

the drop

[ON YOUR RIGHT... to a plan that meets your needs!]

The Office of the Children's Advocate Newsletter for Youth

FALL 2013

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement between many countries around the world. The UNCRC has been in place since 1989 and gives children and youth all over the world more than 40 major human rights. Canada was one country that agreed to protect and promote the rights of all children & youth under 18.

In this edition of our newsletter, we explore UNCRC Article 25 –

States Parties recognize the right of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

Original wording: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

ARTICLE 25

(What does it mean?)

If you are in care, you have the right to a regular review of the agency's care plan for you to make sure the plan meets your needs now and as things change for you in your life. This review should include looking at where you live, and who is involved in providing service & care to you.

While you are in care, you also have the right to regular contact with your assigned social worker.

"Why should they invest the time? BECAUSE I am a good kid."
words from a youth in care

#rememberthechild

"Sometimes you gotta dig deep when problems come near. Don't fear, things get severe for everybody everywhere" - gang Starr - Moment of Truth



**"I try to be stronger,
I keep on trying.."**

opening excerpt from *Perfect* - a poem written by a youth in care



the mini drop : the agency's plan for you has to meet your needs!

If you are a child or youth in care, it is your right to have your care plan assessed and checked on a regular basis.

Your care and treatment is important and all decisions made about you should be in your best interests. Your care plan should be discussed with you and **you have the right to voice your opinion** about decisions that affect you. Adults making those decisions have the obligation to listen to your opinions and seriously consider them as they decide what kind of support you might need.

If child welfare is involved in your family, the agency must – along with you and your family - develop a plan for the agency's involvement and ensure that you and your family understand what is included in the plan.

BEST INTERESTS?!?

You may hear the phrase **BEST INTERESTS** a lot when you are involved with the child welfare system. It is an important idea and one you should understand. **BEST INTERESTS** means that any decisions that are made about you must be made only after looking at all the options and how each might affect you. Your social worker must always consider what options would be best when planning for you.

You have the right to be involved in the planning process and should be given regular opportunities to speak with your worker. You can ask questions such as why certain decisions were made, or what the goals of the plan are or any other questions you may have.

It is also important that you express your opinion about what you would like to see happen. It may not always be possible to do everything you would like but your opinion must be considered. Your social worker should be in regular contact with you to ensure that you are doing okay and that the plans are still working for you. It is important that you feel your worker is listening to you and including you in the decisions that are made about you.

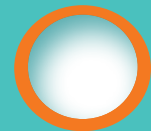
Agencies are required to meet minimum standards of service when involved in a family. Those standards are available online here: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/cfsmanual/index.html> **Section 1.1.3 Planning** describes the three types of plans that may be required if a child welfare agency is involved in your family:

Service Plan - describes what supports or services the agency will help your family or parent activate to improve your home situation. This might include things like counselling, emergency assistance, and other family supports. **An active service plan is required whenever an agency is involved with a family.**

Safety Plan - addresses what specific things have to happen if an agency identifies any immediate risk to a child. **A safety plan is required when there are child protection concerns related to not taking a child into care or returning a child from care.**

Care Plan - details how an agency will take care of you if you have been taken into care. The plan should include things like your rights to contact with family, connection to your culture, where you will live, and more.

A care plan is required for every child in care in Manitoba.



The 42 Poster Project

In September 2013, we released a set of 42 posters we commissioned, which interpret the **42 articles of the UNCRC**. The project was a partnership between our colleagues in the BC and Ontario child & youth advocate offices, as well as with the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. We worked alongside The Healthy Aboriginal organization, which coordinated Aboriginal artists across Canada to create the 42 interpretations with a focus on Aboriginal children and youth.

DID YOU KNOW?!

When you turn 16, your social worker should start helping you plan for when you become an adult at 18.

When you come into care, your parents or adult guardians have the right to decide on which of the 4 CFS Authorities in Manitoba will provide service to you. This is called the Authority Determination Protocol (ADP). If you are under 12, your opinion may be considered by the agency, and if you are over 12, your opinion on the ADP must be considered. If you are on independent living, or an expectant parent, you can sign your own ADP to receive service.

"Write it down and remember, that we never gave in. The mind of a child is where the revolution begins"

- Immortal Technique—Caught in a Hustle



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 25

If you live in care, you have the right to have regular contact with your social worker.



REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth



Children's Advocate

Canadian Museum of Human Rights
Musée canadien des droits de la personne

www.thehealthyaboriginal.net



Manitoba Children's Advocate, Darlene MacDonald, answers questions from youth on collaborative care plans.

Q&A - ASK THE ADVOCATE!

Q: I don't know the care plan the agency has for me and the worker doesn't include me in planning. What can I do?

A: Whether you are part of your family's service plan or have your own care plan as a child in care, you have the right to be actively involved in developing the plan for the agency's involvement in your life. When you have a say in your plan, chances are you will agree with it and the result will be more successful. When you don't agree, talk with your worker and his/her supervisor. If you need help to say what you want, you can call our office.

Q: How often does my care plan get reviewed?

A: Child Welfare Standards say that your worker has to review how you are doing with his/her supervisor at least once every three months and when there are significant changes. Agencies have developed their own policies about when a written care plan needs to be updated but these guidelines generally vary from every four to every six months. If you believe you need to develop a new care plan, ask your worker to do this with you. You can contact our office if you need help in saying what you need in your care plan.

's Advocate



WORD SEARCH!

J W A V Y G U Y L R C
X Z X T R U S T N J B
O Y E Y E N K N Q Q Y
C O L L A B O R A T E
U Q P N A L P E S A C
H I N G X U N C R C S
V R J V W E I V E R T
D C O N T A C T E A H
W Y K X J D J W L T G
A C O A B I G H U G I
L R E S P E C T B A R

**CASEPLAN - COLLABORATE -
CONTACT - RESPECT - REVIEW
- RIGHTS - TRUST - UNCRC -
WAVY GUY**

Did you know???

We are hosting a **FREE BLOCK PARTY** for the Santa Claus Parade on **Saturday, November 16, 2013**, starting at 4pm in front of our office! Join us for super fun games, dance performances, music to warm your soul, and an appearance by our loveable mascot, **The Wavy Guy!** Then stay as the parade begins to roll through Downtown at 5pm!

Bring your LETTER TO SANTA!

#WavyGuyAdventures

We recently added another member to our outreach and education team! **THE WAVY GUY** is a super fun, happy, energetic guy who loves promoting the rights of children and youth. We recently caught up with The Wavy Guy to get to know him a little bit better...

Full name? The Wavy Guy

Likes? High-fives, smiling contests

Dislikes? Mosquito bites, and when adults forget to listen to kids

Fave Food? It's hard to decide - they all make me pretty messy

Fave hair product? Foam!

Dog or cat? Military makaw!

Favourite Holiday? November

20th! That's the anniversary of the UNCRC coming into effect!

Best dance move? Ooh, that's a hard one. Probably the running man - it spans the generations and I don't usually fall down.

Three things to have if stranded on a desert island? I'm not sure - I'd rather be stranded on a dessert island. Then I'd eat cake.



YOU HAVE RIGHTS WHILE YOU ARE IN CARE!

- to contact the Children's Advocate
- to know who your social worker is and how to contact them
- to speak to your social worker on a regular basis
- to know your care plan and to ask for a written copy of the plan
- to be involved in your care plan and to participate in the decisions being made about you
- if you are over 12 years old, to attend court hearings and talk to the judge about the plan being made for you
- to have information about you kept confidential

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