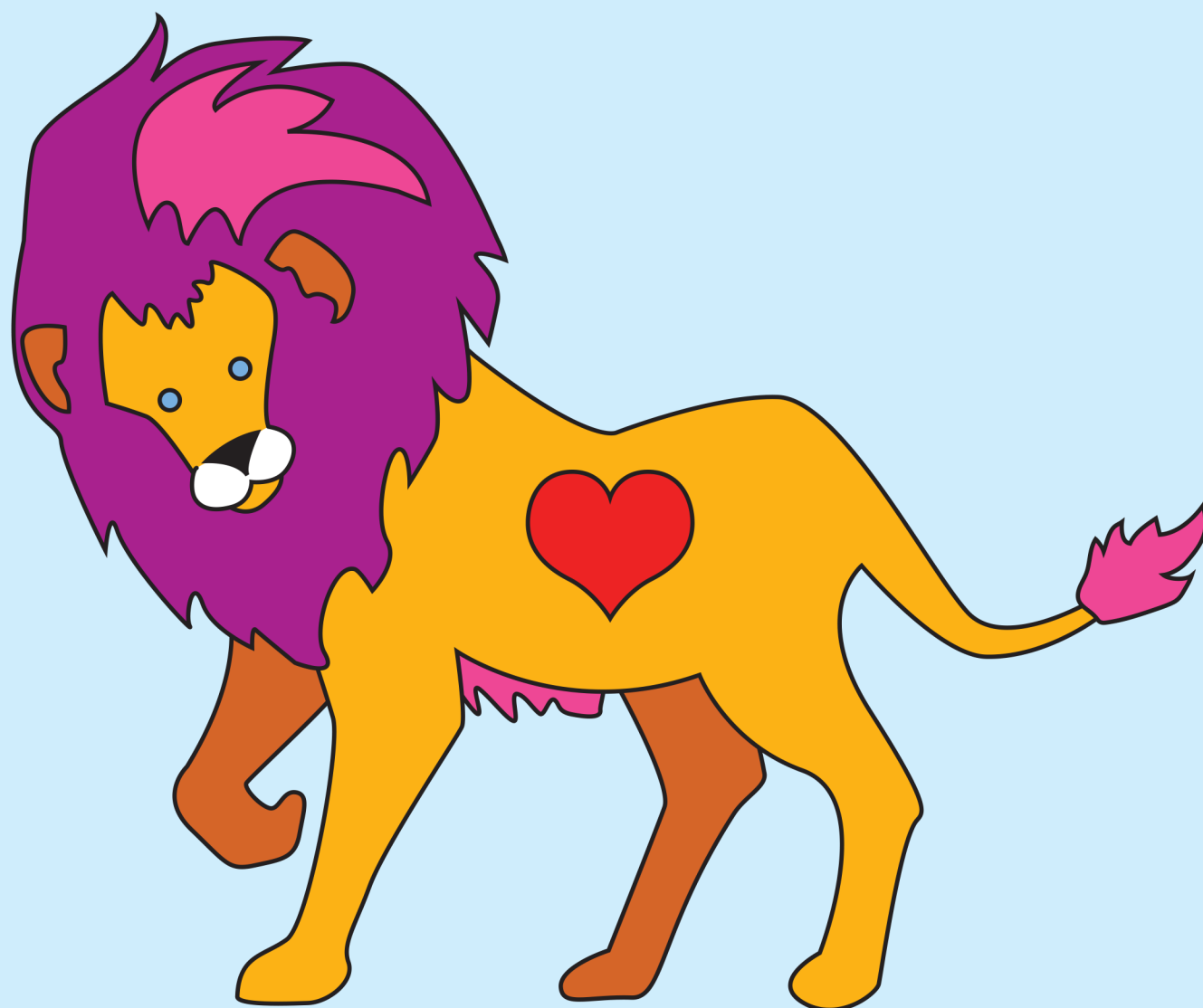


CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY TOOLKIT



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies

 **#CARE4CARE**

Children and Youth in Care Day 2020 Let's celebrate together!

This important day, proclaimed into law with the Children and Youth in Care Day Act, 2012, is an opportunity to recognize the enormous contributions that current and former youth in care make to this Province, as well as the strength, bravery and resilience shown by these children and youth in the face of adversity.

This year in wake of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, OACAS and child welfare agencies are thinking differently about what celebration looks like.

OACAS looks forward to continuing to support Children's Aid Societies, and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies to celebrate Children and Youth in Care Day locally or with zone partners.

Similar to last year, this Toolkit was designed and updated by OACAS with input from our Youth for Change Steering Committee (composed of a diverse group of youth in and from care) and YouthCAN agency staff champions, who provided key feedback about how agencies can make Children and Youth in Care Day events more accessible, authentic and engaging.

The toolkit is also available to download on the members' and public websites.

This Toolkit includes:

- Goals of Children and Youth in Care Day
- Logo and hashtag for social media
- A list of activities recommended by youth in and from care in Ontario
- A list of activities to virtually celebrate with children and youth
- 5 Tips to Be a Helpful Adult to Children and Youth in/from Care During COVID-19
- A chart of past agency events for inspiration
- Key messages for social media and hashtag
- Downloadable poster

Please see package for our logo and hashtag for Children and Youth in Care Day, designed by OACAS with feedback from youth and YouthCAN agency staff champions. The lion represents the bravery and courage to overcome the obstacles and challenges of being an individual in and from care. The colours also reflect elements of being in and from care. This logo and hashtag will be reproduced on the stickers to be delivered to agencies in advance of May 14.

With our hashtag #CARE4CARE, OACAS will focus on creating a social media presence to raise awareness within and beyond the child welfare sector about the importance of caring for children and youth in/from care and increase an understanding of their unique lived-experiences.

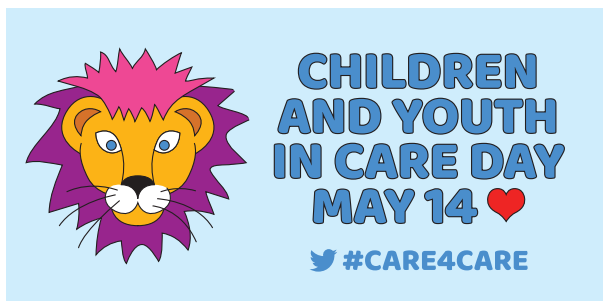
With this strategy and toolkit, OACAS aims to build on the capacity of agencies that already celebrate the day as well as help those who will be celebrating locally for the first time. We hope this strategy will be more inclusive of remote, rural and Northern agencies, which often cannot participate in central events due to travel and weather restrictions. OACAS also aims to promote one unified message across the province about our commitment to children and youth in care, while elevating awareness about the child welfare system to the public.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY TOOLKIT

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY - GOALS:

1. To build Children and Youth in Care Day into a multi-year campaign
2. To celebrate children and youth in and from care for their strengths and unique identities
3. To build better networks of support by increasing participation of community members and partners so that children and youth in/from care feel supported
4. To destigmatize views about children and youth in and from care by increasing awareness and understanding with the public

HASHTAG AND LOGO



To symbolize Children and Youth in Care Day we have chosen a purple lion to symbolize the bravery of children and youth in care; we have chosen a red heart to show that we are loving people and we also want to be loved; we have chosen the colour blue to represent the sadness and losses we experience but also that the sky can't contain our limits as we have endless potential. It is important to care for children and youth in/from care, so the hashtag is care4care.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY YOUTH IN AND FROM CARE IN ONTARIO

Celebration:

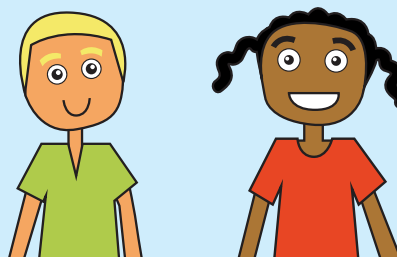
- I think it is important to recognize the amazing successes of children and youth in the system from across Ontario
- This event is to celebrate the strengths, contributions and diversity of the youth in care, such as a banquet or a block party!
- Open-mic times for artistic expression by youth such as poetry or monologues.

Feelings:

- I want agency supervisors and Board Members to participate, so we know who support us!
- Children and Youth in Care day should be an opportunity for the family as well. They should be publicly invited to join us.
- It should be like a birthday party!

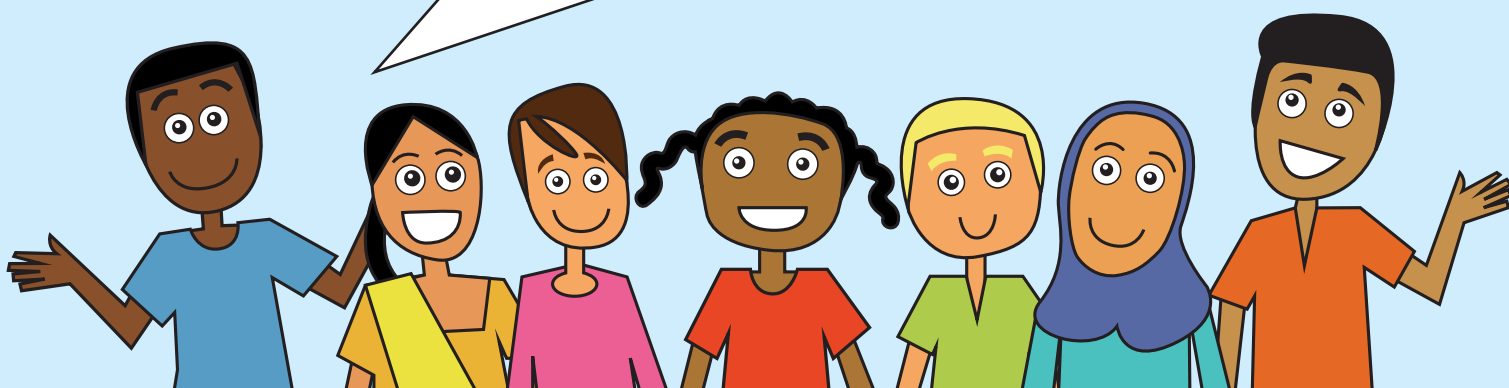
Workshops and speakers:

- I want a motivational speaker who talks about how to address challenges related to mental health and identity.
- I want inclusive workshops and activities that include speakers who reflect our identities like people who are LGBTQ+, a racial minority, Indigenous etc.
- Anti-discrimination and anti-oppression workshops for children and youth, in addition to CAS staff and family members working with the children's service system



A LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO VIRTUALLY CELEBRATE WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

These activities are appropriate for celebration and can be adapted for ongoing engagement with children and youth at your agency



The priority is to put the voice of children and youth at the centre of decision making, so the first step is to ask the young people at your agency what ideas they might already have. The list below are additional suggestions that might help:

- 1. Talent Show.** Circulate sign-up list for youth sign up for a timeslot on selected date to display their talent (e.g., singing). Connect with group via video and let the fun begin!
- 2. Dance Party.** Set a date for everyone to join via video. Assign one person as the DJ and let the music play! Bonus points for wearing a dance outfit and decorating your room.
- 3. Virtual Pizza Hang Out.** Send a mini pizza to everyone's house and setup a time in advance to eat together via video. Alternatively, set up a time with your youth to simply eat their own food together as a group for a dinner hang out.
- 4. Learn a Skill.** Ask youth about something they want to learn, for example, potting a plant. Send youth the tools required (e.g., dirt, pot, seeds) and do the activity at the same time on video with your own set of tools.

5. Virtual Drop-In. Setup a date for youth to join a group video chat or phone call. You can even set this up on a weekly basis (for example, every Wednesday 10 – 11 am). This provides a consistent spot to stay connected and ask questions and/or share resources.

6. Virtual Book or Movie or Game Club. Pick a book or movie or YouTube video with youth to read or watch then discuss as a group. Alternatively, choose a video game that everyone can play online together or on a platform like PlayStation.

7. Life Skills Workshop. Ask youth to send in questions related to a topic and take up questions as a group. Questions can be related to a life skill (e.g., health relationships) or focused on something that might help them during the pandemic (e.g., finding stable housing and apartment viewing during covid-19, how to get along with your roommate). For ideas about resources relevant to youth, [click here](#) for a list created by youth in and from care about their priorities during COVID-19.

8. Cultural and Identity-Based Activities. Find an identity or cultural-based organization to collaborate with so youth can stay connected to community-activities (e.g., Drumming circles, LGBTQ+ drop-in group).

9. Art Inspiration Workshop. Choose a topic or question for inspiration, such as: What would I be like as a superhero including superpowers? Ask youth to create a piece of art, poetry, song etc. based on this prompt. Share your work via video.

10. Mini-Care Package Drop-Off and Letter Delivery. Agencies can create mini-care packages that can be dropped off at a youth's place of residence. Mini-care packages can include encouraging messages from your agency, hand sanitizer, food and other small items that might give youth a sense of care and support during this time. Alternatively, write a letter to youth which expresses that you care and are thinking of them.

5 TIPS TO BE A HELPFUL ADULT DURING COVID-19 FROM CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN/FROM CARE

1. Help us stay connected to our cultural and identity-based groups. Now is the time to lean on and find strength in community.

- Click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis-focused resources.
- Click [here](#) and [here](#) for resources for those of African descent.

2. Talk to us! Validate our feelings and share resources related to COVID-19 that can help us understand what it means in an age-appropriate way.

- Click [here](#) and [here](#) for tips about how to talk to children and youth about COVID-19.

3. We want to be productive! Help us stay on track with schoolwork or collaborate with us to figure out extra learning activities we can do.

- Click [here](#) and [here](#) for French and English educational resources for school-age children and teens.

4. Remember that even if there is a computer in the house, we might have limited or restricted access.

Ensure that we have the right technology (e.g., computers, tablets, phones) with Internet that matches our needs. Technology and Internet access helps us connect with family/friends, schoolwork, mental health supports and other community resources.

- Click [here](#) for a program that provides youth from care access to free phone and data.

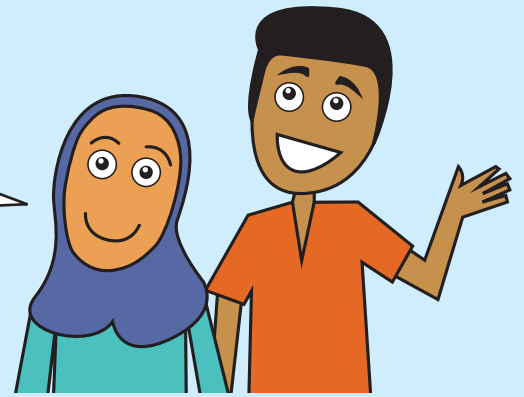
5. Check in with us and let us know you care! This is a scary time and can remind us of other negative experiences in our life involving isolation, trauma and uncertainty.

- Giving us care packages is one way to show your support, these packages can include practical and entertainment items (e.g., art supplies, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, dry foods, vouchers, handwritten letters, games, puzzles etc.). This is especially helpful for youth who find video or phone contact overwhelming.
- Click [here](#) to contact a local Children's Aid Societies and ask how to drop off donations for care packages today.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY TOOLKIT

PAST AGENCY EVENTS

For more ideas, check out a few examples of what was done in past years and agencies!



NORTHERN AND NORTH EAST ZONE

Oxford CAS and Elgin Child and Family Services

BBQ and outdoor activities such as road hockey, cement chalk, and jump rope.

Children's Aid Society of Nipissing and Parry Sound

Outdoor event with activities for all ages including inflatables, obstacle course and jousting. BBQ, cotton candy and popcorn.

Attend local bowling alley, eat pizza and games with prizes.

CENTRAL ZONE

Durham Children's Aid Society

Annual youth retreat for youth in care or living independently

York Region Children's Aid Society

Attend outdoor park and play activities including basketball, volleyball and tennis. Face painter, balloon artist and photobooth available. Games with prizes for participants.

Jewish Family and Child

Evening event at Dave and Busters, including kosher food and snacks.

Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Jewish Family and Child, and Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

BBQ at the CAS Scarborough office.

EAST ZONE

Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society

BBQ with arts and crafts, and live music. The Foundation also gave out graduation awards.

BBQ with assistance from M & M Meats including games, photobooth and prizes. Graduation Plaques from K-H foundation.

The Children's Aid Society of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

BBQ, visit to Little Ray's Reptile Zoo and life size inflatables.

Personalize cards sent to all children and youth in care with a \$20 gift card.

SOUTH WEST ZONE

Oxford CAS with Elgin Child and Family Services	Went to activity centre called The Factory with indoor adventure, zip line and trampoline park with dinner after.
Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society	BBQ at main office and a youth was the DJ for the event.
Bruce Grey Child and Family Services	Youth and staff held "Coffee and Cupcake Break". Also showed art created by youth in care at the office buildings. Each youth in care aged 0 - 21 was given a gift card and a YIPTIC pen and YIPTIC tattoo. YIPTIC provided each youth with a letter. Each youth in care also received a letter from the Board of Directors.
Children's Aid Society of Oxford County	Full day workshop with Gregory Smith (Flipping the Iceberg) for youth and staff. Also BBQ lunch.
Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society	Annual flag raising of special child and youth in care day flag followed by a pizza and popcorn movie party with staff and management at the request of the youth group. Also rented a movie theatre popcorn maker. Mobile Games System Party with Pizza Party and Sundae Bar.
Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex	Children and youth went to McDonalds with their worker.
Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society	Went to Local Bowling Alley, did arts and crafts, and received "goodie bag"

GRAND RIVER ZONE

The Children's Society of Hamilton	Attended the "Fun Fair" with inflatables, games, food, arts and reptile show.
Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region	Family night at Skyzone and indoor trampoline activities
Halton Children's Aid Society	Hosted event called "All Around the World" including food of all cultures, henna tattoos, bouncy castle, cultural music, photobooth and indoor activities. BBQ.
The Children's Aid Society of Haldimand and Norfolk	BBQ with speeches by YIM students, a photo booth and mini photo albums of events were given to youth. Banner was displayed which showed past dinners and events youth have attended.
Brant Family and Children's Services	BBQ and art show.
Family and Children's Services Niagara	BBQ with photo booth, popcorn machine and speeches.
Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex	Children and youth went to McDonalds with their worker.

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Spread awareness about Children and Youth in Care Day on social media such as Facebook and Instagram or Twitter!

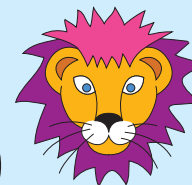
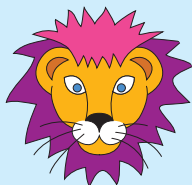
Please see below for our hashtag and key messages that OACAS will be sharing. Join in the conversation and spread awareness online!

TAGLINES/HASHTAG:

#care4care
#childrenandyouthincareday

KEY MESSAGES:

1. On May 14, 2012, Children and Youth in Care Day was proclaimed by the government of Ontario to raise awareness about children and youth in the care of the Province. There are approximately 12,000 children and youth in care in Ontario. Each year 800 - 1,000 individuals 'age out' and leave the care of the Ontario child welfare system. We are a growing part of your community.
2. On May 14, 2020, children and youth in and from care ask the community to join in celebration and raising awareness to show they #care4care. Friends, group home staff, foster parents, health professionals – it is important that we know you care for us!
3. We need to know that we matter to you. It helps to know we have a community that we can turn to and that we belong to, especially in those moments when we feel alone.
4. On Children and Youth in Care Day we celebrate, because we are people living unique, intricate lives, making important contributions to society, just like you. Come celebrate with us.
5. On May 14, 2020, we raise awareness about children and youth in care. We are your friends, your neighbours, your community. Hear us, see us, judge us as you'd judge anyone else.
6. On Children and Youth in Care Day we raise awareness about the struggles we face - being in care can be a challenging, isolating and unpredictable rollercoaster. Supportive friends, services and community can make the difference.
7. It only takes one person to make us feel like we are not alone. On Children and Youth in Care Day, be that person and #care4care.
8. We are here for a purpose and whatever that purpose may be we will shine in our light.
9. To symbolize Children and Youth in Care Day we have chosen a purple lion to symbolize the bravery of children and youth in care; we have chosen a red heart to show that we are loving people and we also want to be loved; we have chosen the colour blue to represent the sadness and losses we experience but also that the sky can't contain our limits as we have endless potential.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE DAY MAY 14



We need to know that we matter to you. It helps to know we have a community that we can turn to and that we belong to, especially in those moments when we feel alone.

We are here for a purpose and whatever that purpose might be, we will shine in our light!

We are your friends, your neighbours, your community. Hear us, see us, understand us, celebrate with us!

We are diverse people living unique, intricate lives, making important contributions to society, just like you! Come celebrate with us!

We celebrate over 12,000 children and youth in care from across Ontario. Every year, approximately 800 to 1,000 of us 'age out' of care. We are a growing part of your community.



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 **#CARE4CARE**