

Marvin M. Bernstein, Child and Youth Advocate/PEI

Marvin Bernstein, B.A., J.D., L.L.M. (ADR), is a lawyer who holds a Bachelor of Arts, Juris Doctor, and Master of Laws in Alternative Dispute Resolution. He has decades of varied professional experience, having served in a variety of child and youth-focused roles over the course of his career. This has enabled Marv to advocate for enhanced rights-based services for children and youth in multiple provinces and territories, and at the federal level.

Marv is honoured and humbled to have been appointed as the first independent Child and Youth Advocate for Prince Edward Island. He officially took office on July 15th, 2020, when the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act* was proclaimed. His mandate under that legislation involves representing the rights, interests and viewpoints of all PEI children and youth through advocacy, reviews, investigations, public education, research and child/youth engagement. This work can be done on both individual and systemic levels.

Marv was engaged as a child rights and child advocacy consultant from 2017 to 2020. Prior to that period, Marv served as Chief Policy Advisor for UNICEF Canada from 2010 to 2017 where he advocated for the implementation of children's human rights with all levels of government and various network and stakeholder groups. During this period, Marv wrote multiple policy and legal briefs that were submitted to federal and provincial parliamentary and legislative committees.

Marv served as Saskatchewan's Children's Advocate from 2005 to 2010. In this role Marv was an independent officer of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and was mandated to carry out individual and systemic advocacy and investigations, monitoring, public education and the amplification of child and youth voice. He was also tasked with promoting the rights, interests and well-being of children and youth in receipt of services from all ministries and agencies of the Saskatchewan government.

Prior to his appointment as Children's Advocate in Saskatchewan, Marv had many years of advocacy and senior leadership experience in the child welfare field in Ontario. Marv served from 2001 to 2005 as the Director of Policy Development and Legal Support at the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies in Toronto. For the prior 20 years, he served as Chief Counsel to the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto. Before that, Marv acted as Counsel for the Children's Aid Society of York Region. During this entire Ontario period, Marv litigated many landmark child protection cases, where he represented child protection authorities at all court levels, including the Supreme Court of Canada.

Marv is a widely published author, having written extensively in recent years in the areas of the necessary measures to fully implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the characteristics of strong independent child and youth advocate offices; and the benefits of child rights impact assessments in developing and reviewing governmental legislation, policy, programming and practice.

Marv is currently a member of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates; the Canadian Bar Association's National Child and Youth Law Section and its UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) Committee; and the Child Rights Academic Network.

Marv is fortunate to have been awarded both the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. He is also the recipient of both the Child Welfare League of Canada Advocacy Award and the North America Council on Adoptable Children Adoption Activist Award. He has additionally been recognized as a Distinguished Canadian who has, by invitation, endorsed the *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth*.