

# THE MEGAPHONE !

[thoughts on **FOSTER CARE**]

Promoting the voices of Manitoba's children and youth

**2014**

i am... **THE GENERAL PUBLIC** issue 12  
Check out our other info sheets for **YOUTH & SERVICE PROVIDERS!**

## A message to foster parents from the Office of the Children's Advocate:

Foster parents play a central role in the care and safety of Manitoba children and youth. As a foster parent, we appreciate and respect your commitment to the children entrusted to your care. We know that the child welfare system can be overwhelming at times, and we also want to acknowledge the important role that the Manitoba Foster Family Network (MFFN) plays in advocating for the rights of foster families and assisting their navigation through the system.

We have similar goals—our office exists as a part of the support network of advocates for the rights of the children in your care. We are an independent voice, ensuring that children's rights are respected and that children's voices are heard clearly. All children in care have the right to play an active role in decisions regarding their futures. All children have a right to have their spiritual and cultural beliefs respected. They have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect and to have regular contact with their social worker. And all children receiving service from a child and family services agency in Manitoba have a right to an advocate.

As a foster parent, you play an essential role in ensuring that children's rights are honored, and that they are provided with a stable, nurturing home where they are respected, cared for and listened to. We are here to help you support the children and youth who live with you. Do they know they have a right to speak with someone from our office? You can help them by ensuring they know how to contact us and that when they do they can meet with us and speak to us confidentially. Help us reach all children and youth receiving child welfare services. Together, we can ensure the voices of all children and youth are heard and their rights protected.

Respectfully,

Darlene MacDonald, MSW  
Children's Advocate  
2014

Every child deserves a  
**champion**  
-- an adult who will  
**never give up**  
on them,  
who understands the  
power of  
**connection**  
and insists that they  
**become**  
the best that they can  
possibly  
**be.**  
-- Rita F. Pierson



UNCRC Article 20

If you can't live with your own family, you have the right to be raised respectfully according to your traditions.

## Office of the Children's Advocate

100-346 Portage Ave Winnipeg, MB R3C 0C3

(204) 988-7440 or 1-800-263-7146 toll free in Manitoba

On twitter @ocadvocate

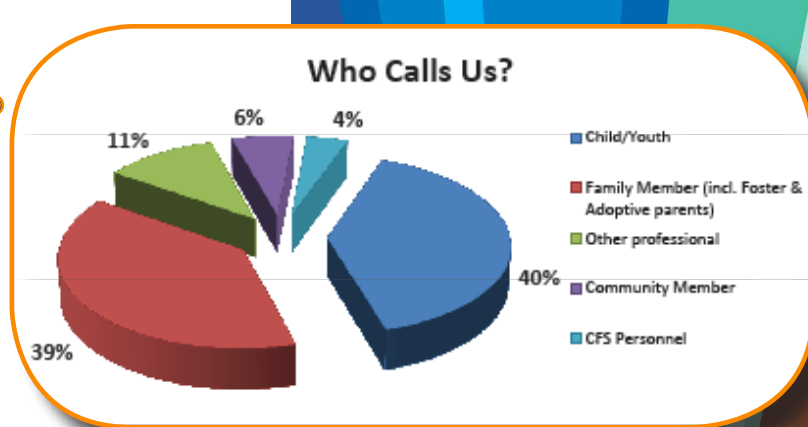
or find us at facebook.com/ocadvocate

[www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca](http://www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca)

## ARE YOU A CONCERNED ADULT?

Anyone with concerns about the services a child or young person is receiving or not receiving from the child and family services community can call our office. We respond to concerns raised about services that fall under The Child and Family Services Act and/or The Adoption Act.

Many concerned adults contact the Office of the Children's Advocate. They include parents, foster parents, grandparents, teachers and day care providers. If an adult contacts us, we act in accordance with the wishes of the child or youth as he/she is the primary focus of our advocacy services.



## SO, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CALL US?

An advocate will speak with you as quickly as possible. If an advocate is not immediately available, we will ask you to leave your name and number so we can call you back. **Your call is confidential.** No one will know you called our office unless you give us permission to tell the people involved.

## WHAT CAN THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE DO FOR YOU?

Listen to your concerns.

Provide information about the child and family services and adoption systems in Manitoba.

Help you help a child by giving you information about how to solve the situation.

Intervene in situations involving child welfare service delivery to young people when our help is requested.

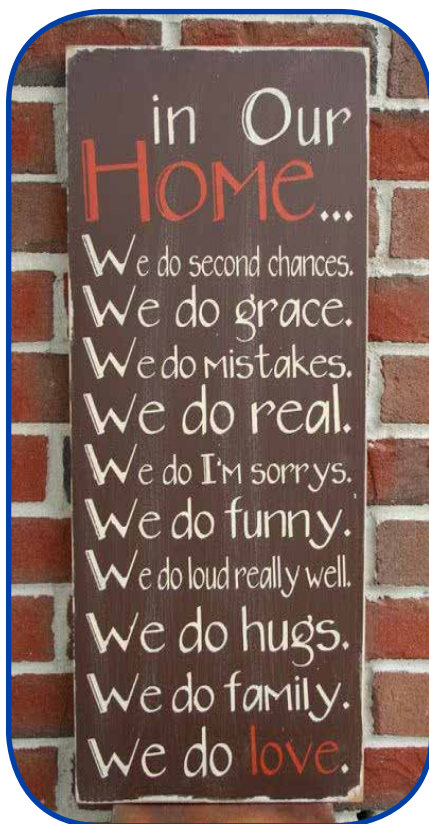
## WHAT CAN THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE NOT DO?

Intervene in private custody matters, or in issues outside of our mandate.

Act as legal counsel for children.

Provide emergency child protection services, however, if we are informed of safety concerns about children, we will notify the appropriate agency to respond.

If you do have a concern about the immediate safety of a child/youth, please notify your local Child and Family Services agency to report your concerns. In Winnipeg, call (204) 944-4200 or outside Winnipeg 1-888-834-9767 (toll-free).



### Children & youth are in particular need of ADVOCATES.

When we speak with them, they tell us that they sometimes feel they have no say in what happens to them. All children have the right to feel safe, feel valued, have a say, have adults listen to them, and to speak to the Children's Advocate.

**Help us spread the word!**

### DIDYAKNOW?

There are four authorities in Manitoba that supervise the child and family services agencies under their jurisdiction. They are:

**THE NORTHERN AUTHORITY** - responsible for the delivery of services to northern First Nations.

**THE SOUTHERN AUTHORITY** - responsible for the delivery of services to southern First Nations.

**THE METIS AUTHORITY** - responsible for the delivery of services to Metis people.

**THE GENERAL AUTHORITY** - responsible for the delivery of services to all other persons.

Under section 4 of the *Child and Family Service Authorities Regulation*, the adult members of a family are entitled to choose an authority of service for the family. They may choose either the culturally appropriate authority or another authority.

### SOURCES

Every child deserves a champion quote - <http://www.toddlerapproved.com/>  
In our home quote - <http://www.princesswarriorlessons.com/>  
Provincial CFS Standards: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/cfsmanual/index.html>

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