



United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child:

Concluding Observations on the Combined Fifth and Sixth Reports of Canada

Introduction

On May 17-18, 2022, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child ("CRC") held meetings on Canada's fifth and sixth periodic reviews. On June 3, 2022, the CRC adopted its "Concluding Observations".

The CRC keeps track of how State parties have implemented the Convention on the Rights of the Child ("the Convention"). State parties, such as Canada, are countries that have both signed and ratified the Convention. Ratified means that a country goes beyond agreeing to follow the convention and is legally bound to it.

State parties must provide reports every few years, or when requested by the CRC, on how they have implemented the Convention. The CRC then looks over each report and lets the State parties know of their concerns and recommendations; these concerns and recommendations are called "Concluding Observations." This information sheet outlines the concerns and recommendations made by the CRC regarding Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) youth and families.

Concerns and Recommendations

1. The CRC urged Canada to fully implement the following articles:
 - a. Article 21 of the CRC, which relates to the best interests of the child being paramount in cases of adoption and ensuring that children remain in their homes unless it is not in their best interests.
 - b. Article 37(c) of the CRC, which outlines that in cases of detention, children are always treated with human dignity and that their best interests are the top priority when allowing them access to their families.
2. The CRC then urged that Canada create a federal law on children's rights based on the principles within the Convention. This would ensure that laws throughout the country consider children's rights.
3. The CRC recommended that Canada ensure that budgetary lines for children in the federal budget, especially those rendered systemically vulnerable like Indigenous children, remain intact despite emergencies, economic crises, or natural disasters.
4. Canada was recommended to urgently implement a children's rights monitoring process within the federal government that works towards addressing complaints by children in a way that they understand. This process would also issue public reports on Canada's state of children's rights. The CRC also urged Canada to restore the Ontario Child advocate's office.
5. Canada was told to end the systemic discrimination against Indigenous children and eliminate the gaps in accessing services for all children.
6. The CRC recommended that Canada put children's best interests at the forefront of decision-making regarding legislation, judicial, and administrative processes regarding children.
7. Canada was urged to take measures to preserve Indigenous children's identity and to guarantee that children in care receive culturally appropriate education to ensure their connection to identity.
8. The CRC, concerned about Indigenous children's safety in the child welfare system, urged Canada to implement a national strategy for violence prevention against children and a monitoring mechanism.
9. Canada was urged to reinforce its preventative measures and provide families with better services to avoid placing youth in care, and reduce the number of children already in care. Further, if there is a need to place a child in care, that it be

done in cooperation with families, for the shortest amount of time, and not done based on the family living in poverty.

10. The CRC encouraged Canada to continue to work towards applying a human rights lens to how they approach accessibility in the country. In particular, they asked that Canada strengthen their support services for Indigenous children living with disabilities, and work in cooperation with communities to eliminate financial barriers for families. The CRC recommended that Canada include Indigenous children living with disabilities on reserve in developing programs and services.
11. Canada was implored to immediately address gaps in the health of Indigenous children, those living with disabilities, living in remote areas and those in care.
12. The CRC recommended the implementation of a child-specific aspect to Canada's Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention that focused, amongst other things, on Indigenous children.
13. Canada was urged to collaborate with Indigenous communities to address the water boil advisories. In addition, the CRC requested that Canada strengthen their efforts to address child poverty and homelessness in Indigenous communities.
14. The CRC recommended that Canada ensure that all Indigenous children receive culturally-appropriate education.

Finally, the CRC urged Canada to circulate the information provided in the concluding observations. Specifically, they recommended Canada make that information available in child-friendly language, in the languages spoken in the country, and accessible to children no matter where they live or who they are.

What's next?

Canada will submit its seventh and eighth periodic reports to the CRC by January 2027. Read the full Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and fifth reports of Canada [here](#).

If you're interested in learning more about your country's progress in uplifting children's rights, visit www.kidsrights.org for annual reports and the [KidsRights Index](#), which gives a global ranking of how children's rights are respected annually by country.