

Message from the Advocate

Hello and welcome to our seventh newsletter. It has been a very busy quarter once again in providing advocacy services to children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. I hope everyone took the time to enjoy the summer months doing the things they enjoy the most!



Carol A. Chafe

Systemic Advocacy is one type of advocacy that we provide and this newsletter will focus on what that means. We provide systemic advocacy by monitoring and addressing issues that affect groups of children and youth. Just how we do that is explained in more detail in the “What We Do” section.

Also of note is the upcoming 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1989. Canada became a signatory to the UNCRC in May 1990 and ratified the document in 1991. It is important that everyone understands that all children and youth have rights and we must ensure that their voices are heard. We will be conducting presentations to groups of children and youth on the UNCRC and our advocacy role as part of celebrating this important milestone.

Enjoy the Fall and remember to try your best to complete the “All Children and Youth Have Rights” crossword!



What We Do

Systemic Advocacy

While much of our work at the Advocate for Children and Youth involves addressing individual complaints, we also dedicate a considerable amount of advocacy efforts to systemic issues. Systemic advocacy involves issues that are impacting a group of children and youth. For example, if we become aware that a certain policy is having a negative impact on the rights of multiple children, we may want to look at the issue with a broader lens, rather than only addressing the issue on a case-by-case basis.

There are many ways we become aware of systemic issues. Often, individual files at the office highlight issues which require further advocacy work, especially if a trend is noticed among multiple files. We also become aware of larger issues throughout our outreach travels across the province, through media and from individuals and groups who bring these larger issues to our attention.

The Advocate monitors many systemic issues throughout the province involving different departments and agencies. Advocacy from a systemic perspective can involve research, meetings, consultations, analysis of statistics, preparing position statements and making recommendations to provincial government departments and agencies.

An example of a long-standing systemic file, that is currently very relevant, involves residential mental health services for youth in the province. A lack of residential treatment for youth with mental health issues requiring youth to travel out of province to receive services has been a significant systemic issue in our province. The Advocate has been monitoring the implementation of the Paradise Youth Treatment Centre for some time and is pleased that the centre is opening its doors. In the ‘Out and About’ section you can learn more about our visit to the centre in September.

Systemic advocacy is proactive; a small change can impact many children and youth in the future. The implementation of the new treatment centre, for example, will provide services to many youth for years to come.

Out and About

ACY staff are always eager to spend time in communities across Newfoundland and Labrador and educate youth, professionals and the public on the role and mandate of the Office, as well as children's rights and responsibilities. Outreach also allows ACY staff to learn first-hand about systemic issues that children and youth are facing in different areas of the province.

In August, one of our Advocacy Specialists had the pleasure of giving a presentation about our office and children's rights in a session hosted by the Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN). Youth attending PLIAN's Youth Justice Camp were provided with the opportunity to learn about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and how it applies to their rights as youth. Thank you to PLIAN for including our office in a great initiative educating youth about the law!

The demand for a long-term facility for youth with complex mental health needs was long recognized by the Advocate for Children and Youth as a systemic issue. In September, two advocacy staff had the opportunity to attend the open house at the new Paradise Youth Treatment Centre; a provincial facility which will provide support and services to young people, age twelve to eighteen years, with complex mental health needs. Youth from throughout Newfoundland and Labrador will utilize the facility and may stay there for up to twelve months, depending on their needs. The Centre has a school onsite as well as recreation and outdoor space. Our staff were pleased to tour the new facility and we look forward to working with the Centre staff and residents in the future.

As part of our outreach, in October and November staff will be visiting Springdale, the South Coast of Labrador (from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay) and St. John's!



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.



The "Rights" Stuff

All Children and Youth Have Rights Crossword

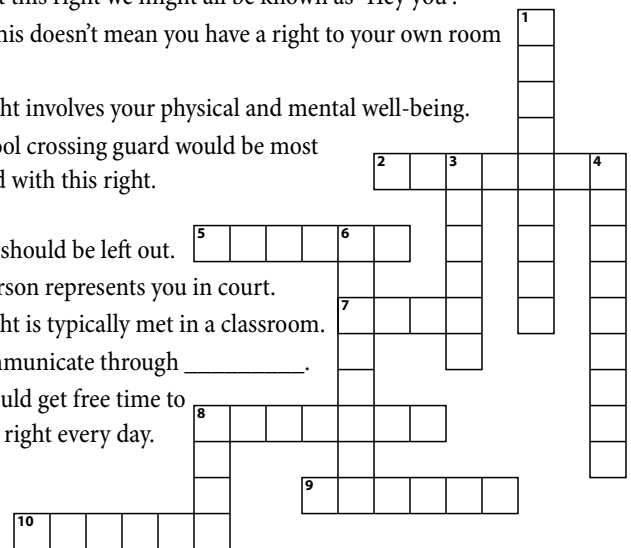
Fill in the rights described, both across and down, using the clues provided. The answer key is located on the bottom of the page in alphabetical order.

Across

- This is the attitude, behavior or characteristics of a group or organization.
- This group may include parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles; maybe even pets.
- Without this right we might all be known as "Hey you".
- Sorry, this doesn't mean you have a right to your own room at home.
- This right involves your physical and mental well-being.
- A school crossing guard would be most concerned with this right.

Down

- No one should be left out.
- This person represents you in court.
- This right is typically met in a classroom.
- We communicate through _____.
- You should get free time to enjoy this right every day.



Article 40

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language

Rights of Children and Youth involved in the Legal System

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies equally to all children and youth without discrimination. A young person, who has been charged with or convicted of a crime, is entitled to the rights guaranteed under the Convention. The Advocate for Children and Youth continues to work with representatives from the province's secure youth facility to ensure that youth in custody are knowledgeable about their rights.

In 2012, the Advocate for Children and Youth, with contributions from the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre, produced a booklet entitled Youth in Custody: Your Rights and Responsibilities. This publication can be viewed on our website: www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca or you can call 1-877-753-3888 and request a copy.

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." ~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

Rights Crossword Answer Key (Appearing in alphabetical order): CULTURE, EDUCATION, FAMILY, HEALTH, INCLUSION, LANGUAGE, LAWYER, NAME, PLAY, PRIVACY, SAFETY.

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