



GENERAL MEASURES: ALL RIGHTS FOR ALL CHILDREN

Closing Gaps: From Patchwork to Coherent Policy

Better outcomes for children depend on how public policies by different departments and levels of government fit together. Canada has pieces of good policy for children, including the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), but we lack a coherent, child-centered framework. Too many vulnerable children fall through the cracks of fragmented support systems for children and families.

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) provides a coherent and integrated approach to policies for children. Each review of how Canada has implemented the CRC made recommendations to turn the current patchwork of policies into a coherent approach with better outcomes for children. The current report by Canada for the 5th/6th review lists some new federal and provincial initiatives, but it rejects or ignores almost all the systemic recommendations.

The Current System Does Not Work Well for Children

Canada can no longer say current systems are adequate after the ruling of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on violations of the rights of First Nations children. If children's rights were monitored and reported as intended by the CRC, the inequitable treatment of Indigenous children would have been identified and addressed much earlier. Other indicators for other groups of children and comparisons between the well-being of children in Canada and children in countries who take the CRC more seriously also affirm the need for more than tinkering with specific policies.

Canada can do better. This review is time for systemic change to help all children develop their full potential. Check out a research paper by the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) that compares what Canada was asked to do in 2012 with what is reported in 2019 and what the CCRC has proposed to serve children better here: ["Closing Gaps: Systemic Change is Essential to Implement Children's Rights in Canada."](#)

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Identified Areas of Action

Start at the Beginning: Know the impacts for children before policies are adopted

Use Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) for all policy changes that affect children under the age of 18. Early identification of impacts and options leads to better decisions for children. For more information, see "[Children in Focus: Using Child Rights Impact Assessments to Make Progress for Children.](#)"

Outcomes and Results: Measure progress with data from children's lives

Every review recommends better data analysis. There is no excuse for the poor quality of data analysis and public reporting on the state of children in Canada. Children's rights put the focus on outcomes for children and public reporting to hold everyone accountable.

Child-centered Coherence: Close gaps by putting children ahead of jurisdiction

Implementing the CRC could make federalism work better for Canada's children. The CCRC proposes practical steps for a system that puts children first and integrates policies to benefit children. For more information, see "[Implementation of Children's Rights in Canada: A Systems Approach.](#)"



Knowing Rights and Appeal Processes: Listen and Respond to Voices of Children

Research shows that children and families who know about children's rights and how to exercise them are better able to support healthy child development. There is no excuse for Canada's failure to inform all children about their rights 30 years after ratification of the CRC. Establishing child-friendly appeal mechanisms for all levels of government could provide avenues for early problem solving to ensure that all children can develop their full potential. For more information, see "[Children's Rights and Education: More than a Right to Go to School.](#)"

Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children

Share this with others and add your voice to support children's rights across Canada.

For more information, check the CCRC website at www.rightsofchildren.ca.

To discuss this further, send a message to info@rightsofchildren.ca.