sup>1</sup> who had a diagnosis of autism and anxiety, had some extremely challenging behaviours that often required two people to be present to ensure her safety and to prevent damage to the family home. She was receiving home supports during school hours through the school district but minimal supports after school and on the weekends, putting pressure on the family alone to provide the intensive care and supervision she required. Although MCFD's CYSN team was involved and had offered support to formulate behavioural plans and develop strategies to support Justine, respite funding had not been offered to afford Justine's family the time and energy to implement the strategies suggested. As a result, both parents were exhausted which resulted in a decline in their physical well-being and, consequently, uncertainty around their ability to care for their daughter long-term.

To creatively address Justine's needs, the RCY advocate supported the family in formulating a proposal – presented to both MCFD and the school district – that would allow them to wrap appropriate services around their daughter while she remained in the family home. After several meetings and contract negotiations, both the school district and MCFD agreed to the proposal. As a result, Justine received 2:1 staffing support throughout the day and on weekends as required. This not only supported Justine to grow, develop and learn behavioural management strategies and emotional regulation, but it also allowed her parents to enjoy some much-needed down time to enable them to successfully care for their daughter.

### *Increasing Number and Complexity of Advocacy Cases*

As noted in last year's report, the complexity of cases and the time RCY advocates spend on cases supporting children, youth, young adults and families to resolve complex issues continues to increase.

Although the number of advocacy calls declined slightly in the 2018/19 fiscal year, there was nonetheless a slight increase in the number of files opened by Advocacy staff (see Figure 1). In fact, since 2012/13, there has been a 31 per cent increase in advocacy case files that involve higher

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms used for this and all other advocacy case examples in this report to respect confidentiality.

needs children and youth who are often engaged with multiple service streams. These files require more time and effort to resolve as an advocate reaches out to social workers, stakeholders, family members, and children and youth themselves to fully understand the issues in order to determine the best course of advocacy. On average, advocacy case files are open for six months with some open for a significantly longer time.

The majority of initial calls that intake advocates receive are from adults who are concerned about the rights and well-being of young people. Promoting meaningful participation by young people themselves is a significant priority for the Office, and over the past year, RCY advocates have increased engagement with children, youth and young adults to ensure their views are understood by all involved. Direct engagement with a child, youth or young adult on each file has increased by 45 per cent over the past year. Participation of young people will continue to be a top priority, and this will continue to place higher demands on advocates and will impact their workloads given the time required to support the active engagement of children, youth and young adults in their advocacy.

### *Advocacy case example*

## **Helping a Child's Voice be Heard**

A request for advocacy was made for Grade 5 student, Tanner, who had a diagnosis of anxiety, ADHD and developmental PTSD. The caller shared that Tanner often complained that no one listened to him. His foster home placements had been changed several times and he felt that he had been moved because he was "bad". As Tanner wanted to speak to his RCY advocate directly, the advocate travelled to his town to meet with him in person. Tanner shared his concerns with his advocate, confirming that he did not feel heard. Tanner recognized that he had been in trouble at school and he wanted counselling to help him so he could return to full days at school like his peers. He also asked to see his family as he had not seen his mother in several years. He mentioned previous foster parents as the only people he had ever referred to as Mom and Dad and he asked if he could see them again, too.

Tanner's advocate attended several case management meetings and brought the youth's voice forward to his care team. As a result of RCY advocacy, Tanner's social worker met with him more often, included him in planning and explained the rationale behind the moves, so he could hear first-hand that he was not "bad," and that the moves were not his fault. The social worker also made a referral to counselling and, within a short period of time, Tanner was seeing a counsellor weekly and was supported to exchange correspondence with his biological mother.

Within a few months, Tanner had his first in-person visit with his biological mother. The visit supervisor took a photo of them together that was then given to Tanner. Tanner proudly showed this photo to his social worker and, in response to a compliment from the worker, remarked that now he knew that some of his looks came from his Mom. In addition to having a better sense of who he was, Tanner's disruptive behaviours at school decreased. Visits with his mother continued and evolved to overnight weekend visits.

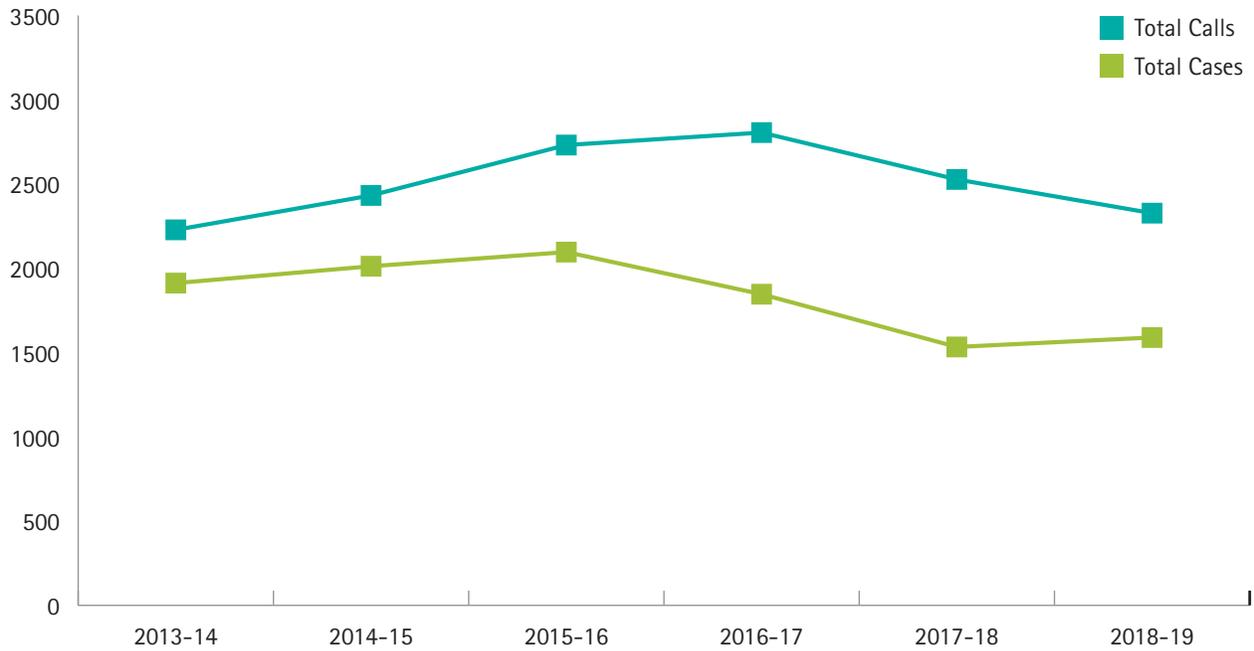


## Highlights of Advocacy Activities in 2018/19

### Advocacy Trends

Figure 1 below shows the total number of advocacy calls received as compared to the total number of advocacy cases taken on by the Representative's Advocacy team for the years 2013/14 to 2018/19.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1 – Total Advocacy Calls and Total Advocacy Cases by Fiscal Year – 2013/14 to 2018/19



### Fast Fact

73 per cent of children and youth whose critical injury or death was reported to RCY had a confirmed or suspected mental health diagnosis.

<sup>2</sup> Period of reliable advocacy call data

*Advocacy case example***Transition Planning, Remedying a Lack of Planning**

RCY was contacted about 18-year-old Samantha regarding concerns about a lack of planning for her transition to adulthood, social worker turnover and its impacts on the process, and a lack of adequate information. The caller also felt that with further assessment, Samantha could be eligible for CLBC services post-19.

In the process of gathering information, Samantha's advocate discovered that Samantha's Persons with a Disability (PWD) application had not been completed and financial support would not be available when she turned 19. In response to this, the RCY advocate asked that the social worker continue to provide case management and to supplement financial support for Samantha post-19. This was agreed to and, for seven months, Samantha and her advocate requested ongoing planning meetings with her social worker and other supports to help her get organized for her transition to adulthood. Even after Samantha turned 19 and moved to a new community, her social worker continued for another six months to participate in these meetings by phone to ensure Samantha's physical and financial needs were addressed, that PWD funding was arranged, and even to fund another assessment of her adaptive functioning to see if she might qualify for CLBC supports.

RCY's advocacy support helped to ensure continued communication by the social worker with Samantha, an offer to make up for the late PWD application, and continued planning support for Samantha post-19, all of which made for a much smoother and more caring transition to adulthood than would have been possible otherwise.



*RCY advocates Sacha and Bronwyn with swag*



## PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

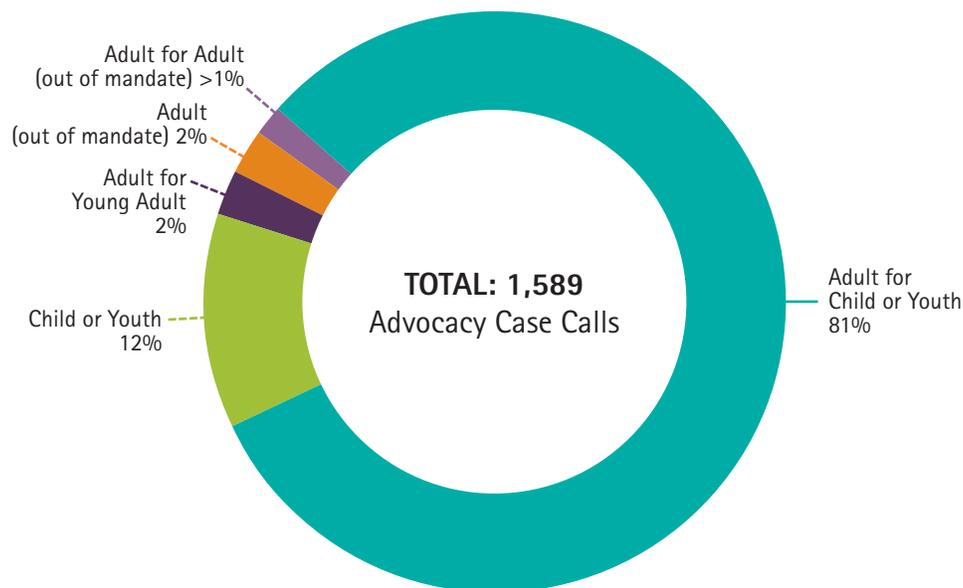
Figure 2 highlights the total number of advocacy cases handled by the Representative's Advocacy team between 2007/08 – the year the Office commenced its advocacy function – and the 2018/19 fiscal year. In total, between 2007/08 and 2018/19, the Representative's Office has handled a total of 20,823 advocacy cases.

**Figure 2 – Total Advocacy Cases by Fiscal Year – 2007/08 to 2018/19**

Fiscal Year	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
Total Cases	1,190	1,555	1,652	1,714	1,919	1,805	1,912	2,012	2,096	1,846	1,533	1,589	20,823

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

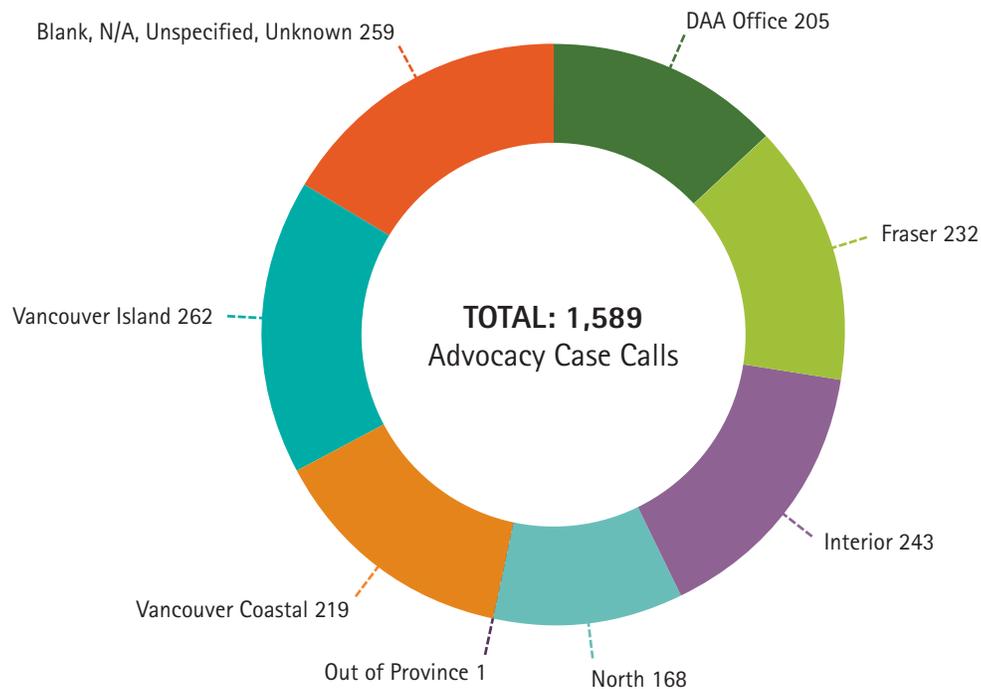
**Figure 3 – Advocacy Cases by Initial Contact 2018/19**



**The top three areas of concern for all individuals seeking advocacy advice were:**

- Operational Practice – Quality of practice/care provided is inadequate 29 per cent
- Ineffective or inadequate plan 23 per cent
- Requests for information on policy, standards, programs or rights 20 per cent

Figure 4 – Advocacy Cases by Region – 2018/19



*Advocacy case example*

**Concerns about Quality of Care at a Staffed Residential Resource**

Sixteen-year-old Trevor was residing at a staffed residential resource when RCY was contacted due to concerns about the quality of care he was receiving. Trevor had been diagnosed with autism and a moderate intellectual disability, and he engaged in severe and persistent self-injurious behaviour that worsened while in care and eventually resulted in hospitalization.

Trevor’s RCY advocate worked with the involved MCFD teams to address the issues about Trevor’s well-being, posing questions about MCFD’s oversight, assessment and response to the concerns. His advocate gathered information, attended meetings and closely monitored planning around Trevor’s care, including questioning whether and how well recommendations from various community professionals were being considered and implemented. The advocate supported the process which saw the family, MCFD, a community agency and a multidisciplinary clinic work collaboratively to formulate a plan that would support Trevor to be closer to his family while also addressing his harmful behaviours.

Trevor was moved to a separate suite in his family home and was provided with around-the-clock, in-home support staff as well as a multidisciplinary clinical team. Within six months, Trevor showed tremendous improvement: he was back out in the community, riding public transit, watching movies and playing basketball and, after every outing, he returned to his family home. His self-injurious behaviour also greatly decreased.

## *Advocacy Initiatives*

### **Custody Centres**

Providing direct advocacy support and advice to youth in B.C.'s two Youth Custody Centres continues to be an important part of the Representative's advocacy. This work is facilitated by the ongoing positive relationships the team has established with staff at the Prince George and Burnaby Youth Custody Centres.

Advocates visit the centres on a monthly basis to meet with youth individually and discuss any concerns they may have with their own planning or issues arising in the centres. Advocates encourage and support self-advocacy, assisting youth in creating opportunities to have their voices and views considered in decisions that affect them. For example, at the Prince George facility, an advocate supports the youth to participate in the Directors Round Table meetings. This is a forum where youth can discuss issues and advocate for change and improvements at the centre that impact their quality of life while in custody. Advocates also facilitate rights education for youth at the centres and deliver training to MCFD youth custody staff about the services of the Representative's Office to support youth.

#### *Advocacy case example*

### **Transition Planning, Advocating for Necessary Health Care**

Jasmine was a youth in care who contacted RCY two months before her 19th birthday. She had recently moved to a new community and was not only worried about her transition into adulthood but was also concerned that she would age out of care without having received necessary orthodontic work.

After connecting with Jasmine by phone and providing education about her rights, her RCY advocate requested a joint meeting with her MCFD social worker, who worked out of Jasmine's previous community. The meeting allowed Jasmine the space to clearly express her concerns and needs related to transition planning. One of the outcomes of this meeting was that a local courtesy social worker was made available to support Jasmine. This courtesy worker was then able to meet with Jasmine in person just before and after she turned 19 to follow up further with her about local resources, including information about AYAs.

As MCFD was unable to submit the necessary paperwork to its Medical and Dental Benefit Unit before Jasmine turned 19, Jasmine's orthodontic funding was initially denied. But given that Jasmine's orthodontist had confirmed her need for braces, her advocate continued to work with the social worker, team leader and eventually MCFD's Director of Operations for another eight months after she left care. In the end, MCFD finally acknowledged that because Jasmine had been a child in care who had met the criteria for orthodontic work, the ministry still had the responsibility to provide it. When Jasmine received the news that MCFD had agreed to completely fund her orthodontic work, she was thrilled and relieved.

## Advocacy Outreach

Along with the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team, the Advocacy team is taking the lead on the provincial #Rep4Rights Tour launched in May 2018. The goal of the provincial #Rep4Rights Tour is to reach out to educate children, youth and those who care for them about their fundamental rights. For more on the #Rep4Rights Tour see the Youth Engagement section on page 54 of this report.

In addition to the many meetings and workshops under the #Rep4Rights Tour, the Advocacy team continued its general outreach activities throughout 2018/19, connecting with youth through information booths at community events and participating in information sessions. General advocacy outreach work has steadily increased with the number of outreach activities doubling over the past three years. In order to be able to respond to more requests for attendance at community events, the Advocacy team has added a new coordinator role within the team to coordinate and manage outreach activities.

### **BRIGHT SPOT – MCFD Specialized Youth Services team: Helping Youth get off the Street**

MCFD's Specialized Youth Services team supports youth and caregivers in helping youth address significant emotional and/or behavioural difficulties that may be severely affecting a youth's overall well-being and functioning. The team includes MCFD social workers, youth outreach workers, and family and mental health clinicians who work together to engage a youth with services and supports.

RCY's Advocacy team has seen how the coordinated approach of the MCFD Specialized Youth Services team can support youth. An example is the case of 15-year-old Taylor, who was unable to reside in her family home due to concerns that her heavy drug use and escalating behaviours would impact her younger siblings. Her parents signed a Voluntary Care Agreement with MCFD; unfortunately, the pull of Taylor's addiction was too strong and she was not yet ready to access the placement and services. This breakdown resulted in Taylor becoming homeless and involved in a lifestyle and activities that put her at risk of harm.

In response to concerns about Taylor's well-being and personal safety, the MCFD Specialized Youth Services team became involved. Detox, MCFD placements and other services were regularly offered to Taylor. She took up the offers of detox on several occasions but would often return to substance use and the street. Taylor's support team did not give up on her and continued to engage and offer supports. Taylor eventually agreed to support from a long-term residential program in the community that focuses on mental health and substance-related issues. Taylor continues to engage with this community program with aspirations to return to school and reconnect with family.



# Critical Injury and Death – Reviews and Investigations

## Overview

The Critical Injury and Death (CID) Reviews and Investigations mandate is focused on accountability and learning.

When children or youth receiving reviewable services – such as services from an MCFD program – die or suffer a critical injury, the Representative is responsible for conducting reviews and investigations to inform improvements to services to help prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Public bodies that provide reviewable services are required to report critical injuries and deaths to the Representative if the child or family was receiving services at the time of, or in the year prior, to the injury or death. Reviewable services include:

- services or programs under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*
- some limited services for children and youth with special needs
- addiction services for children
- mental health services for children
- youth justice services.

All reports are reviewed to identify whether the report meets CID's mandate and whether service delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury. A review may result in an internal referral to the Representative's Advocacy team or, alternatively, the Representative may bring a concerning case to the attention of the Provincial Director of Child Welfare. The Representative conducts more in-depth reviews of a limited number of injury and death reports when there appears to be strong connection between the services received – or not received – and the injury or death. This comprehensive review is then used to inform a decision about whether to investigate the injury or death. If, after completing a comprehensive review, the Representative decides not to investigate the critical injury or death, the Representative writes to the public body to share the results of the review.

### Fast Fact

The largest number of in-mandate critical injuries reported to the Representative was for children and youth who were placed in staffed residential resources (38 per cent).

### Fast Fact

More than one-quarter (28 per cent) of critical injuries reported to the Representative were for children and youth with both mental health challenges and substance use issues. Substance-related injuries, suicide attempts and sexualized violence accounted for the majority of in-mandate injuries reported for these youth.

<sup>3</sup> Critical injury means an injury to a child that may result in the child's death or cause serious or long-term impairment of the child's health.

When the team conducts a full investigation, the Representative prepares a public report with recommendations to government to prevent similar injuries or deaths in the future. The CID team also aggregates and analyzes groups of injuries and deaths to identify and examine trends, and issues reports with recommendations to improve the child-serving system.

### **BRIGHT SPOT – Atira Women's Resource Society**

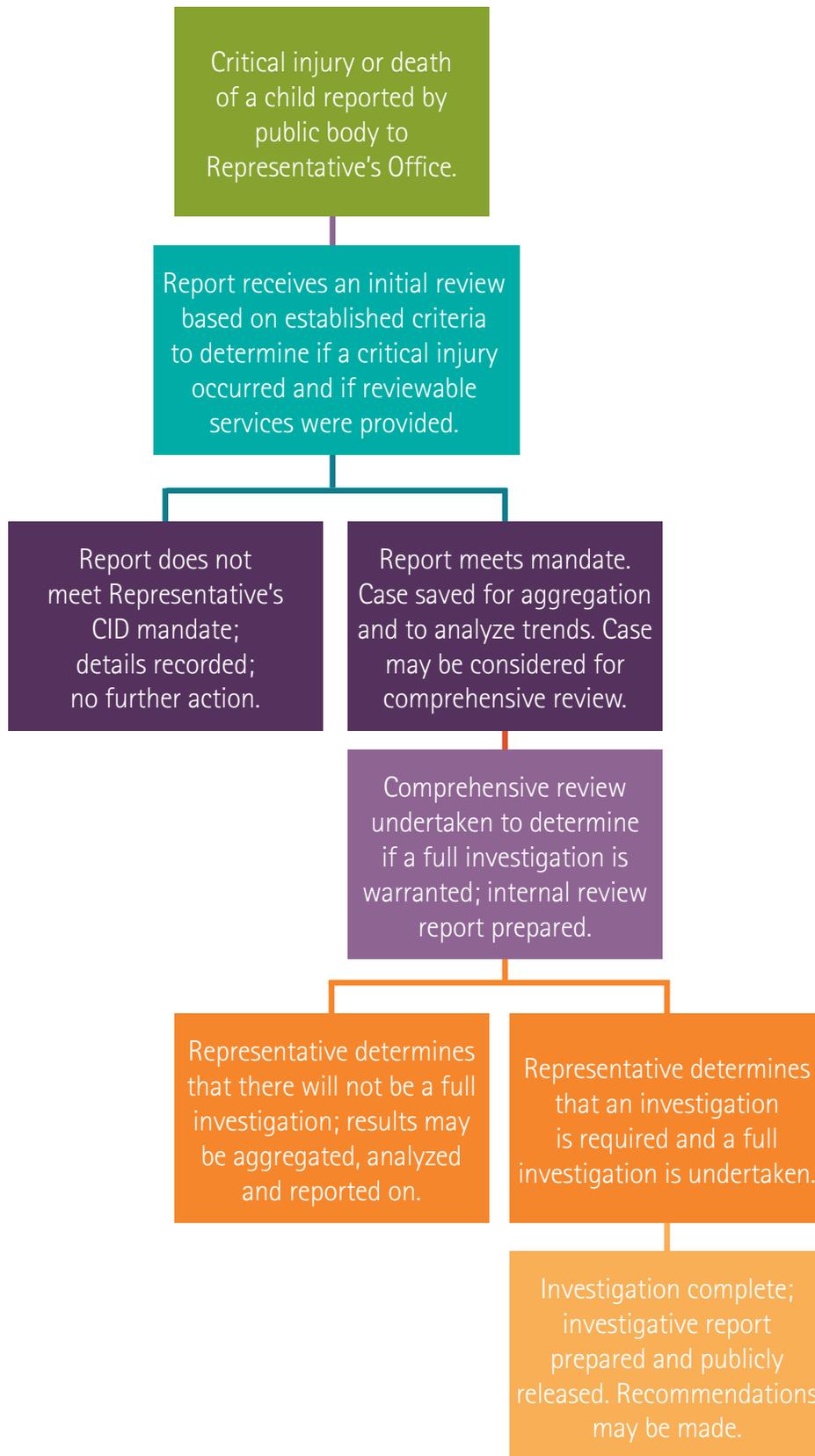
Through its work, the CID team becomes aware of organizations that provide services in support of women and children affected by violence. One of those is Atira Women's Resource Society, a non-profit organization that operates in the Lower Mainland. Atira offers safe and supportive housing, as well as other supports and services such as family and parenting programs, child care, early learning, employment initiatives and access to other resources including counselling and education. It also actively seeks out ways to help those in need through homelessness prevention and housing outreach programs.

In addition, Atira subcontracts operation of about 2,650 units of co-ed housing, including supportive housing, mixed rentals, seniors' housing and co-ops to its property management company, Atira Property Management Inc.

Staff at the organization reflect the diversity of the women accessing Atira's services with 38 per cent of staff identifying as Indigenous or of Indigenous ancestry and 33 per cent as women of colour. Atira believes that having a representative staff is the most important action an agency can take to make its services accessible.



## The Review and Investigation Process



## Highlights of CID Activities in 2018/19

### *CID Cases and Trends*

During 2018/19, CID received approximately 2,735 critical injury and death reports for children and youth who received services during the preceding 12 months. Each received an initial review and of these reports, 1,146 – or 42 per cent – were determined to meet the Representative's mandate.

Figure 5 details the number of cases by fiscal year of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth receiving reviewable services that met mandate after an initial review for the fiscal years 2009/10 to 2018/19.

### **Fast Fact**

The total number of injury and death reports received by the Representative in the 2018/2019 fiscal year increased by 11 per cent over last fiscal year.

**Figure 5 – In-Mandate Critical Injuries and Deaths – 2009/2010 to 2018/19**

Fiscal Year	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Critical Injuries	137	136	413	300	318	292	665	754	818	1037
Deaths	93	88	101	100	99	82	138	112	118	109
Total	230	224	514	400	417	374	803	866	936	1146

**Note:** The sharp increase in in-mandate injuries and rise in in-mandate deaths since 2015/16 is due to the overall increase in the number of critical incident reports received by the Representative's Office following the implementation of an updated Reportable Circumstances Policy by MCFD in June 2015.



Figure 6 shows the breakdown of the 1,146 reports in 2018/19 by injury or death and Indigeneity.

Figure 6 – Critical Injuries and Deaths by Indigeneity

Critical Injuries		Deaths	
Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
573	464	29	80

**Note:** Health Authorities do not generally report deaths and critical injuries in relation to addictions and mental health services for children and youth, but this is currently under review. Health Authorities are public bodies under the *RCY Act* and are required to report deaths and critical injuries related to reviewable services – notably mental health and addictions services – however, this has not been enforced or implemented since the inception of the Office. This is currently under review with the Ministry of Health and Health Authorities.

The following Figures 7 to 11 provide more detail on the type of classification, breakdown by gender and age of in-mandate critical injury and death reports received by the Representative in 2018/19.

Figure 7 – In-Mandate Critical Injuries by RCY Classification and Gender – 2018/19

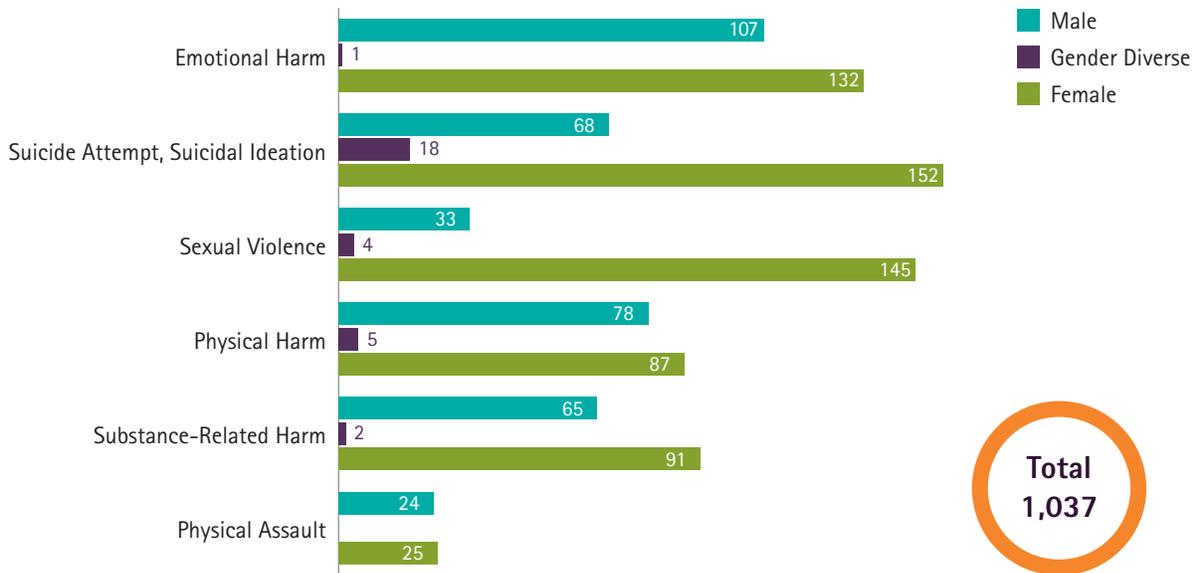


Figure 8 – Percentage of In-Mandate Critical Injuries by Gender – 2018/19

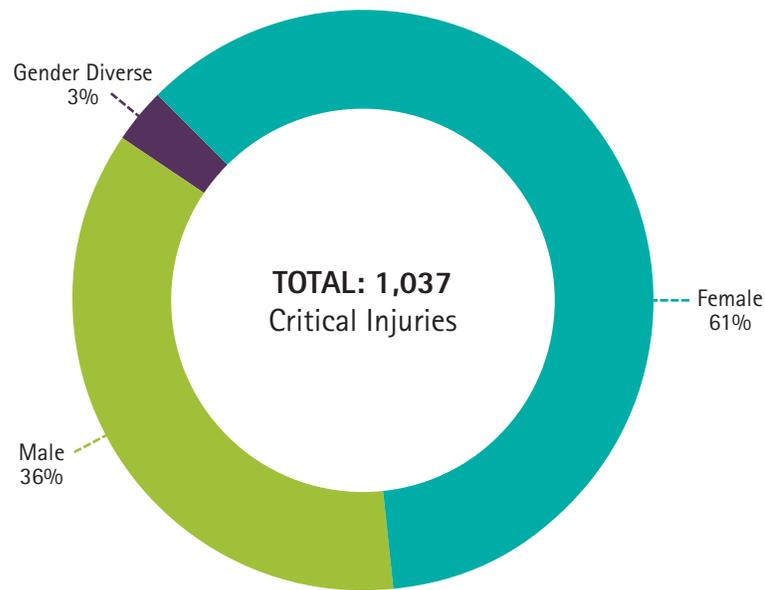
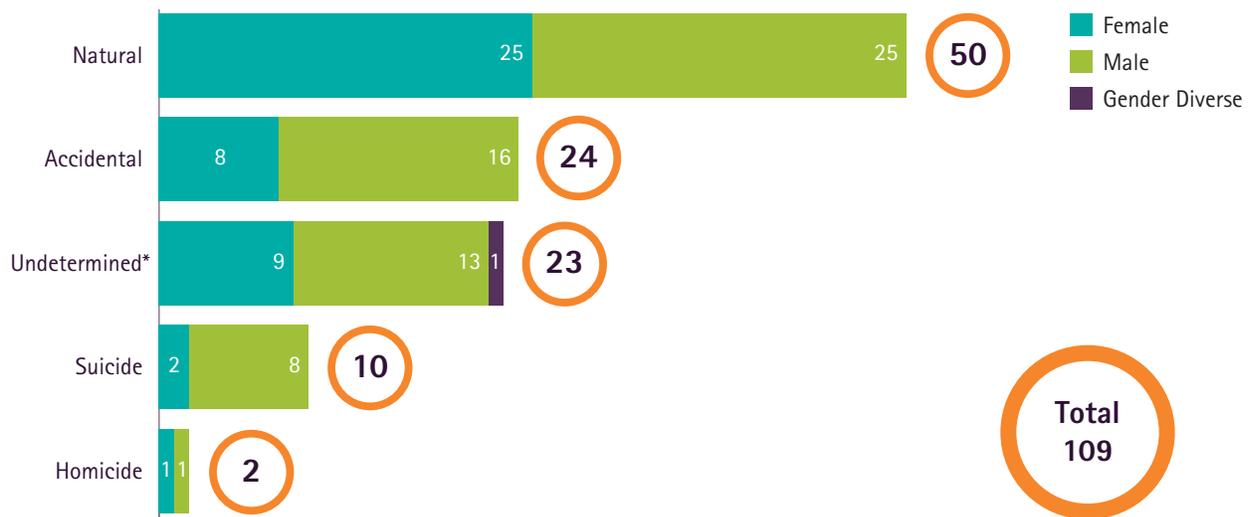


Figure 9 – In-Mandate Deaths by RCY Classification and Gender – 2018/19



\* An undetermined death is one in which the coroner cannot determine how the child/youth died. This may be due to lack of information, an ongoing investigation, or equal evidence that could indicate multiple possible causes of death (for example, it may not be clear if the death was accidental or a homicide, or accidental or a suicide).



Figure 10 – Percentage of In-Mandate Deaths by Gender – 2018/19

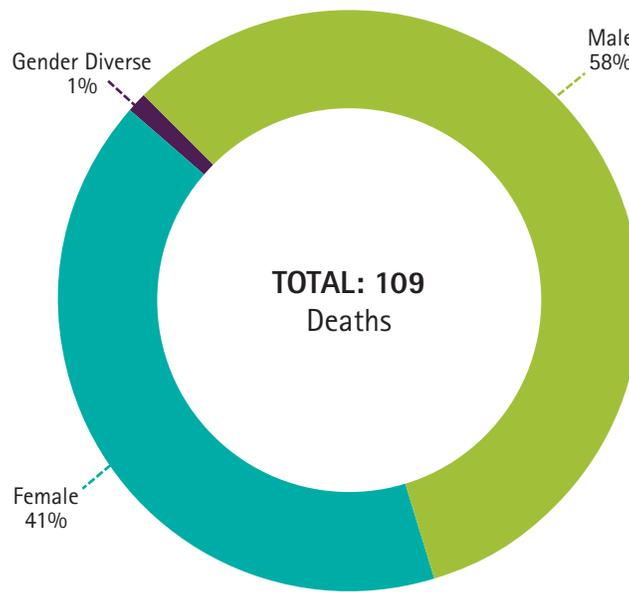
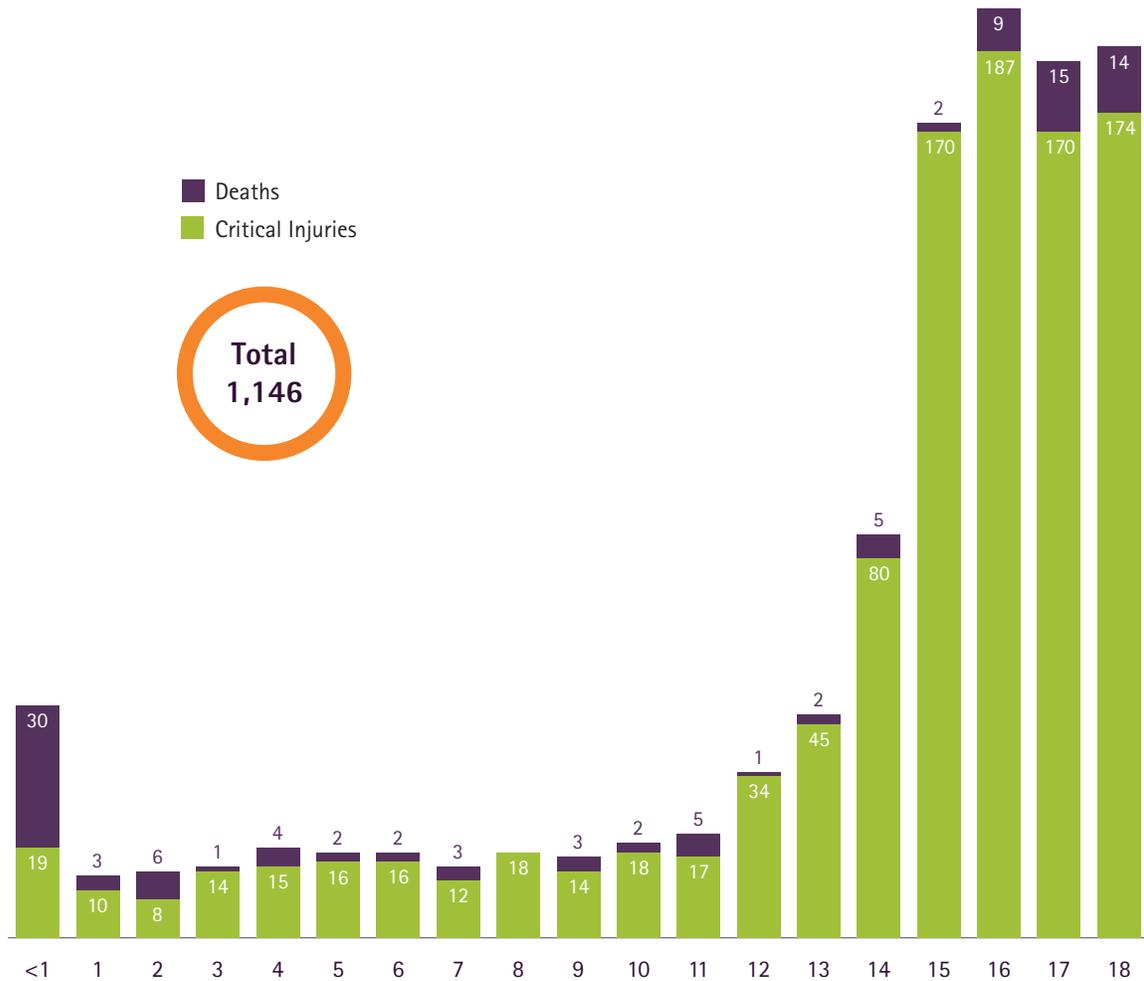


Figure 11 – Age Distribution of In-Mandate Critical Injuries and Deaths – 2018/19



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## Devon Trower – CID

With a fresh master's degree from the University of Western Ontario, Devon Trower relocated from Ontario to take a position at RCY as an Investigative Analyst in CID this spring, so she counts as one of RCY's newest employees. And, like all the staff here, she is motivated by her passion for children and youth. To Devon, it is the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in young peoples' lives that drove her here:

*"If you have a child who gets an intervention early on, that can change their path and where they go in life. They just need that one support. You can possibly change a whole life trajectory. That's what really draws me – the idea of making a difference."*

Devon's work involves analysis of the many facets of B.C.'s complex child-serving systems which, in turn, draws upon her recent degrees in applied school psychology and criminology. For Devon, the rich data she works with every day represents a wellspring of potential and opportunity to contribute to positive change for kids. And, she says, RCY's openness to mixed-methods research that utilizes both quantitative data and contextual research made it a place she wanted to be.

*"Quantitative approaches are important – having those statistics – but they give you no context. It's the context that really tells the story associated with the numbers."*

That's especially crucial when it comes to the Indigenous children and youth who are disproportionately represented in the child-serving system. It's an area of focus for Devon.

*"Because I'm from Ontario, I'm learning a lot of new things about Indigenous cultures in B.C. There are some similarities [with Indigenous cultures in Ontario] but they are very different. And with so many cultures here, it's just so diverse. It's a privilege to be able to learn more and build my knowledge. And that's been really integrated into my time here at RCY."*

Shortly after starting, Devon attended the annual RCY All-Staff meeting held in Victoria. And that, she says, cemented her conviction that she is in the right place.

*"I got to move from a mindfulness-based workshop, to learning on the land with Della [Rice Sylvester, a Cowichan Medicine Woman], then went into a seminar on addressing complex issues using a theoretical framework. I realized this is exactly where I need to be."*



## CID Initiatives

Between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019, CID released one aggregate review of substance use-related injury and death reports received by RCY in 2017. CID also released one individual investigative report during this time period. (For a description of the aggregate review and investigation reports see the Public Reports and Submissions section starting on page 44).

Beginning in the fiscal year 2018/19, the Representative discontinued the practice of issuing periodic CID update reports on injury and death reports received and reviews and investigations undertaken. The Office will continue to report annual CID statistics in the Representative's *Annual Report and Service Plan*.

CID is currently piloting a themed review process as a new approach to systemic analysis of groups of injuries or deaths. As well, given the over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in care and in the Representative's injury and death data, the CID team is looking critically at its review and investigation processes to incorporate Indigenous research methodologies and trauma-informed practices.

During the past fiscal year, CID began work on several important projects:

- Based on changes to the RCY database, CID is now able to report in a more in-depth manner on various aspects of the Representative's injury and death data. The Representative is currently working on an analysis of injury and death reports spanning three years. The report will have three sections including one that applies to all children and youth as well as specific sections on injuries and deaths of First Nations and Métis children and youth. Recognizing that some of the data belongs to First Nations and Métis communities, the Representative has engaged in discussions with those communities regarding the data. The Representative hopes to continue this dialogue and to use the data to support communities as they build capacity and reassume child welfare responsibility.
- The Representative is conducting an investigation concerning the overdose death of a youth who was in care in Alberta but living and receiving services in B.C. The focus of the investigation is on how provinces and territories support children and youth in care or families with child welfare involvement who move across borders.
- The Representative is undertaking a review looking at how children can participate in important decisions that impact their lives including mental health detentions, child protection and family law decisions. The Representative is considering whether and how children can access a lawyer to support them in these matters. This investigation involves engaging youth with lived experience to inform this work. The Representative plans to issue two reports on this important topic.

### Fast Fact

60 per cent of critical injury reports or deaths for children and youth in care were related to substance use.

### Fast Fact

Approximately three per cent of in-mandate injuries are reported for youth identified as gender diverse (that is, youth who are transgendered, non-binary, a-gendered or who are questioning their gender). The highest proportion of injuries reported for gender diverse youth were suicide attempts.



- The Representative is conducting an investigation concerning the death of an Indigenous youth. This investigation seeks to understand the systemic change that is needed to support the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of Indigenous children across the province by using both interviews and quantitative data to tell a story.

### BRIGHT SPOT – Sasamans Society

In July 2019, members of the CID team visited Sasamans Society, located on the lands of the We Wai Kai First Nation on Quadra Island and Campbell River. In the Kwak'wala language, Sasamans means "our children." Sasamans serves 12 member Nations and four urban Indigenous organizations from across Kwakwaka'wakw territory with representatives from each of the Nations and organizations forming the board of directors for the Sasamans Society.

Grounded in the voices of children, Elders and families from the communities they serve, Sasamans Society delivers services in a culturally responsive and community-driven way with the aim of strengthening individuals, families and communities. These services include: distinct navigator programs for families, Elders and youth; a cultural connections program; an Aboriginal outreach housing navigator; an Aboriginal parenting support worker program, an Aboriginal caregiver support worker and the Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders. In addition to its ongoing cultural connections work, Sasamans Society received provincial funding to assist two First Nations – Da'naxda'xw Awa'etlala and Mamalilikulla – in the development of Cultural Planning and Protocol Agreements with MCFD to support cultural planning for children in care.



Victoria RCY staff on  
Bear Witness Day, May 10, 2019



# Monitoring and Strategic Initiatives

## Overview

The Monitoring and Strategic Initiatives program supports the Representative with her mandate to monitor and evaluate designated child and youth services with the goal of improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of these services and ultimately improving outcomes for children and youth.

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

- *Research and Evaluation*: undertaking evidence-based research, including collaborations with other independent bodies or research institutions, to better understand the immediate and long-term outcomes for children and youth receiving designated services
- *Review and Audit*: conducting province-wide reviews and audits to assess the effectiveness and responsiveness of programs and services to children, youth and their families. Activities may include measuring compliance with standards, policies and legislation; gauging the adequacy of the ministry's quality assurance activities; and determining whether the needs of children, youth and families are being met
- *Oversight*: monitoring key elements of the government's activities and performance in providing designated services. Government activities are assessed against research and evidence-based practices with a focus on how well the government sets and achieves its stated goals. Key issues and trends are identified, tracked and brought to the attention of the Representative and ongoing monitoring of progress is conducted.

The work of the Monitoring team begins by asking questions, such as:

- How can supports and services provided by government be improved to help children and youth achieve good outcomes?
- How can we understand and respond to the over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of Indigenous children and youth?
- How well is MCFD accomplishing its goals to reduce the numbers of children and youth in care by focusing on meaningful and culturally appropriate approaches to permanency?
- What do young people say about the supports they receive and how effective are these services in their experience?

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Sarah Levine – Monitoring

When the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth first opened, Sarah Levine knew she wanted to work here. In university at the time, the opening of RCY gave Sarah a firm goal to aim for. Ten years later, that goal became a reality when Sarah was hired as Senior Project Lead with the Monitoring team.



*"I have been working toward coming to this Office since it began in 2007. I was in grad school when the legislation came through, studying policy. Children and youth are one of our most vulnerable populations – they don't have a lot of power – and I can remember as a kid what it was like to not have power, and to have decisions being made and not to have a say. So, I've always wanted to work with kids and for kids."*

As a member of RCY's Monitoring team, Sarah believes it is especially important to do work in the community, and so she was delighted to find strong support for her creative research proposal. She is leading the development of RCY's upcoming report on services for those with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and is working with a co-researcher with lived experience. The research involves working with children with FASD and their parents/caregivers as their perspectives are critical in developing recommendations for system improvements.

Sarah says watching her co-researcher work with the kids using a strength-based approach has been a profoundly moving experience.

*"There was a little boy – 10-years-old – and our co-researcher asked him if he thinks he's smart. He shook his head no. But we had learned he can make pretty much anything out of paper."*

Sarah's co-researcher said to the boy, *"What if we were on a deserted island and needed to get off? Who would people go to – Sarah the academic and writer, or you, who can make a boat out of paper?"*

*"Well, me,"* he said.

The co-researcher explained to the boy that everyone is smart in their own way. Sarah says what happened next was one of those unforgettable moments that sticks with you throughout your career.

*"He asked him again – 'Do you think you're smart?' And the boy looked up, huge smile on his face, and said 'Yes!' And for me, that really emphasized why we are doing this research."*

It also brought home for Sarah how important it is to be working here. In fact, she says it is no stretch to say that, at RCY, she has found her dream job.



The Representative may share findings through reports released publicly as well as submissions or statements on issues of concern. Reports include recommendations to government service providers about changes to services to improve outcomes for children and youth.

Monitoring work also involves liaising and engaging with key stakeholder groups, including young people with the lived experience of being in care or receiving services, government ministries, community organizations and other research institutions to ensure that reviews, research and recommendations are relevant and well-informed, and that findings and recommendations are understood.

### Fast Fact

Research shows that, over the last 20 years in North America, young people are taking longer periods of time to transition to adulthood. In 2016, 34.7 per cent of young adults were living with their parents. In contrast, youth transitioning out of government care at age 19 are only eligible for limited monetary supports and then only if they meet specific criteria.

## Highlights of Monitoring Activities 2018/19

During the past fiscal year, Monitoring and Strategic Initiatives began work on several important projects:

- Representative's final *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Update* – the fifth update to the Representative's 2014 report *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*. This update was a closing report on the numbers related to adoption and permanency options, the number of approved homes and the number of children eligible for adoption. While these are important numbers, they do not tell the complete story of finding permanency and more attention is needed to the relational, physical, cultural and identity dimensions of permanence. The Representative also recognizes the historical and contemporary context of adoption and the continued lack of culturally appropriate permanency options available for Indigenous children and youth in the continuing care of MCFD. These are important aspects of permanence that will be more fully explored in the upcoming years.\*
- The Care Plan Review – a multi-year quantitative and qualitative review of care planning in the areas of cultural planning for Indigenous children and youth in care, transitional planning for youth aging into adulthood, and permanency planning across multiple age categories. This review is a robust systemic analysis that examines care plans of children and youth in care over time and involves interviews and focus groups with stakeholders including children and youth, guardianship workers, caregivers and key informants at the executive level within MCFD. RCY's Care Plan Review represents a significant departure from previous reviews that have focused largely on compliance or point-in-time analysis. RCY anticipates releasing a status report in 2020 and a full report in 2021.

\* This update was released in August 2019.

- FASD research project – examines the topic of FASD from the perspective of two lenses: the social construction of FASD, and the lived experience of young people with FASD and their parents/caregivers. These two lenses will be applied to the review of provincial policies, programs and services to better understand the help and support that children and youth who live with FASD and their parents/caregivers receive and need. It will also identify gaps and areas in which more supports are needed. This report, which will be preceded by an invitational gathering of children, families and key stakeholders in the fall of 2019 and six community gatherings/consultations in the fall and winter of 2019, is expected to be released in the spring of 2020.

### **BRIGHT SPOT – A Family Participating in the FASD Project**

Morgan and Rande, foster parents in northern B.C. for 20 years, have cared for close to 50 children. They go through a careful process of getting to know each child, taking into consideration their Indigenous communities and the effects their diagnoses – most often of FASD and trauma – have had on their lives. Building on a base of love, attention and affection, their goal is to provide a home, not just a place to live. Their home is an ideal setting for healing work, surrounded by the benefits of nature, goats and other family pets, and the space to participate in activities such as bonfires, catching frogs and riding quads – a true refuge.

Morgan and Rande have built a career on gaining knowledge, skills and techniques related to FASD, trauma and attachment to best respond to the children. The passion and love reflected in the stories they have shared with RCY demonstrate the bright spot shining from their home and the difference they have made in the lives of the children for whom they have cared – one of whom they have now adopted and with the process under way to adopt two more. Morgan and Rande have a deep commitment to connecting the children with their Indigenous communities in very real ways that include relationships with their families, extended families, community, leadership and schools. They strongly believe that culture is truly experienced by being in community and with family and that, as caregivers, their primary role is to protect a child's relationships.



In November 2018, the Representative released *Time to Listen: Youth Voices on Substance Use*. (For a description of this report see the Public Reports and Submissions section starting at page 44). As a follow-up, the Representative has initiated an update to the inventory of substance use services described in the Representative's 2016 report *A Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.* This update, which will be complete by early 2020, will serve as a benchmark for assessing progress on the implementation of recommendations from both the 2016 and 2018 reports, specifically in relation to the need to develop a comprehensive system of substance use services throughout the province.

### **Fast Fact**

The No. 1 reason children and youth use substances is to "numb" emotional pain caused by life events or past trauma.

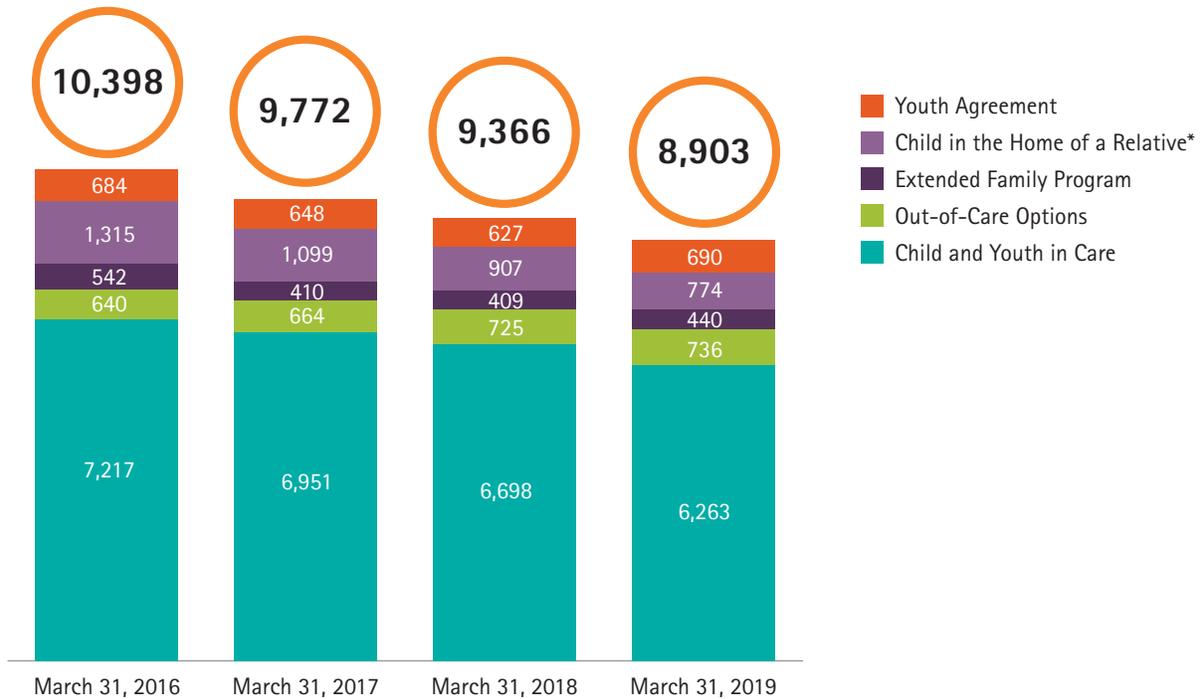
During the past fiscal year, with input from MCFD's leadership team and through independent analysis of available evidence, the Representative completed a critical look at all outstanding RCY recommendations. To contextualize this work, it should be noted that the Representative's *Not Fully Invested: A Follow-up Report on the Representative's Past Recommendations to Help Vulnerable Children in B.C.*, released in October 2014, found that although 72 per cent of the Representative's 148 recommendations had been substantially or fully implemented, little or no progress had been made with about 28 per cent of recommendations. These "legacy" recommendations remain important and will be included in ongoing monitoring activities. The Representative has also implemented a revamped process of developing and monitoring all recommendations for change and system improvements (please see page 46 of this report for a description of the RCY Recommendations Development and Monitoring Process).

### **Monitoring Trends**

Aligned with the Representative's goal of improving services to children and youth, a key trend tracked by the Monitoring team is the number of children and youth living outside their parental home in some form of care arrangement, with a focus on the disproportionate representation of Indigenous children and youth in care.

Figure 12 shows the total number of children and youth living outside of their parental home at the end of fiscal years 2015/16 through 2018/19.

Figure 12 – Children Living Outside the Parental Home – 2015/16 to 2018/19



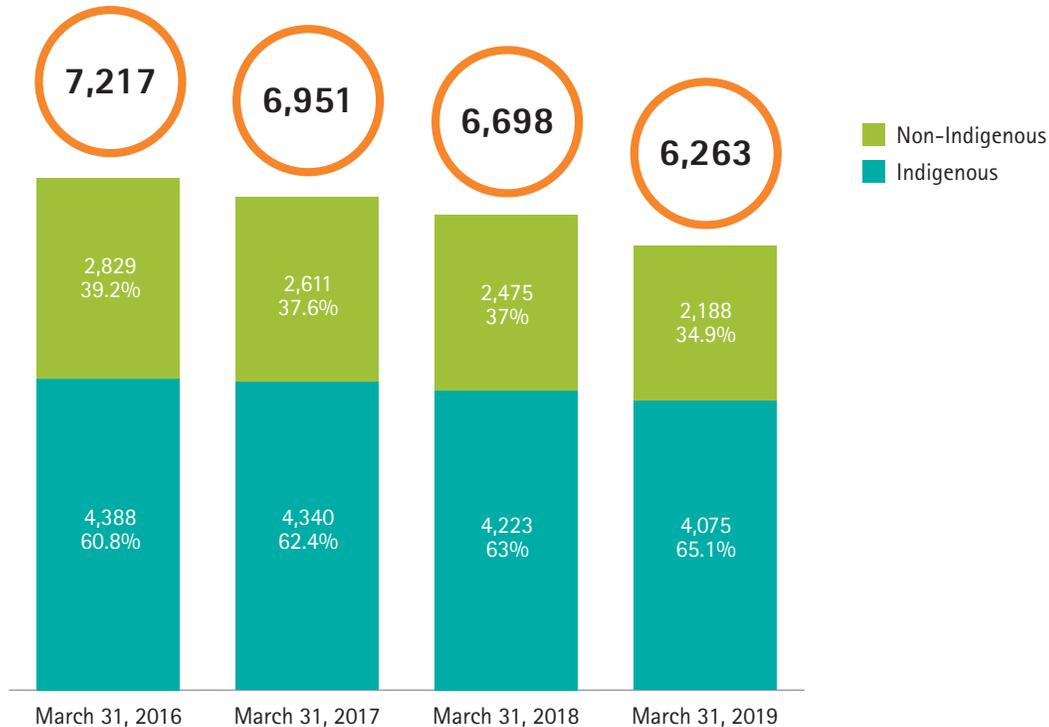
\* New applications for the Child in the Home of a Relative Program were discontinued in 2010.

The total number of children and youth living outside of their home has continued to decline over the four years reported above from 10,398 in 2016 to 8,903 in 2019. Of those children living outside of their parental home, children and youth in care of the government remains the largest category. This number has also decreased over this same four-year period.

Although the total number of children and youth in care has decreased over time, the number of Indigenous children and youth in care has decreased to a lesser extent than non-Indigenous children and youth.

Figure 13 shows the number and the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in care at the end of the fiscal years 2015/16 through 2018/19.

**Figure 13 – Proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in care – 2015/16 to 2018/19**



These figures highlight several significant and ongoing trends:

- The number of Indigenous children and youth in care remains grossly disproportionate. Although Indigenous children and youth represent only about 10 per cent of children and youth between the ages of birth and 19 years in B.C., they represent 65.1 per cent of children and youth in care as of March 31, 2019.<sup>4</sup>
- The percentage of Indigenous children and youth in care, as compared to the total number of children and youth in care, has increased from 60.8 per cent as of March 31, 2016 to 65.1 per cent as of March 31, 2019.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the total number of children and youth in care at each fiscal year-end (March 31) decreased for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. However, the rate of this decrease is significantly different for Indigenous children and youth. Non-Indigenous children and youth in care decreased by 22.7 per cent over this period yet the number of Indigenous children and youth in care only decreased by 7.1 per cent.

Numbers of Indigenous children and youth in care and services and programs for Indigenous children and youth will continue to be a focus of Monitoring activities by the Representative's Office during the coming years.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, Census 2016 data tables.

## BRIGHT SPOT – Indigenous Language Revitalization

The United Nations has declared the year 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.<sup>5</sup> According to research by Onowa McIvor, more than 70 Indigenous languages across 12 language groups are currently spoken in Canada, and B.C. is home to 60 per cent of these.<sup>6</sup> Further, McIvor reports that there are now twice as many Indigenous children as Elders learning an Indigenous language. In B.C., Indigenous communities, researchers and organizations have created tools and programs to support the revitalization of Indigenous languages.<sup>7</sup> An example of this is through Vancouver Island School District 72's implementation of a two-year pilot project: Kindergarten Liq'wala/Kwak'wala language and culture experience at Ripple Rock Elementary in Campbell River.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2019/01/2019-international-year-of-indigenous-languages/>

<sup>6</sup> McIvor, O., Indigenous languages in Canada: What you need to know. Ottawa, ON, Canada: CCUNESCO, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fpcc.ca/language/Programs/>

<sup>8</sup> "School District Gets Number for Indigenous Immersion in Campbell River." Campbell River Mirror (Campbell River, British Columbia), 2019.

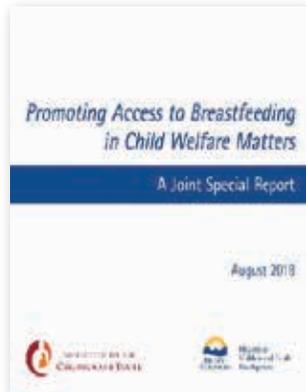


*RCY Monitoring and Advocacy staff at an event with the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, June 2019*

## Public Reports and Submissions

### Investigative and Monitoring Reports

In 2018/19, the Representative publicly released three significant reports. A full copy of all reports, submissions and statements is available on the RCY website at: [www.rcybc.ca/reports-and-publications](http://www.rcybc.ca/reports-and-publications).

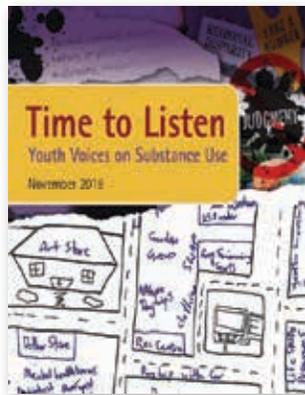


#### *Promoting Access to Breastfeeding in Child Welfare Matters (released Aug. 29, 2018)*

This joint special report with MCFD was initiated after the B.C. Supreme Court ordered the ministry to increase a mother's access to her infant for breastfeeding and bonding, and a provincial court ruled that MCFD had not adequately considered the supports that were available in the mother's First Nations community to keep the family together.

Promoting Access to Breastfeeding in Child Welfare Matters found that, on average, more than 500 infants under the age of 12 months entered government care each year from 2013/14 to 2017/18. Of these infants, nearly 60 per cent were Indigenous, highlighting a concern that the over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in care begins in infancy.

The report resulted in a five-point action plan to support family connections and mother-child bonds.

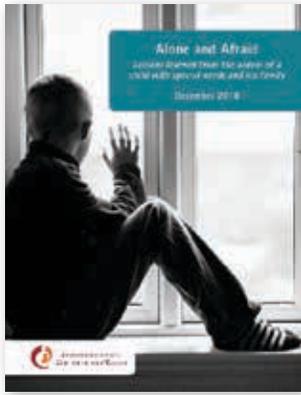


#### *Time to Listen: Youth Voices on Substance Use (released Nov. 15, 2018)*

This aggregate review of substance use-related injury and death reports received by RCY in 2017 also offers the first-hand perspectives of young people in B.C. with lived experience.

Listening to the strong youth voice in this report, the Representative recommended that government develop and fund an array of substance use services that can meet the diverse needs of all youth, their families and communities.

The report highlights the need for harm reduction to be a key component of this wrap-around system. The Representative acknowledged that the issue of harm reduction is controversial but stressed that the ongoing overdose crisis in B.C. requires specific action on behalf of young people.



### *Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family (released Dec. 10, 2018)*

This investigative report describes the life of a boy who is autistic and non-verbal who was found in a state of profound neglect in 2016 at age 12. The report details the events that led to the boy's removal from his mother's care and found that the family struggled with poverty, housing insecurity, disconnection, mental health and substance use issues and that the child had endured years of malnutrition and neglect, inadequate services to address his special needs and little education or socialization.

The review found that MCFD consistently did not comply with standards and no MCFD social worker ever laid eyes on the boy as part of a child protection response until the day he was removed from his mother's care.

The ordeal of the boy and his family showed that B.C.'s system of services to support children with complex needs and their families must be overhauled. The report included 11 recommendations to three government ministries.

## CID Updates

In the 2018/19 fiscal year, the Representative issued the final periodic report on RCY reviews and investigations activities:

- the Representative's Report #31 – Reviews and Investigations: June 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, released on June 18, 2018.

RCY has changed its reporting practices in the area of critical injuries and deaths and will report annually on reviews and investigations but will no longer issue periodic reports.



# How does RCY develop recommendations?

## Recommendations Drafted

- Report team drafts initial recommendations
- Representative reviews and approves draft
- Recommendations reviewed with public bodies
- Feedback considered.

## Administrative Fairness and Recommendation Review

- Report sent to public bodies for fact check and response to recommendations
- Feedback considered
- Formal response requested from public bodies
- Responses referenced in report
- Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY) advised of report release date and offered advance briefing.

## Post Release

- RCY presents report to SSCCY
- RCY meets with public bodies within three months
- Public bodies submit Action Plan to RCY within six months
- RCY confirms Action Plan meets intent of recommendations.

## Recommendations Monitored

- Public bodies complete a substantive update at one-year anniversary
- RCY evaluates implementation of recommendations
- Letter sent to public bodies with RCY's assessment of implementation
- Annual summary of status of recommendations posted on website
- Summary provided to SSCCY
- Monitor recommendations implementation for three years or longer, at discretion of Representative.



## Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships

### An Indigenous Focus

Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships (ISP) works to establish and nurture relationships with Indigenous partners in B.C. and to advocate for culturally grounded and effective supports for Indigenous children, youth and families receiving government services.

During 2018/19, ISP underwent a fundamental redesign and hired additional staff to provide two-pronged support to the organization and communities: community engagement and outreach, and Indigenous research and monitoring.

ISP's community outreach staff meet and engage with Indigenous communities, agencies and service providers province-wide, including children, youth, young adults and families, with a focus on building relationships and child rights education.

ISP's research and monitoring team closely observes and monitors areas relevant to Indigenous child welfare, including the status of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry recommendations, the implementation of Grand Chief Ed John's recommendations on Indigenous child welfare, the implementation of Jordan's Principle in B.C., federal and provincial Indigenous child welfare legislation, and provincial and federal commitments to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

The team also works collaboratively with all RCY program areas to help ensure that the Office is culturally aware, respectful and responsive. ISP's work supports RCY's overall aim to become a culturally safer environment for Indigenous staff and people served.



*Healing room created by ISP  
in RCY's Burnaby office*



## Highlights of Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships Activities in 2018/19

### *Jordan's Principle*

In the fall of 2018, ISP held 10 Jordan's Principle workshops throughout the Lower Mainland. The workshops were offered to a range of service providers and took place at Friendship Centres, schools and community centres.

Workshop topics included basic information on Jordan's Principle, what it covers and the application process.

**Jordan's Principle** – Endorsed by the B.C. government in January 2008, Jordan's Principle is a child-first approach that commits the provincial government to ensuring that jurisdictional disputes do not prevent First Nations children from accessing available health and social services. Under Jordan's Principle, if B.C. has first contact with an Indigenous child, it will pay for services and seek reimbursement later to ensure that a child receives equitable service in a timely way.



*RCY staff learning about the land and medicines from Cowichan Medicine Woman Della Rice Sylvester*

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Cheyenne Andy – ISP

Growing up in B.C.'s foster care system, Cheyenne Andy of the Nuxalk Nation in Bella Coola knew about RCY, thanks to family members and friends who had called our advocates.

*"I heard a lot of positive stories where advocates were really kind and explained what rights the youth had and helped them to self-advocate."*

As a result, she knew on a personal level how important RCY Advocacy services can be in a person's life. It was that appreciation that led her to apply more than two years ago for her first position at RCY as a member of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Team. Later, she became a Youth Engagement Coordinator at RCY's Burnaby office.



*"For me, working here has been so important because it gives me a sense of giving back. I had a positive experience in care, but I have learned how to use my voice to make changes in child welfare. And that's important because I have younger siblings who are still in care – and because of all the youth who are still in care. Some of the things that are happening are really sad stories."*

Hearing sad stories is only too familiar to Cheyenne and they deeply affect her but, at the same time, she is unequivocal that there is a place for more focus on the positive things that are happening as well.

*"I do think there should be more focus on the positive because those are the things that are going right in a youth's life. For me, I've been able to use the positive elements in my life to advocate for others. They show why we need to have those things in place in order for youth to be able to succeed."*

As an Indigenous young person, Cheyenne says she found the annual Gathering Our Voices forum for Indigenous youth that she attended this spring to be transformative.

*"I loved how there were all these Indigenous youth connecting and having fun, and also how they were celebrating their culture and each other. That's a missing piece, especially when it comes to child welfare."*

Cheyenne's plans include a future in child and youth care counselling. She says she has learned much from RCY advocates and is now attending college so she can grow and continue in the field she loves.

*"I get a lot of energy from youth and I love taking that energy and giving it back to them. This line of work is my passion."*

## Indigenous Youth and Community Engagement

Working with the Advocacy team, ISP is playing an active role in supporting RCY's #Rep4Rights Tour. Launched in May 2018, the #Rep4Rights Tour is reaching out to communities across the province with a focus on reaching Indigenous children, youth and young adults, and those who support them, to teach them about fundamental rights. For more on the #Rep4Rights Tour, see the Youth Engagement section, page 54 of this report.

In addition to supporting the #Rep4Rights Tour, the ISP team participated in a number of other youth and community engagement activities over the past year, including:

- hosting a National Indigenous Peoples Day event on June 21, 2018 in Vancouver
- hosting an information booth at Hoobiye 2019 on Feb. 1 and 2, 2019 in Vancouver (Hoobiye is a celebration of Nisga'a New Year and the sharing of culture, stories, songs and dances.)
- hosting an information booth and presenting workshops at Gathering Our Voices held in March 2019 in Port Alberni (Gathering Our Voices is an Indigenous youth event where Indigenous young people from across Canada come together to explore, to learn and to engage with culture among peers.)
- attending the annual Nezul Be Hunayah Family Camp in Fort St. James in July 2018. The camp brings children and youth in care together with their foster, adoptive and biological families on traditional Carrier territories. Families share traditional history, teachings, food, cultural activities and recreational events. It ends with a potlatch to celebrate and honour the children in care who NBH have brought home and all who attend the event.
- Hosting a facilitation training workshop with Ignite Your Spirit 3 youth leaders to learn about various leadership styles and tools and to build skills.



## Ignite Your Spirit 3

In the spring and summer of 2018, ISP undertook detailed planning for a third Ignite Your Spirit Indigenous youth-led forum to take place in Fort St. James in August 2018. This included hiring and training four youth leaders from communities in the region. These youth leaders gained skills in workshop design and delivery in preparation for sharing knowledge and ideas with the young people attending the IYS 3 gathering. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled due to wildfire threat and extreme smoke. The purpose of the Ignite Your Spirit forums is to give Indigenous youth a platform through which to make recommendations to adults and government regarding child welfare. Follow-up plans to engage with Indigenous youth for this purpose are in progress.

### BRIGHT SPOT – Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Delegated Aboriginal Agency

As part of ongoing outreach work, members of RCY's Advocacy team, CID team and the Representative visited a number of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies this past year, including Lii Michif Otipemisiwak (LMO) in Kamloops. LMO provides the full range of mandated child and family services under the *CFCS Act* using a unique approach in delivering services founded in Métis culture and heritage. By embracing the *Signs of Safety Practice Model*, LMO is committed to drawing on strengths of family and culture during times of crisis. Relationship building with self, family and culture is paramount to its vision and values.

The LMO office has a true home-like atmosphere with couches, rocking chairs and jig music playing softly in the background. No meeting is held without food or drink, served on china dishes. Everywhere you look are reminders of relations from the past, Michif language and tented cards with the question "*Is it good for Children?*" Michif language is interwoven in all communication – written and verbal – and each child protection file has an Elder to assist the family and meet with the children or youth.

Keeping families connected to each other and their culture and finding new ways to help families stay together to is core to the work of LMO. A true bright spot in child and family services work, LMO also hosts several community groups for anyone to attend, including a youth drumming circle, teen night, fathers' group, parents' breakfast, Elder lunches and cultural workshops.



Sign at Lii Michif Otipemisiwak

## Communications

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

### External Communications

A key function of the Communications team is to help build awareness about the work of the Office throughout B.C. This includes responding to requests from journalists, organizing report releases and media events. The team keeps the RCY Executive informed about current topics and concerns in the media and government and provides strategic advice to the Representative and Executive on communications-related matters. In 2018/19, Communications handled 126 media requests, in addition to interviews conducted as part of formal RCY media events.

The Communications team is involved in the development of reports from the initial planning stages through to the post-release process, as well as writing and reviewing all public and background materials and organizing special events such as open houses that take place around the province.

Communications staff also prepare materials for the Representative's appearances before government committees, including the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth and the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. During fiscal 2018/19, the Representative made presentations to these committees eight times.

Finally, as part of the Representative's commitment to building awareness about the work of the Office, especially among young people, the Communications team maintains a full social media presence on six social media accounts, with assistance from a three-member Social Media Youth Team (see page 56 for more on the Social Media Youth Team). The Communications team also maintains the RCY website, which in 2018/19 received more than four million hits.

### Internal Communications

Communications keeps staff at RCY's three offices informed of activities and decisions through a weekly staff newsletter, and in between issues keeps staff informed of any internal Office developments. The team also organizes annual staff awareness days, such as Pink Shirt Day, Orange Shirt Day and Bear Witness Day.



*The Representative at the release of the Time to Listen report at Directions Youth Services, November 2018.*

# Year In Review

126

Media requests

2,350

Advocacy calls

5

Reports

8

Appearances before  
Parliamentary  
committees

37

Rights Tour  
workshops

29

Speeches

3,160

Youth with whom Rep  
and staff engaged

4,135,382

Website hits

6

Videos  
released

16

Report  
recommendations

2,735

Injury and death  
reports received

136

Advocacy  
outreach events



## Youth Engagement

Ensuring that youth voices are heard and considered has been, and will continue to be, a priority of the Representative. RCY strives to create opportunities to hear directly from youth about their issues and to involve them in working toward solutions. Positive youth engagement provides the Office with valuable youth perspectives and improved understanding of youth needs and concerns which informs the activities and recommendations of the Office.

### Highlights of Youth Engagement Activities in 2018/19

#### *Youth Engagement Framework*

In early 2019, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) prepared a framework for youth and community engagement for the Representative. The framework identifies characteristics of inclusive and effective youth engagement based on a literature review as well as incorporating feedback from RCY employees, youth-serving organizations and youth themselves.

The framework outlines four objectives to advance the work of RCY:

- convene and collaborate with children and youth with a focus on vulnerable and under-engaged children and youth
- develop content and engage in knowledge transfer and exchange
- enhance partnerships with youth-serving organizations and expand outreach
- improve internal organizational capacity for child and youth engagement.

Through her extensive cross-province stakeholder engagement, the Representative has come to appreciate that effectively engaging with youth requires actively involving those who support youth in their communities. Building on this and work undertaken by SPARC BC, the Office is finalizing a Youth and Community Engagement Framework and practice guide.

## #Rep4Rights Rights Tour

In May 2018, the Representative launched an 18-month provincial outreach tour – the #Rep4RightsTour – to educate children, youth and those who care for them about their rights under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* and the *U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*.

The Representative and staff at RCY hear repeatedly from youth and young adults that they didn't realize they had rights and that they wish they'd known about those rights at a much younger age. Their experiences became the catalyst for the #Rep4Rights tour. The goal is to reach as many children and youth as possible, with a focus on Indigenous children and youth in care. Because many adults are unfamiliar with child rights, #Rep4Rights tour workshops are also being offered to adults and caregivers who work with children and youth.

#Rep4Rights tour workshops are interactive and include a variety of activities such as storytelling, discussion, games and media related to rights and self-advocacy.

Led by the Advocacy and ISP teams, #Rep4Rights tour workshops have taken place in communities across Vancouver Island, the central Interior region and the Greater Vancouver region in locations such as schools, Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and MCFD offices. Through the Rights tour, in 2018/19, RCY staff connected with 551 individuals, including 218 children and youth, 290 adults including social workers, foster parents and professionals working in community agencies, and 43 mixed age groups – often children under 10 with their caregivers.

Workshops are continuing into the 2019/20 year with the goal of reaching children, youth and those who support them in the Interior, Okanagan and northern regions of the province. Through this initiative, it is projected that RCY staff will engage with 1,000 children, youth and those who support them.



#Rep4Rights Tour

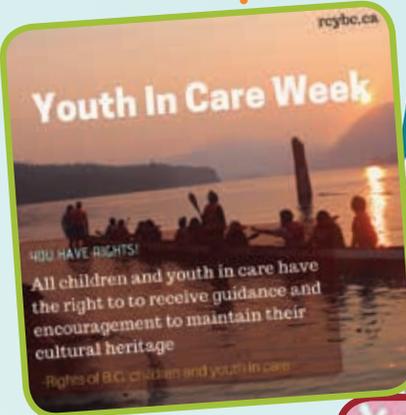




B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth is the only child advocate in Canada that employs a Social Media Youth Team (SMYT) to advise on and create youth-friendly content for the Representative's six social media accounts. Comprised of three dynamic and diverse young people, the team is based at RCY's Victoria headquarters and works with RCY's Communications staff.

In 2018/19, the SMYT designed and produced several projects, including a podcast from the perspective of an Indigenous youth from care (see Bright Spot, page 61), and an extremely successful series of graphics and a video to support youth homelessness advocate Katherine McParland's forums for young people who have experienced homelessness. The SMYT also produced a series on the rights of youth in care for B.C. Child and Youth in Care Week, supported RCY's #Rep4Rights tour with graphics, a video, and a sticker for mass distribution, and created numerous imaginative graphics to raise awareness about advocacy and how the Office can help youth. For 2019/20, the team also created a graphic series on mental health and self-care for youth called #RobotReminders.

With all that, the SMYT still managed to find time to marshal its considerable collective design talents to create a dedicated, youth-friendly office space at RCY's Victoria headquarters to make youth employees – present and future – feel welcome and inspired.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## SEMA'TSE Jordan

From the day she was hired in 2018, Social Media Youth Team member SEMA'TSE Jordan was brimming with imaginative ideas to reach out to other young people through the Representative's social media accounts.

*"It's all about the youth at the end of the day and I realized how important it is for them to know that they have a voice."*

Jordan, who is of Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Snuneymuxw and Nisga'a ancestry, was still a youth in care when she began her position on RCY's Social Media Youth Team. She knows what it feels like to be voiceless; to be ripped away from home at a young age, separated from family, deprived of culture and placed in foster care.

*"When you have somebody come into your home and take you away, in that moment you become silenced because you're overpowered. You think, 'they can literally come into my home and take me away, so what else are they going to do if I say something?'"*

And so, with a passion arising from her own experience of feeling silenced and a compelling desire to help other youth in care, The Kid Advocate was born. Jordan came up with the idea to launch a podcast in which she could discuss real issues from the perspective of an Indigenous youth from care.

*"Most of the time I was in foster care, it was all about the adults. They were deciding everything and I was kind of on the backburner, not really knowing what was going on. Now that I'm 19 and I'm starting to understand all of the things that were supposed to happen and how silenced I was at such a young age, I want to change that for other youth."*

Jordan says she feels safe and supported by the work environment and staff at RCY, which in turn empowers her to help other youth.

*"The biggest thing is that I feel like me telling my story gives other youth permission to tell theirs."*

She says her Grandpa recently told her she should become a counsellor.

*"He said, 'You're really good at this stuff. You make me realize a lot of things I wasn't capable of realizing before.' And I was like, 'I wonder if this is what I make other people feel like when I write podcasts and record them and they go up on the website?' I'm hoping that's what happens."*

The Kid Advocate podcast can be found on the RCY website at: <https://rcybc.ca/kid-advocate>.



## Child Rights Education Week

The Representative's Office is a member of the national Child Rights Education Week Committee, which works collaboratively to produce a yearly awareness campaign in the third week of November around the *UNCRC*. The Committee is comprised of staff from Advocates' offices across Canada as well as child-serving organizations. In 2018, RCY's Social Media Youth Team developed a hashtag and produced a series of graphic images that focused on several rights under the *UNCRC*. These images were shared nationally through social media by different organizations and individuals to educate children and youth about their rights.

## Homelessness Report

The development of a provincial plan to end homelessness is a priority of the province. To effectively address youth homelessness and the distinct issues and developmental needs of youth, it is critical that the voices of youth with lived experience of homelessness are heard in the development of a provincial plan. To that end, RCY is supporting Katherine McParland, a masters of social work leadership student, to lead a project to hear from youth directly about solutions to end youth homelessness. Katherine is also a former youth in care with lived experience of homelessness and the founder of the A Way Home Kamloops movement to end youth homelessness.

Working with the B.C. Coalition to End Youth Homelessness, Katherine brought 13 youth from across the province together to lead youth forums in their communities in order to provide the opportunity for youth with lived experiences of homelessness to share their voices. Through these community forums, 163 youth shared their ideas for change. An additional 68 youth participated in an online survey.

Katherine is currently working in collaboration with the youth leaders on a report to be released in late 2019 through the Office of the Representative. This report will provide a platform for youth voices to educate government on the views of youth with lived experience and their recommendations about what steps need to be taken to prevent and end youth homelessness.



*The Representative filming a video on RCY with Giggles the puppet, December 2018.*



## YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

## Katherine McParland

Katherine McParland knows exactly what it feels like to be homeless. At the age of 19, she left foster care in Kamloops and faced challenges that resulted in her eventually ending up on the street and couch surfing in unsafe places, living a life that no young person should have to endure. Now fully housed and working on a master's of social work leadership degree through the University of Calgary, her harrowing experiences have inspired her current work as a practicum student and contractor with RCY, designing, planning and writing a youth-led research project on youth homelessness in hopes of informing a provincial plan to end it.



*"I'm thankful to be working with RCY. I really admire the work done here, advocating for and elevating the voices of youth. The first time I was introduced to RCY was through a report done on aging out of care called On Their Own, and that was really impactful. It was after I had aged out and I appreciated how RCY was working to ensure that youth have a voice in a system where often youth are powerless."*

Katherine wove what she refers to as "lived expertise" throughout her practicum project, which involved leading and supporting 13 youth leaders – all with lived experiences of homelessness – to host forums for homeless youth in communities around B.C.

*"We interviewed 163 youth and conducted an online survey, and I felt like it really provided an opportunity to amplify the voices of youth."*

You can hear how profoundly affected Katherine was in her tone.

*"At some of the forums, in the smaller, more rural communities such as Cowichan and Nelson, as well as in Victoria, we saw 18 to 28 youth – some of them with their camping gear coming straight off the street. They were able to come into the space and share their voices, and it was so powerful because we knew we were really reaching youth on the ground without a home."*

Throughout, Katherine has never lost sight of the bigger picture. In the end, her goal with her grassroots work is to create change.

*"I'm most excited about the next part of the work because that will be mobilizing those voices, and bringing it to decision-makers."*

Ultimately, this work with RCY brings her full circle by showing her that, as difficult as her own experiences were, they have ultimately become a gift.

*"It provides a silver lining around hardships when you can find the deeper purpose, which is creating policy change to ensure that no other kids have to go through that."*

## McCreary Youth Research Academy

The McCreary Centre Society's Youth Research Academy (YRA) teaches youth with government care experience to conduct community-based research. YRA participants are trained to design, deliver, analyze and disseminate research projects of interest to youth with government care experience and to service providers. Youth in and from care have traditionally had little voice in the services that affect them. By taking on research projects relevant to those services, youth in the YRA have the chance to influence policy and practice within those services.

McCreary's leadership in engaging young people in building the system's understanding of the experience of being in care has been of interest to RCY since the inception of YRA. In 2018/19, RCY worked with YRA to plan its approach to hearing from children and youth for the Care Plan Review. The YRA members provided advice to RCY on methodologies for asking youth for input, research instruments, respectful language and how to support youth when sharing their stories including the ethics of engagement. The YRA also sat on RCY's External Advisory Committee and provided input on the survey instruments for foster parents, other caregivers and MCFD social workers. In the coming year, the YRA will assist the Monitoring and CID teams in reaching out to youth and gathering their input.

### BRIGHT SPOT – SEMA'TSE Jordan and *The Kid Advocate* Podcast

In September 2018, RCY launched a podcast series featuring Social Media Youth Team member SEMA'TSE Jordan's perspectives as an insightful and thoughtful Indigenous youth from care. The podcast, titled *The Kid Advocate*, features original art also created by SEMA'TSE Jordan (cover art for this report is from a podcast episode on residential schools).

SEMA'TSE Jordan has produced podcasts examining her own personal journey through the care system, including her experience of ongoing sexual abuse at the hands of a foster parent and the failure of the system to protect her. Other episodes include discussions about intergenerational trauma, the aftermath of residential schools, what it feels like to age out of care and what kids in foster care really need.

The podcast, heard throughout Canada, is available on the RCY website at <https://rcybc.ca/kid-advocate> and on SoundCloud (*The Kid Advocate*). RCY also posts new podcast episodes on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.





*The Representative with youth at a gathering of provincial youth advisory committees*

## *Youth Voices on Substance Use*

To ensure that the voices of youth are heard in the ongoing dialogue about substance use, the Representative's *Time to Listen: Youth Voices on Substance Use* report (released Nov. 15, 2018) provided the first-hand perspectives of 100 young people in B.C. with lived experience. To hear directly from young people, RCY worked with the McCreary Centre Society which facilitated focus groups with youth who use substances and had received reviewable services in their lifetime.

In May and June 2018, 18 focus groups were held across the province, and were hosted at youth resource centres, Friendship Centres, shelters and other community-based services accessed by youth, as well as in residential substance use programs and youth custody centres. The youth provided their views on substance use and suggestions about what could be changed to make youth safer.

This strong youth input informed the Representative's recommendations to government to develop and fund an array of substance use services that can meet the diverse needs of all youth, including the development of culturally relevant and safe services and supports for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous youth, their families and communities. As reflected in the recommendations, youth also called for youth engagement by ensuring a diverse range of youth are embedded into the province's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy development and implementation.

## Community Engagement

During the Representative's first year, community engagement has been a primary focus. Over the course of the year, the Representative has attended events and meetings, listening to, engaging with, and speaking to participants. The Representative and her staff undertake a broad range of community and stakeholder relations activities and initiatives to:

- raise awareness of services provided by the Representative's Office
- provide education about the rights of children and youth
- establish connections within communities and organizations to enhance awareness of child rights, to facilitate the development of community-based advocacy services and supports, and to listen to the concerns of individuals and organizations.

These activities include: hosting open houses; meeting with child-, youth- and young-adult serving organizations and community organizations throughout the province; attending community events and hosting information booths to distribute information about the rights of children and youth and the services of the Representative's Office; making presentations at conferences, forums and to groups small and large; and meeting with a wide array of community organizations, including youth.



*VACFSS Board Member Bernice Discon, Rep Jennifer Charlesworth, VACFSS CEO Bernadette Spence and VACFSS Guardianship Manager Holly Anderson*



## Highlights of Community and Stakeholder Relations Activities in 2018/19

Upon accepting the position in August 2018, the Representative made it a priority to personally attend as many meetings and events and visit as many communities as possible. Her goal was to hear directly from children, youth, young adults and those who support them about the important issues affecting them and what can be done to address those issues and improve the system of supports and services to children, youth and young adults.

Through this process, the Representative has heard from a wide range of individuals and organizations from across the province and has learned about a wide range of issues. Some common themes emerged from these dialogues. The diagram on the following page outlines these themes which will inform the work of the Representative's Office in the coming years.

Appendix 1 shows a list of all Community and Stakeholder Relations activities that the Representative and staff of the Office participated in or attended in 2018/19.

The map on page 67 shows the communities visited by the Representative and staff in 2018/19.



*The Rep at the October 2018 Foster Parent Appreciation Night*

## What have youth told the Representative about transitioning to adulthood?

In 2018/19, youth most frequently talked about the concerns they have about turning 19, not being adequately prepared for the transition and no longer being eligible for supports and services. Many of the youth who engaged in discussions were approaching their 19th birthdays and spoke about: not having been supported or assisted to develop the life skills that they needed; not having support from workers to develop a transition plan, particularly in relation to housing and income support; not having had access to mental health and substance use services so they were entering into 'independence' with unresolved issues and were not aware of how they might be able to get adult services; not knowing much about their past, including what had led to their time in care, extended family connections, cultural background, etc. and thus not having a clear sense of identity. They often spoke about being on *"the edge of a cliff, with nowhere to go but to fall."*

Many spoke about feeling unheard, disregarded and dismissed by workers, while others spoke about the tremendous connection they had with their professionals and caregivers in their lives. The differences within a group of young people respecting the quality of relationships they had with MCFD and community service workers, foster caregivers, residential service providers, etc. was often striking. Youth who had already turned 19 frequently spoke about the challenges that they faced. These included: fears about their future and a sense of hopelessness; finding affordable and safe housing (many experienced some type of homelessness); accessing mental health and substance use services; and having someone to talk to who would help them navigate not only services, but also life challenges and transitions. The sense of being alone and adrift was often profound and current in the lives of the youth who shared their experiences and concerns with the Representative.



# Top 15 Concerns

In 2018/19, the Rep engaged with hundreds of youth, adults and other stakeholders at more than 200 events.

## TOP 3 CALLS TO ACTION HEARD BY THE REP:

- Focus on preventative services
- Improve supports for transitions to adulthood
- Extend social and financial supports to youth from care after age 19

### YOUTH TOP 5

Listen to youth in matters that affect them, especially on quality of care

Provide early assessments & access to services before aging out

Seek youth direction on permanency & what is most important to them

Foster opportunities for children, youth & young adults to have positive life experiences

Ensure caregivers & service providers are doing their jobs & hold them accountable

### INDIGENOUS LEADERS & SERVICE PROVIDERS TOP 5

Support self-determination and jurisdiction over child, youth and family services

Focus on relevant and meaningful cultural connections, especially for those who are disconnected

Promote culturally appropriate services & connections for children & youth with substance use & mental health concerns

Take action to protect young people who are being sexually exploited

Listen to community and family members; seek to understand contexts & what is necessary for child and family well-being

### FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS TOP 5

Provide more support and access for children & youth with special needs.

Support improved services for children & youth with FASD

Improve response to children & youth with complex needs; shift from silos to coordinated responses

Facilitate navigators to help children with special needs, mental health or substance use issues

Improve transition planning for young people who are eligible for CLBC services





# Communities Visited

The Representative and RCY staff travel around British Columbia to carry out advocacy work, youth engagement and community relations activities, research and investigations as well as to attend speaking engagements and other events. Between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019, the Office of the Representative visited 43 communities in B.C.





# Looking Ahead

# Looking Ahead: Strategic Priorities

## The Representative's Strategic Plan

The RCY Strategic Plan, first developed and implemented in 2017/18 with extensive input from RCY staff, serves as the foundation to an expansive planning cycle for the Office.

The Strategic Plan articulates the vision, mission, goals and key strategies of the Office. To support implementation of the Strategic Plan, each program area has developed comprehensive work plans – collectively referred to as the RCY Operational Plan – with detailed activities and responsibilities identified for a three-year period. Each staff member also develops individual performance plans that link directly to his or her team's work plan and the overall Strategic Plan.

The Representative's Strategic and Operational Plan is a living document that may be revised during the course of a fiscal year and is comprehensively reviewed and revised on an annual basis, based on data and feedback and in response to emerging issues.

## Key Strategies – Underway to 2021/22

*RCY helps to improve services to children, youth and young adults who are in receipt of, or eligible for, designated or reviewable services.*

The Representative is committed to identifying, recommending and advocating for ways to address children and youth with mental health and/or substance use issues; youth aging out of care; and children, youth and young adults with disabilities and special needs. Strategies to achieve this include strengthening stakeholder relationships, using data to deepen our understanding of the issues and monitoring service improvements.

Some of the specific strategies planned are to:

- monitor, assess and publicly report on government's progress in implementing the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions' 10 year "roadmap" – *A Pathway to Hope* – and subsequent implementation plans to improve mental health and addictions services for children and youth
- monitor services and conduct research and data collection on transition and post-majority services to support service improvement
- conduct wide ranging examinations of issues related to supports for youth aging out of care, including a review and assessment of services and supports, an aggregate review of critical injury and death reports, and a youth-led consultation, and issue public reports
- monitor, assess and publicly report on the development and implementation of MCFD's proposed plan to develop a comprehensive system of services and supports for children and youth with special needs



## LOOKING AHEAD

- conduct a review of the services and supports for children and youth with FASD that highlights the lived experience of children and youth with FASD and their families
- conduct an investigation into the overdose death of a young man who received services in B.C. as a result of an interprovincial transfer
- conduct an investigation into the overdose death of an Indigenous female youth, with a particular focus on intergenerational trauma and the need for permanency
- continue the approved multi-year qualitative and quantitative review of care planning and cultural planning for children and youth in care and produce a public report on results in 2020.

### *RCY champions the rights of children, youth and young adults*

Some of the strategies and activities associated with this goal include:

- carry out research and release reports on hearing the voices of youth including through legal representation in legal proceedings that affect them
- continue with the #Rep4Rights Tour throughout the province
- ensure the rights of children, youth and young adults inform investigations and monitoring reports
- explore opportunities for joint projects with the new Human Rights Commission.

### *RCY promotes services and supports that will address and reduce the over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children and youth, and their families and communities.*

One key strategy planned is to:

- assess and publicly report on progress made by public bodies responsible for the provision of designated and reviewable services – or other appropriate public bodies – in the implementation of recommendations arising from previous inquiries and reviews and which are reasonably connected to the improvement of designated services and supports for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children, youth and young adults, and their families and communities.

### *RCY supports First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities in reassuming jurisdiction over child and family services.*

One key strategy planned is to:

- assess and publicly report on progress made by public bodies responsible for the provision of designated child and family services in the implementation of changes to provincial and federal legislation that are intended to facilitate the re-assumption of jurisdiction, responsibility or engagement of Indigenous communities in child and family services, including the degree of assistance and support provided to facilitate that process.



### *Children, youth and young adults are engaged in informing the work of RCY*

The Representative is committed to hearing the lived experiences of children and youth and engaging them in meaningful and effective ways in the work of the Office. Strategies to accomplish this goal will build capacity across all program areas to effectively engage children and youth across all regions and demographics.

These strategies and activities include:

- complete and implement a comprehensive youth and community engagement framework and practice guide
- continue to employ and support Social Media Youth Team members to provide advice on how best to use social media to support youth outreach efforts and create original content for sharing via the Representative's social media accounts
- support and facilitate the production and release of a report and recommendations on youth homelessness that is led by youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness
- Engage children and families with lived experience in the development of a report and recommendation on services to children and youth with FASD and their families.

### *RCY is a culturally attuned and culturally responsive organization*

In the important area of cultural competency, RCY is committed to enhancing its understanding of Indigenous worldviews, cultures, customs and the effects of colonial practices.

This work will continue in very specific and focused ways:

- develop a human resources strategy, aligned with the Public Service Agency Diversity and Action Plan, that supports the recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff
- create working environments and incorporate cultural recognition and supports that are more welcoming and supportive to Indigenous staff, partners and people we serve
- incorporate Indigenous modalities of conflict resolution and healing into human resources processes as appropriate to the circumstances
- provide education and support for RCY staff to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and ways to practice Indigenous research methodologies
- build internal capacity within all program areas of RCY to work with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children, youth and families in ways that respect and are informed by Indigenous worldviews.



*RCY works with integrity in an informed, effective and collaborative manner*

Continuous improvement is an important value for the Representative, and the Office has identified a number of strategies to improve its internal operations, including more effective use of our data, collaborative practices and meaningful staff recognition practices.

In the coming years, the Office will:

- continue to enhance its public reporting of important data and trends
- strengthen the processes for the development of recommendations made by the Representative, and the monitoring and public reporting on the progress made by public bodies in implementing those recommendations
- develop and implement a process for the identification of systemic issues and the strategies to address those issues
- continue to enhance and implement human resources strategies that support staff across the organization and that are focused on the development, retention and recognition of skilled staff.



*Sign at Lii Michif Otipemisiwak*

# RCY's Expanded Mandate

On July 3, 2019, RCY's mandate was expanded to allow the Representative to advocate for adults up to their 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays who have aged out of care and who are eligible for an Agreement with Young Adults or a tuition waiver.

## Who does it Affect?

**4,400** Former Youth in Care



## Why is it Necessary?

Youth from care may face greater risks than their peers



**45%**

of youth from care aged out without a high school credential\*



Youth leaving government care die at

**5X**

the rate of the general population



**58%**

of homeless youth in Canada had some type of involvement with child protection services in their lifetime

**24%**

of deaths of young adults transitioning from care between 2011 and 2016 were suicides



Sources:  
 B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development (2017)  
 BC Coroners Services Death Review Panel (2018)  
 National Youth Homelessness Survey (2016)

\* In fiscal year 2016/17



## Expansion of Mandate and Further Proposed Changes to Legislation

As noted in last year's report, the SSCCY undertook a statutory review of the *RCY Act* during the 2017/18 year. In a report on its review, the SSCCY made a number of recommendations for change including:

- amendment to section 30 of the *RCY Act* to no longer require that the Representative's statutorily mandated functions, and in particular the monitoring function, be specifically reviewed on a periodic basis and justified to continue
- addition of a provision to require that the Representative's work reflect the principles of the *UNCRC*
- clarification of the Representative's current mandate in relation to services to children with special needs
- expansion of the Representative's mandate in relation to advocacy for young adults to include a broader range of programs and services beyond those provided by CLBC, and
- expansion of the Representative's advocacy mandate to include young adults up to their 27th birthday who have previously been in care with respect to a broad range of programs and services necessary to support them in their transition to adulthood.

Throughout 2018/19, the Representative's staff worked with staff of the Attorney General, which has responsibility for bringing forward legislative amendments for government approval, to give effect to the Committee's recommendations. Two of the recommendations were partially implemented in July 2019 through changes made to the *Representative for Children and Youth Regulation*:

- clarification of mandate in relation to services to children with special needs; and
- an expanded advocacy mandate for young adults who have aged out of care and who are on, or eligible for, an AYA or who are on, or eligible for, a provincial post-secondary tuition waiver.

Staff of the Representative's Office and the Attorney General continue to work on changes to the *RCY Act* necessary to give effect to the other SSCCY recommendations with the expectation that proposed amendments will be put before the Legislative Assembly in 2020.

Although the expanded advocacy mandate for young adults who have aged out of care is at present limited to young adults under the age of 24 and only to those eligible for an AYA or a tuition waiver, this initial step means that the Representative will be able to offer advocacy services to an additional 4,400 young adults beginning in the 2019/20 fiscal year. With the passage of further proposed amendments to extend the age up to their 27th birthday and to expand the programs covered to encompass a broad range of services necessary to support the transition to adulthood, the Representative's advocacy services would then be available to a much larger eligible population. The potential impacts/implications on the Representative's resources will be monitored.

# What's coming up?

Look for these and more projects now underway...

## Spreading the Word: Young Adult Outreach to Promote RCY's Expanded Mandate

Strategic outreach targeting young adults from care throughout B.C. who are eligible for AYAs or tuition waivers.

## FASD project

- An examination of FASD from two perspectives:
- What is the lived experience of young people with FASD?
- How do communities and systems understand FASD and how well is that understanding working to support young people?

## Troubling Numbers: A Contextualized Look at Child Injuries and Deaths

A first-of-its-kind analysis of three years of injury and death reports from Jan. 1, 2015 to Dec. 31, 2017 that will result in three distinct sections: an overview of the data, the story and context behind the First Nations data and the story and context behind the Métis data.

## Review of Jordan's Principle: A child-first principle meant to ensure that Indigenous children get the services they need

A close review of the uptake and implementation of Jordan's Principle in B.C. including what is and is not working and how children, families and communities are experiencing Jordan's Principle.





# Performance

# Performance

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

## Measuring Performance

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

- **Relevance** – means that the Office:
  - addresses issues and areas of concern within its mandate and of interest to the Legislature and the public
  - is aware of, and reacts readily and appropriately to, issues brought to its attention through its monitoring and review and investigation activities, its liaison and collaboration with public bodies, and by legislators, stakeholders and the public
  - produces reports that are useful to, as well as accessible and understood by the public, stakeholders, and Legislature
  - 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
  - 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
  - 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
  - rigorous application and compliance with established requirements in all its operations.



## Relevance

The Representative's Office ensures relevance in meeting its oversight and accountability role by addressing areas of concern within its 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 the Office's oversight activities and liaison and collaboration with public bodies and other stakeholders, illustrating that the Representative is alert to issues, is in touch with the system and stakeholders and reacts accordingly.

Key Performance Indicator:	2018/19 target	2018/19 result	2019/20 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%	57%	50%

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2018/19 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>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>	From 2018/19 on, RCY will report annually on the number of reports received, reviews undertaken and cases identified for investigation through its <i>Annual Report and Service Plan</i> .
<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>9</sup></li> </ul>	In 2018/19, the Representative implemented a new approach to developing and monitoring all recommendations for change and system improvements.
<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 are viewed by the public</li> </ul>	In 2018/19, the Representative's website received 4,135,382 hits. In total, 103,618 users accessed 944,610 pages on the site.

<sup>9</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 response 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's Office to meet its mandate.

Key Performance Indicator:	2018/19 target	2018/19 result	2019/20 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%	94%*	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 timeframe</li> </ul>	100%	100%	100%

\* The vast majority of callers – 81 per cent – were responded to within two days; 94 per cent of callers were responded to within three days; 99 per cent of callers were responded to within four days.

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2018/19 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 2018/19, 95 per cent of youth contacting the Advocacy team were called back within 24 hours.**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and stakeholder relations</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 and reaching out to children, youth and their families and stakeholders across the province</li> </ul>	In 2018/19, the Representative and staff participated in more than 350 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 staff in 2018/19.
<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>	In 2018/19, the Representative and staff directly engaged with approximately 3,160 youth and young adults through such activities as attending community events, hosting information booths, facilitating child and youth rights workshops and conducting research.

\*\* Some youth choose to contact the office via email, taking longer to connect with the youth than those who contact the office by telephone; 99 per cent of youth are contacted within two days.



## PERFORMANCE

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2018/19 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous 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 2018/19, the Representative and staff met with more than 40 Indigenous organizations, leadership bodies and individual First Nations and participated in Indigenous events, conferences and speaking engagements. Increasing collaboration and partnerships with Indigenous groups and organizations is a key goal of the Representative in coming years.</p>



*Items in the Healing Room, RCY Burnaby office*

## 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, papers, comments and statements about the findings of her work.

Key Performance Indicator:	2018/19 target	2018/19 result	2019/20 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of reports and papers publicly released and the number of public comments and statements made by the Representative</li> </ul>	10 reports and statements	12 reports and statements	10 reports and statements

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2018/19 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting on Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of times the Representative makes presentations to SSCCY and SSCFGS</li> </ul>	<p>In 2018/19, the Representative appeared before SSCCY six times: on April 11, 2018, regarding the <i>Delegated Aboriginal Agencies: How Resourcing Affects Service Delivery</i> report; on May 9, 2018, regarding the <i>Broken Promises: Alex's Story</i> report; on Oct. 16, 2018, which was a first introductory meeting with the new Representative; on Oct. 17, 2018 regarding the <i>Promoting Access to Breastfeeding in Child Welfare Matters</i> report; on Jan. 21, 2019, regarding the <i>Time to Listen: Youth Voices on Substance Use</i> report, <i>Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family</i>, the Representative's <i>Annual Report 2017/18 and Service Plan 2018/19 to 2019/20</i> and briefing from the Representative on children and youth with special needs; and on March 16, 2019 regarding children and youth with neuro-diverse special needs.</p> <p>The Representative appeared before SSCFGS two times, on May 8, 2018 (mid-year finance update) and Nov. 27, 2018 (annual review).</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:	2018/19 target	2018/19 result	2019/20 target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of full-time and part-time staff who participate in ongoing professional development</li> </ul>	95%	95%	95%

Professional development included: personal effectiveness training in welcoming change into your life, resilience and stress hardiness, healthy active living; practical workplace skills such as investigations interviewing, Indigenous human resources, technical writing, mental health in the workplace, risk management, coaching, managing crisis, project management, dealing with difficult behaviours, information management and privacy protection; required training such as Occupational Health and Safety Committee training mandated by legislation for all Committee members; RCY-generated training opportunities in the areas of cannabis regulation and youth, research with youth as co-researchers; specialized Indigenous cultural safety and humility training, training in growing an organization rooted in an Indigenous worldview, building capacity in Indigenous relations, building relationships with First Nations, leading a reconciliation dialogue; attendance at annual conferences such as the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Inclusion BC, International Conference on Indigenous Child Health, Compassionate Family Court Systems, and 8th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2018/19 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>	Staff through CREW continued to be actively engaged and contributed to creating a work environment that focused on a positive culture and effective human resources practices and communication processes.
<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>	There were no major health and safety incidents in any of the three office locations. The Occupational Health and Safety Committee dealt with some accidents involving either minor or no first aid assistance and no time/wage loss. The Committee continues to refine policies and procedures relating to response to calls of concern (suicide/self-harm, potential risk of violence in the workplace), emergency preparedness, ergonomic assessments and emerging issues such as naloxone training.



Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2018/19 Results
<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 adhere to applicable core government policies, standards and practices and the Office meets budgeting and audit standards and requirements</li> </ul>	<p>In accordance with legislative requirements, the Office of the Auditor General conducted its annual audit of the Office's financial statements. The audit included an evaluation of the appropriateness of accounting policies used and reasonableness of accounting estimates made, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. For fiscal year 2018/19, the Auditor General has reported that the Office's financial statements fairly represent the financial position of the Office.</p>





# Budget & Expenditures

# Budget and Expenditures

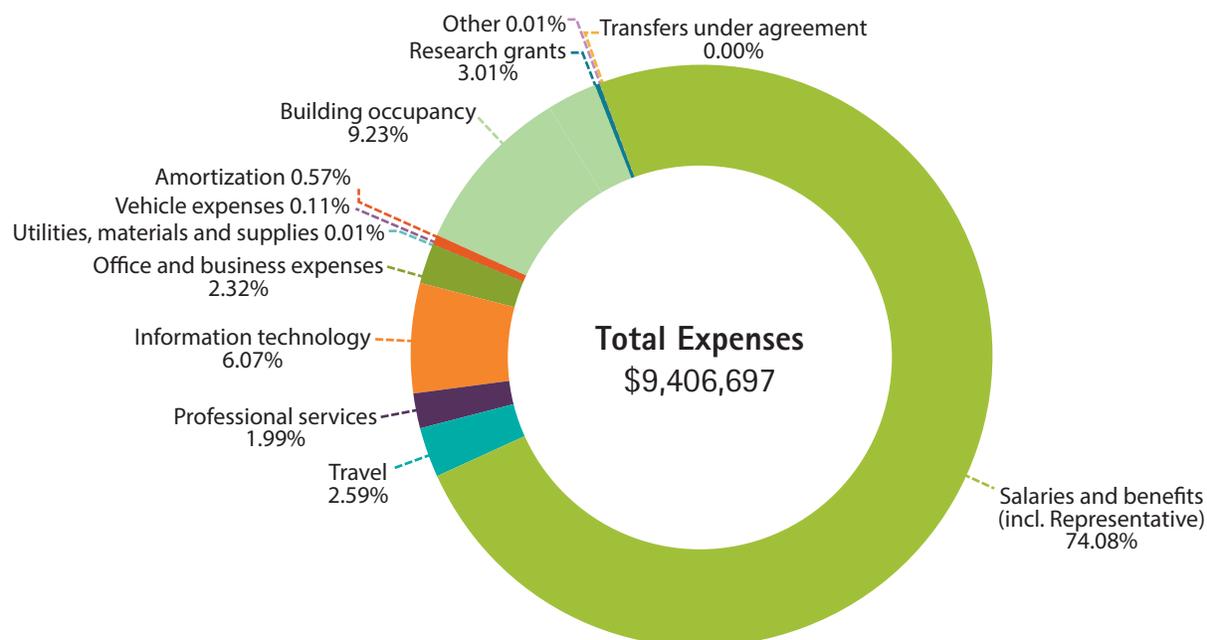
## 2018/19 Actual Expenditure and Budget

Operating Expense Type	2018/19 Actual	2018/19 Budget
Salaries and benefits (incl. Representative)	6,967,898	6,909,000
Travel	244,241	315,000
Professional services	187,432	332,000
Information technology	571,107	518,000
Office and business expenses	218,648	386,000
Utilities, materials and supplies	1,023	7,000
Vehicle expenses	9,893	8,000
Amortization	53,991	43,000
Building occupancy	868,311	870,000
Research grants	283,500	5,000
Transfers under agreement	-	5,000
Other	653	20,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,406,697</b>	<b>9,418,000</b>

Capital Expense Type	2018/19 Actual	2018/19 Budget
Tenant improvements	44,550	-
Information technology	1,493	30,000
Office furniture and equipment	3,123	20,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>49,166</b>	<b>50,000</b>



## Actual Expenditures by Expense Type – 2018/19



## Looking to the future – approved and planned budget for 2019/20 to 2021/22

The table below illustrates operating and capital budgets approved for 2019/20 and planned for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Operating	Note	2019/20 Planned	2020/21 Planned	2021/22 Planned
Salaries and benefits	1	7,166,000	7,190,000	7,214,000
Travel	2	315,000	315,000	315,000
Professional services	3	332,000	332,000	332,000
Information technology	4	518,000	518,000	518,000
Office and business expenses	5	386,000	386,000	386,000
Utilities, materials and supplies	6	7,000	7,000	7,000
Vehicle expenses	7	8,000	8,000	8,000
Amortization	8	49,000	55,000	55,000
Building occupancy	9	961,000	968,000	976,000
Research grants	10	5,000	5,000	5,000
Transfers under agreement	11	5,000	5,000	5,000
Other expenses	12	1,000	1,000	1,000
Recoveries	13	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)
<b>Total operating</b>		<b>9,750,000</b>	<b>9,787,000</b>	<b>9,819,000</b>

Capital	Note	2019/20 Planned	2020/21 Planned	2021/22 Planned
Information technology	14	30,000	30,000	30,000
Office furniture and equipment	15	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 and 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 RCY programs, the provision of services required by statute or legislation and are billed directly to the Office, and the provision of services that will assist the development of policy and/or programs or improve/change the delivery of programs, such as management consulting services.
- Note 4 Information technology (operating) – includes all contract fees and costs related to data, voice, image and text processing operations and services, such as data and word processing, data communications, supplies, repairs, maintenance and short-term rentals of information processing equipment.
- Note 5 Office and business expenses include supplies and services required for the operation of the Office.
- Note 6 Utilities, materials and supplies include the cost of services such as the supply of water and electricity, materials and supplies required for normal operation of government services.
- Note 7 Vehicle expenses include the costs associated with the repair and maintenance of Office vehicles.
- Note 8 Amortization includes the amortization of the cost of capital assets and prepaid capital advances over their useful lives.
- Note 9 Building occupancy includes payments for the rental and/or maintenance of office accommodation, including tenant improvements that do not meet the criteria for capitalization.
- Note 10 Research 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 Transfers under agreement include payments made under the terms of a contract or agreement for which the Office does not receive any direct goods or services.
- Note 12 Other expenses include expenses, such as financing costs, valuation allowances, and other expenses, which cannot be reasonably allocated to another category.
- Note 13 Internal and external recoveries include the recoveries of costs from ministries, participants and/or sponsoring organizations.
- Note 14 Information technology (capital) includes the purchase or capital lease cost of mainframe and other systems hardware, software and related equipment.
- Note 15 Office furniture and equipment includes the cost or capital lease cost of office furniture and equipment.





# Appendix

# Appendix - List of Outreach and Communication Activities

## Events, Conferences and Speaking Engagements

- 20th National | 12th Triennial International Child and Youth Care Conference, Transitions and Transformations: Influencing Change through Relational Practice, Richmond (May 2018)
- Janusz Korczak Summer Institute, Seattle, WA (August 2018)
- Abbotsford Youth Forum on Homelessness, Abbotsford (October 2018)
- Aboriginal Child and Family Support Services, Honouring Our Youths' Journey to Adulthood, Langley (March 2019)
- Adoptive Families Association of BC Stand Together Conference 2019, Coquitlam (March 2019)
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Pre-Best Brains Forum, Victoria (October 2018)
- Assembly of First Nations Jordan's Principle Summit, Winnipeg (September 2018)
- A Way Home Kamloops Society Adulthood 101: Youth Transitions Fair, Kamloops (November 2018)
- BC Association of Social Workers, Okanagan Branch - Celebration of Social Work Week: Real People. Real Impact, Kelowna (March 2019)
- BC Association of Social Workers, Thompson Nicola Branch - Celebration of Social Work Week, Kamloops (March 2019)
- BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations Annual General Meeting, Nelson (September 2018)
- BC Government Long Service Awards, Victoria (October 2018)
- BC Legislative Interns Presentation, Victoria (January 2019)
- BC Prosecution Services (Ministry of Attorney General) Indigenous Justice Cultural Safety Gathering, Victoria (January 2019)
- BC School Counsellors Association Conference, Richmond (October 2018)
- BC Teachers' Federation Advocacy Works 2.0 Conference, Vancouver (April 2018)
- Board Voice Society of BC Annual Conference, Vancouver (November 2018)
- Bridging the Gap Abbotsford Transition Fair, Abbotsford (March 2019)
- Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre Rights Based Workshops, Burnaby (Monthly - 2018/19)
- Camosun College Community, Family and Child Studies (CFCS) Program Information Session, Victoria (March 2019)
- Canadian Federation of University Women BC Council Annual General Meeting, North Vancouver (April 2018)
- Carrier Sekani Family Services Youth Conference, We Are Fierce workshop, Prince George (March 2019)
- Child Welfare Training Event for RCY staff from MCFD, Victoria (May 2018)
- Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island, 5-Year Anniversary of HerWay Home, Victoria (May 2018)
- Chilliwack and Fraser Cascade Transition and Resources Fair, Chilliwack (April 2018)
- Chilliwack Secondary School Human Service Career Enrichment Program Presentation (April 2018)



- Community Coordination for Women's Safety Working Group (October 2018 and February 2019)
- Continuing Legal Education Society of BC Conference, Vancouver (April 2018)
- Douglas College RCY Information Session, New Westminster (November 2018)
- FamilySmart Knowledge Exchange Event, Vancouver (May 2018)
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Collaboration Roundtable 11th Annual Fall Conference, New Westminster (November 2019)
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Justice Conference, Vancouver (March 2019)
- Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks Youth Voice Gathering, Mission (January 2019)
- Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks Youth Retreat, Maple Ridge (February 2019)
- Federation of Community Social Services of BC Annual General Meeting, Richmond (October 2018)
- Federation of Community Social Services of BC 2018 Professional Development Conference: A Focus on Mental Health, Richmond (October 2018)
- Federation of Community Social Services of BC Social Policy Forum: The Future of Leadership and Continuing Education, Victoria (February 2019)
- First Nations Leadership Council, All Chiefs Child and Family Well Being Gathering, Richmond (September 2018)
- Foundry Vancouver, Integrated Youth Services Open House, Vancouver (May 2018)
- Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society Information Session, Surrey (November 2018)
- First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition Fundraising Gala, Vancouver (February 2019)
- Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society Visions and Voices Youth Forum, Chilliwack (November 2018)
- Gathering Our Voices, Port Alberni (March 2019)
- Gathering Our Voices – Youth in Care Honouring Event, Port Alberni (March 2019)
- GlobalChild 2018 BC Child Rights Symposium, Victoria (November 2018)
- Hobiyee (Nisga'a New Year celebration) 2019, Vancouver (February 2019)
- Hope and Area Transition Society, Youth Summit Conference, Hope (October 2018)
- Hope and Health in Musqueam, Musqueam (July 2018)
- Inclusion BC Annual Learning Event, Victoria (January 2019)
- Inclusion BC "Rise Up" Annual Conference, Kelowna (May 2018)
- Indigenous HIPPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters program) Fundraiser, Vancouver (March 2019)
- Indigenous Perspectives Society Aboriginal Social Work Training Information Session, Victoria (October/November 2018 and February 2019)
- Indigenous Perspectives Society Aboriginal Social Work Training Program Graduation Ceremonies, Victoria (July, November, December 2018 and March 2019)
- Indigenous Youth Forum on Homelessness, Vancouver (October 2018)
- Installation of Janet Austin as B.C.'s Lieutenant Governor, Victoria (April 2018)
- Integra Support Services Information Session, Victoria (November 2018)
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Anti-Racism Community Conversation, Victoria (January 2019)
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development, 4 the Generation Project, Surrey (March 2019)
- Interior Community Services Meet and Greet, Kamloops (March 2019)
- International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child, Moncton, NB (June 2018)
- Janusz Korczak Medal for Children's Rights Advocacy Ceremony, Victoria (May 2018)



- Jordan's Principle Information Session, Aboriginal Child and Family Services, Maple Ridge (December 2018)
- Jordan's Principle Information Session, Aunt Leah's Place New Westminster (November 2018)
- Jordan's Principle Information Session, Langley Community Services Society, Langley (February 2019)
- Jordan's Principle Information Session, Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre, Vancouver (November 2018)
- Jordan's Principle Information Session, School District 78 (Fraser Cascade) Aboriginal Education Council, Hope (November 2018)
- Jordan's Principle Information Session, Sheway: A Community Program for Women and Children, Vancouver (January 2019)
- Jordan's Principle Information Session, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Vancouver (November 2018)
- Kamloops Correctional Centre Community Resource Fair, Kamloops (November 2018)
- Kamloops Sexual Assault Counselling Centre Information Session, Kamloops (January 2019)
- Kwakwaka'wakw Youth Conference (Tli'lalanoxw Visiting Our Ancestors), Alert Bay (March 2019)
- Law Foundation of BC Board of Directors dinner, Vancouver (November 2018)
- Lieutenant Governor's Dinner Reception in Honour of the 4th Session of the 41st Parliament, Victoria (February 2019)
- Lieutenant Governor's Reception Honouring the Provincial Moosehide Campaign, Victoria (February 2019)
- LGBTQ2S Conference, Victoria Friendship Centre, Victoria (November 2018)
- McCreary Centre Society Annual General Meeting, Vancouver (November 2018)
- McCreary Centre Society Connect2Thrive Event, Vancouver (April 2018)
- McCreary Centre Society TRRUST Collective Impact Gathering, Vancouver (December 2018)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development, Family Services Information Session, Terrace (November 2018)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development, Family Services Information Session, Port Hardy (September 2018)
- Ministry of Justice Forum, Vancouver (February/March 2019)
- Mission Youth Transition Fair, Mission (February 2019)
- Moosehide Campaign, Provincial Gathering and Day of Fasting, Victoria (February 2019)
- National Indian Child Welfare Association Annual Protecting Our Children National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Albuquerque, NM (March 2019)
- National Indian Child Welfare Association Annual Protecting Our Children National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Anchorage, AK (April 2018)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day Event, Colwood (June 2018)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day Event, Vancouver (June 2018)
- Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia Community Knowledge Gathering, Prince George (January 2019)
- Parent Support Services Society of BC Grandparents Day, New Westminster (September 2018)
- Parks Canada: Cross Cultural Understanding Event, Victoria (November 2018)
- Pink Shirt Day Event, Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George (February 2019)
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Youth and Adult Services Information Night, Prince George (March 2019)
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre Connect with Reciprocity Youth Event, Prince George (March 2019)
- Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre Outreach Clinic, Prince George (Monthly 2018/19)



- Public Guardian and Trustee Information Session, Vancouver (October 2018)
- Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre Soapbox Derby, Vancouver (August 2018)
- Ray-Cam event, R.C. MacDonald, Strathcona and Britannia Elementary Schools Child Protection Training, Vancouver (February 2019)
- RCY Open House, Burns Lake (June 2018)
- RCY Open House, New Hazelton (June 2018)
- RCY Open House, Prince George (November 2018)
- RCY Open House, Terrace (June 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Launch, Victoria (May 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Aries and Cedar Walk alternative Indigenous education programs (Youth), Vancouver (November 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Ayas Men Men Child and Family Services and Ministry of Children and Family Development (All Ages), North Vancouver (February 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Britannia Secondary School (Youth), Vancouver (November 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Broadway Youth Resource Centre (Youth), Vancouver (November 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Burns Lake (Adults and Youth), Burns Lake (October 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Carrier Sekani Family Services (All Ages) Prince George (January/February 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Carrier Sekani Family Services Walk Tall Youth Program (Youth), Prince George (December 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (Youth), Prince George (December 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Foster Parent Support Services Society (Adults), Victoria (May 2018) and Campbell River (September 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Hiiye'yu Lelu (House of Friendship) Society (Staff), Duncan (June 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Hulitan Family & Community Services Society (Adults), Victoria (June 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Island Métis Family and Community Services Society and Sooke Family Resource Society (Support Workers and Resource Staff), Victoria (May 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Lalum'utul' smun'eem (Staff and Caregivers), Duncan (June 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Ministry of Children and Family Development (Adults), Campbell River (September 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Ministry of Children and Family Development (Adults), Parksville (September 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Milieu Children and Family Services (Managers, Staff and Youth), Vancouver (November/December 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, NIL TU,O and South Island Wellness Society (Adults), Victoria (May 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Prince George (Adults and Youth), Prince George (October 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Sacred Wolf Lodge (Adults), Port Hardy (September 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Sunrise Alternative Program Templeton Secondary School (Youth), Vancouver (November 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Surrounded by Cedar (All Ages), Victoria (May 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre (Staff), Nanaimo (June 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Tupper Alternative Program Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School (Youth), Vancouver (December 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Urban Native Youth Association (Children and Youth), Vancouver (November 2018)



- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Family and Child Services (Caregivers), Port Alberni (June 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Vanderhoof (Caregivers, Service Providers, Adults, Children and Youth), Vanderhoof (October 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Victoria Native Friendship Centre (Adults), Victoria (May 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, VIU's WEST Program (Youth), Vancouver (November 2018)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Sasamans Society (Youth), Campbell River (September 2018)
- Reclaiming Family Wellness: Honouring the Circle of Life with Dr. Ron Abraham, Nanaimo (December 2018)
- School District 42 (Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows) Life After High School Transition Resource Fair, Maple Ridge (May 2018)
- School District 62 (Sooke) and Community Partners "Meet, Greet and Share," Colwood (January 2019)
- Sisters Rising Engaging Youth and Community Responses to Sexualized Violence Workshop, Victoria (October 2018)
- Society for Children and Youth of BC, A Night for Rights Celebration, Vancouver (November 2018)
- Souper Bowls of Hope Event, Victoria (April 2018)
- South Island Wellness Society and Island Métis Family and Community Services Society Protocol Agreement Signing, Victoria (September 2018)
- Sts'ailes Band Cultural Reclaiming Ceremony, Chehalis (November 2018)
- Surrounded by Cedar Open House, Victoria (January 2019)
- Two Spirit Gathering, Victoria (November 2018)
- University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work Child Welfare Conference, Calgary (October 2018)
- University of British Columbia 6th Health and Wellbeing in Children, Youth, and Adults with Developmental Disabilities Conference, Richmond (November 2018)
- University of British Columbia 8th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Vancouver (March 2019)
- University of British Columbia, Dean's Distinguished Speaker Lecture: Janusz Korczak, The Father of Children's Rights: Turning Rights Into Actions, Vancouver (September 2018)
- University of Victoria Indigenous Speakers Series, In Return: Governance of the Shore People by Chaw-win-is, Victoria (January 2019)
- University of Victoria Child Rights Conference, Victoria (November 2018)
- University of Victoria Master's in Counselling Psychology Cohort Presentation, Victoria (March 2019)
- University of Victoria School of Child and Youth Care Alumni Reception, Victoria (February 2019)
- Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner, Vancouver (October 2018)
- Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Social Work Recognition Event, Vancouver (March 2019)
- Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Strengthening Our Relations Conference, Vancouver (February 2019)
- Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre Presentation, Victoria (September 2018)
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre Celebration (November 2018)
- Victoria Urban Reconciliation Dialogue, Victoria (February 2019)
- Walking Together with Children, Youth and Families in Respect for their Inherent Right to Culture and Connection Gathering, Richmond (January 2019)
- Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum, Vancouver (August 2018)
- Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum, Kelowna (August 2018)
- Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum, Vernon (August 2018)



Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Prince George (August 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
New Westminster (August 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Victoria (September 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Kamloops (September 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Nanaimo (September 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Surrey (September 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Nelson (September 2018)

Youth Against Youth Homelessness Forum,  
Cowichan (September 2018)

Youth Around Prince and Foundry Celebration,  
Prince George (October 2018)

Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services Forum,  
Vancouver (February 2019)

Youth Matters Forum and Reconciliation in Action,  
Vancouver (September 2018/January 2019)

## Meetings

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

Advisory Committee on Children and Youth  
with Special Needs

Alberta Child and Youth Advocate

Arcus Community Resources

ARC Community Services

Aunt Leah's Place

A Way Home Kamloops

BC Association for Child Development and  
Intervention

BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness  
Provincial Meeting

BC Children's Forum

BC Children's Hospital

BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations

BC Hear the Children Society

Broadway Youth Resource Centre

Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

Canadian Pediatric Society

Child Welfare League of Canada

Directions Youth Services Centre

Ending Violence Association of BC

Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks

Federation of Community Social Services of BC

Foster Parent Support Services Society

Foundry Abbotsford

Foundry Victoria

Interior Community Services

International Institute for Child Rights and  
Development

Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth

McCreary Centre Society

Northern Child Development Centres' Executive  
Directors

Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs

Ontario Provincial Advocate for Children and  
Youth

Options Community Services

Parent Support Services Society of BC

Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health

Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth

SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) clinic,  
Prince George

Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Society for Children and Youth of BC

The Global Child Team, University of Victoria

Youth Futures Education Fund Committee



## Indigenous Leadership/Organizations

Aboriginal Child and Family Support Services, MCFD	K'wak'walat'si Child and Family Services
Aboriginal Education Council, school districts	Lalum'utul' Smun'eem Child and Family Services
Advisory Committee to BC Assembly of First Nations Leadership Council on Children and Families	Lii Michif Otimpemisiwak Family and Community Services
Ayas Men Men Child and Family Services	Métis Commission for Children and Families of BC
BC Assembly of First Nations Leadership Council	Métis Family Services
Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services	Métis Nation British Columbia
The Circle	Mission Indian Friendship Centre Society
Delegated Aboriginal Agency Partnership	Moosehide Campaign
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada	Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia
First Nations Directors Forum	Nezul Be Hunuyeh Child and Family Services Society
First Nations Education Steering Committee	Namgis First Nation
First Nations Health Authority	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
First Nations Health Council	NIL TU,O Child and Family Services
First Nations Leadership Council	Prince George Native Friendship Centre
First Nations Leadership Council Tripartite Working Group on Child Welfare	Reconciliation in Action/Youth Matters
Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society	Secwepemc Child and Family Services
Harley Eagle	South Island Wellness Society
Hi ye'yu Lelum Friendship Centre	Surrounded by Cedar
Hulitan Family and Community Services Society	Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre
Huu-Ay-Aht First Nations	USMA Nuu-chah-nulth Family and Child Services
Indigenous Perspectives Society	Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society
Island Métis Family and Community Services Society	Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society – Youth Advisory Committee
K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners Table	Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society
	Victoria Native Friendship Centre

## Government Organizations

Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre	B.C. Ministry of Attorney General
Community Living BC	B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development
Government of Manitoba – Ministry of Justice	B.C. Ministry of Education
Justice Canada	B.C. Ministry of Health
Members of Legislative Assembly of B.C.	B.C. Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions



B.C. Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction  
Mental Health Review Board  
Northern Health Authority  
Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia  
Office of the Chief Coroner, B.C.  
Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, B.C.  
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, B.C.  
Office of the Ombudsperson, B.C.  
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, B.C.  
Office of the Provincial Health Officer, B.C.  
Office of the Seniors Advocate, B.C.  
Parks Canada  
Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Working Group  
Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services  
Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly  
Trans Care BC, Provincial Health Services Authority

## Other

ARC Programs  
B.C. Advocate for Service Quality  
BC Centre for Ability Association  
British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union  
British Columbia Law Institute  
BC Teachers' Federation  
Canadian Federation of University Women  
Canadian Partnership Against Cancer  
Communitas Supportive Care Society  
Community Legal Assistance Society  
First Call – BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition  
Fondation du Dr Julien  
Hi-Fidelity Wrap Around  
Hon. Ted Hughes, Q.C.  
Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP),  
University of British Columbia  
InWithForward  
Inclusion BC  
Justice for Children and Youth, Ontario  
Justice Institute of British Columbia  
Lakehead University, Ontario  
Law Foundation of BC  
Legal Services Society of BC  
Lookout Housing + Health Society  
Polish Commissioner for Children's Rights  
Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario  
Ontario Children's Lawyer  
Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies (PARCA)  
Ray-Cam Co-Operative Centre  
Royal Roads University  
SheWay: A Community Program for Women and Children  
Simon Fraser University  
Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC)  
Social Venture Partners Vancouver  
Surrey Safe Schools Department  
Surrey Schools WRAParound Program  
United Nations Special Rapporteur on Health  
UNICEF Canada  
United Way, North Thompson  
University of British Columbia  
University of Victoria  
Victoria Foundation  
Victoria Police Department







# Contact Information

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## SOCIAL MEDIA



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



Rep4Youth



@rcybc and @rcybeyouth



@rcybeyouth



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH