

A black and white photograph of a woman with long dark hair and a man wearing a hooded sweatshirt and sunglasses, standing in a graffiti-covered tunnel. The tunnel walls are covered in red and black spray-painted tags and symbols, including a large red circle with a diagonal line. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights. The man is in the foreground, looking down, while the woman is behind him, looking towards the camera.

RC&Y

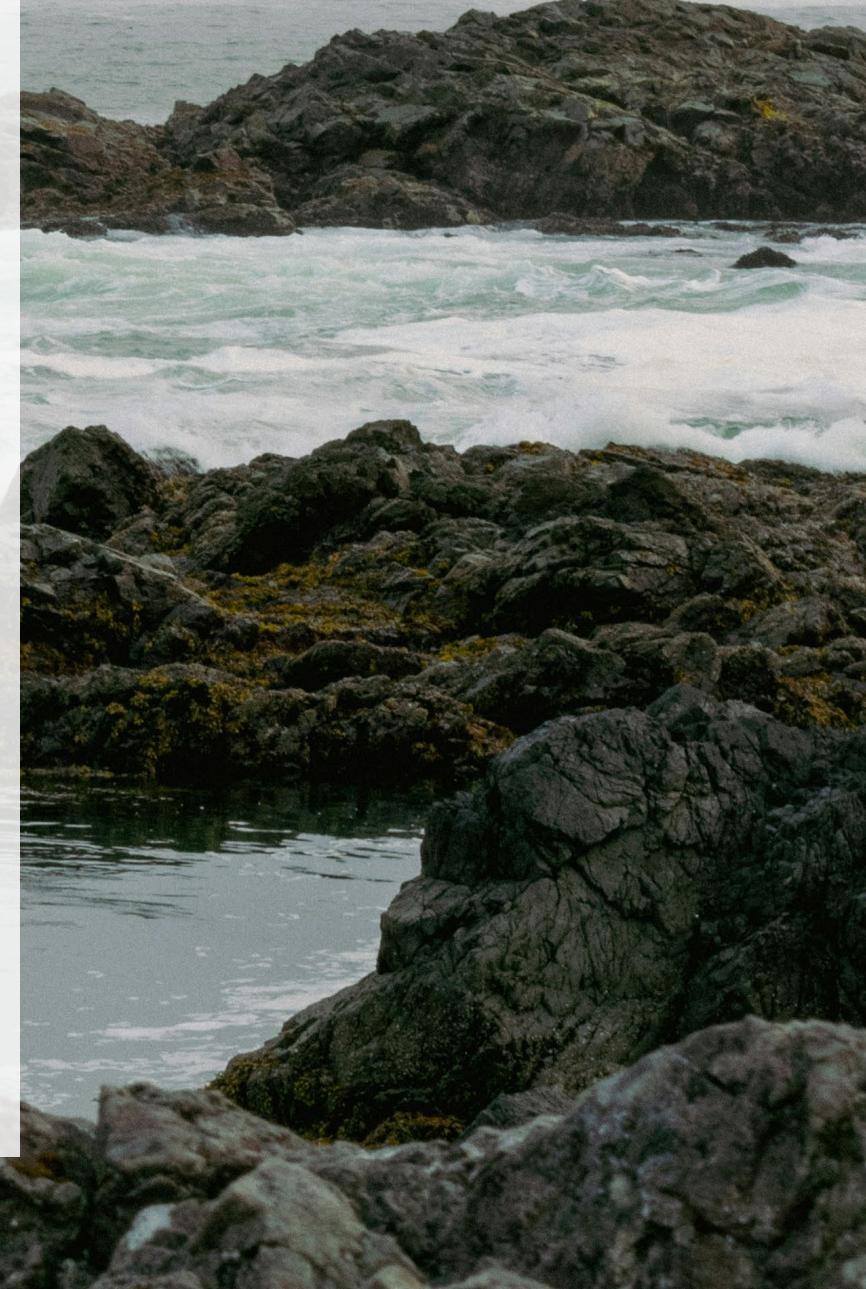
YOUTH JUSTICE IS CHANGING

The risks haven't

Presentation to the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee AGM
January 22, 2026

The Representative and staff, working throughout the province, would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with gratitude and respect on the traditional territories of the First Nations peoples of British Columbia.

We specifically acknowledge and express our gratitude to the keepers of the lands on the traditional territories of the Lheidli T'enneh peoples (Prince George) and the Lekwungen (place to smoke herring) people of the Songhees and X^wsepsəm Nations (Victoria) where our offices are located. We also acknowledge our Métis and Inuit partners and friends living in these beautiful territories.



Independent Oversight for B.C.'s Young People

RCY's Role: What We See Across Systems

Individual advocacy

Review & investigate

Recommend & monitor

In 2024/25, RCY received:

2,003

requests for advocacy.

In 2024/25, RCY received

6,905

reportable circumstances.

A photograph of a person wearing a dark hoodie, sitting on a bench in an urban setting. The background is a brick wall covered in red and black graffiti. The lighting is low, creating a somber atmosphere.

Youth Justice Today

Fewer in Custody, More in Community

The shift:

- Declining custody use
- Shift to community-based responses
- Closure of custody centres

The accountability question:

- The Justice budget remains stable
- ADM for Youth Justice
- New Youth Justice Strategic Plan

Where are prevention & transition dollars landing?

Common Threads for Justice-Involved Youth

- History of trauma
- Mental health needs
- Family violence or instability
- School disruption
- Caregiver strain



The Quiet Signal

Few Justice Involved Youth Come to RCY

What we don't see

- Very few justice-involved youth are accessing RCY advocacy on their own.
- This does not mean there are fewer needs.



Backing Up the Bus

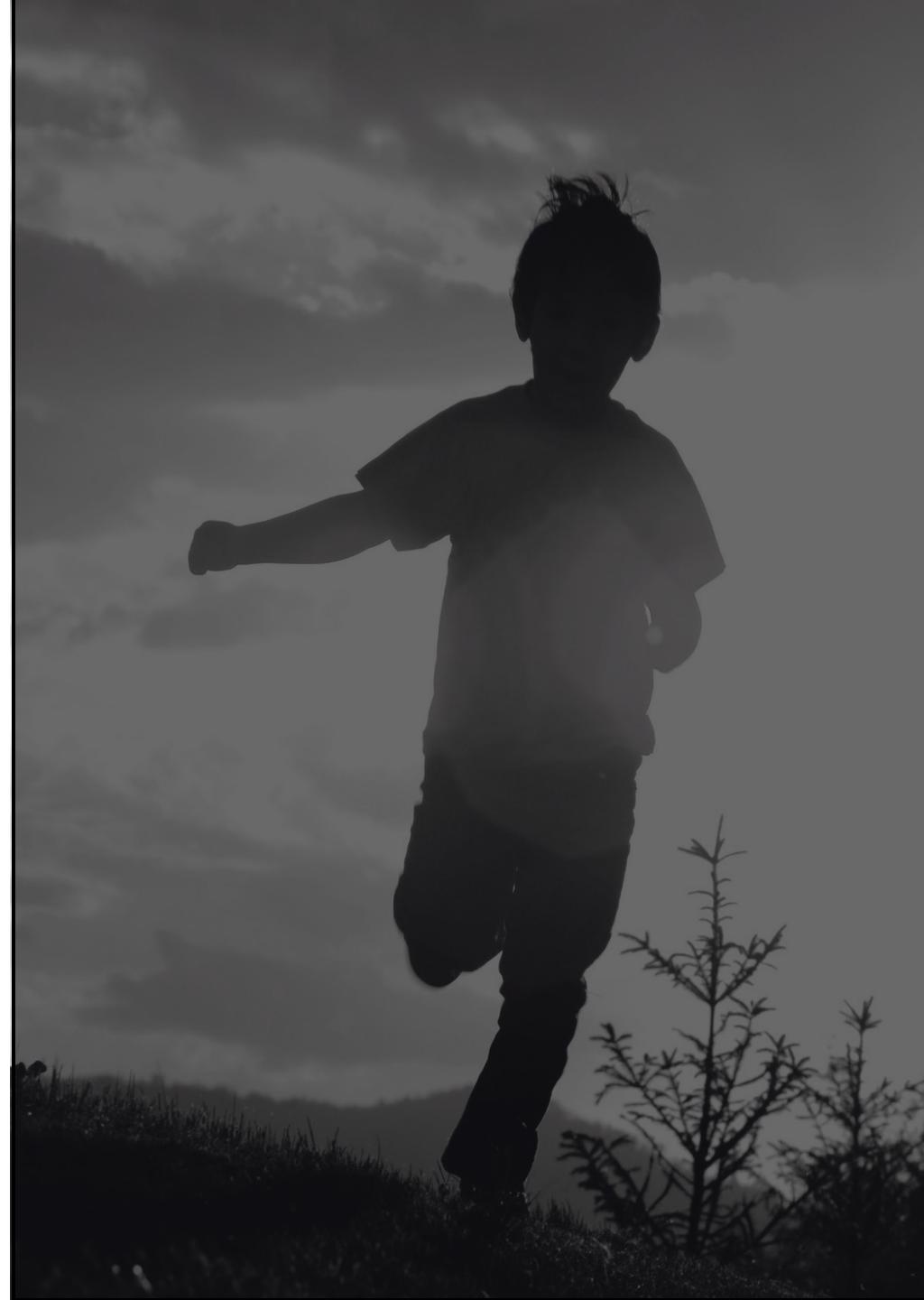
Justice is Often the End of the Story

A Hard Comparison

- Youth are detained under the Mental Health Act more often than incarcerated
- Nearly 3,000 involuntary youth detentions per year
- Fewer rights protections than adults

Don't Look Away: Missed Opportunities are the Pattern

- Pervasiveness of Violence
- Lack of Family Supports
- Significant Gaps for Family Caregivers
- Challenges with Interagency collaboration/communication
- Confusion over Accountability



Dispelling the Youth Crime Myth

- No dramatic rise in youth violent crime
- Increased visibility of crisis does not equate to increased criminality
- Youth crime in Victoria peaked in the mid-2000s (Victoria Foundation)
- Recent year to year increases remain well below historical levels.



Jono's Story

What Would Have Helped Earlier?

Family Justice is Part of Prevention

- Family breakdown
- Caregiver conflict
- Children's voice and participation
- FLA modernization

What This Committee Can Do

- Champion early, voluntary mental health supports
- Ask hard questions about reinvestment of funds
- Keep youth humanized in policy and public discourse



Youth Justice is Different
The Work Around it Must Be Smarter

Listening, Reporting, Calling for Change



YOU ARE NOT ALONE: REACH OUT



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Rep4Youth



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BC's Representative for Children
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