



Unit 100 - 346 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba CANADA R3C 0C3  
(204) 988-7440 • 1-800-263-7146 • Fax: (204) 988-7472  
[www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca](http://www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca)

For Immediate Release

**A Message from Manitoba's Children's Advocate**  
**on the Occasion of National Child Day and the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the**  
**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

On Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, people around the world will recognize and celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1989. As a signatory to the Convention, Canada has an obligation to ensure its laws, policies and services, provide for and protect the rights of children.

Canada ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child 18 years ago, on December 13, 1991. When governments ratify the Convention they are expected to comply with its standards and strive to continuously take all necessary measures to ensure the rights of children are respected and upheld.

This year is particularly important for children's rights in Canada as the Canadian Government will be reporting on the implementation of the Convention through the UN Senate Committee hearings on the Rights of the Child. The children born in Manitoba in 1991 have now reached the age of majority. How much has the Convention made a difference in the lives of Canadian children born within this time period? We look forward to hearing of Canada's progress on implementing the Convention.

One example of children's rights in the Convention states that children in Canada have a right to an adequate standard of living. In November 1989, the House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution to eliminate child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. We remain concerned about Canada's progress in addressing child poverty as past reports from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg have indicated that targets have not been met in Manitoba. We look forward to the Council's upcoming release of its' Manitoba Poverty Report Card on November 24, 2009.

When it comes to rights, children appear to be the forgotten group. Most children and youth that we encounter are certainly not aware of the Convention. The reality is that most Manitobans are not aware of its existence, what it states, or what it means for the rights of children and youth. **A Right Is Only A Right If You Know It Exists.** The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides an opportunity to raise awareness.

Last month, DVD's containing a copy of the Convention, and youth rights resources available from the Office of the Children's Advocate, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, Manitoba Ombudsman, UNICEF and Voices: Manitoba's Youth In Care Network went out to 300 Manitoba teachers. 300 DVDs were also distributed to students attending Manitoba Human Rights Commission events in Winnipeg and Brandon this week. Advocacy Officers from the Office of the Children's Advocate have been traveling to communities throughout the province promoting the Convention while doing their advocacy work. They will also be visiting group homes, shelters and other child and youth serving facilities.

**As we acknowledge this 20<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary, we urge all Manitobans to become familiar with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to speak out for those rights to be recognized. The Convention on the Rights of the Child can be downloaded at [www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca](http://www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca) .**

**On Friday, November 20, 2009 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., we will be passing out UNICEF poster copies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in front of the Office of the Children's Advocate, 346 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. The Children's Advocate, representatives from UNICEF and Voices: Manitoba's Youth In Care Network will be available for comment to the media.**

Respectfully,

Original signed by

Billie Schibler  
Manitoba's Children's Advocate