



MEDIA STATEMENT
June 1, 2021

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**Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates Acknowledges the
215 Children Discovered at Former Residential School in B.C.**

SASKATOON – The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates is deeply saddened to learn of the 215 children found at the former residential school in BC, in unmarked graves. “We acknowledge the heartbreak that families and communities must be experiencing. Let the discovery of these children remind us of the devastating impact of residential school on Indigenous children, families, and communities and focus wholeheartedly on truth telling and reconciliation as real change in the path forward,” said Lisa Broda, President of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates.

Reflecting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and its purpose to reveal the stories of the impacts of colonization, particularly the legacy of the Indian Residential School system, this discovery is a somber reminder of why it is that Indigenous peoples in Canada continue to be impacted by this trauma. “We must come together as citizens to recognize these past evils and advocate for the fulfillment of the TRC Calls to Action,” Broda reflected.

Calls to action 71 through to 76 of the TRC focus on missing children and information about their burials and the discovery of these children is likely just the tip of the iceberg. These calls to action implore governments and other authorities to work collectively to:

- make all documents available regarding records of deaths of children in care of residential school authorities,
- provide resources to develop and maintain a National Residential School Student Death Register,
- establish and maintain a detailed online registry of residential school cemeteries,
- inform families of children who died at residential school of burial locations and support them to commemorate or provide alternative reburial, and
- in accordance with Indigenous protocols and guidance: develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.

The Council is committed to supporting and advocating for the principles and values of both the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* in our declaration to advancing the Calls to Action.

It is critical that government supports and works with Indigenous communities and leaders who are endeavoring to find those children still missing and to embrace the Calls to Action as part of meaningful and tangible reconciliation. Every child matters.

“Once again, our history and it’s inter-generational impacts have shaken us back to the reality of actions that should haunt all of us, and that continue to be a barrier to the redress, healing, and progress fully deserved by Indigenous children, youth, families and communities,” states Broda.

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates is an association of government-appointed children's advocates, ombudsman and representatives in the provinces and territories who hold explicit legislated mandates to protect the rights of children and youth in Canada. Government appoints them as independent officers of the legislatures in their respective jurisdictions.

For more go to www.cccya.ca

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