



MEDIA RELEASE
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Advocate for Children and Youth Tables 2020 Annual Report

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Lisa Broda, tabled her annual report with the Legislative Assembly today.

In her report, Broda outlines the challenges faced by Saskatchewan children and youth in 2020, and the associated difficulties for child-serving systems and the community who care for our province's most vulnerable. During most of 2020, public health restrictions meant to control the virus have had a significant impact on children. This includes reduced observations and interactions by professionals and community members who would normally assist children and youth in receiving help when they need it most. "As these social safety nets are compromised, it becomes more difficult to identify and mitigate the impacts to children during this health crisis," stated Broda.

This year's report highlights 2020 as a year of planning and preparation, including finalizing the office's 2020-2024 strategic plan and to putting youth voice at the fore. "To give voice to and be informed by young Saskatchewan citizens, we established a Youth Advisory Council. And to realize the priority of reconciliation we created our first Elders Advisory Council to receive the benefit of their knowledge and wisdom as we move forward," said Broda.

The report outlines the Advocate's work to promote and advance children's rights and improve child-serving systems. "We continue to work collaboratively to influence legislation, policy and child-serving practices," said Broda. Other key highlights from this Annual Report include:

- Advocate's comments on the Impact of COVID-19
- Systemic and collaborative work with Ministries to inform public policy on suicide prevention and children's rights
- Ongoing analysis of interviews of young Saskatchewan citizens about their lived experiences with Mental Health and Addictions Services in Saskatchewan
- Advocacy processes and efforts to uphold rights and encourage preventative measures
- Recommendations monitoring and developments from five recent investigations
- Collaboration with Advocates from across Canada to support a National Commissioner for Children and Youth and advance children's rights through reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

This past year brought significant concerns about risks faced by vulnerable children and youth in Saskatchewan, and with it, complications to services that are charged with mitigating those risks. The Advocate acknowledges and thanks all of those who have worked tirelessly to fight against COVID-19, including everyone who continues to help children and youth during this unprecedented time. "More than ever, we must ensure child-serving and oversight systems are well provisioned in order to be effective, even in times of a crisis such as this global pandemic," stated Broda.

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 voices of children and youth are respected, valued, and supported to assist young people to reach their full potential.

For full details visit www.saskadvocate.ca to view the 2020 Annual Report.

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