



August 3, 2007

TORONTO – Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies Executive Director Jeanette Lewis today released the following statement regarding the Supreme Court of Canada's recent decision to uphold the mandate of Children's Aid Societies in Ontario to protect children:

"OACAS supports the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada to support Section 15 of the Child and Family Services Act which mandates Children's Aid Societies to protect children from abuse and neglect or the risk of abuse and neglect.

We welcome the Supreme Court's decision where Justice Rosalie Abella said that child protection workers "must be free to execute this mandate to the fullest extent possible." This decision is good for families and reinforces Children's Aid Societies mandate to protect children.

We acknowledge the philosophy of Children's Aid Societies to work with parents and support families while providing safe, stable and loving environments for children to grow up in. At every opportunity, Children's Aid Societies include parents in decision-making, in determining the most suitable care arrangements or planning care that is in the best interests of the child.

Children's Aid Societies' intake and assessment model uses a balanced approach to helping families and protecting children. Societies respond to child protection concerns in a family-friendly, child-focused way and provide service and supports based on the family's needs and strengths. Children's Aid Societies focus on child safety, well being and permanence, while building on family strengths and assisting families to further develop their child caring capacity.

We also acknowledge the work of countless child protection workers, supervisors and directors in developing and implementing child-focused and family-friendly practice over many years. We are pleased the Government of Ontario has also endorsed this approach to child protection with their revisions to the legislation which reflects a move to a more family-friendly though child focused environment.

The way we resolve child protection concerns puts the best interest of the child, and the strengths and needs of the family first when approaching planning."

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