



June 22, 2017



Canadian Coalition
for the Rights of Children

Coalition canadienne
pour les droits des enfants

Poverty Reduction Strategy: More Suggestions

The number of suggestions being submitted for the poverty reduction strategy indicates a high level of support, as the consultation period ends on June 30. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills, and Social Development (HUMA) made [53 recommendations](#) to improve a wide range of federal programs. Among those that directly impact children are proposals to: index the National Child Benefit to inflation rates and ensure that it is not clawed back by reduced provincial social assistance rates; increase social assistance rates for indigenous families on reserves; strengthen food security in Canada's North; develop a school-to-work transition strategy; and focus on quality and accessibility in the early childhood education and care strategy. While the committee acknowledged the calls for rights-based approaches, they did not make specific recommendations about that.

Detailed recommendations are also coming in from other anti-poverty organizations, such as Campaign 2000, Citizens for Public Justice, and Canada Without Poverty. As common themes emerge, expectations are growing for the fall announcement of what the government will do.

Youth Contest for Poverty Reduction

How can we reduce poverty? If you are between 12 and 24, you are invited to submit your idea in any creative form before August 24, 2017. This is an opportunity for young people to submit their views. Winners will be invited to

Ottawa for a national event in September. Information available at: <http://esdc-consultations.canada.ca/reducepoverty-contest>.

Tribunal Order Shows System Failure

In May the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal issued its fourth order, calling on the federal government to fully implement Jordan's Principle, to end discrimination against indigenous children in public services. This is good news

Young Leaders for CCRC Board

The CCRC board is looking for young leaders to serve on the board and contribute to the upcoming review process. If you know someone, please send a nomination letter to info@rightsofchildren.ca, or contact Kathy Vandergrift, Chair at kathyvandergrift@rogers.com.

Information Sharing

The CCRC is gathering information about the situation of children in Canada to prepare for the upcoming review. If you have research reports, information to share, or interest in the review, please contact Kathy Vandergrift, Chair of the board at kathyvandergrift@rogers.com.

Children with Disabilities

Canada received a number of recommendations to improve federal and provincial policies affecting children with disabilities after the first review of Canada under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Discussions are also underway to ratify a complaints procedure under this Convention. For more information, check the CCRC website

at <http://rightsofchildren.ca/uncategorized/children-with-disabilities-recommendations-for-canada/>

for indigenous children.

There are also important lessons for all areas of children's rights. The ruling confirms the CCRC assessment that current mechanisms to implement children's rights are not effective. Canada tells the UN Committee that the Interdepartmental Working Group on Children's Rights co-ordinates implementation of the Convention at the federal level. The May tribunal ruling shows it is not working.

Officials from Justice Canada and the Public Health Agency co-chair this group. At the same time another branch of Justice Canada fought the claim from indigenous children for over ten years instead of taking opportunities to resolve it. The Public Health Agency (PHAC), which is responsible for implementing the ruling of the tribunal, but did not consider children's rights in doing so. In the most recent ruling, the tribunal found that PHAC's program was

"a calculated, analyzed and informed policy choice based on financial impacts and potential risks rather than on the needs or the best interests of First Nations children, which Jordan's Principle is meant to protect and should be the goal of Canada's programming."

Clearly co-ordination within and between departments is not working, not even when there has been an order by the highest human rights tribunal in the country.

The CCRC recommended structural changes in its last review and the UN Committee has twice now called on Canada to substantively reform the systems in place to implement the Convention. Hopefully we will see change in Canada prior to the next review, in order to restore public confidence that the federal government does take children's rights seriously

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