

the drop

[On Your **Safety** Rights!]

The Office of the Children's Advocate Newsletter for Youth

SUMMER 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 19 –
YOUR RIGHT TO LIVE FREE FROM ABUSE.

article 19

Children and youth have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind. The government should provide programs for the prevention of abuse and treatment for children & youth who have experienced abuse.

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults.”
Frederick Douglass, Author

The Office of the Children's Advocate

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www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca





Inspiring youth-created mural spotted in Portage la Prairie at CFS Central's new resource centre. An exciting collab project between local youth, RCMP, and established artists!

the mini drop:

Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of YOU.

- H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Safety is your right!

OCA Contributor: Bethany Zeitner

Article 19 of the UNCRC has two parts. The **first** part says that the government has a responsibility to protect children and youth from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and maltreatment. The **second** part is that the government must provide help to children and youth who have been hurt by violence, abuse and neglect.

Here in Manitoba, the government is required to do some specific things to keep young people safe from abuse. Here are some examples:

- ☺ Child & Family Services agencies are **required to investigate** all reports of abuse.
- ☺ Once an agency has finished looking into the allegation, the agency should tell your parents/caregivers about what they found if the abuse was about you. Also the agency **should tell you** what they found in the abuse investigation, if you are old enough to understand what the abuse investigation means and if the information is in your best interest to know.
- ☺ You don't have to be abused before you can ask for help! If you feel your parents or a caregiver is likely to hurt you then **you should ask an adult you trust for help.**
- ☺ **Your voice matters.** If you tell an adult that you have been abused or hurt, they have to report this to CFS and CFS has to look into it.
- ☺ You don't necessarily have to leave your parents' home if a CFS agency finds you are in need of protection. **If you feel safe at home**, sometimes you can still live with your parents as the agency works with your family to make living at home safe for you.



“SOMETIMES OUR FEARS WON' T LET US FIGHT ...BUT WE FIGHT OUR FEARS.” - QUOTE FROM A YOUTH IN CARE

feeling safe in care!

Guest contribution from the amazing VOICES Leadership Team!

Each young person in care may have a different experience with child and family services protecting them from violence, abuse, and neglect. Some youth find safety and security in group homes or foster homes while others may feel unsafe in their placement.

The Government of Manitoba has a responsibility to take care of children. They do this by providing resources and supports to families and communities - things like schools, housing, and financial supports. When kids come into care, the government has a more direct role in protecting children from abuse and neglect. In care, youth should have a safe place to live, food to eat, proper clothes to wear, and fun things to do.

As youth currently in, or formerly from the care system, we've had some good experiences with social workers that were supportive and talked with youth in care when they felt unsafe. These adult supports showed an understanding of the situations youth find themselves in, didn't judge or blame, just listened and offered solutions. They also protected us from harmful people by doing things like helping us file police reports or listening to us when we needed to talk.

There are things that could be done better to protect children and youth from violence, abuse, and neglect. If a child has concerns, it's important that adults listen and consider the child's perspective, and to investigate the underlying causes. It is important for adults to validate the feelings of young people when, for example, the young person says they are not feeling comfortable in their foster parent's home.

Abuse and neglect can happen in or out of care. If you feel you're being abused or neglected talk to an adult you can trust. When young people use their voice and speak out, and adults take into consideration the best interests of children, we can create a better system of care in Manitoba.

Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network provides support, encouragement, and advocacy to young people in and from care in Manitoba. We come alongside youth while they are in care, as they transition to in(ter)dependence, and as they grow into adults pursuing their goals.

We are youth-driven and youth-focused.

www.voices.mb.ca

Nobody's perfect, ain't none of us worthless
We all got a place, and we all got a purpose —MURS

ask the advocate!

Q: MY FOSTER PARENT KEEPS TELLING ME THAT IF I DON'T DO A BETTER JOB OF LISTENING TO THEM THAT VISITS WITH MY FAMILY WILL BE CANCELLED. CAN THEY DO THAT?

A: No. Your foster parent is not allowed to deny you family visits as punishment for your behavior. However, you have a responsibility to do your part in creating a safe and comfortable home environment for everyone who lives there too. Family contact is your right while you are in care, unless this is not in your best interest, which is a decision for your social worker. If visits with your family are cancelled, you have the right to ask your social worker why. You can read more about foster care rules here <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/pdf/c080-018.99.pdf> or call us if you want to know more, if you don't think a decision is fair, or need help to speak up.

Q: MY SOCIAL WORKER SAID I WOULD BE SAFE IN CARE. I KEEP GETTING MOVED TO DIFFERENT PLACES AND MY STUFF IS GETTING RIPPED OFF. STAFF ARE MEAN AND DON'T LISTEN TO ME. I DON'T FEEL SAFE. WHAT CAN I DO?

A: Whether you are in care or at home, you have the right to feel safe. You should have regular contact with your social worker where you can talk about what is happening to you. Part of your social worker's responsibility is to work with you to figure out how to resolve your concerns. If you are in a placement where you don't feel safe, you need to tell your social worker or another adult you can trust. If you aren't feeling heard, you can call the OCA for help.



MANITOBA CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE, DARLENE MACDONALD, ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT FEELING SAFE AND SECURE IN CARE.

WORD SEARCH!

Find the words in the list below!

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

* ADVOCATE * ABUSE * HELP *
 * LISTEN * PROTECT * RIGHTS *
 SAFETY * TRUST * UNCRC *
 * WAVY GUY *



SHOUT OUT!

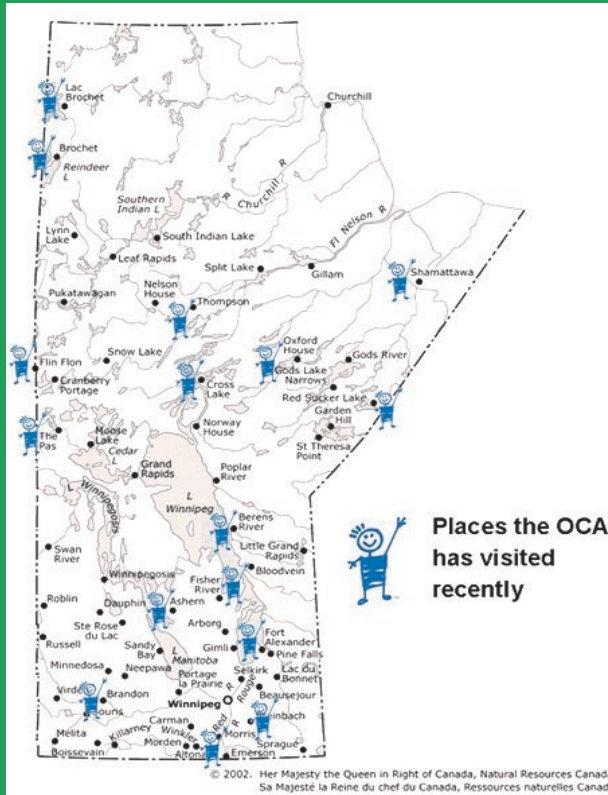
To Red River College
 for the YOUTH IN CARE

BURSARY PROGRAM they're starting this fall! RRC will now offer free tuition to at least 20 youth in care each academic year. For more details check out www.rrc.mb.ca or contact your Authority to see if you're eligible!

#sweetopportunity

#WavyGuyAdventures

We love getting into the community as we work with children, youth, and adults all over the province. We also get requests to present to a wide range of groups and facilities about the work we do for children and youth.



We take every opportunity we can to meet with children, youth, and adults in order to promote the rights of young people, and advocate for their best interests.

As a child or youth, you have the RIGHT to:

Be Safe --- FEEL Safe --- Have a Say

Have adults listen to you

AND TO TALK TO THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE.

If you want to learn more about us, ask us questions, or tell us about any concerns you have in your own situation, or that of another young person you know, get in touch with us!

WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

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