



*Office of the Provincial Advocate
for Children and Youth*

*Bureau de l'intervenant provincial
en faveur des enfants et des jeunes*

Statement of Reconciliation Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth

We stand here in these final days leading up to the release of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report. The realities of truth and reconciliation now take on their hardest journey: from the hearts and memories of survivors to the hands of the Honourable Justice Sinclair and the Commission, and now into the heart and soul of the consciousness of this country.

The history and legacy of the Indian Residential Schools lives on in the survivors and descendants of more than 150,000 children who attended one of the more than 100 residential schools that were funded by the federal government and largely run by Canada's churches. It is carried in the collective memory of current and future generations of First Nations, Aboriginal, Inuit and Metis children; their grandchildren and great grandchildren. We must come together as a country to create a path of healing and reconciliation. This work must be anchored in the possibilities of this country's children and youth being a powerful voice in the vision and work tied to remembering and reconciliation now and for the next seven generations.

In Ontario, we must come together and critically examine how our current systems fuel assimilation. It is here where we must create new opportunities where truth telling and the process of reconciliation can be mobilized.

Reconciliation lives in the space of the past and present. But truly, it is tied to a future that remembers not only the survival of children and youth who were sent to the Indian Residential Schools but actively demonstrates to current and future generations of Aboriginal, Inuit, Metis children that we will never again allow children to be stolen from their families, communities and nations and be robbed of their culture, language and spiritual connections.

As Ontario's Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, we offer this statement of commitment to actively embrace our role as a leader in the process of truth telling. We are committed to working with and on behalf of all Aboriginal, Metis, Inuit children and youth in Ontario. This Office will continually strive to ensure that this province actively engages in a process of healing that is tied to the vision of reconciliation as advanced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. This vision must reflect the lived experience of the survivors of the Indian Residential Schools and focus on ensuring that these legacies of that survival are addressed and wherever possible, replaced with hope, possibility and healing in the current generations of nations of children and youth who now call Turtle Island home.

(June 1, 2015)