



**Defence for Children
International-Canada**

www.dci-canada.org

a worldwide movement for children's rights

20 Spadina Road
Toronto Ontario M5R 2S7
Tel 416-907-7432
contact@dci-canada.org

Media Release

Re Release of report by BC Representative for Children and Youth provides opportunity for fundamental change in Ontario

Release date – July 16, 2024

In releasing, this week, her seminal report, “Don’t Look Away”, the British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth has courageously imagined an alternative to our current dysfunctional, failing child protection system.

The report honours the short life of a precious First Nation young boy caught up in an unforgiving system. Our hearts and prayers are with his family and others who loved him. In turn the report also honours the lives of so many other children, connected in some manner to child protection, across Canada who we have lost (in 2022-23, a shocking record 136 children in Ontario alone)

“I was a Member of the Circle of Advisors to the creation of “Don’t Look Away”, said Irwin Elman, President of Defence for Children International – Canada and former Child Advocate for Ontario, “The report calls for the building of a “Child Well Being System” that one day could subsume our child protection system. A system that is built and stewarded both by the Legislature in a non partisan manner and by the public service through an empowered whole of government body working across Ministries. A process where both the public service and the Legislature holds itself accountable for meaningful, measurable results”

In Ontario our child protection system is now in free fall. The evidence has never been more clear. In Ontario other systems of care (mental health, complex special needs, special education, addiction, intimate partner violence) have been hollowed out and are unable to meet demand. This too is irrefutable.

We are in the midst of a dangerous perfect storm.

Elman said, “The BC Representative has courageously set for us a “North Star”. We call upon Ontario to join us as we support the effort of forward thinking service provider Stepstones for Youth as they convene the most generative thought leaders, including young people, parents and members of overrepresented groups in child protection to use this moment to build a vision for a made in Ontario child well being system that can serve as our North Star.”

Elman added “We won’t look away. Don’t you”

-30-

For more information and media availability contact office@dci-canada.org

Defence for Children International – Canada is a National Section of Defence for Children International. DCI – Canada boldly promotes the rights and voice of those children in Canada and around the globe most marginalized from their rights