



# **SIGNIFICANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

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# OVERVIEW

## 1. What is a comprehensive child protection strategy?

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Comment 13
- States Structural Obligations

## 2. Canadian and International Examples

- New Brunswick: *Keeping Children and Youth Safe from Harm in New Brunswick*
- Australia: *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009 – 2020)*

# UNCRC ARTICLE 19

## The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence

Article 19 suggests the need for a comprehensive strategy to address violence against children

- An **integrated, cohesive, interdisciplinary and coordinated system** is required
- **Child participation** is essential in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the measures.

UNCRC General Comment no.13 is based on the fundamental assumption and observation that “primary prevention, through public health, education, social services and other approaches, of all forms of violence is of paramount importance”

# ...UNCRC GENERAL COMMENT NO.13

## STATES STRUCTURAL OBLIGATIONS

### Objectives of the general comment include:

- To outline the legislative, judicial, administrative, social and educational measures
- To overcome isolated, fragmented and reactive initiatives to address child caregiving and protection
- To promote a holistic approach to implementing article 19
- To provide States parties and other stakeholders with a basis on which to develop a **coordinating framework**

### General Comment No. 13 is calling for:

- Legislative measures
- Administrative measures
- Social measures
- Educational measures

# NATIONAL COORDINATING FRAMEWORK ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

**Child rights approach**

**Gender dimensions of violence against children**

**Primary prevention**

**Primary position of families in child caregiving and protection strategies**

**Resilience and protective factors**

**Risk factors**

**Children in potentially vulnerable situations**

**Resource allocation**

**Coordination mechanisms**

**Accountability**



# NEW BRUNSWICK

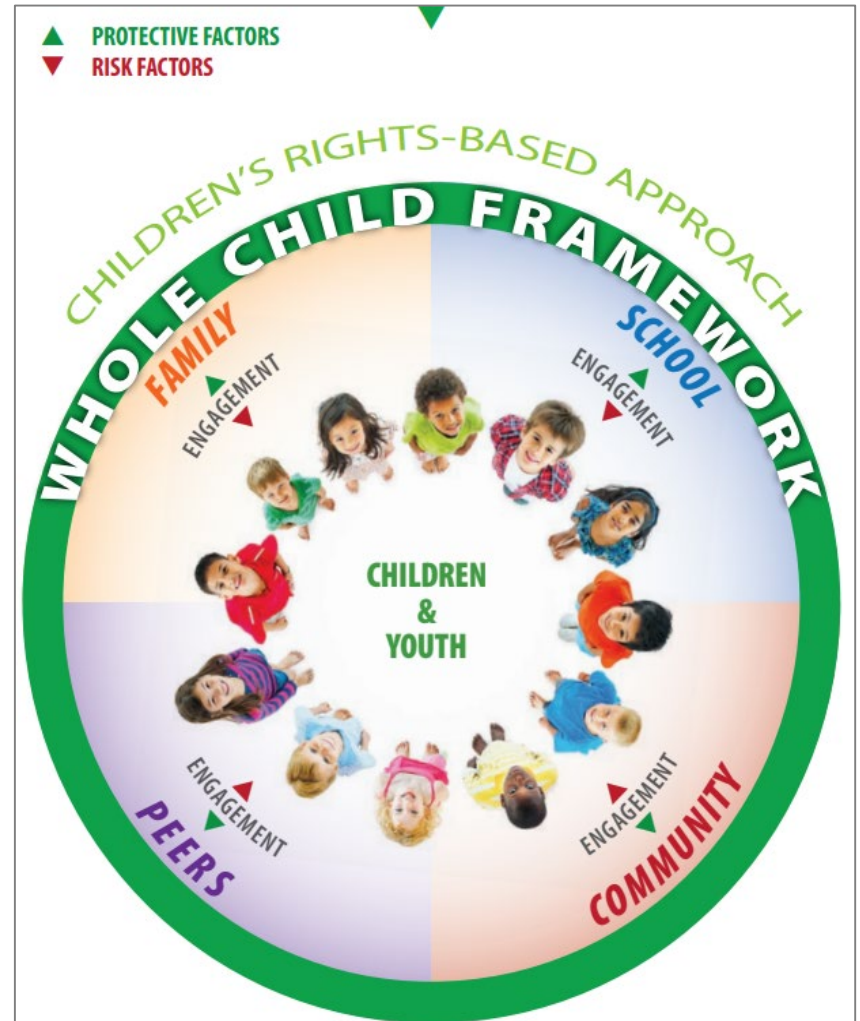
## Keeping Children and Youth Safe from Harm in New Brunswick: Five-year strategy by New Brunswickers (2015 – 2020)

### The strategy follows:

- UNICEF and UNCRC's rights-based approach to policy;
- WHO's social determinants of health; and
- UNCRC's General Comment 13 for harm prevention through planned and coordinated approaches.

### New Brunswick's Implementation of Article 19:

- Build the resiliency of children and youth in the province
- Increase the protective factors and decrease the risk factors
- Use the Whole Child Framework



# HOW WAS THE STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

- The Child and Youth Advocate's Office initiated this strategy by endorsing the plans of the strategy's interdepartmental working group and establishing a 2-person secretariat
- The Secretariat and Working Group recruited a provincial roundtable to lead the development process
- The Roundtable was comprised of 44 New Brunswickers, selected to ensure representation from all sectors (linguistic, gender, demographic and geographic considerations)
  - Roundtable members included young people, child-serving non-profit organizations, academics, business leaders and deputy ministers from 8 government departments
- During the development of the strategy the Roundtable directed the Secretariat to considerably expand the youth representation at the roundtable meetings

# PRINCIPLES AND COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY

- The 2 guiding principles of the strategy are to emphasize the need for:

**Youth  
engagement**

**Coordinated  
approaches in  
harm  
prevention**

- There are 10 priority areas in relation to the 5 components of harm:

**Mental health**

**Bullying and  
cyber bullying**

**Equity in  
education**

**Belonging/  
right to a family**

**Housing for  
vulnerable  
populations**

**Support for  
youth in the  
criminal justice  
system**

**Physical  
injuries**

**Health and  
nutrition**

**The needs of  
First Nations  
children**

**Sexual violence  
and  
sexualization of  
young people**



# EARLY INDICATIONS OF IMPACT

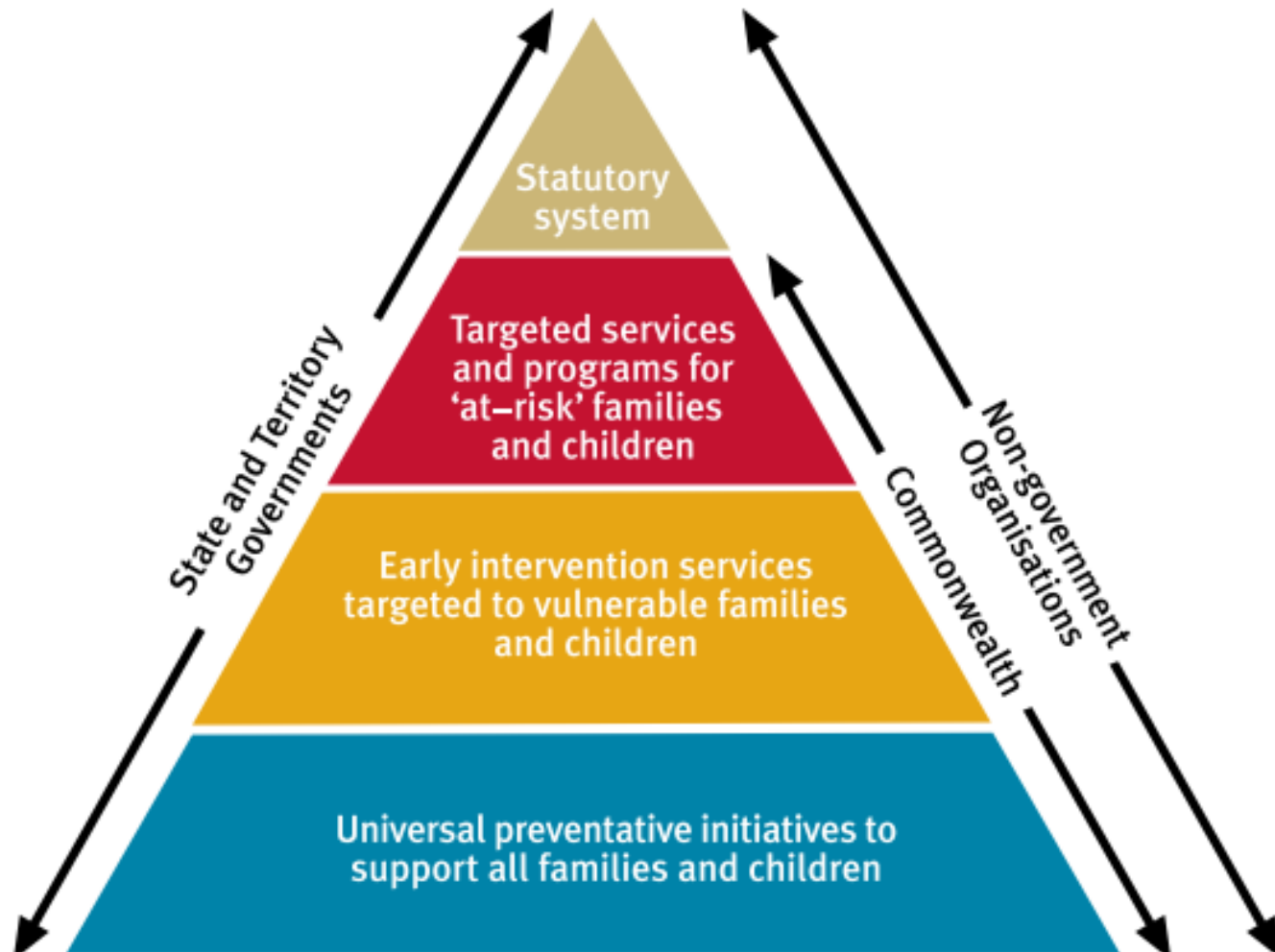
## Strategy indicators and preliminary results (as of November 2017)

- **Sociocultural Harm:** Progress is seen in almost all indicators related to crime and opportunities
  - Rate of youth who report feeling that they are treated fairly in communities
  - Youth incarceration rate
  - Total youth crime rate (charged)
  - Education level
- **Physical Harm:** Progress is shown in the hospitalization rate for injuries
- **Emotional Harm:** There has been a reduction in bullying, but rates of cyber-attacks have stayed the same from 2012 to 2016. There has also been an increase in the rate of hospitalized cases for mental diseases and disorders (up 10% from 2009 to 2017)
- **Neglect:** Reduction of children in care (down 7% since 2010)
- **Sexual Harm:** Lack of progress relating to sexual harm indicators

# AN INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLE

## AUSTRALIA

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009 – 2020)



# LESSONS LEARNED

The partnership between the Commonwealth/state governments and NGOs is seen as one of the most important benefits of the Framework. Different stakeholders are able to engage and collaborate in a way that had not previously existed.

# IN SUMMARY

- Comprehensive strategies are critical for children
- Key Documents for comprehensive strategies:
  - Article 19 of the UNCRC
  - General Comment 13
  - Child-rights based approach to policy making
- New Brunswick and Australia:
  - 2 examples of attempts to put these recommendations into practice
  - Results remain to be seen but New Brunswick is seeing progress in multiple areas based on preliminary evidence



**THANK YOU**