



November 20, 2009

Via e-mail: NichoR@parl.gc.ca

Honourable Robert Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Nicholson:

As Canada prepares to celebrate *National Child Day* on November 20th, the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) would like to draw your attention to the fact that as a signatory of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the government of Canada committed to ensuring that all children in our country are fully provided for and protected, and that they have access to a healthy, productive and respectful life.

Unfortunately, the level of child poverty and the high proportion of children in care are unacceptable, particularly when compared to other high-income countries. Rates of childhood obesity and diabetes are on the rise – and there are especially vulnerable groups of children, such as those in aboriginal communities, immigrants and refugees, and those in economically disadvantaged families – with quality of life and health indicators that are of concern.

In signing the UN Convention, Canada committed to being accountable to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. With reports due every five years, our research indicates the latest report was submitted in 2001. Several of the recommendations made by the UN Committee, in response to Canada's report, have not been implemented, including that of establishing an ombudsman's office responsible for children's rights at the federal level.

On this 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention, CNA is:

- seeking clarification by the government on the status of its reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee;
- urging the government to implement policies and programs that foster equitable opportunities for children – such as quality, affordable child care; enhanced child benefits; investments in education; and health and welfare – regardless of status at birth or place of residence; and

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- seeking agreement by the federal government to monitor and report annually on indicators for child health and social supports and services.

We believe that investment in children is fundamental, now and for the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kaaren Neufeld".

Kaaren Neufeld, RN, MN
President

cc. Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health