NCWC • CNFC
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA
LE CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DU CANADA

World Children's Day -November 20

On World Children's Day, the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) reaffirms that every child and young person in Canada has the right to safety, dignity, opportunity, and a future free from poverty, violence, exploitation, and discrimination.

World Children's Day was established by the United Nations in 1954 as Universal Children's Day to promote international togetherness, awareness of the needs of children, and the improvement of children's welfare worldwide. November 20 also marks the anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989, a landmark human-rights treaty that recognizes children as rights holders and calls on governments to protect and fulfil their rights. Canada ratified the Convention in 1991.

A rights-based commitment

NCWC calls on the Government of Canada to meet its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child in law, policy, and practice. Children's rights must be treated not as aspirations, but as enforceable commitments reflected in adequate funding, coordinated services, meaningful participation, and accountability.

A federal Children's Commissioner

NCWC continues to call for the establishment of an independent, well-resourced federal Children's Commissioner. Canada needs a national champion for children and youth who can independently monitor how federal laws, policies, and programs affect their rights and well-being; receive and investigate concerns; amplify children's voices; and hold governments publicly accountable.

Protecting children online

NCWC supports Bill S-209, the *Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act*, and urges Parliament to advance it without delay. The bill would restrict young persons' online access to pornographic material and is an important step toward stronger safeguards for children and youth in digital spaces. Canada's international human-rights commitments require practical protection from online harms. Age-appropriate safeguards, effective enforcement mechanisms, and privacy-protective age-verification measures can help prevent children from being exposed to material that is inappropriate or harmful for their age. NCWC urges all parliamentarians to support S-209 and to ensure that children's safety is treated as a public priority.

Ending child and youth poverty

Poverty remains one of the most significant barriers to children's rights, health, learning, and future opportunity. NCWC's Education Fund recently hosted **"Child and Youth Poverty: End it Now!"**, a webinar exploring the realities of child and youth poverty in Canada, its impacts on young people and families, and the factors contributing to poverty and inequality. The discussion also highlighted practical solutions and actions that individuals and communities can take to raise awareness and support children, young people, and families.

A call to action

On World Children's Day, NCWC urges the Government of Canada, parliamentarians, provincial and territorial governments, and civil society to:

- Establish an independent federal Children's Commissioner.
- Advance and adopt Bill S-209 to strengthen protections for children and youth online.
- Take sustained, measurable action to reduce child and youth poverty through income supports, affordable housing, accessible childcare, food security, mental-health services, and strong public education
- Fulfil Canada's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensure that children and young people are heard, respected, and meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Every child deserves to grow up safe, supported, and able to reach their full potential. On World Children's Day, NCWC reaffirms its commitment to advocating for the rights, protection, and well-being of children and young people across Canada.