



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Annual Report 2019/20  
*and*  
Service Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23





*Honourable Ted Hughes, QC, about to receive an honorary degree at Royal Roads University, 2012 (Photo credit: Dan Anthon, Royal Roads University)*

The Representative for Children and Youth and all of her staff would like to pay tribute to the Hon. Ted Hughes, who passed away on Jan. 17, 2020. Ted was a champion of justice and a powerful and wise voice on child welfare whose independent review of B.C.'s child protection system in 2006 led directly to the creation of this Office. That review is as relevant today as when it was published – such was his extraordinary ability to deeply understand the core issues and what needed to be done in the interests of respect, equity, fairness and justice.

Alongside his wife Helen, Ted devoted himself to public service and contributed both as a volunteer and in a professional capacity as a lawyer, judge and adjudicator. He served as judge of the Court of Queen's Bench of Saskatchewan, as Deputy Attorney General of B.C. and as the first Conflict of Interest Commissioner for this province.

Ted lived an interesting, meaningful and principled life. He raised the inequities experienced by First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families and the impacts of residential schools and colonization long before it was common to do so. From 2003 until 2008, he served as federal chief adjudicator in residential school settlement claims. Ted also headed an inquiry in Manitoba into the abuse and death of a five-year-old Indigenous girl. His 2014 report recommended sweeping changes to improve that province's child-welfare system.

Ted and Helen were also heavily involved in other organizations to combat issues such as homelessness. Ted was the first co-chair of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and he chaired the Law Society's gender bias committee, which published an influential report that made 300 recommendations regarding gender equality in the justice system.

Even after retiring at the age of 90, Ted dedicated his life to the greater good and he remained firmly connected to RCY until his passing. He was beloved by staff, who recognized him as the "father of RCY" and he supported this Office and offered his counsel during the tenure of all three Representatives. Ted received the Korczak Medal for Child Rights Advocacy and was awarded the Order of Canada for his service to British Columbia and Canada as a whole. Ted is deeply missed, but his compassion for others, devotion to justice and influence on the child welfare system will continue to shape the province and country for generations.

September 30, 2020

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

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the 2019/20 Annual Report and the 2020/21 to 2022/23 Service Plan of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to the Legislative Assembly.

This document reports on the period April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 and covers activities underway and planned for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023, and has been prepared in accordance with part 5, sections 17 and 19 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "J Charlesworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth  
Province of British Columbia

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

Jennifer Arril  
Committee Clerk, Legislative Assembly

The Representative and staff, who do their work throughout the province, would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with gratitude and respect on the traditional territories of the First Nation peoples of British Columbia. We specifically acknowledge and express our gratitude to the keepers of the lands on the traditional territories of the Lheidli T'enneh peoples (Prince George), the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations (Victoria), and the Musqueam, Skwxwu'7mesh, Tsleil-Waututh and Kwikwetlem Nations (Burnaby) where our offices are located.

We would also like to acknowledge our Métis and Inuit partners and friends living in these beautiful territories.

*About the cover art:*

*Floral beadwork is a distinctive trademark for Métis peoples, who are sometimes referred to as the "Flower Beadwork People." In the past, the Métis took inspiration from their mixed ancestry, incorporating First Nations beadwork and European floral patterns to produce brightly coloured designs for vests, bags, moccasins and more. For Métis women, beading was an important source of income and a means of connecting with other women. They would often bead together and discuss the ever-shifting times. These stories could be reflected in the designs they created. Beadwork is also an important part of many First Nations cultures. Today, beading connects Métis and First Nations peoples of all genders and ages and the protocols and techniques used range widely.*

*The beadwork on this report's cover was created by RCY staff member Nicole Hall, a Métis youth of Saulteaux and mixed European ancestry. Her mentor was Gregory Scofield, a Canadian Métis poet, beadwork artist, dramatist and non-fiction writer, who taught her the protocol of always acknowledging who your teachers are.*

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## Representative for Children and Youth



Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth is British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth. She was appointed as Acting Representative effective Aug. 31, 2018 and confirmed in her appointment as B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth on Oct. 1, 2018. Dr. 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, 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 First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families. Dr. Charlesworth also co-led a comprehensive review of child and youth residential care in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Since leaving the Federation, Dr. Charlesworth has been immersed in developing the leadership, innovation and cultural awareness of the community-based social care sector. She is the founder of the Leadership 2020 program for the Federation, has served on numerous community boards 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 First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban 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 an award-winning teacher, author, activist and a parent of two vibrant young adults who remind her daily of the power and promise of young people.





# A MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



If my first year in office was characterized by listening, learning and launching, this second year is best characterized as planning, pivoting and presencing. As a result of the tremendous opportunities that I – and my team – have had to listen and learn from young people, families, caregivers, community members, First Nation and Métis leaders, community organizations and RCY staff, we launched into the 2019-20 year with excitement and plans to bring a number of initiatives to life, and to do so in new ways. Not only were our choices informed by what we had learned, but we designed our work to ensure that we continued to learn from and with young people, families and partners and reflect their lived expertise in influencing transformational systems change. But what a year this has been!

First, I want to talk about planning. In 2019-20, we shifted our approaches to projects and reports in several ways. For one thing, we are conscious that our reports must be of service to the communities involved. With that in mind, we have undertaken a collaborative approach to our reports that is fundamentally grounded in having strong working relationships – especially with First Nations and Métis governments and communities that have been left out for too long. This approach begins with the concept of “*nothing about us, without us*” and views collaborators as partners rather than as “subjects.”

Through this approach, we recognize the deep experience and knowledge that exists within communities and with young people and those who care about them. It has involved building relationships, which takes time, and that important work continues. We have established joint commitment agreements and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Métis Nation BC and with the First Nations Leadership Council and are working on an MOU with the Delegated Aboriginal Agencies Director’s Forum, with more agreements in the works. Of course, MOUs set the intention, but the real work is in how they get expressed.

For example, over the past summer, we released a report, *Invisible Children: a descriptive analysis of injury and death reports for Métis children and youth in British Columbia, 2015 to 2017*, that reflects our commitment to more readily share information that will support service planning and decision-making in communities. Done in consultation with Métis Nation BC, Métis Commission and a number of Métis child- and family-serving organizations, the report reflects the questions they had about their children and youth and what could be learned through the injury and death reports we receive. A second part to this report focusing on First Nations young people as well as non-Indigenous children and youth will be released this fall.

In November 2019 we released *Caught in the Middle*, an investigative report into the overdose death of a boy who had been in contact with both the Alberta and B.C. child-serving systems and who was moved more than 40 times while in government care. In this investigation, we worked very closely and



respectfully alongside the young person's family members to maximize their engagement, ensure the young person's story was told in a good way and to minimize trauma.

We are continuing to focus on honouring and centring youth voice. Starting in 2018, we have worked with and supported a young former youth in care who has also experienced homelessness, Katherine McParland, in her quest to encourage government to create a homelessness action plan specifically for youth. Katherine led a project, with RCY support, in which she brought together a group of youth with lived expertise in homelessness to lead a series of 13 youth forums around the province. We released the resulting report, *From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those With Lived Expertise*, in February that strongly centres youth voice and presents their views on solutions. We continue to be connected to and supportive of the work that Katherine and her colleagues are doing to inspire a transformational response to homelessness and housing instability experienced by youth and young adults – particularly those who were raised in care.

We are using this child- and youth-centred approach, as well, with the in-depth study by our Monitoring team of services and supports for children and youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). We have partnered with children, youth and families, as well as a researcher with FASD, to dive deeply into this area, discovering where the gaps are (hint: there are many) and specifically what children and families feel is needed to improve outcomes. Last fall, we convened a forum involving these children and families as well as policy makers and senior government decision-makers to explore the gaps and potential solutions. On pages 50 and 51, you will find an infographic describing this forum and on page 54, the compelling reflections of a member of our Monitoring team who attended. We will release a report in the coming months on the research and findings conducted for this study, and again, it is our goal that this report should prove useful to families who are living with FASD, as well as to government decision-makers.

Our upcoming report on youth who are involuntarily detained under the *Mental Health Act* also features this youth-centred approach, which has enabled us to deeply understand their experiences and opportunities for change in legislation, policy and practice. This is the first of two reports that will address youth voice and participation in decisions that have profound impacts on their lives and well-being.

On page 22, you will find an infographic that illustrates an Indigenist approach that informs and guides our research and investigative methodology. Drawing on the work of First Nations and Métis scholars and knowledge keepers, we are aspiring to embed the "5 Rs" into our practice. This refers to the centring of Relationships, characterized by qualities of Respect, Relevance, Responsibility and Reciprocity. In the coming months, we will release a report utilizing this framework that examines the life and tragic overdose death of a young First Nations youth. As an Office, we have always recognized that investigations are difficult for families and communities. It is our hope that by utilizing the 5 Rs and sensitive Indigenist approaches, we can minimize trauma, continue to build trust and relationships, raise awareness and understanding and, most importantly, improve the experiences and outcomes for children, youth and young adults.

In recognition that there are many ways to effect change to child-serving systems, we have also pursued avenues other than reports. For example, over the past fiscal year, we have released 17 public statements on a wide variety of topics ranging from proposed changes to the *Mental Health Act* that





would have seen youth who had overdosed involuntarily detained for up to seven days, to support for LGBTQ2S+ youth, to a statement on our response to COVID-19, to a joint statement with the Human Rights Commissioner on family violence.

We recognize that we must be accountable to British Columbians in all walks of life, from First Nations, Métis and Urban Indigenous communities to government, families, and especially, children and youth. Part of that commitment to accountability is reflected in our Monitoring team's new process for monitoring recommendations we have made to government. The status of our recommendations is monitored regularly, and our assessment of progress is posted annually on our website for public consumption, holding those with the power to actually create change to account.

The big pivot for RCY this year was necessitated by the pandemic. Despite our best-laid plans, like the rest of the globe, COVID-19 caught us all by surprise, and we had to react quickly. The urgency of COVID-19 that landed squarely on our plates in March has continued, unabated, since then. And yet, while it has changed the way we practice in some ways, such as restricting our ability to be in community in person; in other ways, it has reinforced the need for what we were already doing and compelled us to do it differently.

Internally, COVID-19 required us to take immediate action to inform and protect staff, following the orders of the Provincial Health Officer. Most RCY staff switched to working from home in March, and while some will be returning to our offices in October, we have learned that we are highly effective and just as productive working virtually and many of the staff will continue to work in this way for the foreseeable future. For those returning to our physical offices, we have brought in many changes to protect their health and the health of the children and youth we serve, including within our offices and when we do individual advocacy or outreach work in communities.

In March, we also created a COVID-19 Response Team that has been liaising with external and community organizations and connecting directly with First Nations in B.C. to offer advocacy support and information. This team has been monitoring the number of advocacy calls we get related to COVID-19 and the number of reportable circumstance reports received by our Critical Injury and Death Reviews team related to COVID-19. They have briefed me weekly on advocacy and CID data and issues and provided staff with regular pandemic updates. In collaboration with our Social Media Youth Team, they launched a highly successful #CovidandKidsBC social media campaign to assist young people with challenges presented by COVID-19 including harm reduction for those who use substances, support for LGBTQ2S+ youth, supports for youth in and from care and online bullying.

First and foremost, our concern has been with the children, youth and young adults of B.C. How has COVID-19 and the myriad responses to it affected them? Where are the gaps and what needs to be done? If responses to the pandemic have been varied and complex – and they have been – the sometimes-unanticipated outcomes for children and youth have added even more layers of complexity. It was clear that we needed to spring into action quickly and this is where the third theme of the year – presencing – comes in.

In consultation with our many partners, we soon discovered that a much-needed role for us was to be attentive to the ever-evolving impact of the pandemic on children, youth, young adults and systems of care. We felt we could be most present and effective as a convener – bringing together families,



young people, First Nations, Métis and stakeholder groups who work with children and families, and community-based advocates and service providers to hear what's working and what's not, to amplify their voices and convey what they told us to government and decision-makers so that children and youth are well-supported in B.C. In our role as convener, we committed to a series of "rapid research" initiatives examining the effects of COVID-19 in such areas as child and youth mental health, children and youth with special needs, youth transitioning out of care and children and youth who experience family violence.

Through this ongoing work, we have heard raw, emotional stories of needs unmet and of struggles unaided – for children and youth with disabilities, for First Nations youth and young people living in rural or remote areas, for youth who are using substances and for youth in care or entering adulthood. We are sharing the findings of these conversations with government decision-makers to help them envision and create the change that is needed both during and subsequent to the pandemic. We are making public statements as well, to more broadly inform all with an interest in child and youth well-being about the lessons we are learning, the gatherings we have convened, the problems that have been identified and the solutions offered, as seen by those most affected. But while there are many challenges, there is hope too – in the frank solutions that are being discussed, in the coming together of communities to brainstorm how to create better outcomes and in the collective commitment of government, advocates, organizations and families we have witnessed to bolster supports for children and families.

Part of our COVID-19 response has also been to consider diverse ways to effect change for children and youth. Although one role of my Office has been to make recommendations to government, we made the decision to suspend recommendations until the immediate crisis had passed in recognition that we could be of most use to children and youth through collaboration and support. In this spirit, we have carried on continuous conversations with government decision-makers through frequent, regular meetings with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) as well as other ministries to come up with solutions on how best to serve the needs of young people. By bringing people together, we have been armed with the first-hand experiences of B.C. children, youth, young adults and families to communicate directly to government. This is a powerful way to amplify child, youth, young adult and family voices and is a key part of the work we do.

All of this has taken place in the context of our continuing evolution as an Office that recognizes our responsibilities to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families and that is committed to ongoing education, reconciliation and becoming a culturally safer space. We have continued to work consciously and intentionally to decolonize through listening, engaging with and taking advice from First Nations and Métis partners and staff. Our hope is to become an organization that feels safe and welcoming for all First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples and we pursue this goal with humbleness and humility.

On Aug. 31, our new Deputy Representative of Advocacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations, Samantha Cocker began in her new role. Samantha is of Cree and Scottish ancestry and brings deep knowledge and insights into child welfare – particularly Indigenous child welfare – in B.C. She will lead our First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations program area through its continued evolution and its efforts to build relationships with First Nations and Métis partners. And she will work on the Office's



expanded advocacy mandate, ensuring that RCY is meeting the needs of as many young people in transition and in the Agreements with Young Adults and Tuition Waiver programs as possible. She will also work on the anticipated further expansion of the Office's mandate for youth who have transitioned out of care, and she will work to ensure that RCY is doing its best work in allyship with First Nations, Métis and Urban Indigenous communities as they resume jurisdiction over their children and youth.

Through all of 2019/20 and the many course changes we have made, our staff has sustained unwavering commitment to the well-being of young people. Our Advocacy team has continued work with young people with increasingly complex needs and interests. Our CID team has continued to deal with an unprecedented number of critical injury and death reports. The team is identifying situations where Advocates might be able to assist young people, advising MCFD on cases that we have concerns about, looking for themes and patterns across reports that indicate systemic issues, and undertaking comprehensive reviews to ensure opportunities for learning and change are better understood. Our Monitoring team is undertaking projects that will help to inform systems of care. The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations team is building meaningful relationships in communities and informing Indigenist approaches throughout RCY. And our Corporate Services and Executive team ensures that we do our work well and in a good way. Every day, staff across the organization know why they are part of RCY – and that is to support and lift up the voices and lived experiences of children, youth and young adults and advocate for systemic change.

It is a deep honour to do my work as Representative alongside a passionate and multi-talented team and with government and community leaders, service providers, families and young people.

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 2019/20 and outlines RCY's planned strategic initiatives for 2020/21 to 2022/23. 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,

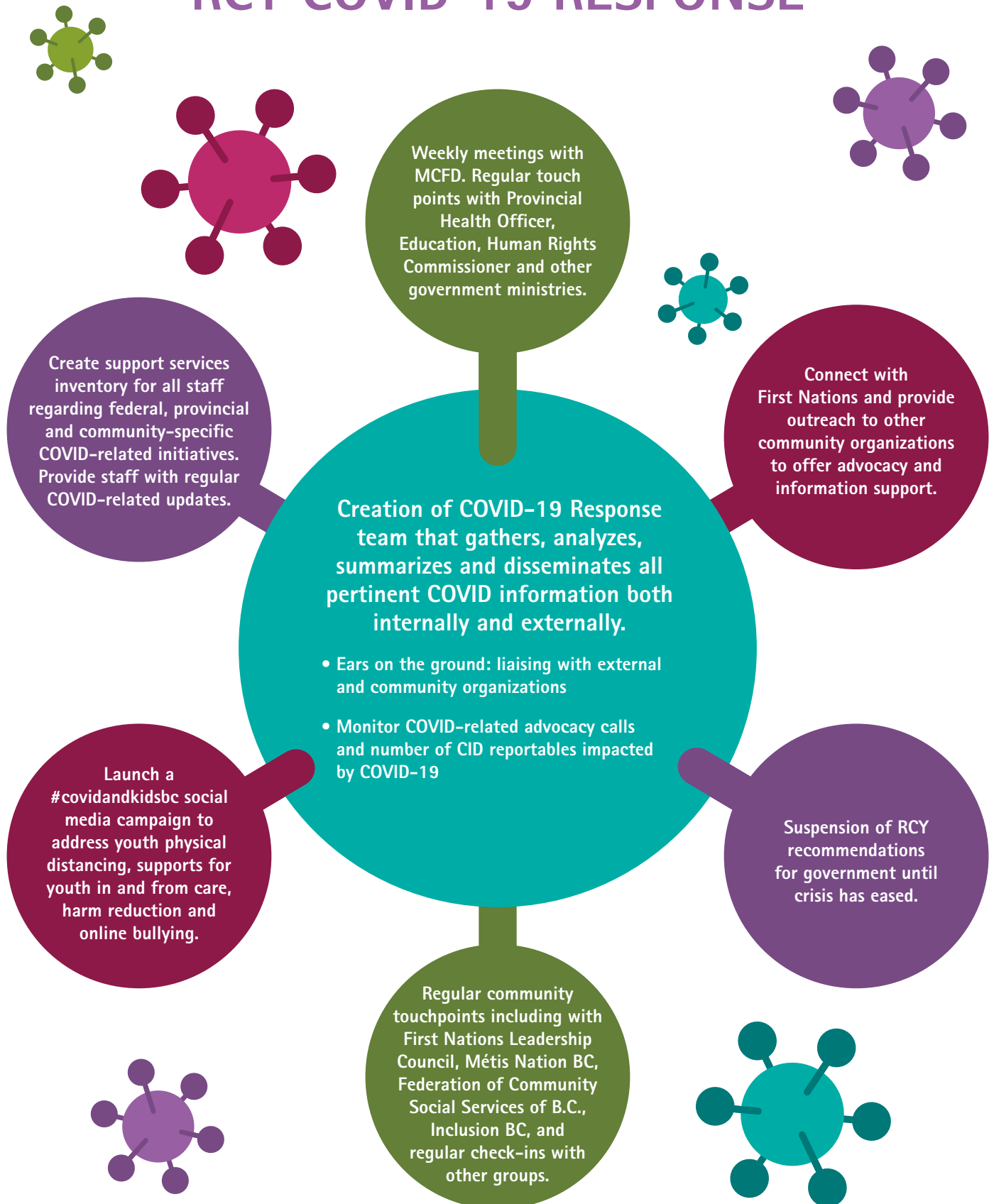


Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth





# RCY COVID-19 RESPONSE



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* 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





# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## Vision

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

## Mission

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is an independent advocacy and oversight body that champions the fundamental rights of and promotes improvements in services for children, youth and young adults.<sup>1</sup>

## 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 identifies and promotes awareness of the legislation, policies and practices that result in 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, and promotes changes, services and supports that will address and reduce that over-involvement.
4. RCY identifies, understands and addresses issues of systemic racism and structural barriers that impact the lives of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and families served.
5. RCY supports First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities in reassuming jurisdiction over child and family services.
6. Children, youth and young adults are engaged in informing the work of RCY.
7. RCY is on a journey to become a culturally safer organization for staff and people served.
8. RCY works with integrity in an informed, effective and collaborative manner.

<sup>1</sup> RCY's jurisdiction is limited to those in receipt of or eligible for designated or reviewable services.



## Values



### *Scope of Representative's Mandate – Summary of Court Case*

## **British Columbia (Representative for Children and Youth) v. British Columbia (Attorney General), 2019 BCSC 1888**

In the fall of 2018, the former Representative initiated a review under Section 20 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)* to examine how children can participate or have a voice in important decisions that impact them in cases under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the *Mental Health Act* and the *Family Law Act (FLA)*. The review was initiated after considering many critical injury and death reports, advocacy files and high-profile cases where the Representative was concerned about the absence of children's voices in these very significant decisions and about the disproportionate number of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children impacted.

Under the Section 20 review, the Representative began to gather information from a variety of sources, including asking the Ministry of Attorney General for records under the Family Advocate Program that had provided government-funded legal representation for children in contested custody and access cases until a decision was made by government to cease funding the program in 2002. The Ministry of Attorney General challenged the jurisdiction of the Representative to carry out this review, particularly in relation to the inclusion of *FLA* matters and refused to comply with RCY's request for documents.

After attempts at informal resolution, the Representative filed a petition seeking a declaration that the ministry failed to comply with its statutory duty to provide the information. The Attorney General filed a counter petition.

In November 2019, the court ruled in the Representative's favour, concluding that the Representative's report was "firmly rooted" in RCY's mandate and that the Representative has a right to the information requested. The court noted, "*What occurs in parenting cases, and in particular whether children are heard in these proximate proceedings, could have a bearing on the workings of the child welfare system and this is squarely within the Representative's mandate to address by way of a special report.*"

In ruling in the Representative's favour, the court took a fairly broad view of the Representative's statutory mandate under Section 20 of the *RCY Act* noting that the Representative may come across issues related to the child welfare system that are outside the narrow definitions of 'designated services' and 'reviewable services', and that if closely connected to her mandate, she should be able to report on those issues directly to the Legislative Assembly.





## Organization

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

The Representative's staff bring a range of experience to the Office. With backgrounds in child welfare, social work, child and youth care, psychology, counselling, education, youth justice, 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 First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth it supports, RCY employs intentional strategies to attract and retain First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous staff. As of March 31, 2020, 21 per cent of the Representative's staff identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or Urban Indigenous, with 15 per cent of permanent positions held by First Nations, Métis, Inuit or Urban Indigenous employees.



## 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 the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY), an all-party committee of the Legislature. 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, 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.



*CID staff Monique and Jody present at the CCCYA conference*



## 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 of the three territories: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan and Yukon. The 12 members of CCCYA have mandates to support the rights of children and youth and to work together to identify areas of mutual concern and develop ways to address issues at a national level.

The B.C. Representative for Children and Youth is the lead for an information exchange initiative between member CCCYA offices. Virtual information sharing sessions are held bi-monthly with offices presenting on and discussing issues of common interest. For the years 2019 and 2020, information sharing sessions are centred on the theme of Youth Engagement.

On Sept. 17, 2019, CCCYA published a national paper on youth suicide and at a joint news conference called on government at the national, provincial and territorial levels to take concrete action to prevent youth suicide in Canada. The paper consolidates research by CCCYA members that led to the identification of three broad findings related to youth suicide: the impact of traumatic childhood experiences; the importance of service integration and continuity; and how the voices of children and youth need to be at the front of change.

### **Fast Fact**

Suicide is the second most common cause of death amongst young people in Canada.

(A National Paper on Youth Suicide, Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, Sept 2019)



*National Advocates attend the 2019 CCCYA conference*





## Focus on Children and Youth

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 or designated services from MCFD or other public bodies delivering child-, youth- and young adult-serving programs including:

- Family, youth and children in care services delivered under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCS 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, youth and young adults 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 BY THE NUMBERS	
5,713	Number of children and youth in care as of March 31, 2020
3,766	Number of Indigenous children and youth in care as of March 31, 2020
879	Number of youth who aged out of government care and youth agreements in fiscal year 2019/20
15,634	Number of children and youth who received an autism funding payment in fiscal year 2019/20
1 in 7	Number of children and youth in B.C. who will experience a mental illness at some point
13	Number of illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2019 among youth under the age of 19 years
176	Number of children and youth in care placed for adoption in fiscal year 2019/ 2020
24	Average daily number of youth in B.C.'s two youth custody centres in March 2020

Source: MCFD, CLBC, BC Coroners Service, CMHA, RCY Data





PROGRAMS

AND

ACTIVITIES



# PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2019/20

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 the child-, youth- and young adult-serving systems in the province.

The mandated program areas are supported by First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations 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. In order to fulfill the Office mandate, RCY builds partnerships with community organizations and child-, youth- and young adult-serving agencies.

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



### *Inter-program Collaboration: Systemic Issues Working Group (SIWG)*

SIWG is a cross-program committee comprised of staff from CID, Monitoring, Advocacy, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations and Communications responsible for identifying, prioritizing and developing actions or strategies for RCY to use in addressing systemic issues in the child-, youth- and young- adult serving systems. SIWG has developed action plans for identified systemic issues in the areas of Parental Capacity Assessments and Nursing Support Services for medically fragile young people and is working on proposals for gender diverse youth and access to mental health supports for young people who were formerly in care or receiving government services.



*RCY staff at CCCYA conference in September 2019*





## Building Partnerships

The Representative is committed to entering into and maintaining agreements with provincial First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous organizations given our shared commitment to the well-being of their children, youth and young adults.

Over the past year, the Representative has nurtured closer ties with leaders and members of a number of organizations and communities, notably the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), Métis Nation BC (MNBC), Métis Commission (MC), Delegated Aboriginal Agencies Directors Forum (DAA Directors) and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

In the winter of 2019, FNLC brought forward a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the general assemblies for the Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs that had been negotiated between RCY and FNLC. The purpose of this MOU is to confirm the parties' shared commitment to improve the well-being of First Nations children and youth in British Columbia and establish processes to engage in ongoing dialogue on general and systemic issues, as well as to take joint action on specific issues and initiatives. Among other things, it aims to reduce the over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of First Nations children and families, in turn reducing the number of First Nations children in care. The MOU was fully ratified by each of these organizations. Although the formal signing ceremony, scheduled for early 2020, could not proceed due to concerns about COVID-19, RCY and FNLC are fully implementing the terms of the MOU in their ongoing work.

In May 2020, the Representative signed a Joint Commitment Agreement with MNBC and Métis Nation Child and Family Services Society. The Agreement states that the three parties will work collaboratively and in partnership towards supporting the cultural identity, safety and well-being of Métis children, youth and young adults in B.C. The Agreement commits the parties to biannual meetings to identify priorities; information sharing around joint efforts and goals; and engagement and consultation on investigative and special reports affecting Métis children, youth, young adults and families and advocacy and educational materials to ensure they are culturally appropriate and reflect current realities for Métis children. In the spirit and intent of the Agreement, MNBC and MC provided advice to RCY on the statistical review of critical injury and death reports of Métis children and youth.

An Agreement between DAA Directors and RCY has been drafted and will be reviewed by DAA Directors in early fall 2020. In accordance with the working draft, RCY and DAA Directors regularly share information and resources, work on issues of shared concern and consult on RCY projects and reports.

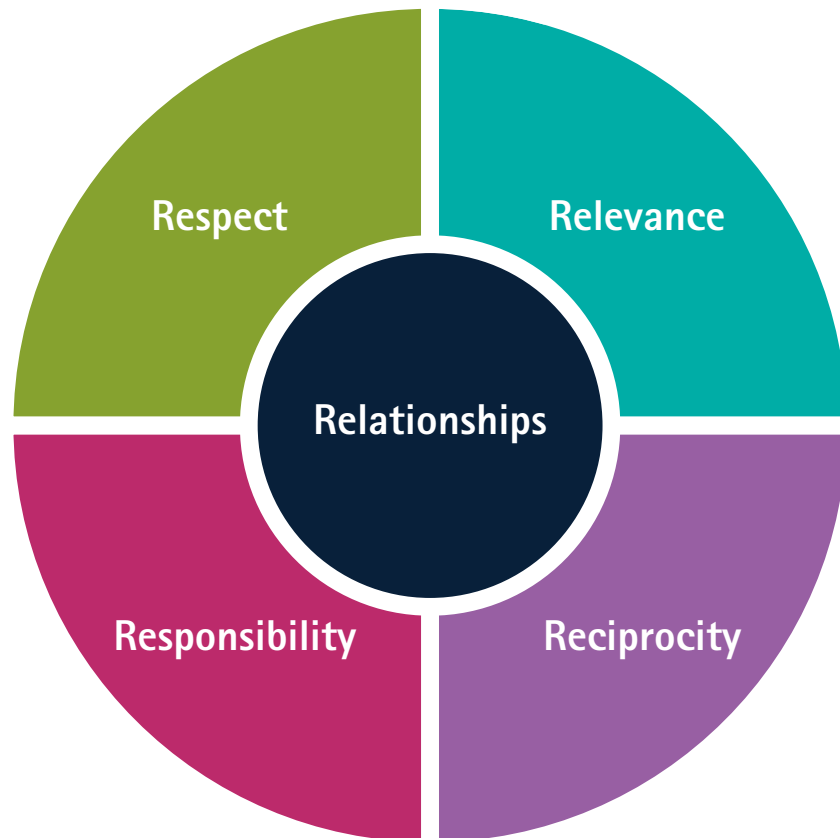
Memorandums of Understanding and protocols also exist with other child-, youth- and young adult-serving organizations, including:

- MCFD – Communication and Information Sharing Protocol, signed April 2017
- Community Living BC – Joint Protocol, signed September 2013



## The Five Rs of Research: a new approach for RCY reports

The Four Rs of research were developed in 1991 by Kirkness and Barnhardt as a way to be more inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and are now reflected in Indigenous research methodologies.\*



**RESPECT** emphasizes the importance of including Indigenous knowledge, values and traditions as guiding principles in any project. Respect means to listen to what people say, value different points of view and respect practices and protocols within each community.

**RESPONSIBILITY** in research means integrity is maintained throughout. This includes a responsibility to stakeholders and participants by way of respect, ethical conduct and appropriate dissemination of information gathered for reporting to the public. Responsibility means to be responsive, timely, reliable and accountable, and to protect Indigenous and cultural knowledge.

**RELEVANCE** means to emphasize utility when planning and conducting any work we do ensuring that it is always considered within a cultural and historical context.

**RECIPROCITY** means to work to strengthen community and organizational capacity when possible. It means to give back in other ways, to honour knowledge and time shared and to involve bi-directional knowledge transfer and story-telling.

The four Rs are the guiding principles for how we work in **RELATIONSHIPS** with others.

\* Verna J. Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt, *Journal of American Indian Education*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (May 1991), pp. 1-15. The four Rs were originally conceptualized for higher learning institutions, making these institutions more relevant for Indigenous learners, emphasizing the need for a higher educational system that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationships with others and that helps them exercise responsibility over their own lives.



# 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, young adults and their families in relation to government-funded designated services
- young adults from their 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays who are eligible to receive services from Community Living BC (CLBC) and who received a reviewable service within 15 months of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, and
- young adults up to their 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays who:
  - are on, or are eligible for, an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA), or
  - are on, or are eligible for, a provincial post-secondary tuition waiver.

Under its advocacy mandate, the Representative's Office also reaches out to communities to build awareness about child rights and to support and promote the development of local advocacy services. The Representative may identify broad issues that need to be addressed and may 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 and 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 are receiving, 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 with respect to the services they need
- assisting transitions out of MCFD care
- assisting transitions for young adults eligible for CLBC services.

When contacted by individuals about issues outside the Representative's mandate, the Advocacy team will provide a referral to an appropriate agency or service.

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 how to approach a service provider on how to resolve an issue, or how to access or use a complaints process. Should a caller's situation require further support, an Intake Advocate will assign the file for additional follow-up and open a case file.



# ADVOCACY INTAKE FOR YOUTH

The Representative for Children and Youth works to make sure the voices of B.C.'s young people are heard. We know that situations can be complicated and sometimes it is scary to ask for help. That is one of the reasons we have an easy way to reach out for information.

## What happens when you call the advocacy number at 1-800-476-3933 or email [intake@rcybc.ca](mailto:intake@rcybc.ca) ?\*

**1** Your confidential call will be put through to an RCY staff member.

**2** That person will talk to you and determine how we can help you.

Maybe you don't know how to make connections to services and programs you need.

Maybe you want to discuss your rights and what to do if those rights are ignored.

Maybe all you need is some information about who is the right organization to talk to or some suggestions on how to better explain what you want.

**3** Sometimes you might need more help from us to resolve the issue. If that is the case, you will be provided an Advocate to help you. An Advocate is a person who will listen to you and will help you amplify your voice and promote your rights and best interests.

An Advocate can try and help you get the care and services you need. You might want help reconnecting with your family, community or culture or putting together an action plan. Maybe you feel like your social worker is not listening to you or including you in planning. An Advocate can support you to speak up in a way that might resolve the issue and help you become an effective self-advocate.

*When you call the Advocacy line you can expect to be heard and respected. And you can expect support and assistance.*

Depending on the circumstances, an Advocate can help to ensure your needs are planned for as you transition out of MCFD care or connect to Community Living BC services. An Advocate can also provide you with information and support regarding the Agreements with Young Adults program and Tuition Waiver program.

\* As of August 2020 RCY is available through chat.





## *Expansion of Advocacy Mandate*

Changes to the *Representative for Children and Youth Regulation* that were brought into force on July 3, 2019 expanded the advocacy jurisdiction of RCY to include young adults ages 19- to 23-years-old (inclusive) who are eligible for Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) and/or the Provincial Tuition Waiver (PTW) program.

In the initial implementation period between July 3, 2019 and March 31, 2020, there were 38 cases of expanded mandate young adults seeking advocacy support from RCY. It is expected that as awareness of RCY's expanded role increases, the young adult caseload will grow in the coming months and years.

As part of the outreach to young adults and service providers, coordinators met with youth-serving organizations and post-secondary schools across B.C. to discuss RCY's advocacy services and how the Office might be able to help their students. This work created new relationships and increased awareness of RCY services. Between December 2019 and March 2020, 25 organizations and 187 professionals were informed about RCY's expanded mandate. In-person visits and outreach have been paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but work has begun on the development of alternate ways to connect and engage with the community including through virtual sessions and the design of a webinar.

### **Fast Fact**

2019 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## *Intake and Community Relations Coordinators*

Funding approval was given for two new Advocacy team positions to address the expanded mandate for vulnerable young adults as well as case complexity and workload. The responsibilities of the two new Intake and Community Relations Coordinators are evolving. Their core responsibilities are outreach and supporting those who initiate contact with RCY through the 1-800 line. They also assist with cross program collaboration, management of referral information and data collection and coordination of child rights information and education sessions.

## *Response to COVID-19*

In early March, when COVID-19 became a significant public health issue, two Advocates were re-assigned to the RCY COVID-19 Response Team. The Advocacy team utilized its database system to track cases impacted by COVID-19 and increased its use of virtual tools to engage with young people accessing advocacy services. Advocates continue to support children, youth and young adults despite the challenges the pandemic has created through reduced face-to-face meetings.



## BRIGHT SPOT

### Post Secondary Schools – Support to Former Youth in Care

In 2020, the Advocacy team met with a number of public post-secondary schools located on the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and in the Interior. The purpose was to provide information to the colleges and universities about RCY's expanded mandate to advocate for youth 19 to 24 who are receiving, or eligible to receive, Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) and/or the Provincial Tuition Waiver (PTW) program and in turn, to learn about the programs the schools currently offer.

Through these visits several schools stood out as offering exceptional services to former youth in care:

- University of British Columbia has a dedicated full-time position supporting former youth in care – a position currently held by a former youth in care. It has lowered entrance requirements for youth in care/former youth in care and its application process enables youth to more easily identify as having been in care. It also has its own internal tuition waiver program intended to catch youth who do not qualify for the PTW Program. It has exceptional First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous student supports, makes housing a priority for youth in care/former youth in care and hosts social events.
- Simon Fraser University also has its own internal tuition waiver program intended to catch youth who do not qualify for the PTW program and provides exceptional Indigenous student supports.
- Vancouver Island University has an internal tuition waiver program with lowered eligibility criteria and no age limit on when former youth in care can apply to the program.
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University offers a faculty mentorship program under which former youth in care are paired with a faculty member who supports them in navigating the system and understanding deadlines. Faculty receive extensive training on what it means to have grown up in government care.
- Douglas College provides a student navigator with lived experience in care to help other students who were youth in care navigate the system.
- Langara College has an internal tuition waiver program with reduced criteria as compared to the PTW program and no age limit on when former youth in care can apply.

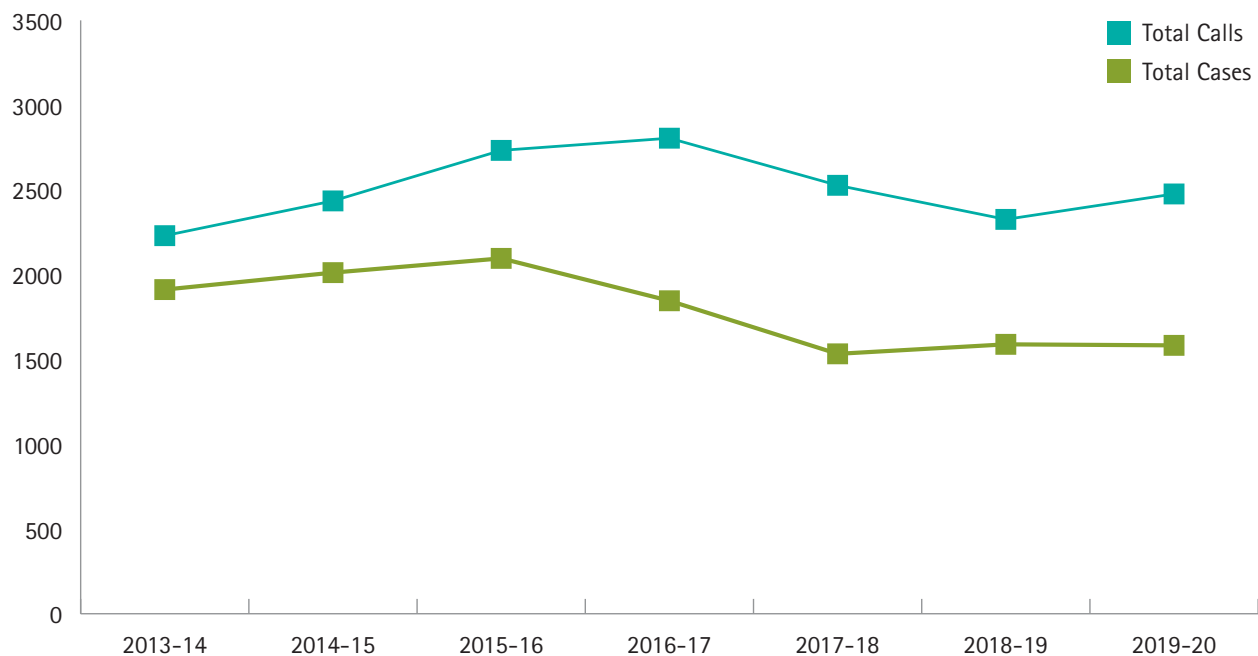


## Highlights of Advocacy Activities in 2019/20

### 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 2019/20.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1 – Total Advocacy Calls and Total Advocacy Cases by Fiscal Year – 2013/14 to 2019/20**



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





*Advocacy case example*

## **Supporting Permanency Planning**

RCY was contacted by nine-year-old Nicky who was concerned about being moved from a very stable home and caregivers who had expressed interest in providing permanency for him. Nicky and his caregiver went to an RCY office to speak with an Advocate to ensure that his views were being heard by decision-makers who were making plans for his long-term care.

Nicky said he had been moved around a lot and wanted to stay with his current family. He was happy at his current home and the constant moves were not easy on him. Nicky had written letters explaining his feelings to both his band and to MCFD but didn't feel that the letters were being taken seriously and that they were not listening to him.

Nicky's Advocate met with him in person and on the phone numerous times over an 18-month period and shared information about his rights, supporting him in making sure his views were being heard by MCFD, his band and family. The Advocate also connected with MCFD to ensure that Nicky's best interests were being considered and that his needs were being met in planning. The Advocate also participated in ongoing meetings and mediation that included MCFD, his band and family and spoke directly to them about the impact of the process on Nicky, making sure that Nicky's views were understood by everyone at the table.

In the end, Nicky's band, family and MCFD all came together and agreed to a plan to keep Nicky in his home permanently, with agreements being made to ensure that Nicky would be supported throughout his life to build and maintain relationships with his family, his Nation, his community and his culture.



## Figure 2 – Total Advocacy Cases by Fiscal Year – 2007/08 to 2019/20

Figure 2 below highlights the total number of advocacy cases handled by the Representative's Advocacy team between 2007/08, the year the Representative commenced its advocacy function, and the 2019/20 fiscal year. In total, between 2007/08 and 2019/20, the Representative's Office has handled 22,406 advocacy cases.

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	19/20	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	1,583	22,406

### *Advocacy case example*

#### **Transition Planning to Adult Services**

RCY opened an advocacy file for 18-year-old Denise, a First Nations youth with developmental disabilities who was on a Special Needs Agreement. The concern was that neither family nor MCFD was taking a lead in her transition to adult services planning. As well, Community Living BC (CLBC) was unable to locate or create an appropriate placement for her in the local area with an adequate level of support for her concurrent needs – mental health, addictions and developmental disabilities. This led to the further worry that she might become homeless and her addictions worsen.

The RCY Advocate connected with Denise to confirm her preference for a local placement and gathered perspective from the health authority, MCFD and CLBC. Due to the short timeframe, the Advocate quickly elevated planning concerns to the MCFD Executive Director and the CLBC Director of Regional Operations and requested and attended regular Integrated Case Management (ICM) planning meetings in the months leading up to and after Denise turned 19.

The RCY Advocate pushed for someone to act in the role of case manager to coordinate planning for Denise after she turned 19 and Health/Health Services Community Living (HSCL) stepped up to do so. The result of the RCY Advocate's involvement was the development of a strong and effective MCFD, CLBC and Health/HSCL care team that worked together to explore all possible placement options for Denise. Even after the first placement in Mental Health housing broke down, the team regrouped within a number of weeks and was able to secure a local temporary CLBC placement.

The RCY Advocate spoke with Denise at this placement and Denise indicated that she was very happy with her placement and the planning process for getting her there. Denise continues to receive supports from Health/HSCL and CLBC and her care team continues to coordinate planning around her placement and long-term care needs.



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

Figure 3 – Advocacy Cases by Initial Contact 2019/20

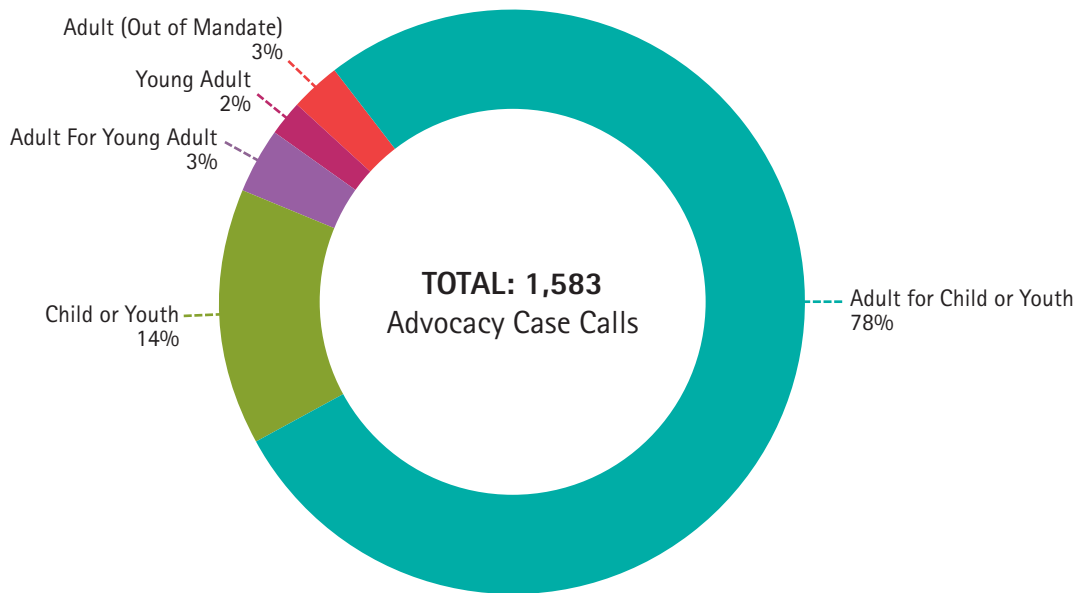
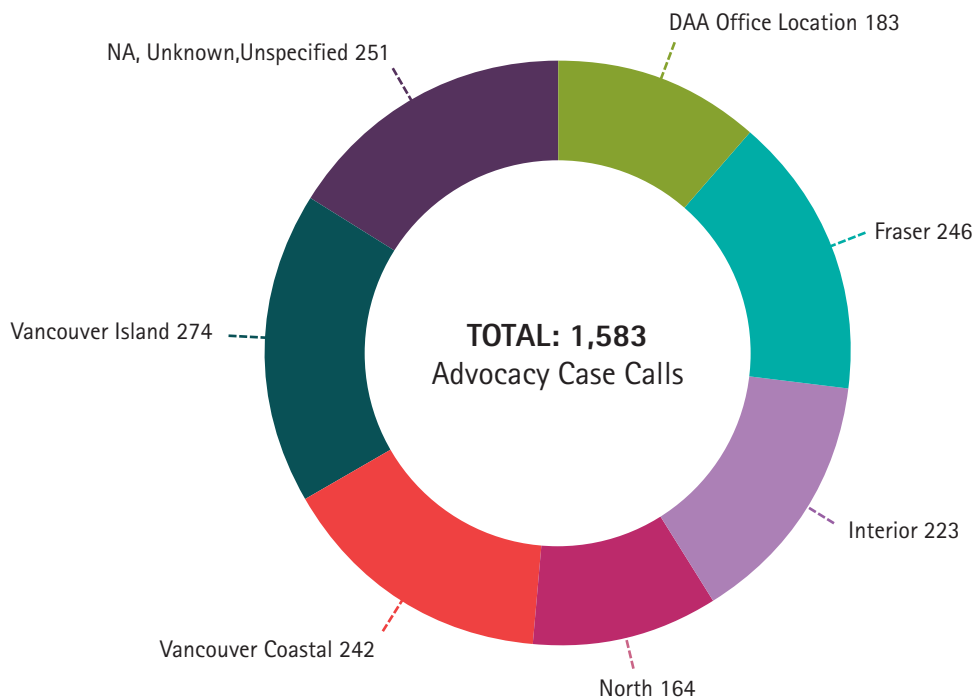


Figure 4 – Advocacy Cases by Region – 2019/20





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

- Operational Practice – Quality of practice/care provided is inadequate 26 per cent
- Ineffective or inadequate plan 22 per cent
- Requests for information on policy, standards, programs, rights, legislation 19 per cent

## *Advocacy Initiatives*

### **Case Information Tracking & Reporting (CITAR) System Development**

Since it was established in 2007, RCY has used the CITAR database system to collect both CID and Advocacy program data as well as to support advocacy case management. The system has had several revisions over the past few years and now requires some significant changes as RCY's mandate continues to expand and the Office develops better strategies to categorize and capture data.

CITAR redevelopment work began in fall 2019 and will continue throughout the 2020/21 fiscal year with a planned implementation date of April 1, 2021. The most significant change to the system will be the ability to relate advocacy issues to individuals rather than a case file, thus improving RCY's ability to understand data collected and how individuals who connect with the Office may be experiencing designated services. The system and supporting tools will also increase administrative efficiency, improve information management within each case managed and enhance quality assurance and audit functions.



## Behind the Scenes with RCY Staff – Advocacy

### Sophia

*"I am a very quiet person, unless I am advocating for children and youth, and then I am definitely not quiet."*

This is appropriate, considering Sophia is part of RCY's Advocacy team. Sophia started work at RCY more than two years ago as an Intake and Community Relations Coordinator and has recently taken on a new position as an Intake Advocate.



*"I have found my niche in Intake. It is about both policy and making sure that children's and youth's voices are heard."*

Originally from the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan, Sophia was in and out of care until she was 16 which, for her, makes the kind of work she does more meaningful.

Given her background, Sophia says early on, she was determined not to be a social worker.

*"I swore up and down my entire life I would not work in social services. I was very adamant that I would never work in a group home."*

Instead, she got a degree in environmental geography with a certificate in geographic information systems.

*"I've worn many, many hats!"*

But fate has a funny way of intervening and when jobs in the field became scarce in 2011, she found herself getting a position in youth work and, yes, working in a group home.

*"I found out that I just love working with children and youth. I wanted to be part of making positive change and that's why I wanted to come to RCY. My dream was to become an Advocate."*

Sophia's background also includes work with Indigenous children, youth and families as a Family and Cultural Connections worker, which has prepared her well for her current position.

*"I am definitely enjoying this work – and one of the good things about RCY is you are there to find solutions. For example, I had a youth who was not even 18-years-old and he had been homeless for six months. His social worker had him apply for underage income assistance and so there was no support for him. He was trying to find a place to live in the middle of COVID-19 and he was couch-surfing and moving from shelter to shelter. I was able to assign him to an Advocate who got him a youth agreement so now he has help finding a home."*

Sophia speaks like a true Advocate when she says, *"I am inspired to help youth find their voice and help them with their own permanency plan. Whether the work is legal or relational – I listen to what they want and try and help them get there."*



## Advocacy Outreach

### 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.

#### Fast Fact

More than 40 per cent of youth in custody each day in a youth custody centre in B.C. were Indigenous.

(MCFD Reporting Portal, latest statistics 2018/19)

One of the specific activities carried out in the 2019/20 year with the staff of the Burnaby Youth Custody Centre was a monthly presentation of the "Rights to Success" (R2S) workshop to youth in the centre. The R2S workshop is aimed at increasing resident capacity in the areas of rights, participation and advocacy and provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships with RCY Advocates. Youth involved in the workshops said that they enjoyed the presentations and were engaged in and participated in the discussions.

Advocates also attended and participated in the National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations at the Prince George Youth Custody Centre on June 20, 2019, connecting with youth, staff and other members of the community in celebrating First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous cultures.

In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Youth Custody Centres restricted access to RCY Advocates, but made arrangements for youth to continue to have access to Advocates via phone and video conference.

### General Outreach

In addition to the workshops under the #Rep4Rights Tour and the custody centre visits, the Advocacy team continued its general outreach activities throughout 2019/20, connecting with youth through information booths at community events and participating in information sessions. This work reached approximately 700 children, youth and young adults and their community supports.





### Advocacy case example

## Supporting Youth Participation

Adam contacted RCY because he had serious concerns about returning to his caregiver. His caregiver was a family friend who had guardianship of him via the *Family Law Act* – something Adam had never wanted. At the time, Adam was not living with this caregiver because of abuse and he was fearful that this would continue if he returned. Adam wanted to live near his grandmother and his sisters who were about four hours away from him.

Adam was very clear that he felt it was in his best interest to move to the community that his family lived in. The Advocate was able to support Adam in articulating his concerns, connecting with his support team, helping him understand what the barriers were, and working collaboratively to come up with a plan that supported him being relocated with his family. Adam is now living in the same community as his family and the same home as his sister. He reports being very happy about this. RCY's Advocate was able to successfully assist Adam in relocating to his family's community by facilitating open communication and collaboration between Adam and his care team.



Advocates Shanna and Tracey in Williams Lake



# Critical Injury and Death – Reviews and Investigations

## Overview

Public bodies that provide “reviewable services” are required to report critical injuries and deaths to RCY 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:

- child welfare
- children and youth with special needs
- addiction services for children
- mental health services for children
- youth justice services.

All critical injury and death reports received from public bodies are entered into the Representative's database. Reports are reviewed to identify whether they meet CID's mandate and whether service delivery issues may have been a factor in the death or critical injury.

When there appears to be strong connection between the services received or not received and the injury or death, RCY conducts a more in-depth review of the injury or death. This comprehensive review is used to inform a decision about whether to investigate the injury or death.

Only one or two critical injuries or deaths per year will result in a full investigation by the Representative's office. When the team conducts a full investigation, the Representative prepares a public report with recommendations to government focused on preventing similar injuries or deaths in the future.

When a comprehensive review does not result in a decision to conduct a full investigation, the Representative may share the results of her review with the public bodies responsible for the service provision. Sharing the results of a comprehensive review in a meaningful way can make a significant contribution to the public body's process of ongoing quality assurance and help inform improvements to practice.

### **Fast Fact**

The total number of in-mandate injury and death reports received by the Representative in the 2019/20 fiscal year increased by 16 per cent over the previous fiscal year.

(CID statistics)

### **Fast Fact**

72 per cent of injury and deaths reports were for youth between the ages of 13 and 18 years.

(CID statistics)



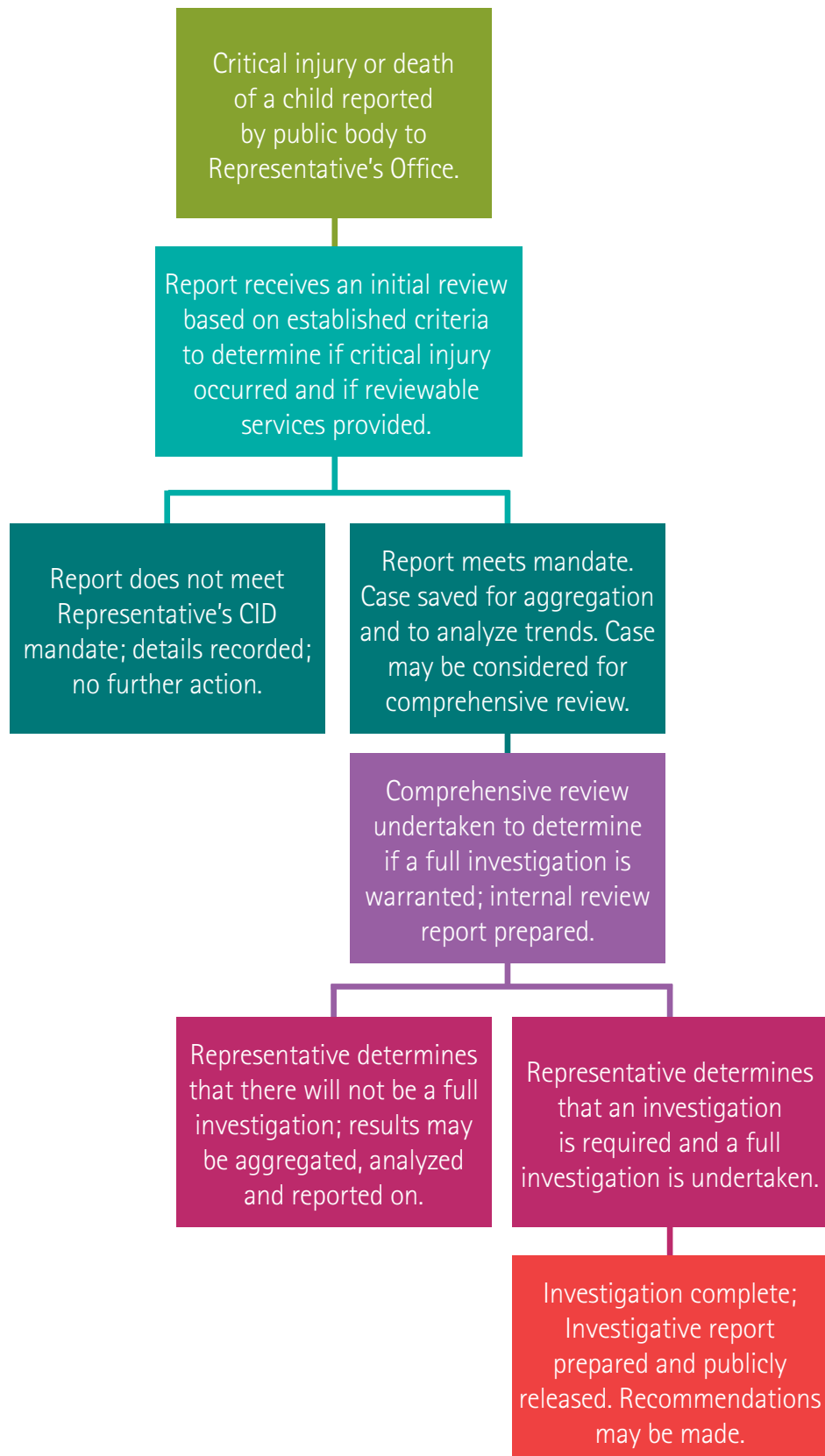
## What happens after an RCY comprehensive review

RCY conducts about 15 comprehensive reviews a year. Comprehensive reviews have two purposes: to determine whether to investigate and to learn from specific circumstances in order to inform improvements to reviewable services. If a review does not result in a full public investigation, RCY may send a detailed letter disclosing the results of the comprehensive review to the public body who provided the services, usually MCFD or a health authority. This letter provides details on the life of the child, how their injury occurred, areas of service strength and suggested areas for service improvement or learning.

RCY is in a unique position to review groups or themes of critical injuries that are experienced by children and youth who receive reviewable services. The CID team has been doing this work in new ways which include consultation with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities, leadership and service providers to inform analyses and to enable RCY to report out in a way that is supportive to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities, including the resumption of child welfare jurisdiction. CID is also producing interesting work that combines aggregate data reviews, case summaries, research and expert advice, such as the recently released report *A Way to Cope: Exploring non-suicidal self-injuries in B.C. youth*.



## The Review and Investigation Process





## Highlights of Critical Injuries and Deaths Review and Investigation Activities in 2019/20

### *CID Cases and Trends*

During 2019/20, CID received 3,185 critical injury and death reports for children and youth who received services during the preceding 12 months. Each of these reports received an initial review, and of these reports, 1,329, 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 the mandate after an initial review for the years 2009/10 to 2019/20.

### **Fast Fact**

Children and youth living in staffed residential resources accounted for 42 per cent of injury reports in 2019/20, compared to 38 per cent in 2018/19.

(CID statistics)

**Figure 5 – In-Mandate Critical Injuries and Deaths – 2010/2011 to 2019/20**

Fiscal Year	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Critical Injuries	136	413	300	318	292	665	754	818	1,037	1,234
Deaths	88	101	100	99	82	138	112	118	109	95
Total	224	514	400	417	374	803	866	936	1,146	1,329

**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 June 2015 update and implementation of Reportable Circumstances Policy by MCFD.



Figure 6 below shows the breakdown of the 1,329 reports by injury or death, by Indigeneity and care status.

**Figure 6 – Critical Injuries and Deaths by Indigeneity and Care Status – 2019/20<sup>1</sup>**

	Critical Injuries					Deaths				
	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous
	First Nations	Métis	Inuit	Indigenous: Unspecified		First Nations	Métis	Inuit	Indigenous: Unspecified	
In-care	493	76	2	1	336	6	1	0	0	8
Not in-care	95	21	0	0	210	21	5	0	0	54
Total	588	97	2	1	546	27	6	0	0	62

<sup>1</sup> There are different reporting policies for children in and out of care so the numbers are not directly comparable.

The following Figures 7 to 11 provide more detail on the type of classification, break down by gender and age of in-mandate critical injury and death reports received by the Representative in 2019/20.

**Figure 7 – In-Mandate Critical Injuries by RCY Classification and Gender – 2019/20**

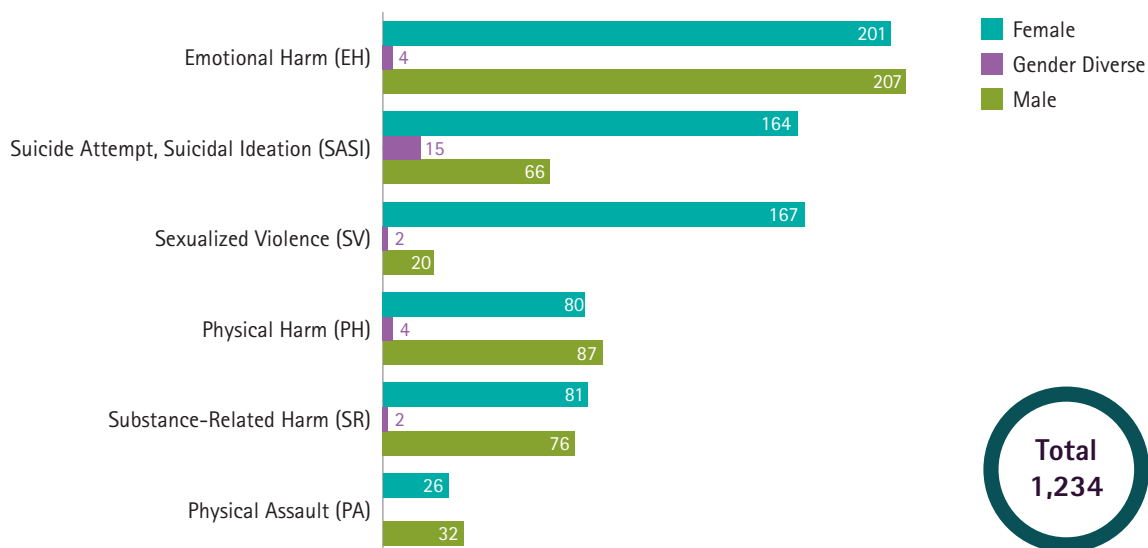


Figure 8 – Percentage of In-Mandate Critical Injuries by Gender – 2019/20

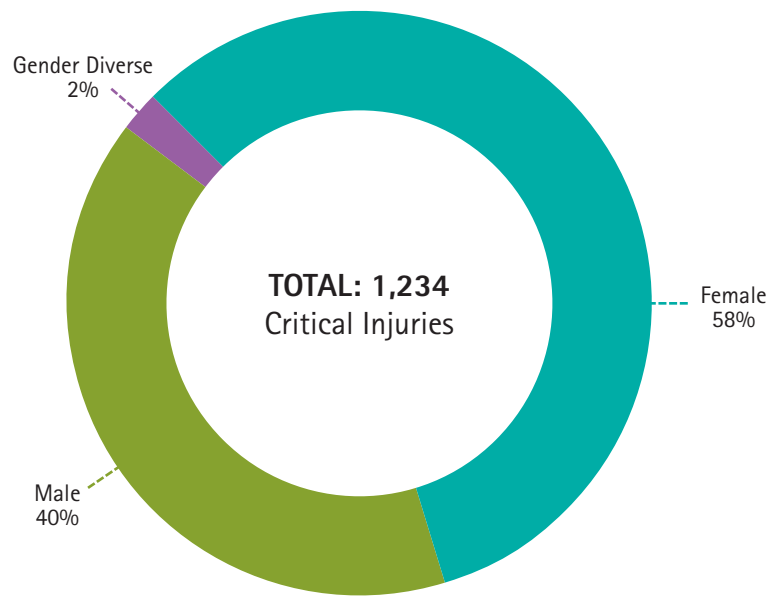


Figure 9 – In-Mandate Deaths by RCY Classification and Gender – 2019/20

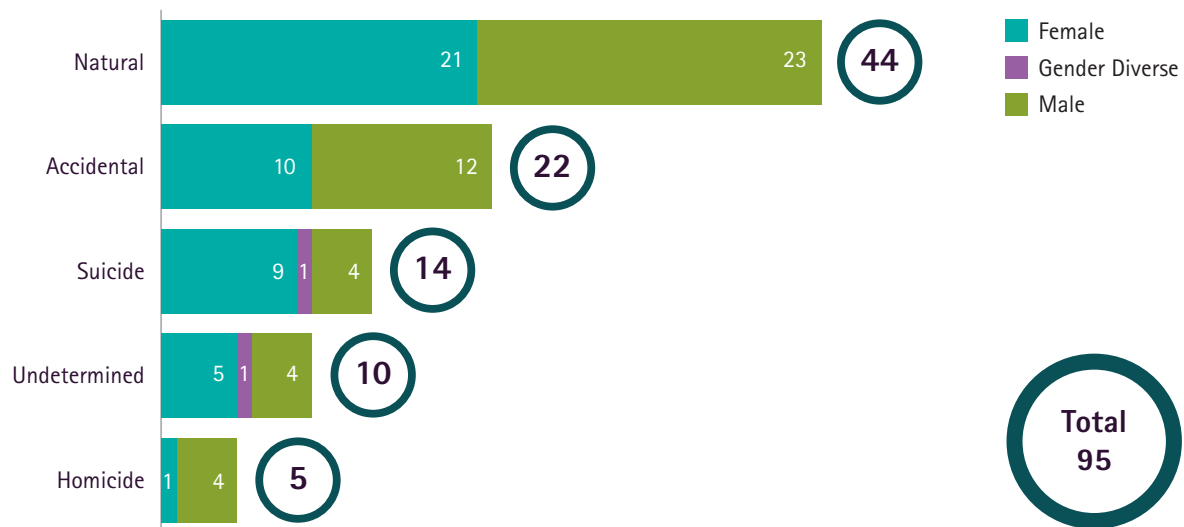


Figure 10 – Percentage of In-Mandate Deaths by Gender – 2019/20

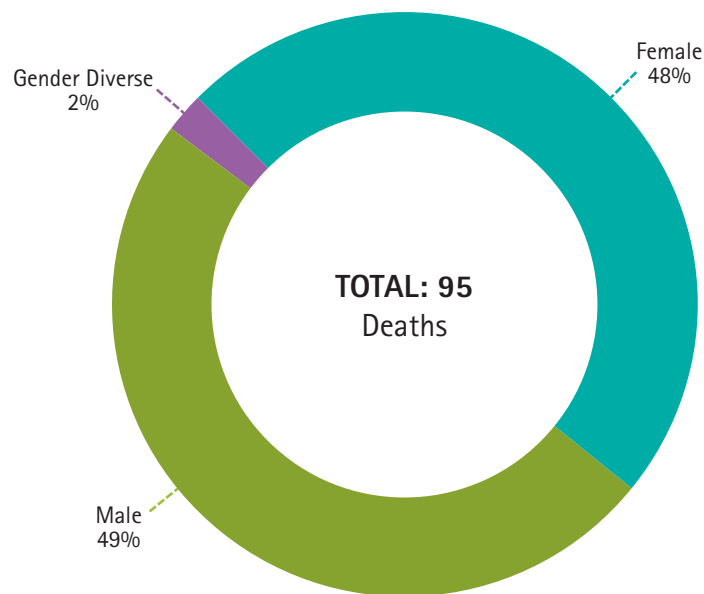
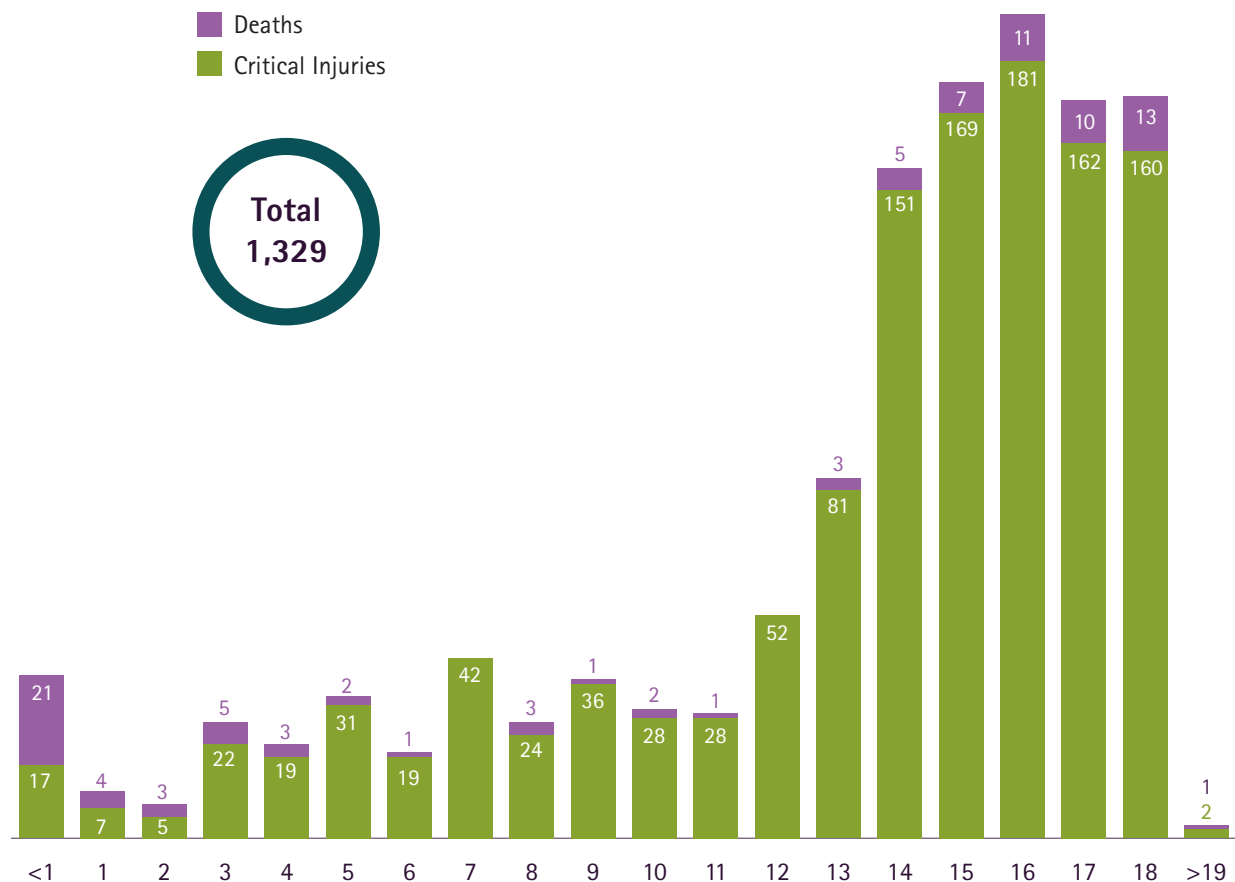


Figure 11 – Age Distribution of In-Mandate Critical Injuries and Deaths – 2019/20





## Behind the Scenes with RCY Staff – CID

### Jessica

As an Investigator on the Critical Injury and Death Reviews and Investigations team for the past four years, Jessica has been involved in many projects, but one of the most personally meaningful involved an investigation around a child with special needs who was the subject of the December 2018 report, *Alone and Afraid*. It traced the story of a child with autism who was also non-verbal, and who had suffered profound long-term neglect.



*"I spent a year reading about him, going through files about him and interviewing people about him, so it was really important for me to go out and meet him.*

*I went to his foster home, knocked on the door and he opened it with a huge smile on his face. The improvements in him were significant after the neglect he had endured. He was not the boy I had read about in the files. He had gained weight and looked healthy, he was walking, he was eating nutritious food, he was going to school – he hadn't been to school for five years. He showed me around his room and foster home. There was a wooden outdoor swing in the backyard that the foster parent had made for him and I saw how happy it made him to swing. It was just such a profound moment in my life when I saw how much better this boy who had experienced such unimaginable trauma was doing."*

Prior to joining RCY, Jessica had worked at the Ministry of Children and Family Development as a child protection social worker.

*"I remember very clearly the moment I knew I wanted to work for RCY. It was in 2012 when I read the RCY report Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon regarding the senseless murder of three children by their father. It highlighted how critically important it is to the safety of children to conduct specialized risk assessments in domestic violence cases.*

*As a social worker, I learned so much from that report that I carried on in my practice, and I still use the report today in my work at RCY when I am conducting reviews into cases involving domestic violence."*

Jessica also values her work at RCY because of its close alignment with her own values around reconciliation.

*"I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the Lekwungen peoples, whose traditional territory I have the privilege of living and working on. For me it is important to acknowledge that I have a great deal of responsibility to the Indigenous peoples whose land I occupy. Part of fulfilling this responsibility is through my personal reconciliation journey, which includes learning about the histories of Indigenous people, listening to Elders and knowledge keepers and taking action through participation. During my time at RCY I have also had the honour of witnessing how resilient Indigenous communities are in their steadfast commitment to their children and I think this resilience is important to hold up and acknowledge."*



## CID Initiatives

Between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, CID released one investigative report, *Caught in the Middle*. Some reports scheduled for release during the spring 2020 were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors.

During 2019/20, CID worked on the following projects:

- A brief and targeted report focusing on the phenomena of repeated and severe non-suicidal self-injuries (NSSI), which impact a small group of youth requiring significant resources to keep safe. This includes a review of the existing literature, quantitative analysis of injury reports and five case examples to improve supports and services for children and families experiencing NSSI. With this report, the intention is to provide an opportunity for collaborative learning and knowledge sharing to support better outcomes for these youth. The Representative released this report in September 2020.
- An investigative report into the death of a First Nations youth by overdose on her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday after having been separated from her mother, family and community for a number of years. This investigation is the first of its kind for RCY. Taking into consideration the harmful impacts of the child welfare system on First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and families, this project explores a new approach to the investigative process guided by the “5Rs” – the principles of respect, relationship, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility (see page 22). The investigation is also guided by the foundational principles of cultural safety, restorative approaches, trauma-informed practice and working with complexity.

The investigation aims to use interviews and quantitative data together to tell a story by intentionally weaving Indigenist ways of being and knowing into the work. It tells the youth’s story of separation from her family, culture and community, and seeks to understand systemic change that is needed to support the emotional, spiritual and physical needs of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children across the province. The stories shared throughout the investigative report illustrate the need for transformative change to improve how children and youth are supported to establish physical, cultural, identity and relational permanency while in the care of MCFD.

The Representative plans to release this report in early 2021 after consulting with First Nations leadership.

- Two reports looking at children’s participation in important decisions that impact their lives including mental health detentions, child protection and family law decisions.
  - The first report focuses on children and youth’s participation under B.C.’s *Mental Health Act*, which sets out rules that govern the voluntary and involuntary care and treatment of people with mental health challenges in designated facilities. This report explores how children’s voices are sought, reflected and heard within the context of involuntary detentions. It also seeks to understand how First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth experience mental health detentions in light of the history of colonization, residential schools and the child welfare system. The report considers whether appropriate safeguards are in place, if they

### Fast Fact

26 per cent of injury reports or deaths were related to substance use.

(CID statistics)



are functioning appropriately and whether there are alternative methods – including more culturally attuned approaches – that may be more effective. In order to explore these questions, this report amplifies the voices of youth with lived experience of involuntary detention and starts from the premise that all young people have the right to participate in making decisions about their care. The Representative plans to release the first report in early 2021.

- The second report focuses on children and youth's participation in child protection legal processes and family law legal processes. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCS Act)* and the *Family Law Act* both have provisions for hearing children's views as a factor in determining the best interests of the child. However, it is unknown how successful these provisions are in providing meaningful avenues for hearing children's views and their right to contribute to decisions that are being made about them. By engaging young people with lived experience in child protection and family law legal processes, the project team will produce a report that explores opportunities for children to participate in *CFCS Act* and/or *Family Law Act* legal processes in a meaningful and inclusive way. The Representative plans to release this report in 2021.
- Two statistical reviews of Métis and First Nations data covering three calendar years of critical injury and death reports, Jan. 1, 2015 to Dec. 31, 2017, examining the types and frequencies of injuries and deaths by demographic (e.g., gender, age) and systems (e.g., placement type, legal status). Additional analyses were driven by consultation with First Nations and Métis leaders, service providers and community members. A significant intention of this project was to begin dialogues around the data that RCY collects and keeps, and identify work going forward that is informed by First Nations and Métis leaders, service providers and communities in order to support their goals, especially with regard to the resumption of jurisdiction over child welfare.

The project was separated into two reports in response to community consultations:

- a report focusing on Métis data and the ways in which child-serving systems are or are not supporting cultural connection for Métis children and youth with reported injuries. This report was released in summer 2020.
- a separate report considering all the data, and specifically the First Nations data, to be released in winter 2020. This second report is being informed by consultations with FNLC, some DAAs, the DAA Directors' table and some non-DAA-affiliated communities. It is considering questions that have arisen such as mental health supports for First Nations youth with reported injuries.

As well, in 2019/20, CID formed a working group with representatives from MCFD, the Ministry of Health and health authorities to develop processes enabling health authorities to report critical injuries and deaths of children who receive mental health and substance use services from them. The Representative's goal is for the health authorities to begin reporting in 2020/2021.

### Fast Fact

Approximately half of the injuries reported for gender diverse youth were suicide attempts.

(CID statistics)



**BRIGHT SPOT****Youth Justice Services, Community Youth Probation Officers**

Youth Justice Services contribute to public safety by promoting the development of law-abiding behaviour primarily through an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach for youth who are in conflict with the law. Youth probation officers work collaboratively with parents, caregivers and other professionals to address the individual needs of youth and to reduce their risk of re-offending. The duties of youth probation officers include: supervising youth who are subject to a community-based supervision order and providing youth with assistance to comply with their conditions; referring youth to programs and services in the community such as counselling; preparing reports as directed by the court; and attending court where appropriate.

CID has observed strong practice from youth probation officers in several cases. This includes youth probation officers who have worked collaboratively with other professionals involved with youth to advocate for their safety, particularly when these youth may face vulnerability due to unstable housing, sexual exploitation, mental health and substance use issues. Youth probation officers have demonstrated trauma-informed approaches to working with youth who have likely experienced multiple traumas or adverse experiences in their lives and who are in conflict with the law.





# 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 collaboration with other independent bodies or research institutions, to better understand the immediate and long-term outcomes of 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, young adults 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, young adults 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 practice 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.

### Fast Fact

An array of options that include harm reduction and recovery-oriented services is required to address problematic substance use in youth.

(*Youth Substance Services in B.C.*, Representative for Children and Youth, March 2020)

The work of the Monitoring and Strategic Initiatives 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-representation of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in government care?
- 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? How effective are these services from their experience?



The Representative may share findings through reports released publicly as well as submissions or statements on issues of concern. Reports may 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 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.



*Rep with RCY team in Cranbrook*



## Highlights of Monitoring Activities 2019/20

During the 2019/20 fiscal year, Monitoring and Strategic Initiatives has continued work on and has begun work on several important projects:

- *Care Plan Review* – a multi-year quantitative and qualitative review of care planning in the areas of cultural planning for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban 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. It involves survey questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with stakeholders including children and youth, guardianship social workers and team leaders, foster 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.

Due to COVID-19 there has been a delay in executing the survey questionnaires and interviews across the province, however, RCY anticipates releasing the first of three smaller reports in winter 2021. The overall analysis of the care plan audits, interviews, surveys and data requests will be published in a report in 2021.

- *FASD research project* – an examination of 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. Nine children and youth between the ages of eight and 18 participated in research with RCY. This research, along with dialogues with four First Nations communities across B.C. and multiple interviews with professionals in the field, will be applied to the review of provincial policies, programs and services to better understand how supports can be improved. This report will be released in fall 2020.
- *Early Years* – The early years from birth to about six-years-old are critical for healthy childhood development. Through review of critical injury and death reports, RCY often identifies missed opportunities during early childhood where a range of cultural, emotional, physical and/or mental health supports would have been vital to the individual and/or their caregiver's well-being. Recognizing the importance of the early years, RCY has begun a project that will examine complexities in the system, opportunities for improvement, and bright spots across the province that highlight how we can do better by our children so they can stay safely together with their families without the involvement of child protection.





## BRIGHT SPOT

### *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*

On Jan. 1, 2020 the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* came into force. Although funding was not attached to the legislation, it is a significant milestone towards the resumption of child welfare jurisdiction by First Nations, Métis and Inuit Nations and communities.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations and Advocacy staff attended the online conference *Wrapping Our Ways: Indigenous Child Welfare 2020* that centred learning around Indigenous communities and federal child welfare legislation. The virtual conference, hosted by ShchEamee.tkt (Our Children) Project in collaboration with Continuing Legal Education Society of BC, was rich with meaningful information around the resumption of child welfare jurisdiction.



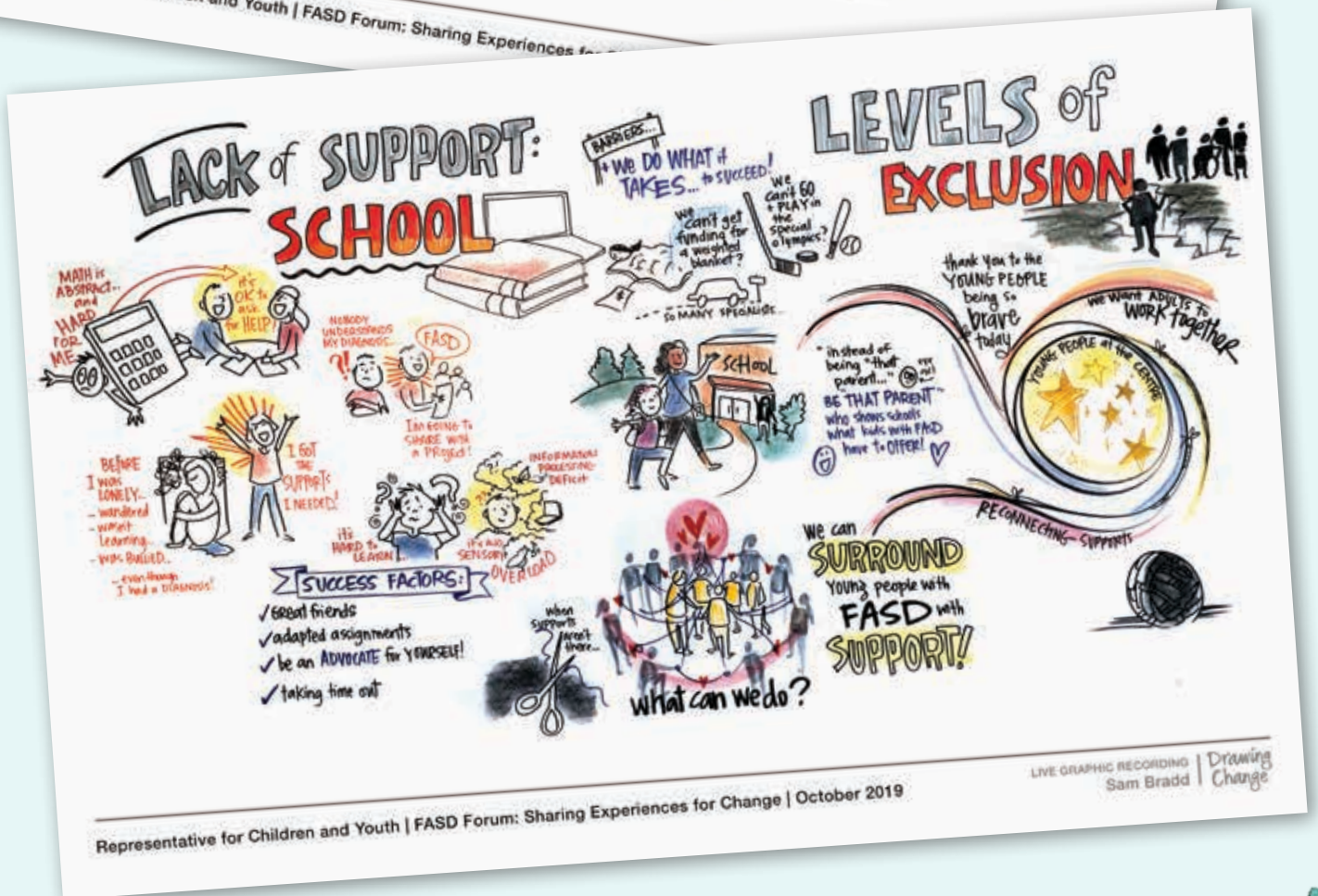
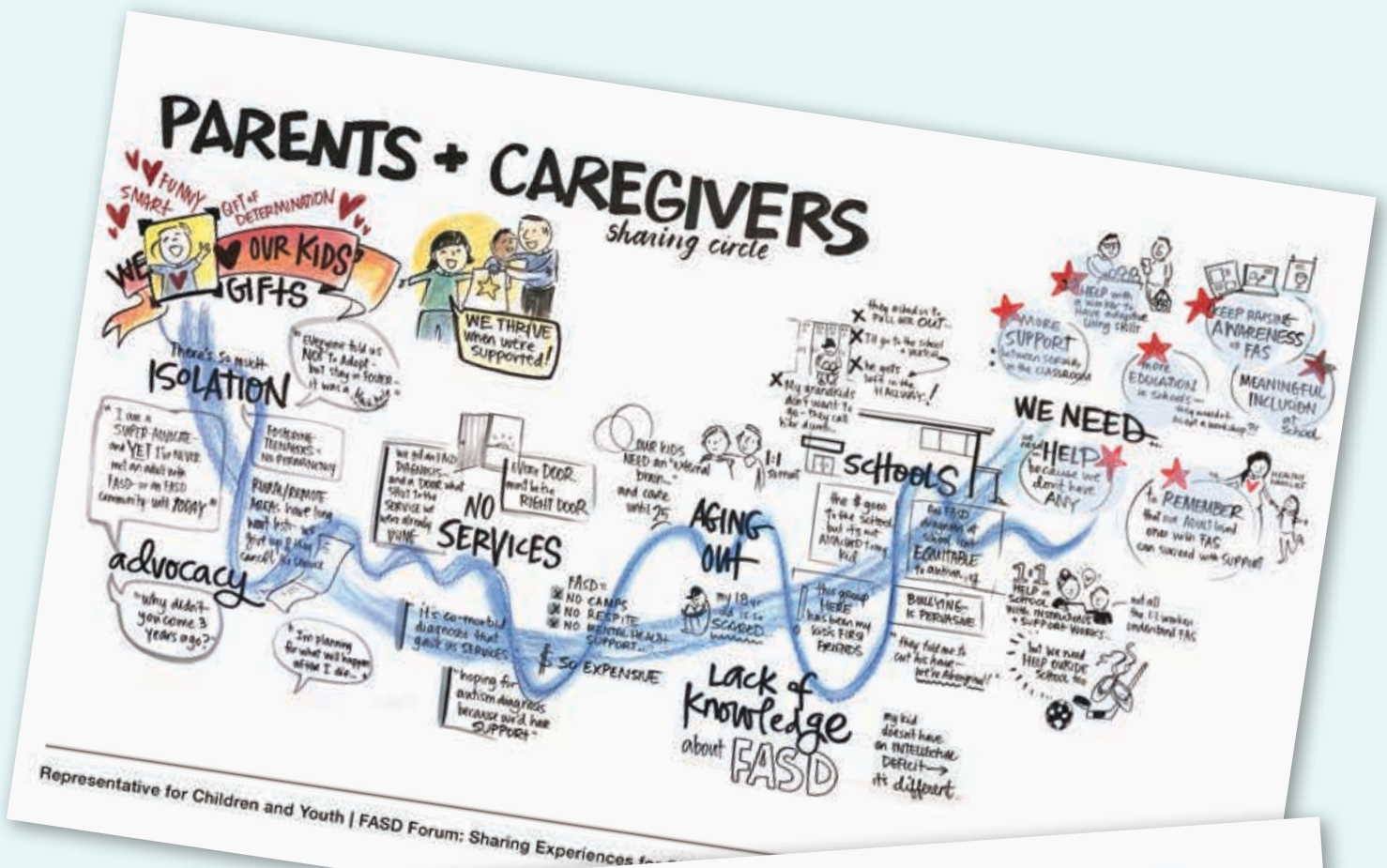
*Participants get connected at the FASD Forum*









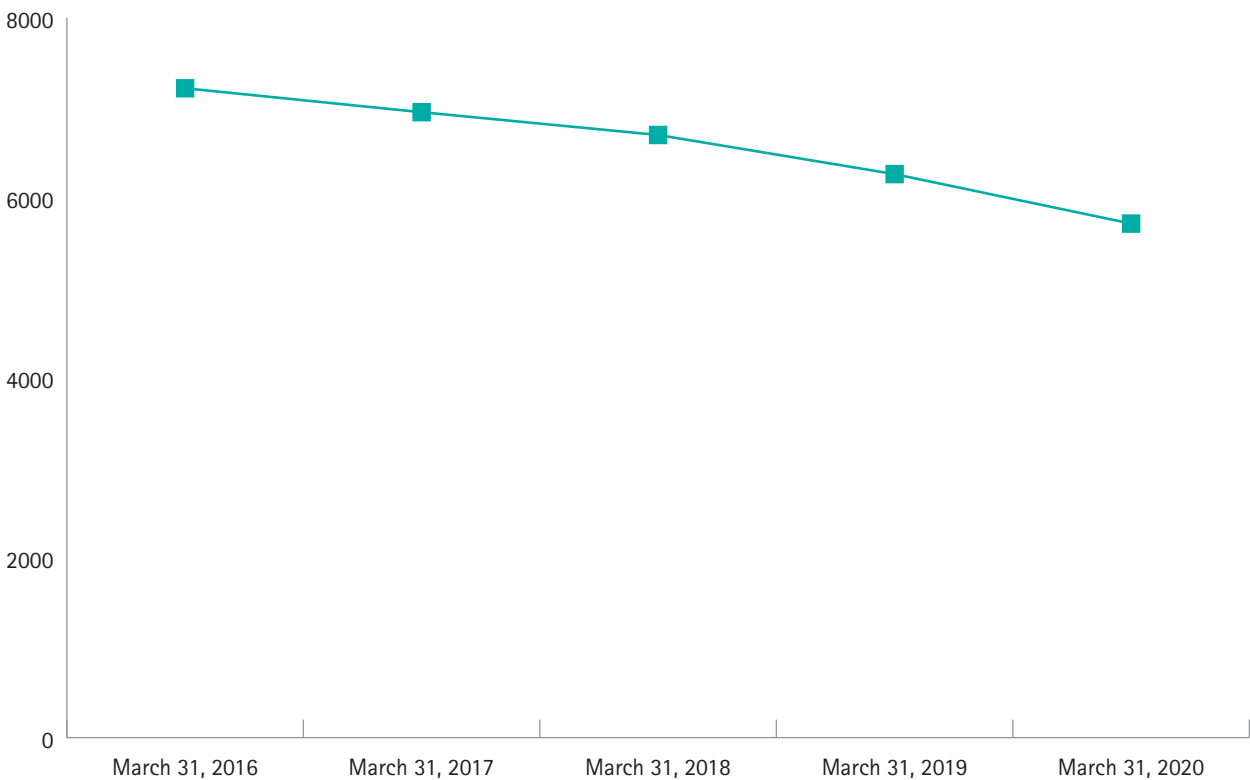


Monitoring Trends

Aligned with the Representative's goal of improving services to children and youth, a key trend tracked by Monitoring is the number of children and youth in care, with a focus on the disproportionate representation of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care.

Figure 12 shows the total number of children and youth living in care at the end of fiscal years 2015/16 through 2019/20.

Figure 12 – Children and Youth in Care at fiscal year-end – 2016 to 2020

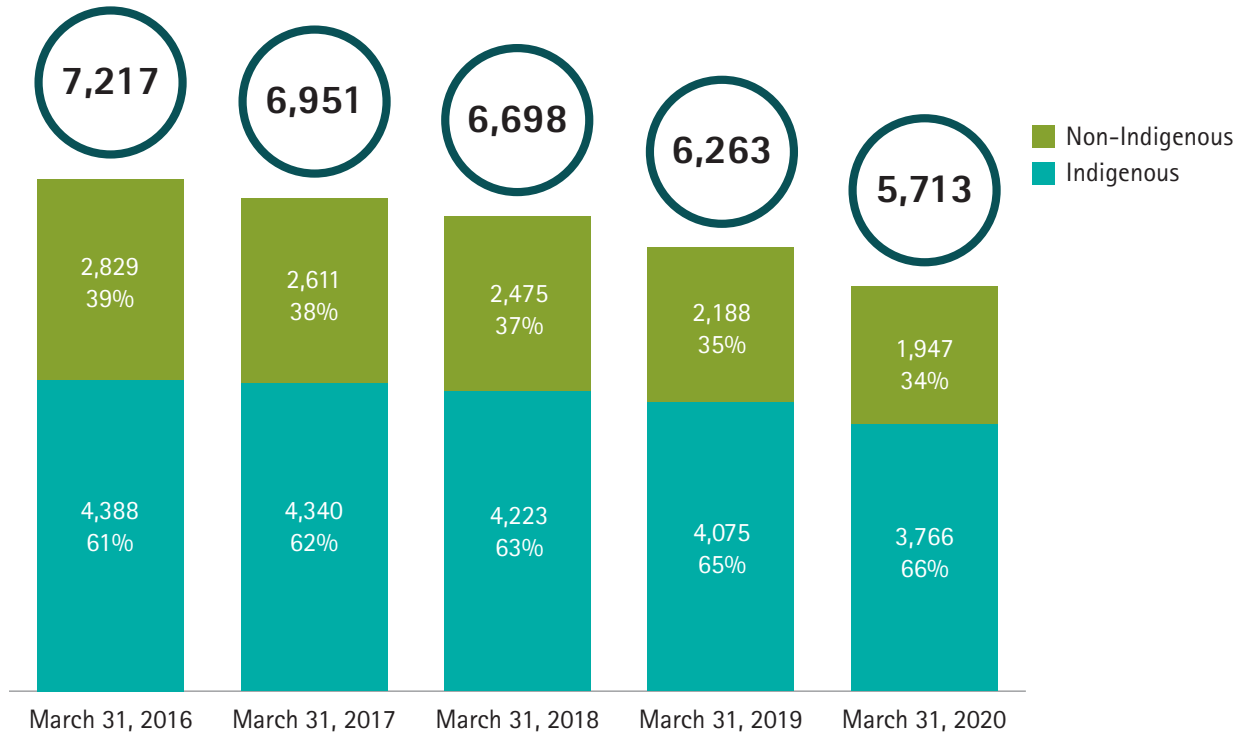


The total number of children and youth living in care has continued to decline over five years from 7,217 in 2016 to 5,713 in 2020. However, although the total number of children and youth in care has decreased over time, the number of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth has decreased to a lesser extent than non-Indigenous children and youth.

Figure 13 shows the number and the proportion of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in care at the end of fiscal years 2015/16 through 2019/20.



Figure 13 – Number and proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in care at fiscal year end – 2016 to 2020<sup>4</sup>



These figures highlight several significant and ongoing trends:

- The number of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care continues to be disproportionate to the number of non-Indigenous children and youth in care. Although First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban 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 66 per cent of children and youth in care as of March 31, 2020.<sup>5</sup>
- The proportion of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care has continued to increase from 61 per cent on March 31, 2016 to 66 per cent on March 31, 2020.
- Between 2016 and 2020, the total number of children and youth in care at each fiscal year-end decreased for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous children and youth. The number of non-Indigenous children and youth in care decreased by 31 per cent over this period yet the number of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care only decreased by 14 per cent.

The over-representation of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care and services and programs for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban 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> Of the 3,766 Indigenous children and youth in care on March 31, 2020, 3,176 were First Nations, 497 were Métis, 59 were Nisga'a and 34 were Inuit.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, Census 2016 data tables.





## Behind the Scenes with RCY Staff – Monitoring

### Michelle

*"I love my job. It is honestly my dream job. I was so excited when I got the phone call to confirm that I was the successful candidate and I haven't looked back."*

That was the response when Michelle, a Research Officer with the Monitoring division was asked how she felt about working with RCY. A graduate of the Masters program in public health at the University of Victoria, Michelle has been with RCY three-and-a-half years.



*"I wanted to influence policy change and see a shift at the systems level. I was researching poverty and homelessness and I saw that 40 per cent of people who experience homelessness had been in government care at some point in their lives. That issue connected me to a lot of the research RCY had undertaken. I was really inspired by that work and I thought this is where I want to work someday."*

Michelle is currently part of a team examining services for children and youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), but she says it's more than that: *"This study is not just about services and supports, but is about the lived experiences of communities across B.C., children, youth and their families – the challenges, the barriers, as well as their strengths."*

*"I supported a forum that RCY hosted on the issue. It was fantastic – definitely one of the more memorable experiences of my time at RCY. The kids were able to be present with the prominent decision-makers of the province and they were hearing directly from these children and youth with FASD, as well as directly from the parents and families. We saw the decision-makers' hearts open up and they said at the end it was a really valuable experience because they were able to hear directly from the voices – rather than reading it in a report – and they were really able to build a connection."*

*"Some decision-makers stayed an hour after the forum ended to speak to the families about the challenges they had. And some of those decision-makers ended up taking action immediately on behalf of those families. It was incredible how powerful those families' voices were. It was an overall inspiring day."*

Asked what keeps her motivated Michelle answered, *"A lot of voices have been suppressed and not heard for so long and those voices need to be at the forefront of decision-making. That is what keeps me motivated – as well as the people I work with. I get to work along side of some of the most thoughtful, brilliant people and they are real champions for effecting change on behalf of young people and their families in this province."*



## Public Reports

### Investigative and Monitoring Reports

In the 2019/20 fiscal year, the Representative publicly released four significant reports, including one that accompanied a report on youth homelessness that was supported by RCY.

A full copy of all reports and submissions is available on the RCY website at: [rcybc.ca/reports-and-publications](http://rcybc.ca/reports-and-publications).



#### *B.C. Adoption & Permanency Options Update 2019 (released Aug. 30, 2019)*

In 2014, RCY undertook an in-depth review of B.C.'s adoption system and released the report *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*. At the time of that first report, the Representative committed to periodic updates on the status of B.C.'s adoption program. Four updates have since been released – in November 2014, April 2015, December 2015 and December 2017. This report is the fifth and final update on the initial 2014 report and examines the trends in adoption and other permanency placements over time. It includes updated

information for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 fiscal years.

Since the release of the 2014 report, the idea of permanency has shifted and evolved. In 2014, legal permanency – primarily referring to adoption – was believed to be the most desirable aspect of permanency and prioritized by MCFD over other permanency options. However, since that time, recognition of other established aspects of permanency such as relational, cultural and physical permanency are seen as important and there is increased awareness in MCFD that adoption is not always in the best interest of every child. First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders, communities and families have called for more work to be done to prevent removals from family members, greater efforts to place children and youth with extended family members, more attention paid to cultural permanency and more effort given to supporting customary or custom adoption within First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities.

The Representative will be monitoring key shifts in the ministry's understanding and practice of supporting permanency through RCY's upcoming work in the areas of care planning and transitioning to adulthood and through the Office's advocacy work.





### *Caught in the Middle (released Nov. 26, 2019)*

*Caught in the Middle* is an investigative report examining the factors that led to the overdose death of a 17-year-old boy with complex needs who spent time in the child-serving systems of both B.C. and Alberta. The boy was moved more than 40 times while in government care and died in May 2017 while placed in an emergency staffed residential resource in B.C. This report found a direct link between the inadequate services he and his family received in B.C. and his death because of poor communication and coordination between the two provinces regarding his care.

While the Representative's mandate does not include the ability to make findings about services provided by other jurisdictions, the report did conclude that Alberta did not follow the Interprovincial Protocol that guides the provision of services and supports to children moving between provinces and territories. The key recommendation of this report is that B.C.'s MCFD take a leadership role in bringing about changes to the Interprovincial Protocol.

The report also recommends that MCFD strengthen its own oversight of interprovincial children to ensure they receive timely and suitable services. Other recommendations include that MCFD direct its staff to speak with children about their ethnicity and desired connections to their culture, that MCFD ensure a trauma-informed method is implemented for making decisions for children in its care who have experienced multiple adversities and that the ministry assess the need for residential care and treatment resources across the province.



### *From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those With Lived Expertise*

*and*

### *Raising Young People's Voices on the Issue of Youth Homelessness – a Special Report (both released February 21, 2020)*

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth fulfills a number of key roles in overseeing the child- and youth-serving systems of British Columbia, but the heart of the organization's work is advocacy.

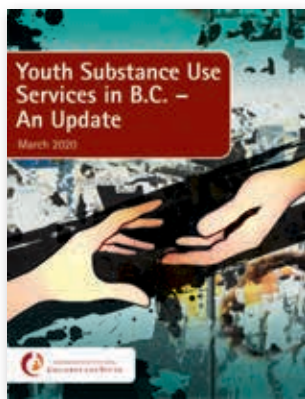
The report, *From Marginalized to Magnified*, accompanying the special report of the Representative, is in many ways an extension of the advocacy work of the Office. By assisting with the creation of *From Marginalized to Magnified*, produced by University of Calgary graduate student and A Way Home Kamloops Society Executive Director Katherine McParland and her advisory group of youth leaders, RCY staff helped to bring forward the voices of young people who are too often marginalized in society.

*From Marginalized to Magnified* explores the topic of youth homelessness in depth and includes an analysis of input collected from 13 youth forums as well as an online survey and research by the author. Although RCY supported and facilitated the production of this report, it is truly a report



by youth with lived expertise about youth homelessness that seeks to shine a spotlight on youth homelessness in B.C. It provides valuable insights on the pathways into youth homelessness, the risks and barriers impacting youth who are experiencing homelessness and ultimately, solutions to end it.

The lone recommendation in *From Marginalized to Magnified* calls for the provincial government to develop a distinct plan to end youth homelessness and to involve youth with lived expertise in the development of that plan. The Representative's special report, *Raising Young Peoples' Voices on the Issue of Youth Homelessness*, echoes these young people's call for a youth-specific plan to address the issue of youth homelessness in B.C. The Representative also called on government – led by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction in collaboration with other ministries and public bodies – to include youth in the development of that plan and, as part of that process, to carefully consider the solutions offered in the *From Marginalized to Magnified* report.



### *Youth Substance Use Services in B.C. – An Update (released March 24, 2020)*

This report provides an update on the inventory of youth substance use services in B.C. included in RCY's 2016 report *A Review of Youth Substance Use Services in B.C.* It also shares the perspectives of service providers, highlights service gaps and proposes opportunities for future research.

This new baseline of services for youth will allow the Representative to measure and publicly report on progress made by the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, the Ministry of Health and health authorities to improve access to and information about youth substance use services in B.C.





# HOW DOES RCY TRACK RECOMMENDATIONS?

## WITHIN 3 MONTHS

Within three months of a report's release, RCY meets with public bodies referenced in the recommendations to discuss development of action plans for implementation.



## WITHIN 6 MONTHS

Within six months of a report's release, public bodies develop action plans.

Individual organizational action plans may or may not be combined with other organizations.



## AT 1 YEAR

At one year, public bodies will provide action plan updates on progress made towards implementation of recommendations.

The RCY team responsible for the report will assess progress on the recommendations as:

- Complete/implemented
- Substantial progress
- Some progress
- No progress

Public bodies will be informed in writing of the Representative's assessment of implementation.



## AFTER 1 YEAR

The status of recommendations for each individual report will be posted annually after the report's one-year anniversary date on RCY's website.

The Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth will receive a copy of the one-year update and will be asked to review progress on the recommendations.

RCY will continue to track recommendations for 3 years or longer if requested by the Representative with the results posted on RCY's website.



## First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations

In 2019/20, the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships team was renamed First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations in respect and recognition that First Nations, Métis and Inuit are distinct peoples.

### A First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous Focus

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations works to establish and nurture relationships with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous partners in B.C. and to advocate for culturally grounded and effective supports for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families receiving services funded by government that are within the RCY mandate. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations leads the RCY service plan focus of promoting services and supports that address and reduce the over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and their families and communities.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations conducts research and monitors the system to highlight the strengths and challenges in the current First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous child welfare landscape. Team members are working to advance RCY's research approaches to be more inclusive of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous ways of being and knowing. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations also supports and engages with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families on child rights.

The team works collaboratively with all program areas to ensure that the Office is culturally safe, respectful and responsive.



*The Rep attended a Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society event and heard the Youth Advisory Committee share highlights from their work*



## Highlights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations Activities in 2019/20

### *Building Foundations for Engagement*

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations is developing an approach to engaging with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities that offers supports, knowledge and information sharing. This reflects a shift in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations' engagement approach that is responsive to the recent changes to the *CFCS Act* and new federal legislation, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, which support Indigenous involvement, the importance of cultural connections and the resumption of child welfare jurisdiction by First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

As part of its new approach, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations is developing ways to support and monitor the implementation of federal and provincial agreements related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples taking on authority for child welfare. The team is developing tools to support community self-advocacy along First Nations and Métis pathways to the resumption of child welfare jurisdiction.

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations team, like all RCY teams, has made adjustments as a result of COVID-19 and is working on ways to continue developing relationships with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities while at a distance.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations has reached out to Aboriginal Friendship Centres to introduce itself, explain what it does and how it can support Friendship Centres with their advocacy work with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families. Going forward, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations has begun the process of reaching out to First Nations and Métis governments in the province with the same focus.

### *Community Mapping Database*

In 2019, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations created a Community Mapping Database, a central location in RCY for information about First Nations, their communities and their community organizations and supports, including child welfare services.

The community mapping work provides profiles that include information about a First Nation's history, territory, language, governance and community population. The profiles also identify the Nations' associated DAAs, other provincial or federal child welfare agreements, MOUs or protocols and community organizations including youth advisory groups. As well, the profiles include new media information, including current closures and information regarding COVID-19 and its impact on each First Nation and Métis government.

This information provides community knowledge and awareness assisting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations and other RCY teams to effectively engage with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities and support them in achieving their priorities respecting Indigenous child welfare.



## Behind the Scenes with RCY Staff – First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations

### Lynn

Ask Lynn about her job at RCY and it's impossible not to be struck by her passion. Working for the Representative is something Lynn has wanted to do for a long time.

*"The fact of the matter is, I have been waiting and working towards getting into RCY since its inception. I am deeply dedicated to working for racial justice and equity alongside others in the community for our most valuable gifts – our children. It was the driving force for me to obtain my education and get here to RCY!"*



Lynn, who is of Métis ancestry, has a deeply personal connection to her work. She is a Community Relations Officer with RCY's First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations program area, and herself aged out of care in B.C. in the 1980s. In her view, change in the child-serving system is desperately needed – *"The system supports children and youth less now than it did back in the 70s"* – and working for the Rep gives her the opportunity to help create that change.

*"We are in one of the most pivotal moments in our lifetimes. Between Bill C-92 [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families], UNDRIP, and Black Lives Matter shining a light on systemic racism, there is opportunity for us to make huge progress as a society and as an agency for children and youth, families and communities."*

With the onset of a global pandemic, life turned around suddenly this March, and Lynn has high praise for how things were managed at RCY. *"Executive made the health and well-being of all RCY staff the number one priority when faced with COVID-19. The speed with which Executive rallied around us and supported us to find our way back to the work despite a major pandemic is most certainly my most impressive memory thus far."*

Although Lynn is uncomfortable in the limelight, her enthusiasm and positive attitude is a clear signal to others around her to keep moving forward. *"I have been inspired by the incredible leadership on the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations team. I am inspired to dive into the complexities of our work and how my personal and professional selves intersect so that I bring the best version of myself to my work every day. It is a very exciting time to be here and be part of effecting the change that is so desperately needed and will serve generations to come."*





## *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations Cultural Awareness Calendar*

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations has created and maintains a Cultural Awareness Calendar that provides a monthly theme with related activities and reading materials, available through hard copy or virtually, for RCY staff to increase their understanding and knowledge of anti-racism, colonization and First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous knowledge.

## *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations Research*

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations research is based on collaborative approaches to research including co-led research with other RCY teams and First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous partners and communities.

In 2019/20, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations collaborated with the Monitoring team on the FASD project to host community dialogues with four First Nations across the province. Each community was involved in the design of its dialogue to ensure that it was distinct to the community. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations contributed to this work through building relationships, ensuring awareness of protocols and where requested by the community, co-facilitating the dialogues. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations also assisted with summarizing and analyzing the information shared in the community sessions.

A significant piece of research work carried out by First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations in 2019/20 was the sorting by theme of recommendations from significant reports that covered Indigenous child welfare issues.

The reports reviewed included:

- *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification: A Report on Indigenous Child Welfare in British Columbia*, by MCFD Special Advisor Grand Chief Ed John
- *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*
- *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*
- *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

### **Fast Fact**

The rate of suicide is disproportionately high among Indigenous youth.

(A National Paper on Youth Suicide, Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, Sept 2019)

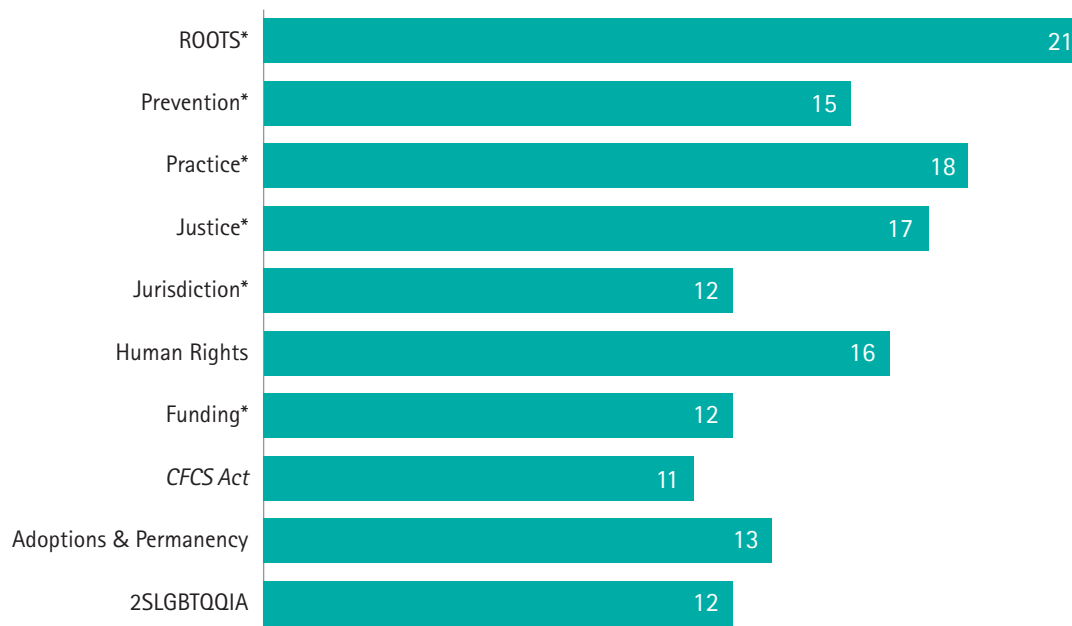
The team identified how often a recommendation related to an identified theme. For example, 11 recommendations made across all reports related to the *CFCS Act*.

This work will be used to monitor progress on these recommendations. It will also aid RCY in being more culturally responsive and internally accountable to these critical reports including reinforcing in RCY work, where applicable, calls to action made in those reports.

Figure 14 is a list of the top 10 themes and the number of times those themes presented in all the reports combined.



Figure 14 – Frequency of Indigenous Child Welfare Themes in Reports



\* **ROOTS** programs (which include family finding and cultural connections programs) support connections between First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care with their Indigenous identity and community, and alternatives to care through culturally appropriate placements with a child's family, extended family or community.

**Prevention:** captures recommendations and articles that reference prevention services needed, required or recommended on a pathway to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous resumption of child welfare.

**Practice:** includes recommendations and articles that highlight practice guidelines working alongside First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

**Justice:** refers to recommendations and articles dealing with youth justice services.

**Jurisdiction:** identifies recommendations and articles that speak directly to the conflict between on-reserve communities and provincial and federal governments over child welfare jurisdiction and provides direction on how to make the required adjustments to policies and practices.

**Funding:** maps out the recommendations and articles that address monetary changes required to strengthen First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous child welfare.

The recent amendments to the *CFCS Act* and the proclamation of the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* have placed emphasis on requirements for relational and cultural permanency for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth in care. To understand what mechanisms are in place to support kinship and community ties and how MCFD and DAAs are meeting these requirements, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations has recently begun a research project on MCFD programs to support First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous cultural connections and permanency options. One of the programs to be examined is the MCFD-funded ROOTs program that supports connections between First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care with their Indigenous identity and community, and alternatives to care through culturally appropriate placements with a child's family, extended family or community.

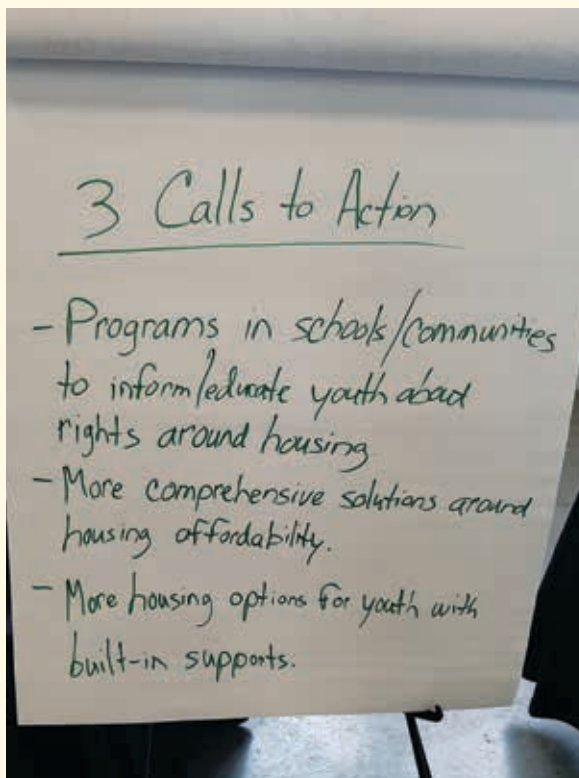


## BRIGHT SPOT

### Youth Voices of East Van – Youth Policy Conference

Youth Voices of East Van (YVEV) is a youth leadership and governance initiative spanning five inner city Vancouver neighbourhoods – Strathcona, Grandview-Woodland, Hastings-Sunrise, Mt. Pleasant and the Downtown Eastside. YVEV seeks to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous Youth ages 15 to 30 to identify and work toward solutions to the social issues they face, starting in their local neighbourhoods and city.

In February 2020, YVEV hosted a Youth Policy Conference, an all-day event bringing together diverse youth from East Vancouver and other parts of the city, and other stakeholders. Participants explored innovative pathways for youth participation, self-expression and advocacy around the themes of community governance, accountability, reconciliation and inclusion. Youth participants chose from a range of topics including: poverty issues for youth; the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and its impact for Indigenous youth and girls; housing and the threats of homelessness for youth aging out of care; employment and employment equity; and Indigenous inclusion and gentrification. Youth were very passionate about this conference and there are plans to continue hosting these in the future.



## 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.

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.



*The Rep interviewed for W5*

The Communications team is involved in the development of reports from the initial planning stages through to the development of recommendations, design, graphics and the post-release process, as well as writing and reviewing all public and background materials.

The Representative is committed to speaking up on behalf of vulnerable children and youth and receives many invitations each year to speak at functions and engagements. The Communications team supports these activities by preparing speeches and background materials. In 2019/20, the Representative spoke at 34 events.

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 2019/20, the Representative made presentations to these committees 4 times.

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 social media presence on six social media accounts, with assistance from a Social Media Youth Team to advise on and create youth-friendly content. (See pages 72-73 for more on the Social Media Youth Team). The Communications team also maintains the RCY website, which, in 2019/20, received over four million hits.

Internally, Communications keeps staff at RCY's three offices informed of key decisions and activities through a weekly staff newsletter, the RCY Update and, in between issues, keeps staff informed of any internal Office developments.

During COVID-19, Communications has monitored and provided regular updates to staff from the Provincial Health Officer and other federal and provincial officials.

Communications is also responsible for organizing staff awareness days, such as Pink Shirt Day and Orange Shirt Day.





## Behind the Scenes with RCY Staff – Corporate Services

### Anne

Truly an unsung hero of RCY, Anne is the Representative's longest-serving staff member. She is RCY's Accounts Payable and Contract Administrator and has been with the organization through all its iterations, dating back to 1996. This year is bittersweet for Anne and her colleagues as she will retire in mid-2020.



With a personality that fills a room and a warm-heartedness to match, Anne is one of RCY's most memorable characters, known for her propensity to break into dance at any moment, love of catchy music, good food and beverages, and a wicked laugh that, over the years, has been heard reverberating throughout the office hallways on countless occasions, cheering up all within earshot. She has known almost every employee RCY has had and has an overflowing basket of memories.

In Anne's view, it's the people at RCY who make it such a great place to work and who are the reason she has stayed so long. *"The people I have worked with through the years have been amazing, especially during my time as a single mum. I had so much support from my colleagues through all those difficult years..."* One event, in particular, stands out.

*"One of my co-workers gave me his mother's car. He said I needed it being a single mum with two kids and I will never forget him for his kindness."*

Another unforgettable moment came when the organization was still known as the Children's Commission. *"I answered the phone with 'Chicken's Commission' in error. My partner had just been asking what I wanted for dinner, so it was still in my brain!"*

As Anne departs RCY and heads into her well-deserved retirement, she says, *"I believe someone was looking out for me and led me to this wonderful place where I have worked for so many years. There are so many smart, talented people who work here, and the work this office does always amazes me."*

An RCY stalwart who will be sorely missed, we wish Anne a music-, dance-, and good food-filled retirement. Thank you Anne!



# YEAR IN REVIEW



## 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 that informs the activities and recommendations of the Office.

As a result of COVID-19, the Office will develop ways to continue to connect and interact with youth through virtual platforms.

### Highlights of Youth Engagement Activities in 2019/20

#### *Youth and Community Engagement Framework*

Building upon the work of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC in the 2018/19 fiscal year, RCY is drafting a principle-based Youth and Community Engagement Framework that encapsulates RCY's organizational values; the 5 R Principles of Relationships, Respect, Reciprocity, Relevance and Responsibility (see page 22 for more information); and the four principles of cultural safety, restorative approaches, trauma-informed practice and working with complexity.

The RCY Youth and Community Engagement Framework will continue to develop alongside the RCY Ethics Framework and development of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous research methodologies to provide staff with consistent guidance and direction as they do their work. The Youth and Community Engagement Framework will be a living document that will evolve and benefit from regular reflection and feedback from staff, young people and communities.



## A different kind of bright spot

*RCY believes the Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council has been a shining example of a bright spot. Here they are in their own words:*

The Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council is based out of the Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre. Our council is made up of 12 youth advocate members, a council coordinator and an Elder. Our mission is to bring youth together to create harmony and social responsibility. However, we do not advocate alone. We believe it is essential to learn from our peers and community to ensure a collective story is heard. We believe that it is our role as young leaders to bring awareness to the youth experience and to improve and effect change with our current child welfare system. We are founded on three pillars: peer support, systems change and sustainability.



This past year we have been focusing a lot of our advocacy on the experiences of youth homelessness and houselessness within our community. When we learned that youth with lived experience in care are 200 times more likely to experience homelessness and houselessness we decided to take action. For the last three years we have focused on awareness building around youth homelessness and this past spring decided that the best way to demonstrate a need for mobile youth services was to do it!

We made more than 200 connections with youth in our community, providing survival kits, basic needs, harm reduction supplies and education and connections. We collected important data to inform our collective story and how we as a community could better respond. Alongside outreach we hosted many mini-engagements and conversations about and with youth that informed our advocacy. We heard young people speak about their experiences of houselessness during the pandemic, and how basic needs like water and food, reduced youth services and shelter beds and increased policing of youth shaped the landscape of houselessness for our youth. Our calls to action and community reporting were heard and we were awarded funding to build and launch the first-ever Mobile Youth Outreach Services in our community.

We know that many young people, much like ourselves, do not have physical permanency, along with many other pillars of permanency. We find that we often hear a lot about the adverse outcomes young people face from the care system and calls to increase post-majority services. Post-majority programs for youth aging out of care are important and so is permanency. To share our perspectives of permanency in a safe way, we have created a book of images we took that represent our perspectives of permanency for youth in and from care.

We are sad that our council has come to an end as of August 2020 and are appreciative for every opportunity to advocate in our community. We are honoured to be part of the collective action to create systems change and recognize these callings from our leaders before us, and our responsibility to those after us.





### *#Rep4Rights Tour*

Throughout 2019, Advocacy, in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations, continued to meet with children, youth and their support people as part of the #Rep4Rights Tour. The Tour originally launched in May 2018 in response to a message from youth and young adults that they did not realize they had rights and wished they had known about those rights at a much younger age. The goal of the #Rep4Rights Tour is to educate children, youth and those who care for them about child rights, including those under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

During 2019/20, RCY staff delivered interactive rights-based workshops to 195 children and youth and 281 adults including social workers, foster parents and other community professionals throughout the Interior and Okanagan areas and parts of Vancouver Island, Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. The Tour was to make stops in communities in the Northeast and Northwest of B.C. and Haida Gwaii, but due to winter travel conditions these were postponed until spring 2020. Unfortunately, as a result of COVID-19, these plans have been postponed.

### *Gathering Our Voices 2020*

Gathering Our Voices is a week-long celebration that takes place every year in March bringing together more than 1,000 First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous youth from across B.C. to participate in ceremony, workshops and other activities aimed at affirming the importance of culture, enhancing life and leadership skills and building networks of peer support. RCY was invited to facilitate an interactive and experiential workshop on the *United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and self-advocacy at the 2020 conference. Unfortunately, due to restrictions set as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was cancelled, but the Office looks forward to participating in the event in 2021.

### *Homelessness Report*

On Feb. 21, 2020 the Representative released a special report, *Raising Young Peoples' Voices on the Issue of Youth Homelessness*, to support the release of *From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those with Lived Expertise* report prepared by homelessness advocate Kathrine McParland and her Youth Against Youth Homelessness B.C. advisory group. (See page 56, Public Reports, for a description of both reports.)

The *From Marginalized to Magnified* report itself is the product of two years of work undertaken by McParland and her advisory group, supported by RCY. McParland worked with a group of youth from across the province to lead youth forums in their communities 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.

The *From Marginalized to Magnified* report identifies the pathways that can lead to youth homelessness, the impacts of homelessness on young people, the barriers that exist to receiving services and supports necessary to avoid or escape homelessness and, most importantly, suggests solutions from youth for ending the problem in B.C. The report includes direct messages from Youth Against Youth Homelessness B.C. and photos and artwork contributed by the young people who participated.



## Youth Voices on Mental Health Detentions

As part of its work looking at children's participation in important decisions that impact their lives, including mental health detentions and child protection and family law decisions, the Representative partnered with InWithForward, a B.C. organization that specializes in social research to learn more about how young people experience involuntary detention under the *Mental Health Act*.

During August and September 2019, InWithForward met with 14 young people who shared with RCY their understanding of the *Mental Health Act* and their experience of being detained under the *Act* during their adolescence, including the opportunities they had to participate and exercise their rights while detained.

## Engaging with Children and Youth with FASD

For the past year, RCY has been engaging children, youth and families in an innovative research project on 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. Nine children and youth between the ages of eight and 18 participated in research with RCY. This research, along with dialogues with four First Nations communities across B.C. and multiple interviews with professionals in the field, is being applied to the review of provincial policies, programs and services to better understand how supports can be improved.



*Katherine McParland and the Rep at the release of From Marginalized to Magnified*



## SOCIAL MEDIA YOUTH TEAM

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. The team works with RCY's Communications staff.

In 2019/20, the SMYT designed and produced several projects, including a graphic series on mental health and self-care called #RobotReminders and a podcast from the perspective of an Indigenous youth in care. The podcast, which discusses important issues such as intergenerational trauma and parental abuse, became so successful that the host, SEMA'TSE Jordan, was interviewed by the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in the team's youth-friendly office that they decorated themselves.



The SMYT also collaborated to create a series of graphics educating youth on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and a Claymation video teaching youth about their rights. In the spring of 2020, the SMYT transitioned to a multi-media project series entitled #CovidandKidsBC to educate and help youth navigate life during COVID-19. This successful series covered a variety of topics from boredom busters to harm-reduction safety tips and the graphics were shared widely by other organizations and individuals. The team also launched another popular series: the #IndigenousHistoryChallenge. Each week, the team shared a challenge to help youth become stronger allies to Indigenous peoples. The challenges were widely shared and started some important conversations regarding reconciliation responsibilities.









## Community Engagement

During the course of 2019/20, community engagement continued to be a significant focus of the Representative.

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 and to facilitate the development of community-based advocacy services and supports, and
- hear directly from children, youth, young adults and those who support them about the important issues affecting them, what can be done to address those issues and improve the system of supports and services to children, youth and young adults.

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

An example of the type of community engagement activity the Office participates in is Inclusion BC's annual conference for self-advocates, families and professionals working to build more inclusive and supportive communities for children and youth with special needs and adults with intellectual abilities and their families. The 2019 conference was held in Victoria with presentations covering a variety of topics including education, advocacy, employment, housing and relationships. The Representative was a keynote speaker on the opening day. RCY staff from all program areas attended the conference and hosted an RCY information booth providing information about the Office.

Another example of a different type of community engagement is the work being done with Métis and First Nations communities in the development of the statistical reviews of Métis and First Nations critical injury and death reports data. A significant part of the review is consultation and engagement with Métis and First Nations to obtain their input and gain their perspectives on the review and analysis of the data. This work includes in-person meetings with First Nations and Métis leadership and Indigenous child- and youth-serving organizations across the province, meeting with the All Chiefs Meeting on Children and Families and feedback provided through a short questionnaire, and input provided by First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous leaders and service providers by telephone or in writing.



## Highlights of Community and Stakeholder Relations Activities in 2019/20

Until the COVID-19 pandemic, the Representative continued to personally attend as many events, meetings and activities across the province as possible to meet and connect directly with children, youth and young adults and the individuals and organizations supporting them. During the pandemic, engagement has necessarily been largely virtual.

During 2019/20 the Representative heard from a range of individuals and organizations about the issues and matters that are important to them. A number of common themes emerged from these dialogues. The infographic on the following page outlines the themes that will help to inform the work of the Representative's Office in the coming years.

For a list of all community engagement outreach and communication activities that the Representative and her staff participated in, attended or undertook during 2019/20, see Appendix 1.

The map on page 77 shows the communities visited by the Representative and RCY staff in 2019/20.



# TOP 15 CONCERNS

In 2019/20, the Rep engaged with hundreds of youth, adults and other stakeholders. These are some of the things the Rep heard.

## Top 3 calls to action heard by the Rep:

- ➔ Prevention and early intervention
- ➔ Co-ordinated approaches to complex needs
- ➔ Inclusion, participation and voice

### Youth Top 5

"Include me in the decisions that affect my life. If I raise concerns, don't dismiss me – listen and work things through with me. We may not agree but I want to be heard and understood."

"Be more proactive in supporting me through transitions – especially out of care and into adulthood, between treatment, hospitalization or youth custody and community. Transitions are frightening, disruptive and expose me to more risks."

"Rethink 'aging out of care' – it doesn't make sense to lose all connections and supports just because you turn 19. Other families don't do that to their kids. Turning 19 is not a celebration if you are in care. It is terrifying."

"Using substances is a coping mechanism for many of us. Address the toxic drug supply and provide more harm reduction options. Help me address the issues underlying my substance use."

"As an Indigenous young person, I want to know my family, community and culture – help me connect. Don't take away my voice because you think you know what is best for me."

### Indigenous Leaders & Service Providers Top 5

"We have an opportunity to do things differently for our children as we resume jurisdiction and develop approaches that lift our children and families up. This will require collaboration, support and investments."

"Our families and communities require culturally safe, wraparound, community-based services – especially in the early years or when they are facing significant challenges."

"Mental health of our young people is a significant concern in our communities. We need the culturally appropriate resources that are lacking in many communities."

"Cultural connection is a protective factor. We need all systems of care and support to focus on meaningful, relevant and ongoing cultural connection and supports."

"Problematic substance use is deeply impacting our children, youth, families and communities. Community members can help to find solutions."

### Families & Caregivers Top 5

"We need more timely and accessible assessments to better understand our children's developmental and learning needs."

"As parents and caregivers of youth who use substances, we desperately need access to help including early supports and information right through to intensive residential treatment and care."

"Finding, arranging and coordinating services and supports feels like a full-time job for parents and caregivers. We need case coordination and navigation support – or even someone to return our calls and emails."

"Mental health concerns are on the rise and our children, youth and families are struggling. We need a more holistic, non-stigmatizing response to mental wellness in schools and communities."

"Families with young children who are also experiencing other challenges such as poverty, unstable housing, racism, lack of community and cultural connection and mental health challenges need more non-stigmatizing, non-shaming support in the early years."





57

- 100 Mile House
- Abbotsford
- Ashcroft
- Boothroyd (Fraser Canyon)
- Burnaby
- Burns Lake
- Campbell River
- Chilliwack
- Clearwater
- Colwood
- Comox
- Coquitlam
- Courtenay
- Cranbrook
- Dawson Creek
- Duncan (Cowichan)
- Fort St. James
- Fort St. John
- Harrison Hot Springs
- Hope
- Houston
- Kamloops
- Kelowna
- K'Tunaxa
- Ladysmith
- Langford
- Langley
- Lantzville
- Lillooet
- Mackenzie
- Maple Ridge
- Merritt
- Mission
- Musqueam
- Nanaimo
- New Aiyansh
- New Westminster
- North Vancouver
- Parksville
- Pender Island
- Penticton
- Pitt Meadows
- Port Alberni
- Port Moody
- Prince George
- Quesnel
- Revelstoke
- Richmond
- Salmon Arm
- Sechelt
- Surrey
- Terrace
- Tsawwassen
- Vancouver
- Vernon
- Victoria
- Williams Lake

## 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, 2019 and March 31, 2020, the Office of the Representative visited 57 communities in B.C.





LOOKING

AWHEAD



# LOOKING AHEAD: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## The Representative's Strategic Plan

The RCY Strategic Plan, first developed and implemented in 2017/18, 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 develops comprehensive work plans – collectively referred to as the RCY Operational Plan – with detailed activities and responsibilities identified for a three-year period.

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 2022/23

Described below and arising from the 2019/20 planning cycle is an illustrative list of some of the key strategies and activities by goal to be undertaken by RCY in the next period. It is recognized that some of these strategies will be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and will be subject to adjustment in the 2020/21 planning review.

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

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

- 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
- conduct a review of the adequacy of the current system of services and supports to young adults who have transitioned out of care and produce a public report in 2020/21 that recommends service improvements
- implement the expanded new advocacy mandate in relation to 19- to 23-year-old young adults who are eligible for Agreements with Young Adults and/or the Tuition Waiver program, including proactive outreach to enhance awareness of the expanded mandate
- implement the proposed further expansion of the advocacy and monitoring mandate in relation to 19- to 26-year-old young adults who were formerly in care when amendments to the *RCY Act* are enacted



- regularly 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
- 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 and produce a public report with recommendations in 2020/21
- produce an aggregate report on critical injuries resulting from non-suicidal self-injuries
- continue the multi-year qualitative and quantitative review of care planning and cultural planning for children and youth in care, producing a series of public reports on results, with recommendations in 2020/21 and 2021/22
- monitor and assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and youth – and service delivery – in areas of particular vulnerability, including children and youth with special needs, child and youth mental health, youth who have aged out of care and domestic violence
- conduct a review of early years services and supports that better enable children and families to be supported and kept safely together, producing a public report in 2021/22.

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

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

- carry out research into child participation and hearing the voices of youth, including through legal representation, in detention decisions under the *Mental Health Act*, producing a public report with recommendations in 2020/21
- analyze, publicly comment on and, as appropriate, monitor the implementation of proposed amendments to the *Mental Health Act* regarding short term stabilization care for youth who have overdosed
- carry out research into child participation and hearing the voices of youth, including through legal representation, in child protection and high-conflict family law cases, producing a report with recommendations in 2021/22
- ensure the rights of children, youth and young adults inform the planning, conduct and content of RCY investigations, monitoring and special reports
- explore opportunities for joint projects with the new Office of the Human Rights Commissioner.

### **Goal:** *RCY identifies and promotes awareness of the legislation, policies and practices that result in 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, and promotes changes, services and supports that will address and reduce that over-involvement*

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

- 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 – such as *Indigenous Resilience*,



*Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions* (MCFD Special Advisor report), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, and the report from the Murdered and Missing Women and Girls Inquiry – 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

- conduct an investigation into the overdose death of a First Nations female youth, with a particular focus on intergenerational trauma and the need for permanency, producing a public report with recommendations in 2020/21
- conduct a review of implementation and utilization of Roots programs that assist First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children in care to reconnect or preserve their ties to Indigenous family, extended family, community and culture.

**Goal:** *RCY identifies, understands and addresses issues of systemic racism and structural barriers that impact the lives of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and families served*

One over-arching strategy is to:

- where applicable, ensure that the contemporary circumstances of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and families – and services to those populations – are appropriately contextualized within the legacy of colonial and systemic racist policies and practices.

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

One over-arching 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 resumption of jurisdiction, responsibility or engagement of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities in child and family services, including the degree of assistance and support provided to facilitate that process.

**Goal:** *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 include:

- develop and implement a targeted youth and community engagement strategy that supports the engagement of children, youth, young adults and communities across all areas of work
- include the consideration of engagement of children, youth and/or young adults with lived experience in the planning for every project or report and, where appropriate, implement that engagement





## LOOKING AHEAD

- include the voices of children, youth and young adults with lived experience in RCY reports when appropriate
- continue to employ and support RCY 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.

### **Goal:** *RCY is on a journey to become a culturally safer organization for staff and people served*

RCY is committed to enhancing its understanding of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous worldviews, cultures, customs and the effects of colonial practices.

- Some of the ways this will be accomplished include:
- develop a human resources strategy, aligned with the Public Service Agency Diversity and Action Plan, that supports the recruitment and retention of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous staff
- foster and maintain a working environment that is welcoming and supportive to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous staff and people served
- engage in a process of reconciliation with the Nations on whose territories RCY offices are located
- build internal individual and organizational capacity within all program areas of RCY to work with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth, young adults and families in ways that are respectful and informed by Indigenous worldviews.

### **Goal:** *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 and collaborative practices.

In the coming years, the Office will:

- establish regular linkages and, as appropriate, partnerships with universities and colleges, and other external research bodies
- continue implementation of new processes for the development of recommendations made by the Representative, and for the monitoring and public reporting on the progress made by public bodies in implementing those recommendations, and assess and adjust those processes as necessary
- develop and fully implement an ongoing process for the identification of systemic issues and the strategies to address those issues
- rationalize and regularize external advisory processes
- continue to expand the utilization of other modalities of influence, in addition to public reports, for influencing positive systems change
- implement a balanced approach to systems change that includes highlighting and promoting existing system strengths and promising practices



- Improve how RCY collects and uses quantitative and qualitative data from all program areas to better enable the identification of systemic issues and to better inform current and future priority initiatives.

**Goal:** *RCY develops and implements new ways of carrying out the work of RCY*

While every organization should continuously improve its business processes, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need to do so. Some strategies in this regard include to:

- implement and periodically assess flexible work options for RCY staff, including full-time work from home
- acquire and implement technological tools to better facilitate communication, collaboration and consultation amongst RCY staff and with external agencies, service providers, and stakeholders
- acquire and implement new technological tools such as talk and text to better inform and engage children, youth and young adults.

## Expansion of Mandate and Further Proposed Changes to Legislation

In 2017/18, SSCCY undertook its required statutory review of the *RCY Act*. In its report on the review, 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
- expansion of the Representative's advocacy mandate to include young adults up to their 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

On July 3, 2019 changes to the *Representative for Children and Youth Regulation* were brought into force to expand the advocacy jurisdiction of RCY to include young adults ages 19- to 23-years-old (inclusive) who are eligible for Agreements with Young Adults and/or the Tuition Waiver Program.

Amendments to the *RCY Act* recommended by SSCCY to further expand RCY's advocacy jurisdiction to broaden the age range of young adults formerly in care and youth and young adults with special needs to include those up to their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday and as well as broaden the range of eligible services (e.g., mental health and addiction services), are expected at a later date.



# WHAT'S COMING UP?

Look for these and more projects now underway...

## Supporting Kinship and Community Ties

Recent amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* and the implementation of the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* mean greater legislative requirements for relational and cultural permanency for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth in care. An RCY research project will explore what mechanisms are in place to support kinship and community ties and how MCFD and DAAs can enact these requirements.

## Finding Opportunities for Support In the Early Years

Recognizing the importance of the early years, RCY will examine complexities in the child welfare system, opportunities for improvement and bright spots across the province that highlight how we can do better for B.C. children so they can stay safely together with their families without the involvement of child protection.

## Enhancing Child Participation In Decisions that Affect Them

RCY is creating two special reports featuring the perspectives of children and youth on their participation in child protection, mental health and family law proceedings. These reports will include assessments of whether and to what extent participation in these proceedings should be enhanced and specific recommendations to improve child participation.

## New and Creative Ways to Connect With Children and Gather Information

Capturing information is important so that the Representative can effectively advocate for needed changes in child-serving systems. In the coming months, RCY is looking forward to finalizing a full review of and implementing an upgrade to our information systems that will allow us to better report on trends that we see in our advocacy files.



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



## Relevance

The Representative'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:	2019/20 target	2019/20 result	2020/21 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%	60%	50%

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2019/20 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>preparation and production of public information outlining the number of reports received, reviews undertaken and cases identified for investigation by the Representative</li> </ul>	RCY reports annually on the number of reports received, reviews undertaken and cases identified for investigation in 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</li> </ul>	In 2018/19, the Representative implemented a new approach to developing and monitoring recommendations made to public bodies. Under this new process public bodies develop an action plan for responding to recommendations made by the Representative and update RCY annually on progress made on the action plan; RCY monitors the progress of public bodies and prepares and posts publicly on RCY's website an annual update of public bodies' progress on responding to recommendations.
<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 2019/20, the Representative's website received 4,121,424 hits. In total, 80,854 users accessed 609,902 pages on the site.



## Responsiveness

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

Key Performance Indicator:	2019/20 target	2019/20 result	2020/21 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%	92%*	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%

\* 97.47% of adult callers are responded to within four days and 99.64% within five days

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2019/20 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 2019/20, more than 96 per cent** of youth contacting the Advocacy team were called back within 24 hours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tracking the number of appearances or presentations by Office staff at stakeholder and community events, the number of community relations and engagement activities and the number of communities visited with the goal of ensuring that the Representative is engaging and reaching out to children, youth, young adults and their families and stakeholders across the province</li> </ul>	In 2019/20, the Representative and staff participated in 301 community engagement activities. This included attendance at events and conferences, participation in workshops, meetings and speaking engagements. Appendix 1 includes a list of outreach and community engagement activities undertaken by the Representative and staff in 2019/20.
<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 2019/20, the Representative and staff directly engaged with 2,241 youth and young adults through such activities as attending community events, hosting information booths and facilitating child and youth rights workshops.



Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2019/20 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous Engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of collaborative efforts or initiatives with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities and organizations on mutually identified issues of shared concern</li> </ul>	<p>In 2019/20, the Representative and staff met with 38 First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous organizations and participated in 38 Indigenous events, conferences and speaking engagements.</p>

\*\* 99% of youth are responded to within five days





## 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:	2019/20 target	2019/20 result	2020/21 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	21 reports and statements	10 reports and statements

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2019/20 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 2019/20, the Representative appeared before SSCCY two times: on Nov. 27, 2019 to discuss the Representative's <i>Annual Report 2018/19 and Service Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22</i>, the <i>Youth Substance Use Services in B.C. Update</i> report and the <i>Adoption Update 2019</i> report; and on Feb. 24, 2020 to discuss the reports <i>Raising Young People's Voices on the Issue of Youth Homelessness – Special Report</i> and the accompanying report <i>From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those With Lived Expertise</i>.</p> <p>The Representative appeared before SSCFGS two times on May 6, 2019 and Oct. 22, 2019.</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:	2019/20 target	2019/20 result	2020/21 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%	93%*	95%

\* There was a hold on training and other discretionary spending for part of 2019/20 fiscal year.

Training and professional development covered the following topics: Restorative Justice; Wrapping Our Ways: Indigenous Child Welfare; Paddling Together: Indigenous Reconciliation for Organizations; Building Bridges Through Understanding the Village; Leading A Reconciliation Dialogue; Introduction to Gender-Based Analysis (GBA+); Introduction to Working With Trans Gender Clients; Exploring Gender Diversity; Diversity and Inclusion Essentials; Policy Essentials; Mental Health Awareness; Practical Project Management; Labour Relations 101; BC Government Financial Control Fundamentals; Ergonomics Risk Assessment; Coaching Approach to Conversations; *Public Interest Disclosure Act* training; Ethics for Everyone.

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2019/20 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 the Committee for a Respectful and Engaged Workplace (CREW) continue to be actively engaged in supporting a positive and effective workplace culture. Key initiatives in 2019/20 included forming sub-committees for staff wellness, recommendations in response to the annual staff survey and cross-organization collaboration.
<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 addressing any health and safety matters immediately and effectively in compliance with occupational health and safety laws and meeting the needs of staff and ongoing support for, and facilitation of, activities and programs to support staff well-being</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 incidents involving either minor or no first aid assistance and no time/wage loss. The Committee continues to provide recommendations and refine policies and procedures relating to employee and client safety, workplace safety including conducting annual safety evaluations for all three office locations and potential risk of violence in the workplace.



## PERFORMANCE

Other Indicators of Performance	Measured by	2019/20 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 adhering to applicable core government policies, standards and practices and the Office meeting budgeting and audit standards and requirements</li></ul>	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 2019/20, the Auditor General has reported that the Office's financial statements fairly represent the financial position of the Office.





BUDGET

AND

EXPENDITURES



# BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

In addition to the following information, a full set of financial statements for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is available on Representative's website.

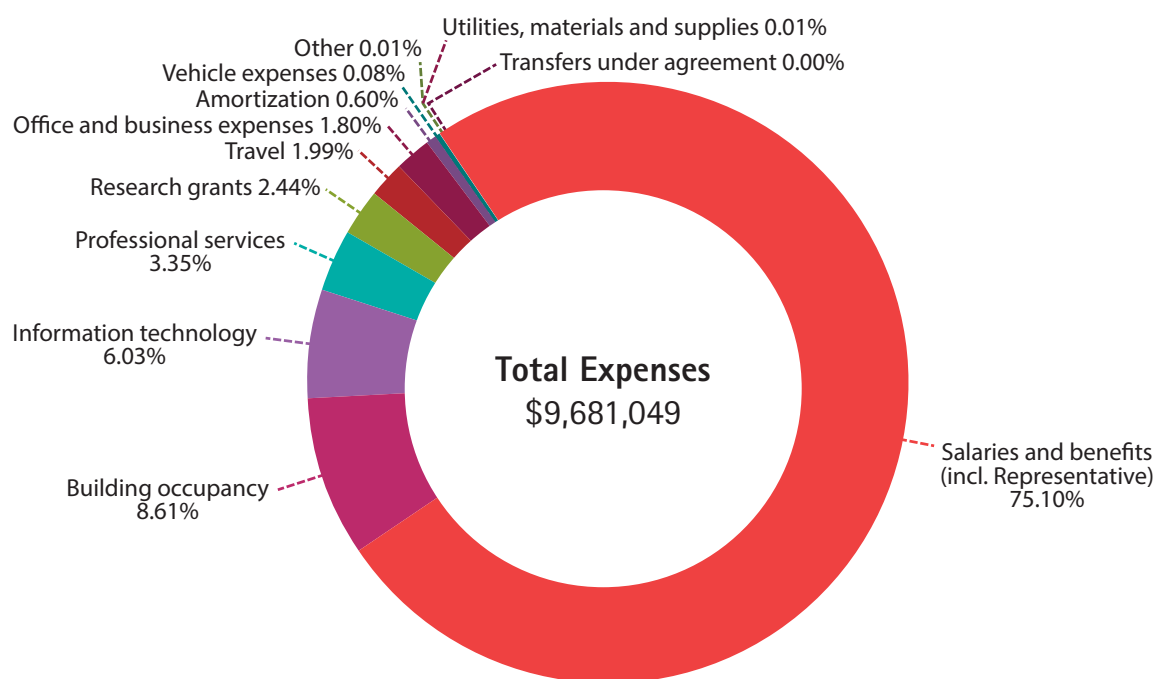
## Actual Expenditure and Budget – 2019/20

Operating Expense Type	Actual	Budget
Salaries and benefits (incl. Representative)	7,270,604	7,166,000
Building occupancy	833,768	961,000
Information technology	583,337	518,000
Professional services	324,130	332,000
Research grants	235,800	5,000
Travel	192,563	315,000
Office and business expenses	173,802	383,000
Amortization	57,636	49,000
Vehicle expenses	7,668	8,000
Utilities, materials and supplies	957	7,000
Other	784	1,000
Transfers under agreement	-	5,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,681,049</b>	<b>9,750,000</b>

Capital Expense Type	Actual	Budget
Tenant improvements	-	-
Information technology	25,383	30,000
Office furniture and equipment	4,595	20,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>29,978</b>	<b>50,000</b>



## Actual Expenditures by Expense Type – 2019/20



## Looking to the future – approved and planned budget for 2020/21 to 2022/23

The table below illustrates operating and capital budgets approved for 2020/21 and planned for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Operating	Note	2020/21 Planned	2021/22 Planned	2022/23 Planned
Salaries and benefits	1	8,174,000	8,319,000	8,145,000
Travel	2	345,000	345,000	345,000
Professional services	3	332,000	332,000	332,000
Information technology	4	628,000	637,000	622,000
Office and business expenses	5	447,000	454,000	444,000
Utilities, materials and supplies	6	7,000	7,000	7,000
Vehicle expenses	7	8,000	8,000	8,000
Amortization	8	55,000	55,000	55,000
Building occupancy	9	1,019,000	1,027,000	1,027,000
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	(555,000)	(712,000)	(513,000)
<b>Total operating</b>		<b>10,471,000</b>	<b>10,483,000</b>	<b>10,483,000</b>



## BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Capital	Note	2020/21 Planned	2021/22 Planned	2022/23 Planned
Information technology	14	45,000	45,000	45,000
Office furniture and equipment	15	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Total capital</b>		<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>

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

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

*Note 3 Professional services includes fees and expenses for professional services rendered directly to the Office for the provision of services in the delivery of our programs, the provision of services required by statute or legislation and 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 includes supplies and services required for the operation of the Office.*

*Note 6 Utilities, materials and supplies includes 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 includes 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 includes 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 includes 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 includes expenses, such as financing costs, valuation allowances, and other expenses, which cannot be reasonably allocated to another category.*

*Note 13 Internal and external recoveries includes the recovery of costs from other officers of the Legislature, ministries, participants and sponsoring organizations for activities described within the vote.*

*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

- A Way Home Kamloops Youth Hub, Kamloops (April/May 2019)

Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework (APPF) Keeping the Circle Strong Event, Vancouver (September 2019)

Access to Justice BC (A2JBC) – Enhancing Children’s Resilience Working Group, Virtual Gathering (December 2019)

A2JBC Gathering Leadership Group Meeting, Vancouver (October 2019)

Continuing Legal Education Society of BC Access to Justice for Children 2020: Best Interests of the Child Conference, Vancouver (March 2020)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Best Brains Exchange – Embedding Prevention of ACEs into Policy & Programs, Victoria (November 2019)

All Chief’s Meeting on Children and Families (October 2019)

Young Parents Programs Conference, Parksville (October 2019)

An Introduction to Domestic Homicide Reviews in England and Wales: Exploring Challenges and opportunities through the Lens of LGBT+ Domestic Homicide, Virtual Learning Event (December 2019)

Aunt Leah’s Place 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Birthday Party Gala, Vancouver (October 2019)

Aunt Leah’s Place Essential Skills Program – Self Advocacy Workshop, New Westminster (August 2019)

Aunt Leah’s Place Plates for Possibility Event, New Westminster (April 2019)
- BC Association for Child Development and Intervention (BCACDI) Annual Meeting, Victoria (May 2019)

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) Annual General Meeting, Williams Lake (July 2019)

BC Association of Social Workers (BCASW) Ethics Meeting, New Westminster (September 2019)

BC Aboriginal Child Care Society 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Provincial Training Conference, Mission (October 2019)

BC Federation of Foster Parents Associations Annual General Meeting, Harrison Hot Springs (October 2019)

B.C. Government Long Service Awards, Victoria (October 2019)

B.C. Legislative Interns Presentation, Victoria (January 2020)

BC Non-Profit Housing Association Housing Central 2019 Conference, Vancouver (November 2019)

B.C. Office of the Ombudsperson 40th Anniversary Lunch Reception, Victoria (November 2019)

B.C. Office of the Ombudsperson Outreach Strategies RCY Information Session, Victoria (June 2019)

BC School Counsellors Association Conference, Richmond (October 2019)

BC School Trustees Association Meeting, Richmond (October 2019)

BC Society of Transition Houses Annual Training Forum, Vancouver (October 2019)



- Beyond Borders, Boothroyd/Fraser Canyon (April 2019)
- Board Voice Society of BC Annual Conference, Richmond (November 2019)
- Boys and Girls Club of Williams Lake & District Annual Family Street Party, Williams Lake (August 2019)
- Broadway Youth Resource Centre's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Vancouver (September 2019)
- Building Bridges Through Understanding the Village Reconciliation Workshop, Nanaimo (April 2019)
- Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre Rights Based Workshops, Burnaby (Various – 2019/20)
- Canadian Bar Association of BC (CBABC) Children's Law Section Annual General Meeting, Vancouver (June 2019)
- Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) Biennial National Conference and Meeting, Winnipeg, MB (September 2019)
- Carrier Sekani Family Services Youth Conference: We are Warriors Workshop, Prince George (April 2019)
- Child Welfare League: Working Group on Immigrant, Refugee and Newcomer Children and Youth, Virtual Gathering (March 2020)
- Children of the Street: 2019 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Canvas of Change Event, Vancouver (September 2019)
- Child & Family Welfare Panel: Resuming Jurisdiction, Musqueam (October 2019)
- Chilliwack and Fraser Cascade Transition and Resource Fair, Chilliwack (April 2019)
- Community Living LBC (CLBC) Transition Fair, Parksville (April 2019)
- CLBC South Island Community Council Spring Community Celebration and Mapping Night, Victoria (April 2019) Construction Foundation of BC Meeting (November 2019)
- Council of Ministers of Education Canada Event, Victoria (July 2018)
- Early Childhood Development Roundtable RCY Information Session, Burnaby (May 2019)
- Early Years Conference 2020 Listen Together, Learn Together, Act Together (University of BC Inter-Professional Course), Vancouver (January 2020)
- Earth Drums Opening Event, Victoria (September 2019)
- Ending Violence Association of BC Annual Training Forum, Vancouver (November 2019)
- Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks Youth Retreat, Mission (May/October 2019)
- Families in Canada Conference 2019, Virtual Gathering (June 2019)
- Family Services of Greater Victoria Fundraising Dinner, Victoria (February 2020)
- FASD Okanagan Valley Assessment and Support Society FASD Conference, Vernon (October 2019)
- First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, BC Children's Rights Forum, Vancouver (September 2019)
- Fostering Change Policy Solutions Day 2019, Victoria (October 2019)
- Fostering Change 2019 Policy Slam'N Jam, Burnaby (April 2019)
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association Guiding Youth Home Fundraising Gala, Surrey (November 2019)
- Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society Visions and Voices Forum 2019, Chilliwack (November 2019)
- Gathering of the Youth Advisory Councils (YACs), Richmond (May 2019)
- Hobiye (Nisga'a New Year's celebration) 2020, Vancouver (November 2019)
- HOYJA 2020 Ceremonial Leaving Community Event, Tsawwassen (March 2020)
- Human Rights Services Career Enrichment Program Human Rights Training, Chilliwack (April 2019)



- Identities, Cultures and Rights: Indigenous Scholars Forum Conference, Comox (April 2019)
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) Presentation, Victoria (June 2019)
- Inclusion BC Inclusion 2019 Annual Learning Event and Annual General Meeting, Victoria (May 2019)
- Inclusion BC Kids Can't Wait - Community Gathering, Vancouver (October 2019)
- Indigenous Perspectives Society Aboriginal Social Work Training Information Sessions, Victoria (May/October 2019 and February 2020)
- Indigenous Perspectives Society Aboriginal Social Work Training Program Graduation Ceremonies, Victoria (November/December 2019)
- Indigenous Youth Festival, Sechelt (August 2019)
- InWithForward Presentation (May 2019)
- Janusz Korczak Medal for Children's Rights Advocacy Ceremony, Victoria (May 2019)
- Janusz Korczak Summer Institute Conference, Vancouver (July 2019)
- John Oliver Secondary Rights Workshop, Vancouver (February 2020)
- Kairos Blanket Exercise, Victoria (May 2019)
- Katzie First Nation Health Wellness Day, Pitt Meadows (June 2019)
- Leadership 20/20 Event, Virtual Presentation (July 2019)
- Lieutenant Governor Reception in Honour of Independent Officers, Victoria (November 2019)
- Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre, Bifrost Program Team Day RCY Information Session, Burnaby (November 2019)
- McCreary Centre Society Connect2Thrive Event, Vancouver (May 2019)
- McCreary Centre Society TRRUST Collective Impact Gathering, Vancouver (December 2019)
- Métis Family Services Honouring Service (July 2019)
- Ministry of Education All Superintendents Meeting, Richmond (May 2019)
- Moosehide Campaign Provincial Gathering & Day of Fasting, Victoria (February 2020)
- Moytel/ken chEEEn Youth Summit, Hope (October 2019)
- Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Fundraising Gala, Nanaimo (September 2019)
- National AccessAbility Week Event, BC (May 2019)
- National Indian Child Welfare Association Annual Protecting Our Children Conference, Albuquerque, NM (April 2019)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day Event, Colwood (June 2019)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day Event, Prince George (June 2019)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day Event, Surrey (June 2019)
- Nezul Be Hunuyeh Annual Cultural Camp, Fort St. James (July 2019)
- Northern Indigenous Parenting Conference, Prince George (September 2019)
- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre & Brechin United Church Paddling Together for Organizations Workshop, Nanaimo (May and November 2019)
- Preschool Rights Workshop Doncaster Elementary School, Victoria (February 2020)
- Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre Outreach Clinic, Prince George (Monthly 2019/20)
- Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebrations, Prince George (June 2019)
- Q'ushin'tul Project Report Release, Duncan (November 2019)
- Ray-Cam Co-operative 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Soapbox Derby, Vancouver (August 2019)



- RCY FASD Forum: Sharing Experiences for Change, Victoria (October 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Foundry Abbotsford (Youth), Abbotsford (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Caribou Friendship Centre (Professional Adults), Williams Lake (April 2019)
- RCY Right Tour Presentation, Denisiqi Services Society (Professional Adults; Children and Youth), Williams Lake (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Foundry Kelowna (Professional Adults), Kelowna (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Knucwentwecw Society (Professional Adults), Williams Lake (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Lalum'utul' smun'eem (Children), Duncan (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Langley Community Services Society (Professional Adults), Langley (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre (Professional Adults; Children; Youth), Coquitlam (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, MCFD Circle 5 (Children), Surrey (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, MCFD Kelowna (Staff; Caregivers; Parents; Youth), Kelowna (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, MCFD Penticton and Oliver (Staff; Caregivers; Parents; Youth), Penticton (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, MCFD Vernon (Staff; Caregivers; Parents; Youth), Vernon (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Okanagan Boys & Girls Club (Professional Adults; All Ages), Kelowna, (June 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Pacific Coast Resource Society (Youth), Surrey/Newton (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Caregivers; Youth; Children), 100 Mile House (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Children; Youth), Ashcroft (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Children; Youth), Clearwater (April 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Children; Youth), Dawson Creek (October 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Children; Youth), Fort St. John (October 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Children/Youth), Lillooet (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Children/Youth), Merritt (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Parents; Youth), Revelstoke (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, (Professional Adults; Parents; Youth), Salmon Arm (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Scw'exmx Child and Family (Professional Adults; All Ages; Children/Youth), Merritt (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Secwepemc Child and Family Services (Professional Adults; Children/Youth), Kamloops (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Shuswap Children's Association and Wellness Centre (Professional Adults; Children/Youth), Salmon Arm (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Shuswap Family Centre (Professional Adults; Children/Youth), Salmon Arm (May 2019)
- RCY Rights Tour Presentation, Spectrum Society for Community Living (Professional Adults), Vancouver (April 2019)
- Restoring the Circle: Trans Youth Inclusion in Healthcare, Schools, and Social Services Workshop, Toronto, ON (June 2019)
- Second Wave Parents Group Event, Victoria (May 2019)
- School District 42 Transition Resource Fair, Maple Ridge (April 2019)
- School District 62 Community Partners Resource Event, Colwood (October 2019)





Siya:ye Yoyes Society Aboriginal Staff Development Conference, Langley (April 2019)	Distinguished Speaker Lecture: The Hon. Murray Sinclair, Vancouver (November 2019)
Snuneymuxw Homecoming for Children and Youth in Care, Nanaimo (April 2019)	University of Victoria Building Cross Agency Capacity to Prevent Sexual Exploitation of Youth Event, Victoria (April 2019)
Social Services Sector Forum: Together for Social Change, Richmond (November 2019)	University of Victoria Canada Asia Pacific Institute Presentation to Thailand Judges (July 2019)
Social Venture Partners Event, Victoria (May 2019)	Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee Meeting, Victoria (November 2019)
Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services Annual General Meeting and Community Dinner, Victoria (October 2019)	Victoria Native Friendship Centre Two-Spirit Gathering, Victoria (November 2019)
Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services Child and Youth in Care Week Celebration, Victoria (June 2019)	Victoria Native Friendship Centre 50th Anniversary Celebration, Victoria (September 2019)
Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services Open House, Victoria (January 2020)	Westcoast Family Centres Society Annual General Meeting, Vancouver (June 2019)
Symposium on the Future of Parliamentary Ombudship, Victoria (June 2019)	Xe xe Smun eem-Victoria Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters Ceremony, Victoria (September 2019)
Threshold Housing Society 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Shine a Light on Youth Homelessness Winter Carnival, Victoria (December 2019)	Youth Matters Forum and Reconciliation in Action, Vancouver (April/June/September 2019 and January 2020)
Tutwiwt me7 Stex7ems Youth Transition Ceremony, Kamloops (October 2019)	Youth Voices of East Van Policy Conference, Vancouver (February 2020)
University of British Columbia, Dean's	

## Meetings

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

Alberta Child and Youth Advocate	Canadian Council on Child & Youth Advocates
Atira Women's Resource Society	Child and Youth Legal Centre, Society for Children and Youth of BC
A Way Home Kamloops	Child Welfare League of Canada
Aunt Leah's Place	Children's and Women's Health Centre of British Columbia
BC Association for Child Development and Intervention	Community Legal Assistance Society
BC Children's Forum	Directions Youth Services, Family Services of Greater Vancouver
BC Children's Hospital	Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations	Ending Violence Association of BC
BC Non-Profit Housing Association	FamilySmart
Broadway Youth Resource Centre	



Family Support Institute  
 Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks  
 Federation of Community Social Services of BC  
 Foster Parent Support Services Society  
 Foundry Abbotsford  
 Inclusion BC  
 International Institute for Child Rights and Development  
 Janusz Korczak Association of Canada  
 Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth

McCreary Centre Society  
 Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council  
 Nunavut Representative for Children and Youth  
 Pacific Community Resources Society  
 Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth  
 Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities  
 SOS Children's Village BC  
 TRRUST Collective  
 YWCA and the Parent Support Group

## First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous Leadership/Organizations

Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society  
 Aboriginal Mother Centre Society  
 All Nations Youth Safe House  
 BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres  
 British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society  
 Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services  
 Delegated Aboriginal Agency Executive  
 Delegated Aboriginal Agency Partnership  
 First Nations Directors Forum  
 First Nations Health Authority  
 First Nation Leadership Council  
 Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association  
 Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Committee  
 K'tunaxa Nation  
 Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services  
 Métis Family Services  
 Métis Nation British Columbia  
 Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre  
 Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre – Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council

Nisga'a Child and Family Services  
 Northwest Inter-Nation Child & Family Services  
 Okanagan Nation Alliance  
 Port Alberni Friendship Centre  
 Prince George Native Friendship Centre  
 Reconciliation in Action/Youth Matters  
 Sasamans Society  
 Secwepemc Child and Family Services  
 Shuswap Nation Tribal Council  
 South Island Wellness Society  
 Surrounded by Cedar  
 Tsleil-Waututh First Nation  
 Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society  
 Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs  
 Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA)  
 Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society  
 Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society – Youth Advisory Committee  
 Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society  
 Xyolhemeylh/Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society



## Government Organizations

B.C. Public Service Agency  
 B.C. Ministry of Attorney General  
 B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development  
 B.C. Ministry of Education  
 B.C. Ministry of Health  
 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  
 Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre  
 Community Living BC  
 Government of Saskatchewan, Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee and Ministry of Justice and Attorney General  
 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada  
 Members of Legislative Assembly of B.C.  
 New Zealand Ministry for Children (Hon. Tracy Martin, Minister)  
 Northern Health Authority  
 Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia  
 Office of the Chief Coroner, B.C.  
 Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, 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 Police Complaints Commissioner, B.C.  
 Office of the Provincial Health Officer, B.C.  
 Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, B.C.  
 Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre  
 Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services  
 Provincial Health Services Authority  
 Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth  
 Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services  
 Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly  
 Statistics Canada  
 Trans Care BC, Provincial Health Services Authority  
 Vancouver Island Health Authority

## Other Organizations

#AllOnBoard Campaign  
 AgedOut  
 Alex Community Health Centre, Calgary AB  
 B.C. Advocate for Service Quality  
 BC Centre for Disease Control  
 BC Law Institute  
 BC Law Foundation  
 BC Poverty Reduction Coalition  
 BC School Trustees Association  
 BC Institute of Technology  
 Camosun College  
 Capilano University  
 Choices Adoption Services  
 Community Collaboration Committee  
 Community Coordination for Women's Safety  
 Construction Foundation of B.C.  
 Douglas College  
 Emily Carr University of Art + Design  
 Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education  
 First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition  
 FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, Simon Fraser University  
 Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), University of British Columbia  
 Island Health Board of Directors: Population Health for Children and Youth  
 Justice Institute of British Columbia  
 Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
 Pacific Business & Law Institute



Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies (PARCA)	Social Venture Partners Vancouver
Pathways to Healing Partnership	Sunny Hill Health Centre - BC Children's Hospital
POPFASD - Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	University of British Columbia
Raincity Housing and Support Society, The Budzy Program	University of the Fraser Valley
Roy Group	University of Northern British Columbia
Seattle Pacific University	University of Victoria
Simon Fraser University	Vancouver Foundation
Social Enterprise Consulting	Vancouver Parks Board
	Victoria Police Department
	White Raven Consulting







**7**

**FREE apps to help you maintain your social life**

AS YOU PHYSICAL DISTANCE

#covidandkidsBC

IF YOU USE SUBSTANCES...

**It is still important to be with a buddy.**

BUT STAY AT LEAST 6 FEET APART.

#covidandkidsBC

**Connect with culture! Learn your language or traditions!**

RCYBC.ca

#covidandkidsBC

**Physical Distancing DO'S & DON'TS**

**DO**

- Stay home if you feel sick.
- Stay 2 metres/6 feet away from people you don't live with.
- Exercise at home or outside.
- Go for walks around your neighbourhood.
- Wash your hands frequently.

**DON'T**

- Share food, makeup, beverages, or smoking/vaping devices.
- Share vehicles with people you don't live with.
- Meet up with your friends in private or public areas.
- Hug, kiss or shake hands with people outside your home.
- Use public transit absolutely necessary.

RCYBC.ca

**Financial Support During COVID-19**

**If you are a youth in care...**

Your social worker should work with you to ensure you have supports you need. This may include extending current agreements.

If you aren't getting enough support during COVID-19, contact us at 1-800-476-3933 or RCY@RCYBC.ca

#covidandkidsBC

RCYBC.ca

**Did you know?**

**If you are unable to pay your rent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you cannot be evicted.**

If you are an LGBTQ2S+ youth there are lots of resources out there to help you find support and a sense of belonging. If you need help, call us: 1-800-476-3933 or email: RCY@RCYBC.ca

#covidandkidsBC

**Kids are online more than ever because of COVID-19. Be mindful of how you treat others online. You never know what people are going through.**

**Stop Online Bullying.**

RCYBC.ca

It can take up to 14 days for people to show symptoms of COVID-19.

Some people who have COVID-19 don't show symptoms so they don't know they are transmitting it.

The best thing to do for the health of yourself and others is to physical distance and stay home.

*Why can't I see my friends during the COVID-19 pandemic?*

RCYBC.ca

**LOVE IS LOVE. SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ2S+ YOUTH**

**Mental Health Support During COVID-19**

**If you are a youth in care...**

Your social worker can help connect you with mental health services and technology that can help you access them.

If you aren't getting enough support during COVID-19, contact us at 1-800-476-3933 or RCY@RCYBC.ca

#covidandkidsBC

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**Boredom Buster #7**

**Build a fort**

#covidandkidsBC

RCYBC.ca

**How to be a good friend during COVID-19**

**Reach out**  
Let them know you are thinking about them.

**Listen**  
Everyone is going through this differently!

**Video chat**  
Keep your friends (and yourself) safe by socializing from home!

#covidandkidsBC

RCYBC.ca

A selection of RCY's Social Media Youth Team COVID-19 posts from the #CovidandKidsBC campaign.





# Contact Information

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

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## SOCIAL MEDIA



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



Rep4Youth



@rcybc and @rcybcyouth



@rcybcyouth



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH