

In the January Issue

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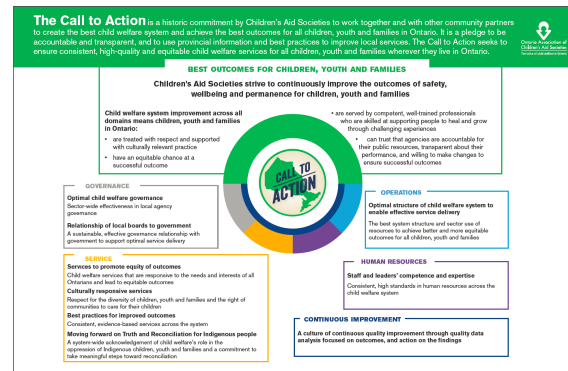
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How the Call to Action is transforming child welfare

After its initial launch a year ago, Call to Action-related projects are now up and running, and the transformation of child welfare in Ontario is well underway. The Call to Action was designed to guide province-wide collaborative work aimed at creating the best child welfare system and achieving the best outcomes for all children, youth and families in Ontario. It is a pledge to be accountable and transparent, and to use provincial information and best practices to improve services to communities.



"Much of the Call to Action work addresses issues identified in coroner's inquests, the auditor general's review, reports from children's advocates and review panels, and the media," explained Wendy Miller, OACAS Lead for the Call to Action. "Children, youth, and families expect a transparent and responsive child welfare system that provides consistent, culturally relevant, and high-quality services, regardless of where they live."

"I don't think anyone questions that we're all committed to helping vulnerable children and families. But what we've heard is we must start doing things differently," said Wendy. "This year, expect child welfare in Ontario to change significantly."

The Call to Action central pillars are:

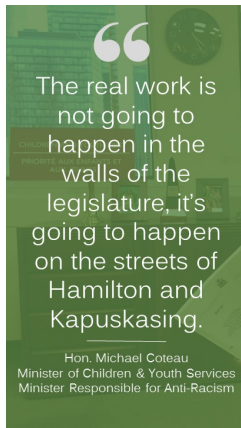
- children, youth and families are treated with respect, supported with culturally relevant practice and have an equitable chance at a successful outcome
- children, youth and families are served by compassionate, competent, trained, and skilled professionals
- Ontarians can trust that agencies place the child at the centre of their work, are accountable for public resources, transparent about performance, and willing to make changes to ensure successful outcomes

The Call to Action projects are being led by staff from agencies across the province and facilitated through the OACAS. In some instances, these projects will result in significant changes in the way agencies function, report their progress, and hold themselves accountable.

In this issue of the Voice, two of these initiatives will be profiled:

1. This year, the OACAS will launch a new system to authorize child protection workers across Ontario. Here are [seven facts you should know about authorization](#) and how it will improve service to children and families.
2. Child welfare has identified improving outcomes for African Canadian children and families as a priority. [Notisha Massoquoi talks](#) about the challenges she faced while adopting a child through Children's Aid.

Hon. Michael Coteau talks to The Voice about how the proposed new Child, Youth and Family Services Act will be a game changer for child



When you announced [the new Child, Youth and Family Services Act](#) you said it was the biggest game changer in child protection in decades. Are there particular parts of the Act that you are most excited about?

There are three pieces that really stand out for me.

Raising the age of protection to 18 is a massive one. I cannot believe that a 16 or 17-year old would not be protected as we

speak. Our perception of who should be protected and who shouldn't be protected, I think that's changed a lot over time. But I think for my generation, there is no question that a 16 or 17-year old should be protected. They need our help and the fact that 1,600 kids would fall into that catchment in the first year, it shocks me. Raising the age of protection will prevent homelessness and prevent sex trafficking, so it's just the right thing to do.

Find out the other parts of the legislation that stand out to the Minister, and more, [here](#).

7 things you should know about the new process to authorize child protection workers

And how it will improve child welfare services to families in Ontario

1. History in the Making

The new provincial process for authorizing child protection workers will be launched in 2017 and is a historic first for child welfare in Ontario. Until now, authorization processes varied across Children's Aid Societies.



2. Achieving Service Excellence

The purpose of authorization is to standardize and enhance the delivery of child protection services, so that every family in Ontario can expect the same superior service, no matter where in the province they live. It will ensure that all new child protection workers have access to the same training, resources and information, and learning path to carry out specific child welfare services.

Read about the five other things you need to know [here](#).

we can learn from Notisha Massoquoi's adoption experience



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improve.”

Notisha Massoquoi
Executive Director
Women's Health in Women's Hands
Community Health Centre

The recently released One Vision One Voice [Research Report](#) and [Race Equity Practices](#) is intended to support Children's Aid Societies as they begin the process of deep change needed to better serve African Canadian families. As a complement to this framework, there is a great deal that can be learned from individual experiences. Two years ago Notisha Massaquoi adopted her daughter through a Children's Aid Society. She shares her insights on how the system needs to improve.

Last year the One Vision One Voice: Changing the Ontario Child Welfare System to Better Serve African Canadians released [a research report](#) and a [Race Equity Practices](#) to support Children's Aid Societies make positive change. Were you involved in this project?

I am the executive director of a women's health centre that frequently works with women who are involved with Children's Aid so it made sense for me to be part of the [One Vision One Voice](#) project. But the project launched at the same time that we started the process to adopt a child, so I felt it would be a conflict of interest to participate. My adoption experience taught me a lot about how the system needs to improve, so I spoke about my experience during the [One Vision One Voice](#) consultations with the African Canadian community. I also spoke at the Symposium launch of the Practice Framework in the hopes that sharing my experience can help make positive change.

What did your experience tell you about how the child welfare system is currently serving African Canadian families?

The process to adopt was very onerous for my partner and I'm somebody who knows the system. And if we're struggling racially and culturally through the adoption process, what about the average African Canadian family wanting to adopt?

[Read the rest of our interview](#) with Notisha.

Resources You Can Use

Pflag Can Help

Pflag is a registered charity with chapters across Canada that provide help to parents when their children come out as LGBTQ. They also support LGBTQ individuals who are having trouble as a result of "coming out" to their parents. They offer peer support by phone and in support meetings so parents can get information and encouragement from other parents who have travelled the same road. Accepting parents who support their LGBTQ children greatly reduce the likelihood of depression, homelessness and even suicide.

To learn more about Pflag and to find a chapter in Ontario [go to their website](#) .

Guide for Foster Parents Considering Legal Custody

For foster parents considering legal custody of a child or youth with Crown Wardship status, [this new guide](#) developed by an OACAS working group answers many common questions about the subject. Consider sharing it with any of your colleagues or friends who may be involved with training foster families.

Upcoming Events

[*Canadian Conference on Promoting Healthy Relationships for Youth: Breaking Down the Silos in Addressing Mental Health & Violence*](#), London, Ontario, February 15-17, 2017

[*The Kids Are Not Alright: The Urgent Need for a National Dialogue to Invest in the Wellbeing of Canada's Children*](#), Ottawa, Ontario, February 23, 2017

[*The 7th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*](#), Vancouver, British Columbia, March 1-4, 2017

[*Gathering Our Voices: National Aboriginal Youth Conference*](#), Kelowna, British Columbia, March 21-24, 2017

[*Love Thy Selfie: Aboriginal Girls Conference 2017*](#), Peterborough, Ontario, March 24-26, 2017

[*Wisdom2Action: From Trauma to Resilience*](#), Ottawa, ON, March 24, 2017

[*Missing & Exploited Children Training Conference*](#), Winnipeg, Manitoba, May 16-18, 2017

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Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
The voice of child welfare in Ontario



L'Association ontarienne des
sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance
Unis pour le bien-être des enfants de l'Ontario

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