



BC ASSOCIATION *of*
SOCIAL WORKERS

BC Association of Social Workers
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SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS CALL FOR MORE SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

(Vancouver) BC's social work association supports the call for more services for children and youth with special needs following a review of how they and their families are managing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Representative for Children and Youth in BC Jennifer Charlesworth's report highlights how fragile and limited support systems for children and youth are and how the pandemic has added additional stress" said Michael Crawford, President of the BC Association of Social Workers. "COVID-related restrictions have meant that children and youth with special needs have lost access to medical, psychosocial, and recreational services and in some cases, families have lost much needed respite services."

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth surveyed 545 families of children and youth with special needs from across the province including families of First Nations, Métis and Inuk children. The report, "Left out: Children and youth with special needs in the pandemic" notes that many of the concerns raised by the families predated the pandemic.

"Services for children and youth with special needs have been inadequate for decades and, like in so many other areas, the pandemic has shone a light on gaps in services" said Crawford. "The recommendations in this report deserve serious consideration and immediate action by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to ensure long-term permanent improvements for all children and youth with special needs."

The Representative's report calls for an extension of all pandemic-related benefits for families of children and youth with special needs, a plain-language communication strategy by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to ensure families receive their entitled services, bringing families together with service providers and funding ministries to form a special needs roundtable, and for an immediate start to the work of fixing a broken system of care and developing a new service framework.

Left Out: Children and youth with special needs in the pandemic
<https://rcybc.ca/reports-and-publications/>

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The BC Association of Social Workers is a voluntary, not-for-profit membership association that supports and promotes the profession of social work and advocates for social justice.