



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

# **Children, Youth, Families and COVID-19 Impacts and Observations**

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# COVID-19 – How RCY has Adapted

- Quick transition in mid-March to staff working from home
- Advocates adapted to all communication by phone, email, etc.
- Daily communiques, frequent leadership and staff check-ins
- Formed RCY COVID-19 Response Team, redeploying 3.25 FTEs to these duties
- RCY social media campaign initiated with community partners, aimed at children and youth during pandemic **#covidandkidsbc**



# COVID-19 – How RCY has Adapted cont.’

- **COVID Response Team:**
  - **Reviews, analyzes and summarizes COVID-related reports of critical injuries and deaths, COVID-related advocacy cases, reports from service providers and stakeholders and other information sources to identify issues and themes**
  - **Proactively obtains information on policy and practice changes to ensure advocates are able to fulfill their duties with young people, family members and caregivers who are confused, worried and stressed**

# COVID-19 – How RCY has Adapted cont.’

- **RCY brings forward these issues and themes to leadership in MCFD and other ministries and public bodies through regular briefings, meetings, phone calls**
- This is how we're relaying info to be most helpful during pandemic
- Not releasing RCY reports with recommendations at this time
- Don't want to distract government from its most important work, but still critical to provide independent feedback and information we have gathered to help inform decisions.

# What We're Seeing/Hearing

- 91 COVID-related Advocacy cases opened to date, dealing with a wide range of issues
- COVID-19 has been mentioned in **122 critical injury and 2 death reports** received since March 1, including:
  - Social distancing was a concern in 75 cases (60%).
  - Access to services or important people was a concern in 33 cases (27%).
  - COVID-19 exposure was a concern in 27 cases (22%).
  - Placement was affected by COVID-19 in 12 cases (10%)
  - COVID-19 impacted court availability in 4 cases
- Many examples of responsive, creative practice



# COVID-Related Areas of Concern

- Children and youth with special needs, their families and caregivers
- Youth aging out of care, placements and supports
- Lack of access to technology, leaving youth feeling cut off
- Children and youth being exposed to violence, victimized.



## COVID-Related Areas of Concern, cont.'

- Homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness
- Mental health of children and youth and lack of access to services
- Substance use and lack of access to services
- Well-being of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children and youth, including access to cultural supports



## COVID-Related Areas of Concern, cont.'

- Safety in foster and residential resource placements
- Suspension of visits between children and youth in care and their family members
- Child protection responses, removals and custody disputes
- Pandemic's impact on day-to-day MCFD services.





- 1. Are these themes consistent with what you are seeing for children, youth and families?**
- 2. What are the most pressing concerns and issues that the people you serve are experiencing?**
- 3. What new practices, policies and approaches should be continued post-pandemic because they make a positive difference for people served, and the staff and agencies that support them?**
- 4. Stories matter! Any that you would be willing to share with us?**

