



CHILDREN FIRST
CANADA

Raising Canada

Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on children

Sara L. Austin, Founder & CEO


National Network of Child Advocacy Centres

April 24, 2020



RAISING CANADA

- The state of childhood in Canada
- The impact of COVID-19 on children
- The opportunities for advocacy



There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

Nelson Mandela



**CHILDREN
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**LES ENFANTS
D'ABORD**
CANADA

THE STATE OF CHILDHOOD IN CANADA



In a good and decent society, we take care of the children, because in doing so, we not only express our humanity, we ensure our future.

- Diane Ravitch





A strong, independent and effective voice for *all* of Canada's children.

IN THE PAST DECADE CANADA HAS FALLEN FROM 12TH PLACE FOR CHILDREN'S WELLBEING TO 25th out of 41 wealthy nations

It's time to change the trajectory for **Canada's kids!**

CHILDREN FIRST CANADA HAS A BOLD AND AMBITIOUS VISION THAT TOGETHER WE CAN make Canada the best place in the world for kids to grow up!



How does Canada rank against its global peers for the wellbeing of children?

High-Performing Countries:

1. Norway*
2. Germany
3. Denmark*
4. Sweden*
5. Finland*
6. Iceland*
7. Switzerland
8. Republic of Korea
9. Slovenia*
10. Netherlands*
11. Ireland*
12. Japan
13. United Kingdom*
14. Luxembourg*

Mid-Ranked Countries:

15. Austria*
16. Spain
17. Estonia*
18. Portugal
19. France*
20. Czech Republic
21. Australia*
22. Croatia*
23. Poland*
24. Italy*
25. **CANADA**
26. Belgium*
27. Cyprus*
28. Latvia*

Bottom-Ranked Countries:

29. Malta*
30. Slovakia*
31. Greece*
32. Hungary*
33. Lithuania*
34. New Zealand*
35. Israel
36. Turkey
37. United States
38. Mexico
39. Romania
40. Bulgaria*
41. Chile

* Indicates countries with a Children's Commissioner / Ombudsperson.

Source: Innocenti Report Card 14, 2017

Canada has been heading in the wrong direction!

Canada vs UK in child wellbeing rankings



Between 2007 – 2017:

The UK made *an improvement of 8 points on the global scale!*

Meanwhile Canada worsened its ranking by *13 points!*



RAISING CANADA

There are nearly 8 million kids in Canada below the age of 18. One third of them do not enjoy a safe and healthy childhood

- Canada's rate of infant mortality is among the highest of OECD countries, with the rates for Nunavut being three times higher than the national average.
- Accidents continue to be the leading cause of death of children in Canada, and each year thousands of children are hospitalized due to preventable injuries.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for children and youth, and Canada is ranked in the top five countries for the highest child suicide rates globally.
- Hospitalizations and Emergency Department visits for mental health concerns have increased considerably over the past decade.
- Nutrition, physical activity and weight continue to need attention, with more than 25 per cent of children reportedly being obese or overweight.
- Food insecurity and inadequate housing plague far too many children: one in five children live in poverty, and one in 10 experiences moderate or severe food insecurity, with poverty rates being highest amongst indigenous children.
- Child abuse represents a public health crisis for Canada, with one in three Canadians reporting some form of child abuse before the age of 16.
- One quarter of Canada's children are vulnerable in one or more areas of development prior to entering the first grade.

Key Findings

Only **3%** of Canadians

ARE AWARE OF THE HARSH REALITY THAT WE RANK

25th out of 41 wealthy countries

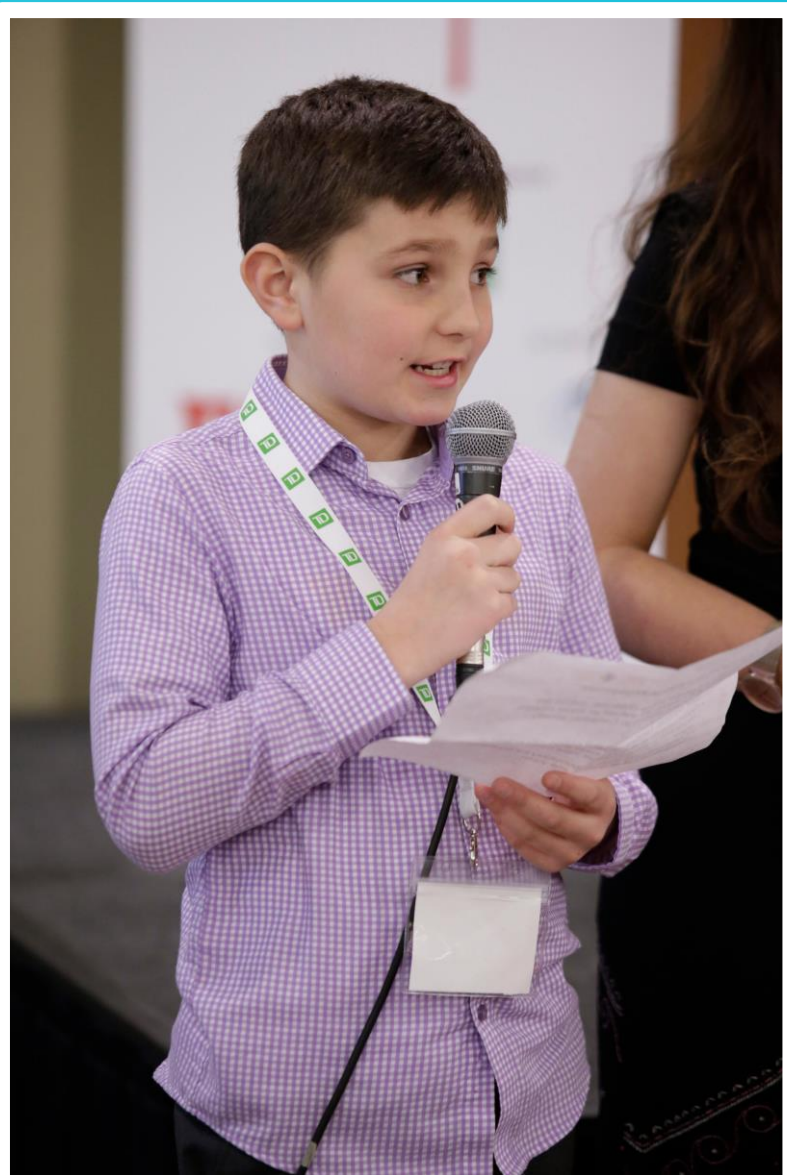
FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING



We're trying to solve a problem that Canadians don't know exists.







“People like to say that ‘children are our future’ but we are also the present.

We are Canadian citizens. If we could vote, perhaps the issues we face would be a greater focus.

Listen to our voices and take action to support children.

We are citizens of this country, present and future, disempowered, but as important as any adult.

18 is just a number.”

Roman Wolfli, 12 years old from Calgary, AB

The good news...
once Canadians
learn where we
rank, they strongly
support the need for
action!



ONCE INFORMED OF CANADA'S ACTUAL RANK,

Nine in Ten (91%)

CANADIANS BELIEVE CANADA SHOULD PUT

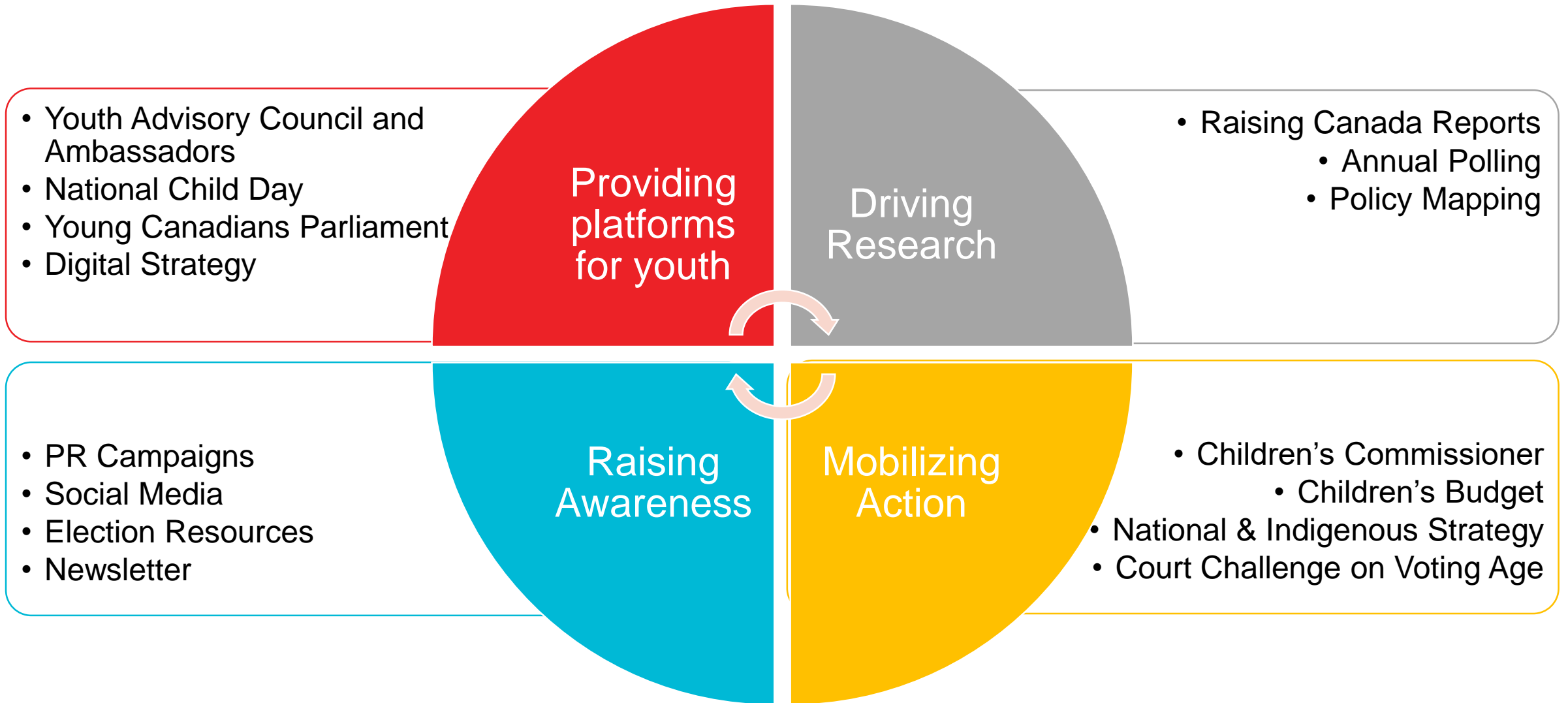
**a high priority on improving its
rating for children's well-being**

with 4 in 10 (43%) believing it should be

a very high priority



Making what matters to kids matter to Canadians...



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN



Leading a coordinated response to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on kids

- At Children First Canada, we've taken steps to minimize risks such as postponing events and restricting travel. While the ways in which we do our work is changing, we will not cease in our efforts to advocate for kids and empower kids to advocate for themselves. Today and every day, we remain committed to prioritizing the rights of kids in Canada and mobilizing action to improve their wellbeing. [Read more](#)
- [View our list](#) of resources for children and families impacted by COVID-19, with information on how to stay healthy and safe, mental health resources, and finances.
- [Read more](#) about the impact of COVID-19 on children in Canada and the recommendations from our Council of Champions to the federal, provincial and municipal governments.
- Children First Canada has joined over 200 of Canada's leading charities to call on the Federal Government for emergency support to face the COVID-19 crisis. Here is our letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister Chrystia Freeland and Minister Bill Morneau: [English version](#), [French version](#), [List of signatories](#).



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Vulnerability of kids to abuse during COVID-19

- High stress home environments – increased risk of domestic violence and child abuse
- Kids no longer have a safe haven at school – teachers are less likely to detect signs of abuse and report it
- More time online – increased risk of online abuse and exploitation and of exposure to pornography
- Social isolation – limiting the ability of kids who have a history of trauma to access the care and support they need to continue to heal

WE'RE HAVING AN IMPACT

Feds announce additional funding to help seniors, kids during COVID-19 outbreak

Speaking from his home in Ottawa, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced additional funding for children and seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mar 29, 2020

Nikitha Martins, Tarnjit Parmar and Marc...



Lobbying for funding

- \$7.5 million confirmed for Kids Help Phone
- Additional funding requests being considered for:
 - Child Advocacy Centres
 - Children's Aid Foundation
 - Children's Hospitals
 - Other frontline charities

The Prime Minister
has been delivering a
weekly message to
kids each Sunday

[CLICK HERE](#)

For the lego animated
version of the PM's
statement to children



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It's not every day that you get to ask the PM a question, especially if you're a kid!



Children First Canada asked the Prime Minister to host a special press conference aimed at taking questions from children and youth and he agreed to do just that!

More than 4000 kids submitted questions, and on Sunday Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Dr. Theresa Tam (Chief Medical officer) responded to the top 10 questions in an interview with CBC Kids. [Check it out.](#)



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The kids are not alright



Child abuse will spike amid COVID-19 crisis, advocates warn

By [Alastair Sharp](#)
News, Generation Toronto
April 1st 2020

#190 of 303 articles from the Special Report:
[Coronavirus in Canada](#)



Three proven strategies would measurably improve the wellbeing of children in Canada. Too many kids aren't living a safe and healthy childhood.

Impact from pandemic especially hard on vulnerable children

by [Hana Mae Nassar](#)
POSTED MAR 31, 2020 7:01 AM MDT




Making headlines...



End Violence  @GPtoEndViolence · 5d 

Global leaders come together in solidarity to share their concern, call for action and pledge their support to protect children from violence – and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 – across the world.

We must act now! [bit.ly/LeadersStateme...](https://bit.ly/LeadersStatement)



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY

It takes a village to raise a child,
but it takes a nation
to raise a nation.

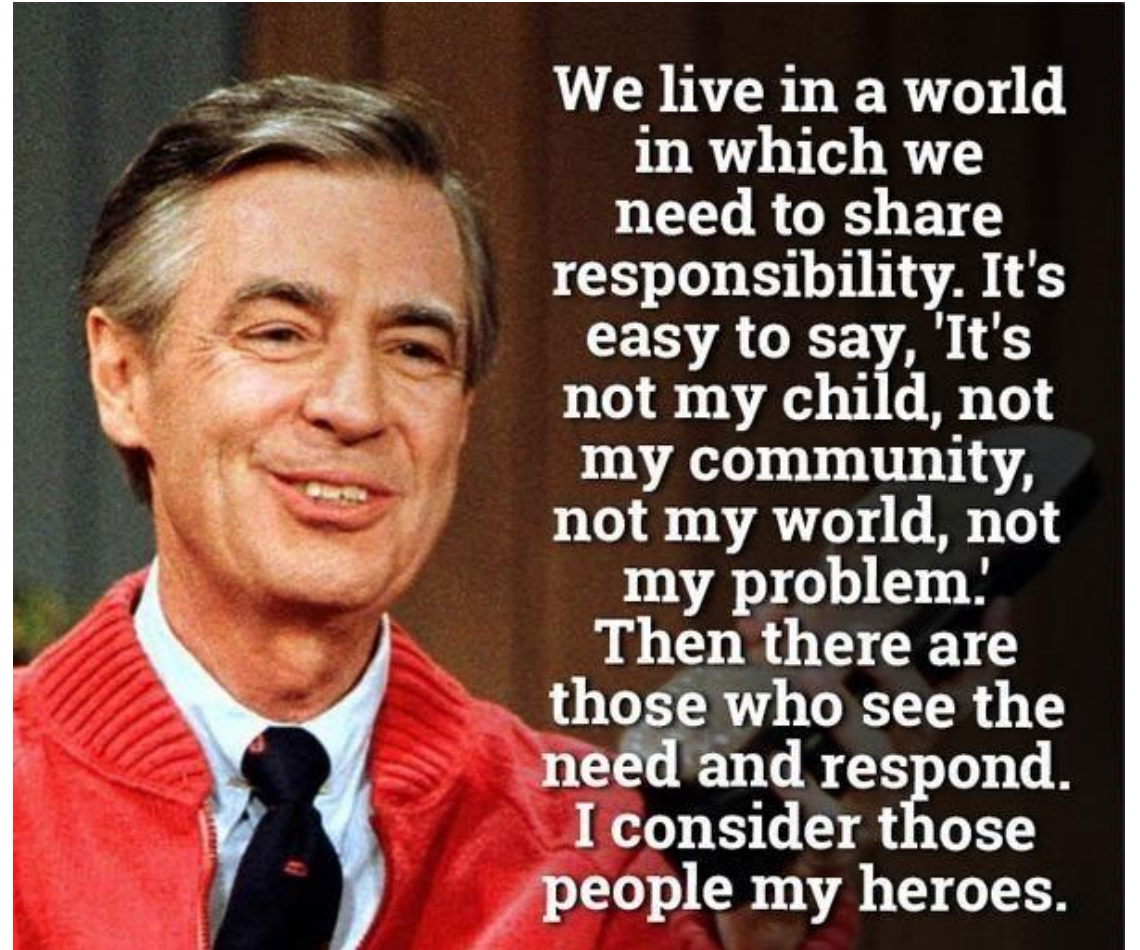
Sara Austin
Founder & CEO





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**We live in a world
in which we
need to share
responsibility. It's
easy to say, 'It's
not my child, not
my community,
not my world, not
my problem.'
Then there are
those who see the
need and respond.
I consider those
people my heroes.**

Opportunities for advocacy – individual action

EACH ONE TEACH ONE

Teach children their rights. Support them to speak up and make their voices heard and to be advocates for themselves and their peers in their community and across the country. Plan a celebration for National Child Day (Nov. 20th)

SPREAD THE NEWS

Engage media and your social network and spread awareness about the impact of the crisis on kids.

STAY INFORMED

Keep up to date on what is happening for kids in Canada by following Children First Canada on social media, keep tabs on our website and sign up for the newsletter.

REPORT A CONCERN

If you are concerned a child who needs protection, you must contact your local police and/or your local child welfare agency to report that information.

If your concerns are about a child who is in immediate danger or risk, call 911 or your local police.

ENGAGE FEDERAL LEADERS

Call on all levels of government to prioritize the concerns of children and to mitigate the impact of the crisis on kids.

Tag them on social media or call their office and ask what their plan is to make this a world-leading country for kids.

Find your MP by entering your postal code at www.ourcommons.ca/members/en

Opportunities for advocacy – collective action

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Engage local media in helping promote the signs of abuse and the duty to report.

JOINT STATEMENT

Produce a joint statement to provincial and federal governments highlighting the vulnerability of kids to violence in the pandemic.

RESEARCH

Work together on data collection and analysis of the impact of the crisis on child abuse trends. The results can be used for awareness raising and lobbying throughout the duration of the pandemic, and can be summarized in a report.

STRENGTHEN CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICES

Participate in and host webinars for frontline professionals, tapping into other networks like ISPCAN, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian Pediatric Society, etc.



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Call for applications:

Youth Advisory Council

Visit childrenfirstcanada.org to apply or learn more

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
IN CHILD-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

CHILDREN FIRST CANADA

EVERY CHILD HAS SOMETHING IN COMMON - THEIR RIGHTS!



Call on our federal candidates to tackle the top 10 threats to Canadian children:

- THREAT #1: Accidents & Preventable Injuries
- THREAT #2: Suicide, Depression & Anxiety
- THREAT #3: Child Abuse
- THREAT #4: Poverty
- THREAT #5: Infant Mortality
- THREAT #6: Obesity & Inactivity
- THREAT #7: Food Insecurity
- THREAT #8: Immunization
- THREAT #9: Discrimination
- THREAT #10: Bullying

Check out our resources

www.childrenfirstcanada.org

www.nationachildday.org

No violence against children is acceptable, and all violence against children is preventable.

Paulo Sergio Pinero

From the UN Study on Violence Against Children



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For more information:

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