



We help young people in Alberta who are involved in the child welfare and youth justice systems to:

- learn about their rights and speak up
- share what they think and what is important to them
- sort out what they are worried about
- have their voices heard by decision-makers

Self-Advocacy Toolkit

Our youth engagement team has been busy talking to young people across Alberta. We asked about times when they were advocates and stuck up for themselves or others in tough situations. We wanted to know what worked, what they wished they had known and how they talk to others about what they need, want, and feel. We are taking what they said and are building a self-advocacy toolkit made for youth by youth. Stay tuned!



Meet our Indigenous Knowledge Keeper!

Hello, my name is Ken, my title at the OCYA is Knowledge Keeper, but I don't call myself that, I think of myself as a helper.

I grew up in Treaty 1 territory, in Winnipeg. My family on my Mom's side comes from Sagkeeng First Nation. Growing up I knew nothing of my Indigenous culture, my family did not practice it. I hid my identity from the world, more tragically from myself. I always felt "something" was missing, I didn't know what, but I felt it somewhere deep inside of me.

When I was 24, I started work at a homelessness shelter in Winnipeg. It was an Indigenous operated shelter, this is where I met my first teacher, Charles. At night, when everyone was asleep, Charles would tell stories, stories about the land, medicines, ceremony, songs, and hunting. I had never had anyone speak to me like that or about those things. It was like food for my spirit, I had never sat with a proud Indigenous person that practiced the culture and spoke like he did. Ever since then I have been trying to learn and do my best to support and help people.

Thanks for reading a little about me and if you ever need want to chat, please reach out!

😊 Ken

Did you know we wrote a report about young people with disabilities?

Beyond Barriers looked at problems with services and supports for children and youth with disabilities in Alberta. We heard from young people, their caregivers, and the professionals who help them.

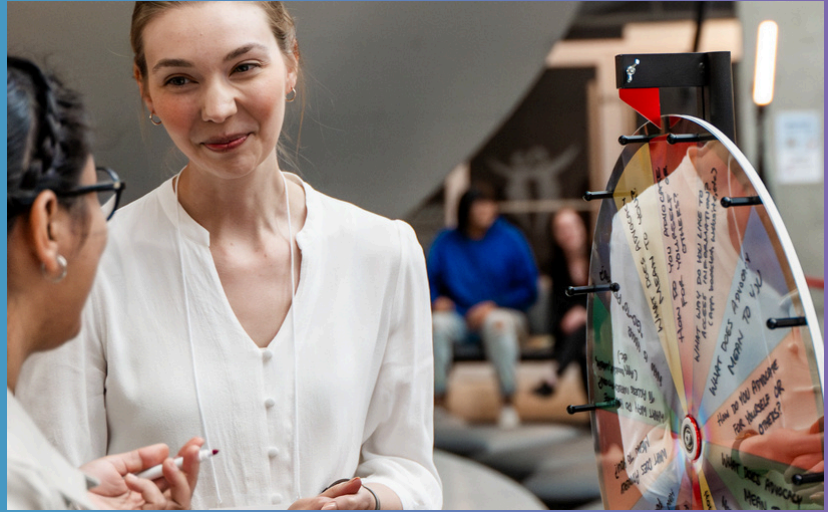
The report made clear that young people with disabilities need to be understood, supported, and included.

Visit ocya.alberta.ca to read the report.

PEOPLE THINK THEY KNOW YOU WHEN THEY SEE YOUR DISABILITY ON A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY DON'T. THEY NEED TO KNOW THAT I STILL HAVE OTHER THINGS THAT MAKE ME, ME.

Young Person

Celebrating International Youth Day



We had a fantastic day filled with laughter, fun, and connection. Over 20 community agencies shared information about rights and their services and supports. Agencies, performers, OCYA staff and speakers helped young people in attendance to find their voice and advocate for change.



Meet our Advocates!

Amy and Chalace are two members of our advocacy team who work directly with young people in the child welfare and youth justice systems. We asked them about their jobs and this is what they said.

What do you like about working with youth involved with the justice system?

"The Justice system can be very scary for young people and their families. I like to be that support to navigate complicated systems and help them understand their rights." Amy

"Young people can get lost, forgotten and silenced in the justice process. It makes such an impact when you can help their voice be heard when they need it the most." Chalace



What is your favourite thing about working with young people?

"I feel so privileged and lucky that when a young person needs help they come to me and trust me to hold their information and that when I say I am going to do something I do it. I get to be on their side. It's very special." Chalace

"Giving them hope, power and the confidence to be their own advocate. Letting them know they are not alone, that they have rights, and it won't always be like this." Amy

Get in Touch!

Need help or have a question?
Want to learn more about your rights and what we do?

You can call us or send us an email. Our office is open between 8:15 am and 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday. If you leave a message with your name and phone number we will call you back.

1-800-661-3446

ca.information@ocya.alberta.ca



@AlbertaOCYA