

**Adoption is an option: Help children and youth create lifelong connections  
November is Adoption Awareness Month**

TORONTO – In recognition of Adoption Awareness Month this November, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and Children's Aid Societies (CASs) across Ontario are raising awareness that all children and youth need and deserve a family to love and nurture them always.

Mary Ballantyne, Executive Director, OACAS said: "Every child and youth needs a forever family that provides support, unconditional love and a safe, loving home."

When parents or caregivers are unable to provide a safe living environment for their children, Children's Aid makes every effort to provide them with support so children may remain safely in their family home. If the safety of a child or youth cannot be ensured and they come into the permanent care of Children's Aid, a plan for their extended future is begun immediately. This plan relies on finding a lifelong, permanent connection for the child or youth – a family.

There are almost 7,000 children and youth in the care of Children's Aid for whom adoption may be an option. Last year, 977 children and youth were connected to families through adoption, while almost 2,300 children are on paths to permanency through legal custody, kinship care and customary care. Of the children and youth adopted last year, 67% were ages 0-5, 19% were ages 6-9, 9% were 10-12 and 5% were 13 and over. Of the children and youth available for adoption, 60% are 13 and over. While older children may have experienced challenges, they too need families to care for them and help them transition successfully into adulthood.<sup>1</sup>

"Every child is unique, but the one thing all children and youth have in common is the need for a family," said Ms Ballantyne. Adoptive parents can be individuals or couples, people unable to have children of their own, parents who want to add to their growing family and adults whose first choice for their family is adoption.

Children need to feel a sense of belonging, with a permanent family that will love and nurture them always. Adoption is an option: Help children and youth create lifelong connections. Visit [www.oacas.org](http://www.oacas.org) to find your local Children's Aid and more information on adopting through Ontario's public system.

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**About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies:** Since 1912, OACAS has represented Ontario's 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on 2013-2014 data