

## Message from the Advocate

Summer is a time we all look forward to! A time to enjoy getting out there during the warm weather and spending time with family and friends. In this newsletter we discuss Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the right to play and rest. It is important to remember that all children have a right to play and rest and this right is as equally important as all other rights outlined in the UNCRC. Providing education to the public and children and youth on their rights, such as this one, is an important part of our outreach program. In our Out and About section we tell you about our recent participation in Project Peace Day at Vanier Elementary.

Be sure to take some time to see just how many words you can unscramble to identify some of the many activities you can participate in for play time. Life is busy, but it is important to take time to get out there and play!

**Have a safe and happy summer everyone!**



Carol A. Chafe

## Right To Play

Did you know that Children have the right to play? Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Child outlines a child's right to play.

### Article 31:

- 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*
- 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.*

Some aspects of Article 31 include: rest, leisure, recreation and play. Summer is a great time to explore this often "forgotten right." We encourage you to get out there and explore your neighborhood, participate in activities in your community and incorporate 'play' into your everyday.

**and remember... don't forget your sunscreen!**



## Out and About

As part of our outreach program, staff from the office travel to various parts of the province throughout the year and meet with the public, professionals, and children and youth. In addition to educating people about children's rights, we reach out to communities across the province to provide information about what we do and how we can assist in advocating for children and youth. Our staff also take the time to educate ourselves and make connections in the community through various education sessions and opportunities for professional development. We are always looking for ways to learn more about other agencies in the Province and to connect with professionals working with children and youth.

In May, an Advocacy Specialist presented to students at Vanier Elementary as part of Project Peace Day. Students learned about their rights and participated in the Advocate for Children and Youth's 'Rights, Needs, Wants' game. Any school or group looking to have someone from the office present on children's rights are encouraged to contact the office!

Also in May, an Advocacy Specialist attended an education session hosted by Thrive-CYN St. John's. The session was titled: 'Anxiety and Youth: First Person Perspective.' Hearing from youth who experience anxiety and how they cope was both inspiring and informative.

Two important sessions in the community were attended by the Director of Individual and Systemic Advocacy this past quarter. In May, the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions had a public presentation in St. John's. It was an excellent opportunity to hear presenters make recommendations on how to improve mental health and addictions services in the province. In June, Choices for Youth hosted an event and released their report titled: 'Towards a Solution: Creating a plan to end youth homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador.' The report presents an action plan to prevent youth homelessness in the province.



## We Need Your Help!

To ensure we reach children and youth and the public, please contact us to add your name to our distribution list and we will send copies as requested.

Contact the Advocate for Children & Youth if you or someone you know is in need of help:

Phone: (709) 753-3888 • Toll Free: 1-877-753-3888  
TTY: (709) 753-4366 • Fax: (709) 753-3988 • Email: office@ocya.nl.ca  
WebSite: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

Or drop by and speak with someone in our office:

193 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, NL • A1C 2H5 • Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm



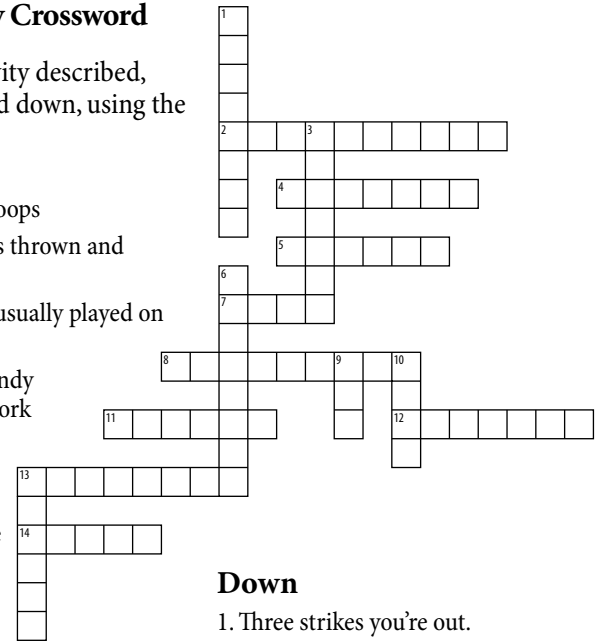
## The "Rights" Stuff

### Right to Play Crossword

Fill in the activity described, both across and down, using the clues below.

#### Across

- Shoot some hoops
- A flying disc is thrown and caught.
- A team sport usually played on ice.
- You need a windy day for this to work properly.
- You throw a rock in a numbered space then hop to retrieve it.
- I "love" this racquet sport.
- Mom's closet is usually a fun place to start when playing this.
- A pool or a pond will do for this summertime activity.
- Check mate



#### Down

- Three strikes you're out.
- The lyrics are displayed on the screen so you can sing along.
- All you need is a jump rope.
- \_\_\_ you're it.
- \_\_\_ and seek
- The object of the game is to kick the ball into the other team's net.

Children's right to play is sometimes referred to as the "forgotten right", perhaps because it appears to the adult world as a luxury rather than a necessity of life; however, play is an essential part of physical and social development.

### Article 31 – The Right to Play

According to Article 31 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*: "State parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

### Ideas on How to Support a Child's Right to Play

- Set aside time for play in a child's busy day. There are many structured activities available to children; but remember that play time is an extremely valuable time for learning.
- Set aside time for play in an adult's busy day. Join in child's play time. Let the child guide the play, but take the opportunity to reinforce social conventions, such as sharing, taking turns and role-playing.
- Choose an early learning and child care program with a play-based approach.
- Create safe and stimulating play environments within your home.
- Organize within your school and community to create safe places for children to play.

"Play is the highest form of research." ~ Albert Einstein

Right to Play Crossword Answer Key: Across – 2. basketball, 4. frisbee, 5. hockey, 7. kite, 8. hopscotch, 11. tennis, 12. dress up, 13. swimming, 14. chess; Down – 1. baseball, 3. karaoke, 6. skipping, 9. tag, 10. hide, 13. soccer.