



Media Release

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For immediate release

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November 20 is the 25th annual National Child Day

Our Kids Network joins national campaign focused on every child's right to an identity

Halton Region, Ontario – Twenty-five years ago, the Canadian government proclaimed November 20 as National Child Day to commemorate two historic events: the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1959, and the UN adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

In Halton Region, Our Kids Network (OKN) uses the annual occasion to encourage everyone to think about and discuss children's rights in our community and around the world.

The adoption of The Child Day Act in 1993 solidified Canada's commitment to ensuring that children and youth are respected, listened to, protected, and can thrive. In 2018, The Educational Partnership Foundation (TEPF), based in Alberta and the organization behind the website nationalchildday.ca, identified Article 8, "a child's right to an identity," as the theme.

Identity is a legal concept within the UN Convention and is every child's entitlement from birth. Director of Our Kids Network, Elena DiBattista, said the right to an identity is the foundation of physical and mental wellbeing, and emotional security.

"Having a strong identity is the basis of feeling secure about your place in the world," she said. "Children have the right to a name, a nationality, a culture, and a faith if they choose. They have the right to learn about their environment, express what they think and how they feel, and be who they want to be."

The UN Convention also outlines a child's right to live with a family who cares for them and an education that helps develop their talents and abilities.

"Our Kids Network is built on the idea that everyone in the community has responsibility for the wellbeing of children and youth," DiBattista said. "That's why we collect and share information that professionals and families can use to support the children in their lives. It's essential that every child feels he or she is someone important, is valued, and has great potential."

OKN shared some ways to help young people develop a strong sense of identity. Adults should encourage children and teens to:

- Pursue their interests and develop their strengths
- Be curious and ask questions
- Support others by listening; encourage others the way they like to be encouraged
- Learn constructive ways to handle difficult situations
- Talk about values, rights, and responsibilities and how to respect them

- Celebrate diversity

“There are plenty of resources in Halton to help parents and caregivers put the concept of identity into action,” DiBattista said. “Even if you’re not a parent, you can nurture and support the children in your life by being approachable, a good listener, and advocating for their wellbeing. Let’s all use this day to talk about how all our children and youth have the right to thrive.”

Our Kids Network is a Halton-wide partnership of organizations and agencies serving children and youth that embraces the vision “All children thrive.” For more information about Our Kids Network, visit ourkidsnetwork.ca.

More information and resources related to National Child Day are available through the Public Health Agency of Canada at canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/national-child-day.html. UNICEF Canada also provides resources at unicef.ca/ncd, including a kid-friendly poster that lists the rights outlined in the UN Convention.

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