



NEWS RELEASE

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OLDER CHILDREN NEED FAMILIES TOO *November is Adoption Awareness Month*

TORONTO – During November, the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS) and its member agencies are promoting Adoption Awareness Month to educate the community about adoption and find permanent families for older children. Older children in the care of Children’s Aid Societies want and need permanent families.

Since last year, completed adoptions through Children’s Aid Societies have increased by 21%. This is a big step in the right direction but more children and youth are still in need of a permanent family. Only 2% of children adopted through Ontario’s public adoption system were ages 13-18 last year yet this age group represents 27% of the 2,800 children available for adoption. Many Ontarians looking to start or grow their family are not aware that there are older children available for adoption who need families.

‘Where do I go for the holidays?’ ‘Who will walk me down the aisle?’ ‘Who will be a grandparent to my children?’ These are questions asked by youth in the care of Children’s Aid Societies (CAS). As children get older, they are more aware of what family means to them and what it means to have a permanent family. The need for a family does not diminish as a child gets older.

“Every child needs a family and a stable, permanent home,” said Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services. “When children of any age are adopted, they know that they have a family they can rely on, and will always be a part of.”

Having a permanent family helps children to have healthy development, creates a sense of self-worth and gives a feeling of belonging. School-aged children understand what it means to be adopted. Older children often know what they want in a family, which can help adoption workers find the right match for their interests. They can immediately become active participants in family life. Families can benefit from having more information about the child, including any information pertaining to special needs.

Creating permanency for children and youth is a key focal point for Ontario’s Children’s Aid Societies. Last year, CASs found permanent homes (kin, customary care and legal custody) to an additional 4,200 children and youth. For more information on adoption contact your local Children’s Aid Society or visit www.useyourvoice.ca

About the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies

Since 1912, OACAS has represented Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario and provided service in the areas of government relations, communications, information management, education and training to advocate for the protection and well-being of children. We are the voice of child welfare in Ontario.

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LES ENFANTS PLUS ÂGÉS ONT EUX AUSSI BESOIN D'UNE FAMILLE

Novembre est le mois de l'adoption

TORONTO – En novembre, l'Association ontarienne des Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance (OASAE) et ses organismes membres mènent une campagne pour sensibiliser la population à l'adoption et permettre aux enfants plus âgés de trouver une famille. Pour les enfants d'âge scolaire pris en charge par les Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance, faire partie d'une famille n'est pas simplement un désir, c'est aussi un besoin.

Depuis l'année dernière, les adoptions menées à terme par l'entremise des Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance ont augmenté de 21 %. Il s'agit d'un grand pas dans la bonne direction, mais beaucoup d'autres enfants n'ont toujours pas de famille permanente. L'an dernier, le groupe des 13 à 18 ans ne représentait que 2 % de tous les enfants adoptés par l'intermédiaire du système public en Ontario, bien qu'ils constituaient 27 % des 2 800 enfants admissibles à l'adoption. De nombreux Ontariens désireux de fonder une famille ne savent pas que des enfants plus âgés cherchent une famille adoptive.

« Où vais-je passer les Fêtes? Qui sera présent à mon mariage? Est-ce que mes enfants auront des grands-parents? » Voici des exemples de questions que se posent les jeunes pris en charge par les Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance. Lorsque les enfants vieillissent, ils réalisent qu'il est important d'avoir une famille qui sera toujours là pour eux. Le besoin de faire partie d'une famille ne diminue pas avec l'âge.

« Tous les enfants ont besoin d'une famille et d'un foyer stable et permanent, a déclaré Laurel Broten, ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse. Peu importe l'âge à laquelle ils sont adoptés, les enfants savent qu'ils peuvent compter sur une famille et qu'ils en feront toujours partie. »

Le fait de pouvoir compter sur une famille de façon permanente aide les enfants à se développer sainement tout en renforçant leur estime de soi et leur sentiment d'appartenance. Les enfants d'âge scolaire comprennent ce que l'adoption signifie. Ils savent quel genre de famille ils aimeraient avoir, ce qui permet aux intervenants en adoption de trouver plus facilement la famille qui convient le mieux. De plus, ces enfants sont parfois en mesure de participer dès le départ à la vie familiale. Aussi, il peut être avantageux pour les parents de posséder plus de renseignements sur l'enfant, notamment sur les besoins spéciaux de ce dernier.

Apporter de la stabilité aux enfants et aux jeunes est une des principales priorités des Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance (SAE). L'an dernier, les SAE ont trouvé un foyer permanent (placement dans la parenté, garde légale) à 4 000 autres enfants et jeunes. Pour en savoir plus sur l'adoption, communiquez avec la Société de l'aide à l'enfance de votre région ou rendez-vous à www.parlezpoureux.ca.

À propos de l'Association ontarienne des Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance (AOSAE)

En Ontario, depuis 1912 l'AOSAE représente les Sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance et fournit des services de relations avec le gouvernement, de communications, de gestion de l'information, de sensibilisation et de formation en vue de promouvoir la protection et le bien-être de l'enfance.

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BACKGROUNDER

ONTARIO'S PUBLIC ADOPTION SYSTEM

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies (CASs) provide a free, public adoption system in Ontario, which includes support, training and education.

What makes the public adoption system unique?

It's all about the right match. The public adoption system aims to find the best match for the child and family.

Adoption through the public system is free. You don't have to be rich to adopt through the public adoption system. Unlike the private and international adoption systems, there is no charge for homestudies or legal fees. Costs to adopt outside of the public adoption system run from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

Everyone is welcome to apply to adopt. Individuals, couples, families with children, same-sex couples, older couples and people from different income levels from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds are invited to apply to adopt a child or youth through the public adoption system. If you have the desire to parent and care for a child, then you are welcome to apply!

The public adoption system is regulated by the government. The public adoption system is highly structured, regulated and monitored by the government. The *Child and Family Services Act* regulates the adoption of children who are living in Ontario. This act protects the rights of everyone involved in an adoption: the child, the child's birth parents and the adoptive parents.

Facts about public system adoption

- 2,800 children and youth are legally available for adoption through Children's Aid Societies.
- 27% of these children are ages 13-18.
- Last year, there were over 1,000 public system adoptions finalized.
- Of the children placed for adoption last year:
 - 73% were under the age of 5
 - 25% were ages 6-12
 - 2% were ages 13-18



BACKGROUNDER

Who are the children?

Children range in age from infants to teens and come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Some are siblings, waiting for a family who can keep them together. Others are special needs children who require parents willing to learn the skills to care for them. Although some children may have challenges, they all have one thing in common – a need for a safe and loving home for a lifetime.

There is a great need for permanent families for older children ages 13-18. They represent 27% of the children available for adoption through the public system, though only 2% of the finalized adoptions last year were for children from this age group. The need for a permanent family does not diminish as a child gets older. They benefit from having familial support through the challenges of going to school, being a teenager and experiencing life milestones.

Canadian's perceptions about adoption

- 96% of Canadian adults believe children in foster care have the right to a permanent home.
- 74% of Canadian adults believe that adoptive parents will feel the same satisfaction and reward from adoption as from raising a child from birth.
- 60% of Canadians know someone who was adopted.
- 14% of Canadians know someone who has placed a child for adoption.
- 11% of Canadians have had a personal adoption experience.

Source- *Every child deserves a home. Period.*- Southwest Ontario Regional Adoption Initiative, 2009