

**Advocate for Children and Youth celebrates National Child Day,
calls for more action to uphold children's rights**

SASKATOON — The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth will celebrate Canada's National Child Day, November 20, by participating in events across the province, including a public celebration organized by the Children's Discovery Museum of Saskatchewan. Advocate Bob Pringle will talk briefly about children's rights, including the right to play, at the celebration, which is taking place at the food court at Saskatoon's Market Mall at 10 am on Friday, November 20.

Although it has been 26 years since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was established, and almost 24 years since Canada ratified this international human rights treaty, Pringle said he feels we are losing ground in protecting and promoting the rights of children and youth to be safe, protected and reach their full potential.

"Earlier this week, Food Banks Canada released their hunger count for 2015, which showed that 26,727 people received food from a food bank in Saskatchewan in March of this year, and 45% - over 12,000 of those people – were children. How can we say we value children in our society, when it is clear that many families are struggling to meet basic needs?"

The Advocate continues to urge governments to address poverty and poverty-related conditions such as food insecurity, mental illness, addictions, disabilities, and family violence in a more comprehensive way, as they put children and families at risk. Aboriginal children and youth are particularly disadvantaged in Saskatchewan, as in Canada, with high rates of poverty, over-representation in the child welfare and youth justice systems, and unequal access to services on reserve.

Pringle would also like the province to objectively measure and report on the health and well-being of children and youth in Saskatchewan. "At this point, there are no clear measures of how well our service systems are functioning, or how well our children and youth are doing. Further, there appears to be little interest in developing these measures, which is troubling," he said.

National Child Day commemorates Canada's ratification of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which spells out the basic human rights to which children under the age of 18 are entitled. It was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989 and ratified by Canada in 1991. The Convention says that governments are in charge of making sure that all children have rights, and that these rights are respected.

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, and is appointed and reports to the Legislative Assembly. The Advocate leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province's young people. Our vision is that the rights, interests and well-being of all children and youth are honoured, respected and valued in Saskatchewan communities, and in government legislation, policy, programs and practice.

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