



MEDIA STATEMENT November 20, 2020

The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth stresses the need to make children's rights a priority on National Child Day and beyond.

November 19, 2020 (Saskatoon) – **November 20th is National Child Day**, and the office of the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth encourages everyone to participate in virtual activities to celebrate children and their rights.

National Child Day is a day dedicated to honouring children and increasing awareness of their rights under The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC is an international human rights law that sets out the broad range of rights held by children and youth. Under the terms of the UNCRC, Canada is required to meet the basic needs of young people across the country, without discrimination, and to help them reach their full potential.

“All decisions that impact young people must be made in their best interests and be informed by the perspectives and opinions of children and youth themselves,” said Dr. Lisa Broda, Saskatchewan’s Advocate for Children and Youth and President of the Canadian Council for Child and Youth Advocates. National Child Day presents an opportunity to raise public awareness of children’s rights and to reflect as a nation on our progress to implement them. “We must be vigilant in our obligations to respect the rights of children and youth year-round,” said Broda.

This year has been unique in that we have seen unprecedented impacts on the rights of children due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The response to the pandemic, while necessary to protect the health and safety of everyone, has impacted children in a myriad of ways – the long-term consequences of which remain to be seen. School closures, social isolation, and interruptions to services integral to child well-being have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. Decisions made today can have lasting effects on children.

As we navigate our way through the pandemic and beyond, it is even more important that we make the rights of children a priority. Article 3 of the UNCRC requires that “In all actions concerning children [...] the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” All actions taken to respond to the pandemic involve children. Moving forward, the needs of children cannot be an afterthought.

“Children and youth must be at the centre of all planning, and an appropriate balance must be struck that respects and protects all elements of their well-being. The best way to ensure this is done is to involve young people in decisions being made about their present and their future, and to seriously listen to what they have to say,” said Broda.

In addition to encouraging safe and virtual participation in National Child Day activities, we also want to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation for the hard work and commitment of all those who are working with, serving, and supporting children and youth in Saskatchewan throughout this difficult and uncertain time. We thank you for the difference you have made – and continue to make – in the lives of our children.

About the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. She leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province's young people. Our vision is that the rights, well-being and voice of children and youth are respected and valued.

-30-

Media inquiries:

Michelle Beattie

Office of the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth

mbeattie@saskadvocate.ca