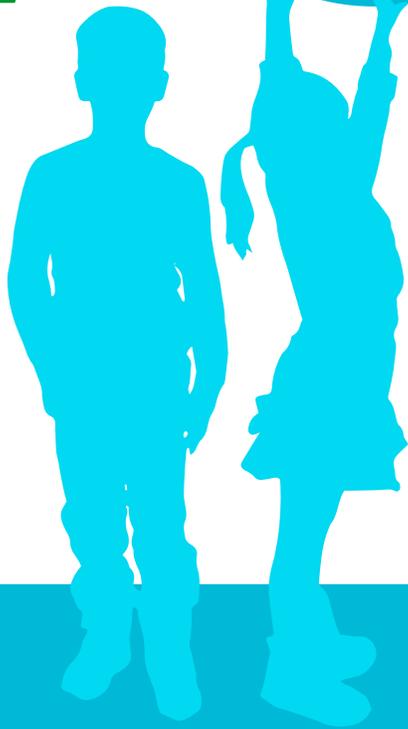


VOTE



FOR OUR FUTURE

The Children's Platform 2021

#voteforourfuture



CHILDREN
FIRST
CANADA

LES ENFANTS
D'ABORD
CANADA



For more than a decade, the quality of life for kids in Canada has been steadily declining, and the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly diminished children’s mental and physical health.

Even prior to the pandemic, more than one third of kids in Canada did not enjoy a safe and healthy childhood, and all 8 million kids in Canada are at risk of the top 10 threats to childhood:

- Unintentional and preventable injuries
- Poor mental health
- Systemic racism and discrimination
- Child abuse
- Vaccine-preventable illnesses
- Poverty
- Food and nutritional insecurity
- Infant mortality
- Bullying
- Limited Physical Activity and Play

Cross-cutting these threats are four major issues that affect children’s quality of life:

- Access to Education and Childcare
- Access to Healthcare and Social Services
- Inequities and Inequalities
- Climate Change

It is time for Canada to take a stand and #VoteForOurFuture.

There are 8 million kids in Canada. They represent nearly one quarter of our population and 100% of our future. They are citizens with rights, including the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives and be represented by Members of Parliament who will work with a shared commitment to ensure that every child in Canada can achieve their full potential.

We must invest in the health and wellbeing of children today. The future of Canada depends on it.

THE CHILDREN'S PLATFORM

The Children's Platform calls on all federal parties to:

- Make a big, bold plan to improve the lives of children and make Canada the best place in the world for kids to grow up
- Ensure that children's voices are heard and that their issues are prioritized
- Put children at the heart of Canada's pandemic recovery plans, and invest in short, medium and long-term solutions for children to survive and thrive.

There are 6 essential building blocks to improve the lives of all 8 million kids in Canada:

1. Establish an independent **Commissioner for Children and Youth** to provide the leadership and accountability to measurably improve the health and wellbeing of children and ensure the protection of their rights.
2. Develop a **National Strategy for Children** to tackle the top 10 threats to childhood and ensure the full implementation of children's rights¹
3. Invest in children, including launching a **Catalytic Investment Fund** for Children and publishing a **Children's Budget** to provide transparency and accountability.
4. **Measure What Matters**, by systematically collecting disaggregated national data on the health and wellbeing of kids across Canada, to measure progress and identify gaps and areas warranting attention.
5. **Provide equitable funding and services for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children** and implement the TRC's Calls to Action and the Spirit Bear Plan
6. **Involve Children** in decisions that affect their lives, including consulting them in policy decisions through the Young Canadians' Parliament and youth advisory councils. We also call on all parties to commit to lowering the voting age in Canada.

> *Details on each of the six building blocks are laid on page 4.*

Each of the six policy solutions are valuable in their own right, and when combined together provide a solid foundation to put children at the heart of Canada's pandemic recovery plans and make Canada the best place in the world for kids to grow up!

1. Detailed policies recommendations on each of the Top 10 Threats have been identified in the Raising Canada 2021 report.

The Case for Action

Canada ranks 30th out of 38 affluent nations for protecting the wellbeing of children². This marks a sharp decline over the past decade from Canada's rank of 10th place in 2010.

The statistics are alarming³:

- One-third of children in Canada do not enjoy a safe and healthy childhood,
- One in three Canadians report experiencing abuse before the age of 15,
- One in five children live in poverty, and
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 14 in Canada.

The pandemic has exacerbated and accelerated the crisis, and Children First Canada's *Raising Canada* reports have revealed that the top threats to children's mental and physical health are worsening or at risk of worsening.

All children and youth have been impacted, but some have been particularly hard hit, including First Nations, Metis and Inuit children, Black and other children of colour, children growing up in poverty, those with complex medical needs and disabilities, and children who experience abuse in their homes.

In May 2021, Children First Canada was joined by Canada's top children's hospitals and advocacy organizations in declaring [#codePINK](#) and raised the alarm about the current mental and physical health crisis facing children across the country. The term "Code Pink" is used to declare a pediatric emergency, and the campaign called on the federal and provincial/territorial governments to act immediately to address this emergency. [#codePINK](#) remains in effect and requires urgent and sustained action on the part of all levels of government.

Children and their families are suffering from the impacts of the pandemic:⁴

- 61% of parents expect residual effects of the pandemic on their children's mental health, even after the pandemic is over, and 17% expect these impacts will be long term.
- Only a quarter of parents say they have received adequate support from all levels of government throughout the pandemic. The remaining 75% either say they have received some, but it hasn't been enough (42%), or they haven't received any support at all (33%).

The kids are not alright. They deserve better.

"Our children are the rock on which our future will be built, our greatest asset as a nation. They will be the leaders of our country, the creators of our national wealth, those who care for and protect our people.

But if they are to take on this great responsibility, the rich potential in every child must be developed into the skills and the knowledge that our society needs."

- Nelson Mandela

2. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/worlds-richest-countries-grappling-childrens-reading-and-math-skills-mental-well>

3. Raising Canada 2020: www.childrenfirstcanada.com/raising-canada

4. Source: Inspiring Health Futures & Abacus Data, June 2021



The Economic Imperative for Investing in Kids

Investing in the wellbeing of children is key to Canada's economic recovery and it will yield a significant return on investment now and for years to come.

According to the World Bank, investing in the early years of childhood is one of the smartest investments a country can make to break the cycle of poverty, address inequality and boost productivity later in life.

Nearly 9 in 10 Canadians say that investing in children will pay off and save the need for additional expenditures in the future. As the government moves from crisis response to a recovery plan, sustained and impactful investment in Canada's kids will be crucial. This will support the government's ability to rebuild while also managing down other future expenditures and spurring productivity.

To catalyse immediate action to improve the lives of children, we are calling for an investment of financial and human resources to improve children's physical and mental health. This includes supporting them through the pandemic recovery and setting them up for a lifetime of success.

In addition to the moral obligation to invest in kids, there is also a strong economic imperative. The price tag on the cost of inaction is steep:⁵

- Child Abuse costs Canadians an estimated \$23 billion per year
- Childhood Obesity costs an estimated \$22 billion per year, and
- Bullying costs an estimated \$4B per year and growing.

The good news is that Canadians strongly support the need for action, with an overwhelming 91 per cent believing that Canada should put a high priority on improving its rating for child wellbeing.⁶

The Detailed Priorities for Investing in Children and Youth

A decade ago, Canada was ranked in 10th place amongst OECD countries for the wellbeing of children. Key to Canada's previous success was dedicated federal leadership and the investment of financial resources to tackle the top threats to childhood. Not surprisingly, when you invest in children and make them a priority, they thrive!

The Children's Platform calls for six policy solutions that will ensure that children are prioritized and that investments are made both in the urgent threats to their wellbeing as well as addressing the systemic barriers that they face to living healthy, active lives.

It's time to put children at the heart of Canada's pandemic recovery plans and drive measurable change for all 8 million kids in Canada. The combination of these six building blocks provides a solid foundation on which to build a meaningful plan to make Canada the best place in the world for kids to grow up!

5. Source: Children First Canada's Economic Commentary on Raising Canada <https://childrenfirstcanada.org/raising-canada>

6. www.childrenfirstcanada.org/news/2019/11/20/new-poll-reveals-majority-of-canadians-believe-our-country-ranks-in-top-10-for-childrens-well-being



When considering the following policy solutions, we encourage the federal government to respect the self-governance rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

1. A Commissioner for Children and Youth

There are 8 million children in Canada and they all have something in common – their rights. By ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Government of Canada has a duty to ensure children can reach their full potential.

A children’s commissioner is a non-partisan and evidenced-based approach to improve child well-being, including children’s health and safety, and reducing child poverty. Children’s commissioners have been established in more than 60 countries, including Sweden, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. It’s a proven strategy to improve results for children. In the UK, the children’s commissioners in Scotland, Wales and England helped improve their international rankings for child well-being by five points. That’s measurable change for children.

During the pandemic, children’s commissioners around the world have played a critical role in addressing the impacts of lockdowns on children by ensuring that children’s concerns are prioritized and that the government is held accountable. In England, for instance, the commissioner has applied a “children first” lens to the pandemic response by regularly issuing reports and policy briefs, and coordinating federal and local stakeholders to mitigate the negative impacts on children.

A broad array of issues has been addressed, including age-specific recommendations for infants, addressing the unique needs of highly vulnerable children, such as those experiencing abuse, children in custody, and homeless children. Moreover, the commissioner has provided guidance to policy makers, teachers, and social workers. As someone who has heard directly from young people about their experiences, the commissioner has been a strong public advocate for children and youth.

The lack of a children’s commissioner in Canada during the pandemic has resulted in a fragmented approach, as children fall under multiple ministerial portfolios. This has resulted in the lack of a comprehensive and concerted effort to address the impacts of the crisis on children, and the lack of a child-focused lens on the federal response to the pandemic.

Federal responsibility for children spans across government departments, including:

- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Women and Gender Equality Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
- Justice Canada
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Public Safety Canada



This list is by no means exhaustive. Coordination across departments is challenging for a host of reasons. As a result, big, bold comprehensive ideas for children are often difficult to gain traction on. A children's commissioner would coordinate efforts across departments and propel action to increase child well-being.

Children have unique rights. The establishment of an independent commissioner would go a long way towards ensuring that their best interests are protected and that they receive the support required to survive and thrive.

With a mandate to promote, investigate and advise on legislation and policies impacting children and youth – and defend the rights of children and youth across federal jurisdictions and ministries – a federal commissioner would have the authority and autonomy to influence significant and positive changes with respect to better outcomes for all young Canadians.

In establishing the federal Office of the Commissioner for Children and Youth, it is essential to work nation to nation, respecting and including the self-governance rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. The [Assembly of Seven Generations](#) and the [First Nation Child and Family Caring Society of Canada](#) spoke with Indigenous Youth about establishing the federal Commissioner for Children and Youth, the results of which have been captured in: [Accountability in Our Lifetime: A Call to Honour the Rights of Indigenous Children and Youth](#).

Young people made four recommendations for determining the best model of accountability for Indigenous youth, including “...prior to establishing a national children’s commissioner, Indigenous youth must be ethically engaged in the decision-making process.” They recommend:

- Holding regional gatherings with Indigenous youth
- Research following the guidelines from [A Way Forward: Ethical Engagement with and by Indigenous Youth](#)
- Discussions regarding a national children’s commissioner are not predetermined
- Indigenous youth and children need space to determine what the best Youth Accountability Mechanism would look like

Moreover, the commissioner should follow international best practices, as outlined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comments 2 and 5, along with the Paris Principles for Independent Human Rights Institutions. These are the essential elements:

- Be independent, free to conduct their duties without fear or favour of government, children’s agencies, and the voluntary and private sectors
- Be established in legislation with clearly defined powers and duties
- Report to Parliament annually, to as to ensure accountability to all citizens
- Have a broad mandate that includes the power to investigate, raise awareness, and monitor progress
- Have a statutory obligation to listen to and involve children



2. A National Strategy for Children

It has been more than a decade since Canada implemented a national plan of action or strategy to improve the lives of children. In the absence of a national plan or strategy, Canada has seen a marked decline in the wellbeing of children, falling from 10th to 30th place amongst OECD countries.

We call on federal parties to work in partnership with the provinces and territories to create and implement a national strategy to measurably improve the lives of all 8 million kids in Canada.

The National Strategy must address the short, medium and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on children, take meaningful action on the top 10 threats to Canada's children, and ensure the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It should also outline priorities, targets and timelines, with a clear delineation of the responsibilities of the various levels of government that are needed to make measurable progress for children in Canada.

Priority areas for action have been identified based on the latest Raising Canada report on the top 10 threats to childhood:

1. **Unintentional and preventable injuries** – prior to the pandemic this has been the leading cause of death for children in Canada (including drowning, choking, bike and car accidents). Throughout the pandemic there has been an overall reduction in children's attendance to emergency departments with unintentional and preventable injuries, but a steady rise in the rate of children dying from opioid-related death and an increase in poisonings and cannabis ingestions.
2. **Poor mental health** – in 2020, suicide was the leading cause of death for children ages 10-14 in Canada, and throughout the pandemic there has been a substantial increase in rates of children being admitted for suicide attempts, eating disorders, and substance use disorders, along with somatic symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches and seizures caused by stress.
3. **Systemic racism and discrimination** – First Nations, Metis and Inuit children, along with Black and other racialized children experience profound inequities that impact their health and quality of life throughout their lifetime, putting them at greater risk of chronic illness and disease.
4. **Child abuse** – one in three Canadians report experiencing some form of abuse before the age of 15, and throughout the pandemic there are reports of increased rates of infant maltreatment (head trauma and broken bones), along with increased reports of online exploitation.
5. **Vaccine-preventable illnesses** – data from 2019 indicates that most two-year-olds had received all the recommended vaccines by their second birthday, but there are still gaps in achieving Canada's goal of reaching 95% coverage. However, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, clinicians and public health officials have expressed concerns about delays or disruptions to routine immunization coverage. Children's access to COVID-19 vaccines is another area of concern; at the time of writing, COVID-19 vaccines have not been approved for use by children under the age of 12, and 0.22% of young people aged 0 to 11 had received one dose, 67.90% of young people aged 12 to 17 had received one dose, and 16.63% of 12- to 17-year-olds had been fully vaccinated.

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6. **Poverty** – There are persistently high rates of child poverty in Canada, with almost one in five children living in poverty (according to the Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax) and Canada ranks 26th out of 38 countries for its child poverty rates. Poverty rates are particularly high for first Nations, Metis and Inuit children, and close to one-third of children living in female lone-parent families were living in poverty, compared with less than one-tenth of those living in couple families.
 7. **Food and nutritional insecurity** – Prior to the pandemic, food insecurity affected close to 4.5 million Canadians, with children being a disproportionately affected. During the pandemic, households with children were more likely to be food insecure (19%) compared to households without children (12%). Food insecurity and poor nutrition were heightened throughout the pandemic as a result of a number of factors, including (but not limited to): reduced family income due to unemployment or underemployment, the closure of schools that resulted in cutting off access to school nutrition programs and other community-based nutrition programs, along with the increased social isolation and mental health challenges that children and their caregivers experienced.
 8. **Infant mortality** – Canada currently has the second highest infant mortality rate amongst OECD countries (with 4.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births), with rates being particularly high in Nunavut (16.7), and lower in British Columbia (3.3), New Brunswick (3.8) and Prince Edward Island (3.8).
 9. **Bullying** – Rates of bullying remain persistently high in Canada, particularly for children who identify as 2SLGBTQ+; rates of bullying are also higher for children based on their race or ethnicity, newcomer status, disability, religion and Indigenous identity. In one survey of youth (pre-COVID), rates of bullying were very high with close to 60% of surveyed students reporting being bullied by others at any rate and close to 20% being bullied frequently. Some research indicates that rates of in-person bullying have declined during the pandemic due to children learning in a virtual environment. However, there are also concerns that the rate of cyberbullying has increased; some forms of which are criminal offences, including: sharing intimate images without consent, uttering threats, intimidation, and inciting hatred, amongst others.
 10. **Limited Physical Activity and Play** – Physical inactivity has been a persistent threat to children in Canada, impacting both their physical and mental health. In 2020, ParticipACTION's annual report card gave children and youth a D+ for Overall Physical Activity and a D+ for Sedentary Behaviours, and less than one in five children (5-11 year-olds) and youth (12-17 year-olds) were meeting national movement behaviour guidelines for physical activity, sedentary behaviours and sleep. Children and youth aged 5-17 years old in all regions in Canada exhibited a decrease in time spent outdoors and in outdoor play; children living in apartment buildings and racialized children were the most severely impacted. Moreover, most parents reported children engaging in sedentary behaviours, including increased screen time.

Cross-cutting these threats are four major issues that are affecting children's quality of life:

- Access to Education and Childcare
- Access to Healthcare and Social Services
- Inequities and Inequalities
- Climate Change

3. A Catalytic Investment Fund and Children's Budget

Establish an **investment fund** of \$2 billion to be allocated over the next four years to catalyse efforts to tackle the top 10 threats to childhood and put Canada back into the top 10 global rankings for children's wellbeing. Funds should be made available to national and local child and youth serving organizations to implement proven and effective strategies to address the short, medium and long-term needs of children, and drive meaningful change for children's mental and physical health and the protection of their rights.

We also call on the government to publish a **Children's Budget** to ensure transparency and accountability for all federal expenditures for children. Children's budgets are a proven strategy that have been used in jurisdictions around the world to ensure that investments are made towards evidence-based programs that improve the lives of children and of future adults. They help ensure that children get their fair share of resources, and often do not result in more money spent, but in money being spent more wisely. We urge the federal government to continue to strengthen the application of the GBA+ lens in relation to children who represent one-quarter of Canada's population.

4. **Measuring What Matters**, by ensuring the collection of disaggregated population-level data through the Canadian Health Survey of Children and Youth (CHSCY)

We call on the government to establish a national and comprehensive data collection system, and analyze the data collected as a basis for consistently assessing progress. Data would be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnicity and socio-economic background. This will facilitate analysis on the situation of all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

The Children's Platform supports Children's Healthcare Canada's call for a federal investment of \$8M to facilitate the Canadian Health Survey of Children and Youth (CHSCY) conducted by Statistics Canada:

The CHSCY includes data on a nationally representative sample of ~45,000 children and adolescents based on the Canadian Child Benefit File (the most comprehensive sampling frame for children available in Canada). This data is ideally suited to serve as a pre-pandemic baseline assessment of the health of Canadian children and youth. Leveraging this sample by conducting two follow-up rounds of collection (2021 and 2023) will provide urgently needed high-quality data to inform policy responses and resource allocations – and to assess what is and isn't working. Importantly, the CHSCY is well placed to inform responses for those who are disproportionately affected by this global pandemic.⁷

5. **Providing equitable funding and services for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children** through implementing the TRC's Calls to Action and the Spirit Bear Plan.

We call for a full implementation of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action in addition to the implementation of the Spirit Bear Plan, and ensure that First Nations, Métis and Inuit children receive equitable funding and services.

7. SOURCE: Children's Healthcare Canada's Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bd8a55e4eddec150a2acdb/t/6033ff4da95f6f4abc335477/1614020430556/ChildrensHealthcareCanada+PediatricChairsOfCanada+-+Final.pdf>

The Spirit Bear Plan lays out the plan to end inequalities in public services for First Nations children, youth and families.

First Nations children and families living on reserve and in the Territories receive public services funded by the federal government. Since confederation, these services have fallen significantly short of what other Canadians receive. Every child matters and deserves equitable treatment, and Spirit Bear's Plan will do just that.

Spirit Bear calls on:

1. CANADA to immediately comply with all rulings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordering it to immediately cease its discriminatory funding of First Nations child and family services. The order further requires Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle (www.jordansprinciple.ca).
2. PARLIAMENT to ask the Parliamentary Budget Officer to publicly cost out the shortfalls in all federally funded public services provided to First Nations children, youth and families (education, health, water, child welfare, etc.) and propose solutions to fix it.
3. GOVERNMENT to consult with First Nations to co-create a holistic Spirit Bear Plan to end all of the inequalities (with dates and confirmed investments) in a short period of time sensitive to children's best interests, development and distinct community needs.
4. GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS providing services to First Nations children and families to undergo a thorough and independent 360° evaluation to identify any ongoing discriminatory ideologies, policies or practices and address them. These evaluation must be publicly available.
5. ALL PUBLIC SERVANTS including those at a senior level, to receive mandatory training to identify and address government ideology, policies and practices that fetter the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action."⁸

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

We come from a past in which the lives of our children were assaulted and devastated in countless ways. It would be no exaggeration to speak of a national abuse of a generation by a society which it should have been able to trust.

...one of our highest priorities must therefore be our children.

The vision of a new society that guides us should already be manifest in the steps we take to address the wrong done to our youth and to prepare for their future. Our actions and policies, and the institutions we create, should be eloquent with care, respect and love.

This is essentially a national task. The primary responsibility is that of government, institutions and organised sectors of civil society. But at the same time we are all of us, as individuals, called upon to give direction and impetus to the changes that must come.

Our actions should declare, in a practical and exemplary way, the importance and the urgency of the matter."

~ Nelson Mandela

8. Source: <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-plan>

6. Involve Children in Decisions that Affect their Lives

Children have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives, including being consulted on policy decisions at the highest levels of government. Children have valuable ideas and opinions that are crucial for the development of truly child-centred policies. When young people are informed and engaged, better decisions will be made within families, schools and even at the highest levels of government. Effective and sustainable change can only happen when we act with children, not for them. Mechanisms like the Young Canadians' Parliament and youth advisory councils should be regularly used by government to meaningfully engage them as leaders today and leaders of the future.

We also call on all federal parties to commit to lowering the voting age in Canada. While some adults may view this as a radical concept, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms already protects the rights of every citizen to vote. Children are citizens, and they have a right to be involved in decisions that impact them, including electing Members of Parliament.

Moreover, all of Canada's major federal political parties allow 14-year olds to join as members and enjoy full participatory rights, including voting in party leadership contests and local nomination contests. Many jurisdictions around the world have successfully lowered the voting age and boosted voter engagement.⁹ There is ample research that demonstrates that youth possess the cognitive abilities to be able to vote, and there are no competency tests applied to adults, including the elderly and persons with cognitive disabilities. In addition, there are legal provisions in Canada for adolescents aged 16 to drive a car, enlist in the reserves, and provide sexual consent.

In addition to enabling young people to exercise their political rights, youth also believe that lowering the voting age would result in their concerns being given greater weight. 63% of young people felt that politicians would pay more attention to the issues youth care about if they had the right to vote.¹⁰

When recommending that the voting age be lowered, youth have also called for increased education for children and adolescents about their civil and political rights and responsibilities, in addition to educating adults and combatting the stigma that youth aren't capable.

“Younger people certainly have the capacity to comprehend the impacts of their vote. We learn calculus, we learn physics, and when armed with the proper tools and education, we can learn how to make informed decisions when voting. We are constantly working towards a better world, which is in large part improving the world for the next generations. Who better to join the discussion than the next generation themselves? More young people voting means more young voices heard.”

- Youth participant in consultation on lowering the voting age

9. Countries that have lowered the voting age to 16 include: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Ecuador, Estonia (in local elections), Germany (some state elections), Malta, Nicaragua, Scotland and Wales.

10. Lowering the Voting Age in Canada: National Consultation Report, Children First Canada, 2020.



This big, bold plan for all 8 million children in Canada must:

- Be developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, and with input from civil society and children themselves.
- Be established in consultation with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, recognizing their unique rights, and with a commitment to a whole-of-government approach to Nation-to-Nation and Inuit-to-Crown relationships.
- Prioritize the top threats to children's health and wellbeing as Canada recovers from the pandemic.
- Establish priorities, targets and respective responsibilities for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and enable the provinces and territories to adopt accordingly their own specific plans and strategies.
- Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this comprehensive strategy (or Commissioner).
- Monitor and evaluate the efficacy, adequacy, and equitability of the distribution of resources allocated to this Strategy (or Commissioner).
- Establish a national and comprehensive data collection system and analyse the data collected as a basis for consistently assessing progress. Data will be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnicity and socio-economic background to facilitate analysis on the situation of all children, with particular concern for children that are the most vulnerable.

CALL TO ACTION

As members of the public, Canadians have immense power to urge those seeking office to take action to improve the lives of children and invest today for the sake of all Canadians. Candidates should be urged to share their plans, ideas and points of view around these issues. As Canadians prepare to head to the polls, now is the time to demand that these challenges be tackled.

1. Engage candidates on social media

- Tag federal party leaders and your local candidates on social media. Here's a suggested post:

I endorse the Children's Platform and plan to #voteforourfuture. What is your plan to prioritize children and invest in them, so they thrive and survive? #elxn44 #cdnpoli #voteforourfuture @children1stca

- Party leaders handles: @JustinTrudeau @erinotoole @yfbianchet @theJagmeetSingh @AnnamiePaul
- Find your local candidates by entering your postal code under "my voter information" on the [Election Canada's website](#). You can also find your candidates by party; the parties' websites often list information about each candidate and include links to their websites and social media pages.

2. Engage candidates in your riding

- Go to debates and ask questions about whether they will endorse the Children's Platform and commit to investing in children so they can thrive and survive?
- Call your candidates' offices. Tell them that you plan to vote for our future, and ask whether they will commit to implementing the Children's Platform?
- When someone phones or comes to your door ask them where they stand.
- If they hold events, go and ask them questions.

Supporting materials:

- Print off the Children's platform handout and ask candidates if they endorse the recommendations.
- Print the Children's platform poster and stick it to your door, window or mailbox for candidates to see during canvassing.
- Social media shareable are available for you to use

Download these resources at childrenfirstcanada.org/campaign/election/

3. Spread the news:

Share the Children's Platform with friends, family and colleagues and ask them to make children a priority in the federal election and [#voteforourfuture](#).

4. Stay informed

Keep up to date on where each party stands and what is happening in the election as it relates to children by following Children First Canada on social media [@children1stca](#), keep tabs on our [website](#) and [sign up for the newsletter](#). On our website you can check out our [platform analysis](#) which will be updated as parties announce their platforms.

5. Involve Children

Kids Speak up!

Share the information about the Children's Platform with children and youth, and ask them what they think. Invite them to speak up and make their voices heard. They can take all of the actions listed above, and also take creative actions like creating their own campaign signs and posting them outside or on social media.

Co-vote

Have discussions with your kids about the recommendations in the Children's Platform, make a joint decision on who to vote for and go together to the voting booth.

6. Vote For Our Future

Make your voice heard on election day.

- a. Make a plan for when you will vote and how you will get there.
- b. Post a message to social media on your way to/from the polling station and share your commitment to [#voteforourfuture](#).
- c. Details on voting accessed [here](#).

Find more information, go [here](#).

#voteforourfuture



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