

*The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) stands up for young people!*

## WHO WE ARE

We help young people in Alberta succeed in their lives and communities by:

- Providing support to young people so their voices are heard by decision-makers in child intervention (sometimes referred to as child welfare) and the youth justice system
- Educating young people about their rights and speaking up for themselves, or someone else, when important decisions are being made
- Asking young people what is important to them and helping them to resolve issues that they are worried about

*Young people have the right to the things you need to grow up healthy, safe and successful. It's important for you to know what your rights are and to ask for help if you don't feel like they are being met. The OCYA is a place to call if you have questions, need legal help, or want to speak out. Check out the children & youth pages of our website for more information: [ocya.alberta.ca](http://ocya.alberta.ca)*



## CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS

The young people we work with often face unique changes and transitions such as coming into care, returning to family, changing caseworkers, moving placements, entering adulthood, and adjusting to new schools and communities. These transitions can be hard if you don't have the information and support you need.

We help young people know their rights and which questions to ask decision-makers, learn advocacy skills, and access resources in their communities. We're a place to call (1-800-661-3446) when young people have questions or need help.

Check out our website and social media for resources. To add yourself to the newsletter mailing list, email us at [education@ocya.alberta.ca](mailto:education@ocya.alberta.ca)

*"I have been living in a group home for a month and I don't like it here. The staff are nice but I have no privacy and the other kids fight a lot. I would like to move home or to a foster home, closer to my community. My caseworker says I have to "stabilize" here and work on some of my problems first. I don't feel like she hears that this place isn't working for me. Can you help me?"*

-Joss, age 14



Hi Joss,

My name is Pam and I work on the intake team at the OCYA. I'm glad you have reached out to us! It's important that you feel your voice is being listened to and that you are involved in planning decisions that impact you, including where you want to live! Did you know that it is one of your rights according to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*?

You also have a right to privacy and to feel safe where you live. At the OCYA, we have advocates that make sure that all your rights are being followed. An advocate could help you talk to your caseworker to discuss your concerns. If you think you would like to work with an advocate, please call us at 1-800-661-3446 to speak with an intake worker. In the meantime, are there any staff at your group home you could talk to about how you are feeling there? Group home staff may not know how you are feeling right now and it is part of their job to make sure you feel safe!

## TRANSITIONING AFTER SERVING A SENTENCE

When you're serving a sentence in a youth custody centre, you have somewhere to sleep, food every day, and daily structure. Once you're released from custody, you may feel overwhelmed, uncertain and confused.

When you're in custody, your keyworker is responsible for organizing and facilitating case management conferences. One of the main purposes of these conferences is to help you with transition planning, so you're released with a place to sleep and supports in place. You are invited to participate in these meetings, as are professionals and your natural supports (parents, other family members, or adults that you have meaningful connections with).

If you're worried about your release, connect first with your key worker. You can also submit an RFI (request for interview) to meet with the centre transition worker. If you still have concerns and feel no one is listening, please call us and an advocate may be able to support you through this time.

### Tips for changing caseworkers

- Acknowledge the change. Ask any questions you may have about the change and your new worker.
- Allow yourself to feel your emotions, and express them in a healthy way by writing, making art, or talking to someone.
- Get to know your new worker and give them a chance.
- Ask to have a say in who your caseworker may be. You won't always get what you want, but you can say what you're looking for.
- Ask to say goodbye to your old worker.

### Join the OCYA Youth Council!

Young people are the foundation of what we do at the OCYA. The youth council amplifies young people's voices, helps increase our understanding of their lived experiences within systems, and leads positive change. If you're interested in joining the youth council or have a question for our current council members, please email [youthcouncil@ocya.alberta.ca](mailto:youthcouncil@ocya.alberta.ca)

# EMOTIONS YOU MAY FEEL DURING TRANSITIONS

C J Y I Q M S A D K V G N M F J Z I U Q  
 D G Z E U J S W E B K E Y N B K U D R Y  
 F Q V D V A L K T W T J J U L V I X Y N  
 I W E E B B F W I G S A T I S F I E D L  
 I J X S Q Z T A C Y M S J T E Q T P E U  
 J O N S N S G R X Z D S Z R U M Z Q K Z  
 N S S E S U F D E Z R S B Z V X Q Q W N  
 O X M R O R S R G A O C Y P P A H Y S A  
 I W Z T D P L P R P U X B U T S I O D Q  
 T Q Z S D R A U E C R E X S A D H E D X  
 A Z S Z Q I L U F J H J H X W R R X S I  
 P E N Y B S X P H E V J N R P A F P V Z  
 I R D L P E G U N P C P O Q C Z I Z R Z  
 C E A E G D H F R R J A D S R G Z T I S  
 I J T N G C C I T O Y N E B E J Z E C U  
 T I B O S C U A Y X H B F P X Q E T A O  
 N F P L L F N G I V S U O B H Y B F M V  
 A K X P J G K C E D E S U F N O C E R R  
 U L N S R H V Z N X H U D G W K G R J E  
 J M I Y H C J A N X I O U S L Z M U D N

SCARED  
 ANXIOUS  
 JOY  
 LONELY  
 STRESSED  
 SATISFIED  
 ANTICIPATION  
 SAD  
 NERVOUS  
 EXCITED  
 AWKWARD  
 PEACEFUL  
 SHY  
 ANGRY  
 HAPPY  
 SURPRISED  
 CONFUSED

**Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA)**

1-800-661-3446 | [ocya.alberta.ca](http://ocya.alberta.ca)

[education@ocya.alberta.ca](mailto:education@ocya.alberta.ca)

Facebook @albertaocya | Instagram @albertaocya

