



**VOTE for
every child.**

Kids can't vote, but their futures are on the ballot

Policies for children are too rarely discussed in Canadian elections. Children and youth are unable to vote before they turn 18, and children living in other countries who are affected by the decisions of Canada's government will never get a say. That's why it falls to those of us who do have a vote to make sure we cast our ballot with children and youth in mind.



As Canada's leading child rights organization, UNICEF Canada is calling on all Canadians to make their vote in this federal election a #VoteForEveryChild.

The COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered and exacerbated existing inequalities faced by children and youth around the world. Progress has gone backward across virtually every key measure of childhood development. The signs that children will bear the scars of the pandemic for years to come are unmistakable, and the cost of inaction is high.

The world now has the largest generation of young people in history. While children and youth face unique barriers and challenges, they are also inherently powerful and capable of offering innovative solutions.

Visit the campaign website at www.unicef.ca/voteforeverychild where you can:



Send a letter to
the candidate in
your riding



Reach out to
party leaders on
social media



View and download
campaign
resources



The federal election is our chance to stand with children everywhere and champion these policies when politicians ask for our vote.



Protect the Right to Childhood

Canada should work toward a world where every child has the equal opportunity to be a kid. That's why the federal party platforms should include a plan to **end discrimination in services provided to Indigenous children**, a clear commitment to **increase the international assistance envelope**, and an assurance that they will take concrete steps to **end child poverty**.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a child rights crisis. Canada's next government should support an Integrated Agenda for Children through COVID-19 recovery and commit new funding for children in crises.

Give Children the Best Possible Start in Life

A child's earliest years are critical to their development, and Canada's next government should support children and families through this important life phase. That means **expanding and improving Canada's parental leave system** and ensuring accessible, **high-quality early learning and child care** is available to all. This focus on a child's earliest years – the most important phase of development in a person's life- should not end within our own borders: Canada's next government should also focus its international assistance on children in crises and increased support for early childhood development.

Ensure Children and Youth are Happy, Healthy and Safe

Children and youth have sacrificed a lot to keep their families and communities safe during the pandemic. Now is the time for government to focus on their well-being. Canada's next government should **invest in child and youth mental health**, **invest in a National School Food Program**, and develop a **National Strategy on Ending Violence Against Children**. Internationally, there is a need for government to realize the rights of the most marginalized children to be educated, protected, healthy, empowered and free from discrimination.

Make Parliament Accountable to Children and Youth

Part of the reason policies that would help children and youth are so rarely discussed is that our democratic institutions are not responsive enough to the roughly 8 million children and youth who don't get to vote. To improve accountability, Canada's next government should explore establishing a **National Commissioner or Commission for Children and Youth** and consider **lowering the voting age in federal elections to 16**. To show leadership internationally, the federal parties should commit to appointing a **Special Envoy for Children in Crisis** and creating a **Global Child and Youth Advisory Council**. Canada's next government should also commit to public finance reforms for children to ensure transparency in how federal funds are spent on programs and services for children and youth.