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Establish an independent body dedicated to the rights of children and youth

We recommend that the provincial government in Nova Scotia take clear action to fully realize Article 4 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* regarding appropriate measures needed to fully implement the breadth of unique children’s rights.³ This includes establishing an independent human rights institution for children. Such an entity can have many functions.

These include receiving and reviewing matters related to individuals or groups of children and youth; advocating, mediating, and resolving disputes on behalf of children and youth that involve their rights; conducting investigations when a process of dispute resolution has not resulted in a satisfactory outcome for a child or youth; making recommendations proactively to government about legislation, policies, and practices that respect the rights of children and youth; preparing reports on matters that relate to the promotion and protection of children’s rights; engaging in child and youth outreach and education on their rights; and engaging in public promotion and awareness of the importance of children’s rights.

Action 7

Enact legislation to establish an independent body dedicated to children and youth rights. Engagement and consultation with Mi’kmaq communities should be carried out to establish how parallel support for Mi’kmaq children and youth will be provided.

Action 8

Apply internationally recognized best practices in establishing the independent body by ensuring legislation is:

- Grounded in national and international best practice as established by the Paris Principles and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child Comment No. 2.^{38,39} These documents provide critical guidance on the independence, mandate, resources, and accessibility to children and youth required to establish an effective independent child rights’ institution.
- Mandated to serve all children and youth, not just those in systems of care. Children and youth will interact with systems of care along their life course, including health, education, community services, and justice systems.