

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates urges increased awareness of children's rights this National Child Day**

November 20, 2018 –The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) encourages all Canadians to participate in National Child Day activities across the country today and throughout the week.

“National Child Day is an annual opportunity to shine a spotlight on the rights of the child, and our efforts to advance and uphold these rights every day,” said Del Graff, Alberta Child and Youth Advocate, and new President of the CCCYA. “The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) spells out the basic human rights for children and youth, and we encourage everyone to stand up and actively promote these rights.”

It has been almost 30 years since the ratification of the UNCRC. Canada became a signatory to the UNCRC in May 1990 and ratified the document in 1991. The UNCRC enshrines a broad range of rights including health, safety, well-being, culture, identity and education for children. National Child Day commemorates the ratification of the UNCRC.

Although Canada is doing well in some areas, our governments are clearly falling short with respect to child rights in others, such as informing children and adults about child rights and including child rights in school curricula. Another area of concern is Canada's failure to address the unique challenges of Indigenous children and youth – specifically the disproportionate number of Indigenous children and youth in care and custody, lack of equitable access to mental health and substance use treatment and services, and insufficient resources and planning to address the high rate of suicide amongst Indigenous young people.

As child advocates, we strive to ensure children and youth are aware of their rights. It is often difficult for a child or youth to recognize when their rights are being violated. That is why we call upon individual Canadians, as well as governments, to make it a priority to be aware of the UNCRC, to take a stand in supporting child rights, and to take action in ensuring the rights of the children and youth in our lives are protected.

To read the UNCRC: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

**About the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates**

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates is an association of government-appointed children's advocates, ombudsman and representatives from nine provinces and two territories: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan, and Yukon. Advocates are independent officers of the legislatures in their respective jurisdictions.

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