

# Media Statement

November 19, 2021

## Child and Youth Advocate Recognizes National Child Day

National Child Day is celebrated every year in Canada on November 20th. It is a special day to celebrate children and children's rights. It also recognizes that Canada, with the support of all provinces and territories, made a commitment to protecting and upholding children's rights in 1991 with the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention is the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in the world today. It requires our governments to ensure children's best interests are protected, and to safeguard young people from harm so that they can grow up happy, healthy and safe, and develop to their potential and have their voices heard in matters affecting them.



“Our work with young people tells us that their input is often not included in discussions about services to them, or when policies, programs, and laws are being developed for them. Their life experiences and perspectives must be considered through their direct participation in order to ensure services and public policy reflects their experiences, needs, and rights. They have the right to be heard.”

*Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Child and Youth Advocate*

On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the NL Advocate joins other Child and Youth Advocates throughout the country in calling for changes to the Criminal Code of Canada. The Criminal Code currently has an antiquated law in Section 43, which legally permits corporal punishment and has been used to defend assault of children for the purposes of

corrective discipline. As a result, children do not enjoy the same protections against violence that adults in Canada take for granted.

“Parenting practices, as well as our understanding of their impacts, have changed over time. Section 43 goes against the solid body of research demonstrating the immediate and long-term harms that corporal punishment imposes on children, and on society generally. It must be repealed.”

*Dr. Lisa Broda, President of Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates  
and Child and Youth Advocate for Saskatchewan*

Our staff have held 10 virtual children’s rights education sessions with almost 200 young people on the island and in Labrador this week. We invite you to reach out to discuss a session for your group or class, or to learn more about children’s rights and the resource materials we have available.

Children’s rights are important all through the year. Meanwhile, wear blue for National Child Day. Make your statement about supporting children and youth rights. We would love to see what you are doing for this special day, so tag us @OCYANL

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate can be reached at:

Toll free: 1-877-753-3888, email [office@ocya.nl.ca](mailto:office@ocya.nl.ca), and check out the resources on the website at [www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca).

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