



Statement

May 31, 2021

For Immediate Release

As we celebrate Child and Youth in Care Week impacted for the second year in a row by COVID-19 and the need to be apart, I have hope – hope that with the mass vaccination program underway, we will soon be able to gather and enjoy each other’s company once again.

In my work, I have had the enormous privilege of meeting with and learning from many, many children and youth in care. The reality is that being in care is often not easy. It is frightening for a young person of any age to face the uncertainty that being in care brings – such as moving away from family, living with strangers, changing schools and activities and not being sure about what will happen next week, let alone into the future. But I have been inspired time and again by young peoples’ strength, courage, resistance and insights under less-than-ideal conditions.

Recognizing that children and youth in care – and all young people – are individuals and can thrive when loving care, compassion, support and resources are available drives us in our work at RCY. The well-being of young people is our No. 1 focus. Among other things, children and youth in care deserve:

- Respect for their rights
- Connection to family
- Connection to culture
- Connection to community
- Safety and stability in where they live
- Caring adults who are good role models
- Education
- Consideration of their views, hopes and aspirations
- Support and resources when times are difficult

Connecting – with family, with friends, with school, with cultural activities – has been difficult over the past year. Technology has really been a necessary friend. But while we are fortunate that there are ways to stay in touch through text, chat, Zoom, FaceTime and other platforms, we know that some youth have not been able to access this vital technology. Children and youth in care deserve access to such things as a laptop, a phone or an iPad to ensure that they are able to make and maintain connections with family and friends, as well as participate fully in school. Social workers and Agreements with Young Adults workers can help young people in care get this access. If that’s not happening, call us toll-free at 1-800-476-3933 and we can help.

Young people in care also need the tools and confidence for a successful transition out of care. For some, that transition is years away but, for others, it may be right around the corner. While supports for youth receiving government services have been extended during COVID-19, these extensions will come to an end within the next year. Youth who don't feel they are being prepared for a successful transition can always contact my Office for support.

All young people have a right to be heard and need to know they are valued and will be supported to be their best selves. During Child and Youth in Care Week, let's reflect on the nearly 5,300 young people in care in B.C. and honour their diversity and strengths, while acknowledging the challenges faced every day.

To learn more about Child and Youth in Care Week and to learn about celebrations planned for this year, check out this link: <https://www.bcchildandouthincareweek.com>.

There are many ways to stay updated on supports for young people and to learn about our Office. Follow us on social media: Facebook (@rcybc and @rcybcyouth); Instagram (@rcybcyouth); and Twitter (@rcybc and @rcybcyouth). We can also be reached via text message at 1-778-404-7161, through chat on our website www.rcybc.ca, via phone at 1-800-476-3933, or by email at rcy@rcybc.ca.

Happy Child and Youth in Care Week!

Sincerely,



Jennifer Charlesworth
Representative for Children and Youth