

For Immediate Release  
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## **PUBLIC EDUCATION IS KEY TO PROTECTING CHILDREN**

TORONTO – In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and Ontario's Children's Aid Societies (CASs) are launching a public education campaign in October to encourage the public to learn more about their role in protecting Ontario's children.

The message of the campaign is that everyone has a role to play in keeping children safe and helping families get the services and support they need. The campaign reaches out to communities across Ontario through public service announcements, media relations, local events and initiatives to raise awareness about protecting children and helping families.

"The campaign to educate the public is about connecting with our communities so together we can better protect and care for children and youth," said Virginia Rowden, Acting Executive Director, OACAS. "Ontario's CASs not only play an important role in protecting and caring for children, but also in preventing child abuse and neglect and educating the public about child protection and well-being."

In 2005, a survey identified that the barriers to reporting child abuse included a lack of knowledge about where to report abuse, fear of retribution and fear that the situation will get worse before it gets better. Since then, OACAS and CASs have worked hard to educate the public and referrals last year increased by 3.2% over the previous year. There is still a great need to educate the public about their responsibility to help protect children.

Last year, CASs received more than 161,000 referrals about possible abuse and neglect of children and youth. CASs completed over 82,000 investigations and on average 25,377 families received ongoing services from a CAS after investigation. In 90% of cases, children were able to remain at home while CASs worked with families to strengthen their parenting capacity and create a more stable future for their children.

Help protect children in your community. For more information, visit [www.useyourvoice.ca](http://www.useyourvoice.ca), [www.oacas.org](http://www.oacas.org) or contact your local Children's Aid Society.

### **About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies**

OACAS is a membership organization representing CASs in Ontario. The Association has served its members, the community, the public and the government in a variety of ways since 1912. Today, OACAS provides service in the areas of advocacy, public education, youth in care, information management, education and training, and member outreach. OACAS is the voice of child welfare in Ontario.

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