

The Benefits of Children and Youth First Principles in Providing Government Services and the Link to Child Rights Impact Assessments



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

54 Articles-

Four Basic Principles

- Non-Discrimination
- The best interest of the child
- The right to survival, life and development
- Participation



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

- The average person may not know what the Convention is.
- Professionals working in child serving systems may not know what it is.
- If they do know what it is do they understand how they can and should apply it to their work with children and youth?

Development of the Children and Youth First Principles

- There was a growing sense that there were some significant rights violations occurring.
- Mr. Marvin Bernstein Saskatchewan Children's Advocate at the time took on the task of developing child rights based principles.

Development of the Children and Youth Principles

- Using the Convention, this was an attempt to distill the most relevant articles.
- Guide for stake holders to place children and youth at the centre of the work.
- Endorsed by the Government in 2009.

Children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to:

- Those rights defined by the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- Participate and be heard before any decision affecting them is made.
- Have their 'best interests' given paramount consideration in any action or decision involving them.
- An equal standard of care, protection and services.
- The highest standard of health and education possible in order to reach their fullest potential.
- Safety and protection from all forms of physical, emotional and sexual harm, while in the care of parents, governments, legal guardians or any person.
- Be treated as the primary client, and at the centre, of all child serving systems.
- Have consideration given to the importance of their unique life history and spiritual traditions and practices, in accordance with their stated views and preferences.

Justice Corrections and Policing Youth Strategic Plan

- Youth have individual rights and freedoms.
- Effective service guided by research and best practice.
- Youth in conflict with the law have the potential to make changes and become contributing members of communities.
- Long term reduction of offending occurs when youth are held accountable through a balance of meaningful consequences and rehabilitation.
- Effective interventions take into account a young person's level of maturity and development, ethnic and cultural background, cognitive and mental health needs.
- Integrated case management that includes parents, extended family, communities, partnerships with First Nations and Métis organizations, other ministries and CBOs is essential to promote services that reduce offending.
- Ministry employees and partners are our most valuable resources in accomplishing our goals and objectives.
- <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/cp-cr>

Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- Those rights defined by the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing Youth Strategy

- Youth have individual rights and freedoms.

Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- Participate and be heard before any decision affecting them is made.

Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing Youth Strategy

- Youth in conflict with the law have the potential to make changes and become contributing members of communities.
- All assessments, case conferences, community safety plans are created **with** the young person.

Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- Have their ‘best interests’ given paramount consideration in any action or decision involving them.

Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing Youth Strategy

- Effective interventions take into account a young person’s level of maturity and development, ethnic and cultural background, cognitive and mental health needs.

Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- An equal standard of care, protection and services

Ministry of Justice, Correction and Policing Youth Strategy

- All youth receiving custody or community services are treated with respect .
- Regardless of status, services provided as needed.

Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- The highest standard of health and education possible in order to reach their fullest potential.

Ministry of Justice, Correction and Policing Youth Strategy

- Effective service guided by research and best practice.



Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- Safety and protection from all forms of physical, emotional and sexual harm, while in the care of parents, governments, legal guardians or any person.

Ministry of Justice, Correction and Policing Youth Strategy

- Ministry employees and partners are our most valuable resources in accomplishing our goals and objectives.



Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- Be treated as the primary client, and at the centre, of all child serving systems.



Ministry of Justice, Correction and Policing Youth Strategy

- Effective interventions take into account a young person's level of maturity and development, ethnic and cultural background, cognitive and mental health needs.

One Youth, One Plan



Rights and Principles Based Work with Youth

Saskatchewan Children and Youth First Principles

- Have consideration given to the importance of their unique life history and spiritual traditions and practices, in accordance with their stated views and preferences.

Ministry of Justice, Correction and Policing Youth Strategy

- Effective interventions take into account a young person's level of maturity and development, ethnic and cultural background, cognitive and mental health needs.
- Integrated case management that includes parents, extended family, communities, partnerships with First Nations and Métis organizations, other ministries and CBOs is essential to promote services that reduce offending.



Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children Youth and Families

- The current Advocate for Children and Youth, Bob Pringle, has now added the Touchstones of Hope Principles to the Advocate philosophy in Saskatchewan.
- Created by the Family Caring Society, this is a guide that recognizes the history between Indigenous peoples of Canada and Child Welfare Services.



Ministry of Justice
Corrections and Policing
First Nations & Métis Services

We are guided by our vision of enhancing the holistic balance of individuals in the correctional system.

Our mission is to contribute to safer communities by decreasing reoffending,
through guidance and sharing of First Nations and Métis knowledge and tradition.

We believe in a balanced approach to Public Safety
– respecting individual rights, client needs,
and spiritual / cultural protocol.

We promote respect and understanding for the
difficult backgrounds and personal experiences
of First Nations & Métis people involved
in the Correctional System.



We honour partnerships with First Nations and Métis people, organizations, and communities – based on respect, collective responsibility, and teamwork.

We develop & deliver cultural services that are guided by our elders and best practices to complement Core Correctional practices.

Culture

- Cultural services are offered in all custody facilities in the province.
- Five of the eight facilities have a full time cultural coordinator.
- The remaining three facilities which include Echo, Yarrow and Drumming Hill provide cultural services without having an actual coordinator position attached to the facility.



Culture

- Every facility has cultural Advisor/elders services available to all residents.
- Individual mentoring is provided on a regular basis or in emergent situations.(grief, loss, behavior issues as needed)
- Sweat lodge , pipe ceremonies, smudging, arts and crafts, storytelling ,singing and drumming are some of the activities offered in the facilities.



Community Cultural Services

- Service Provider Program
- Inviting the community to cultural events at the facilities



Connection to Child Rights Impact Assessments

- The Convention is the foundation of any rights based work done with and on behalf of children and youth.
- If a child and youth serving ministry is adhering to the Convention, a Child Rights Impact Assessment would come out positive.
- The Children and Youth First Principles are a guide to make adhering to the Convention that much more possible .

The connection to Child Rights Impact Assessments

- Similar to how Child Rights Impact Assessments put children at the centre of policy, children and Youth First Principles put children at the centre of all work involving them.



The End

Roxane Schury, B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W., R.S.W.

Manager Legislation, Policy and Planning

Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Corrections and
Policing, Custody Supervision and Rehabilitation
Services

Roxane.Schury@gov.sk.ca

(306) 787-5406