



Toolkit: Children and Youth in Care Day 2022

May 14, 2022

About Children and Youth in Care Day, #ForgetMeNot, and this Toolkit

Children and Youth in Care Day, proclaimed into law with the *Children and Youth in Care Day Act, 2014*, is an opportunity to acknowledge the enormous contributions that current and former youth in care make to the province, as well as the strength, bravery, and resilience shown by these children and youth in the face of adversity. Children and Youth in Care Day was created because of the tireless efforts of young people in and from care and the stories and experiences they shared through the [My Real Life Book](#) report.

This year, OACAS is launching a new campaign aimed at bringing renewed attention to the accomplishments and challenges of children and youth in the Ontario child welfare system. The #ForgetMeNot campaign is about sharing the stories of young people with experience in the system and reminding community, government, and service providers that these young people continue to need critical supports. They cannot be forgotten.

This toolkit is intended to support the participation of various stakeholders, including Children's Aid Societies, government partners, community stakeholders, and young people themselves in Children and Youth in Care Day 2022 and the #ForgetMeNot campaign. Join us on May 14!

This Toolkit Includes:

- [Goals of Children and Youth in Care Day and #ForgetMeNot](#)
- [Key Messages](#)
- [A Poem: "Forget Me Not"](#)
- [Participation Tips](#)
- [Social Media Content and Assets](#)

Goals of Children and Youth in Care Day and #ForgetMeNot

1. To acknowledge children and youth in and from care for their strengths and unique identities.



2. To build better networks of support by increasing participation of community members and partners so that children and youth in and from care feel supported and thrive.
3. To destigmatize views about children and youth in and from care by increasing awareness and understanding with the public.

Key Messages

Children and Youth in Care Day

- On March 25, 2014, 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.
- This important day was created because of the tireless efforts of young people in and from care and the stories and experiences they shared through the My Real Life Book report.
- There are approximately 12,000 children and youth in care served by non-Indigenous Children's Aid Societies in Ontario. Each year 800–1,000 individuals "age out" and leave the care of the Ontario child welfare system.
- Children and youth in care are children and youth who live in kin, foster, and group homes. They are children and youth who are not able to live with their primary caregivers because of conditions that make it unsafe to do so.
- Children and Youth in Care Day is an opportunity to recognize the contributions of current and former youth in care to the province, as well as reduce stigma and acknowledge their strength, bravery, and resilience in the face of adversity.
- Children and Youth in Care Day is an important reminder that children and youth in care face many unique challenges. They require allies, advocacy, and collaboration to help them reach their full potential.

#ForgetMeNot

- The #ForgetMeNot campaign aims to bring renewed attention to the accomplishments and challenges of children and youth in the Ontario child welfare system.
- The poor outcomes of youth from child welfare are well documented. Without a sense belonging, support, and strong relationships, youth in and from care continue to be at increased risk of



- dropping out of high school or post-secondary,
 - substance misuse,
 - early parenthood,
 - human trafficking,
 - being underemployed, homeless, or living in poverty,
 - significant mental health challenges, and
 - involvement in other systems, like criminal justice.
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- The unique risks and challenges that youth in and from care face have been compounded during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The #ForgetMeNot campaign is about sharing the stories of young people with experience in the system and reminding community, government, and service providers that these young people continue to need critical supports. They cannot be forgotten.
 - It is important for children and youth in care to know they belong to, and have the support of, their community. They need to know they are not alone. They need to know they are not forgotten.
 - The #ForgetMeNot campaign is particularly relevant in the lead up to a provincial election when Ontarians have the opportunity to choose a candidate that best represents the issues that are important to them. We want children and youth in care and vulnerable families to be on the minds of voters when they make their decision.
 - Forget-me-nots symbolize love and respect and represent a promise of remembrance. These tiny blooms are known for their resilience and their ability to grow in difficult circumstances and across environments.
 - Like the forget-me-not flower, children and youth in care are resilient and adaptable. But despite that strength, they still need consistent care, attention, and tangible support to thrive.

A Poem

Forget Me Not

I've grown through some tough things,

No doubt,

Survived in spite of



*Thrived and made light of heavy,
Lifted through concrete and kept steady going.
Paving my own way.
Laid roots. Bloomed.
Put feet to ground and planted in impossible odds.
But I didn't get there alone.
I was first shown that odds were meant to be beat.
I was believed in, poured into, and encouraged on by those who didn't count me out.
Those that took me in.
Those that took their time.
People who gave me space to define what blossoming meant for me.
Who reminded that success isn't determined by history, but by a commitment to not forgetting.
It's no mystery, the flowers that grow are the ones you remember to water.
Forget. Me. Not.*

How to Participate

Children's Aid Societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies

1. Join us on social media on May 14 (see some suggested content below) and show your support for children and youth in care and the issues that are important to them.
2. Share the campaign assets (images, videos, poem) with your staff, stakeholders, partners, and volunteers. Engage them in the messages of the campaign and encourage them to participate on May 14.
3. Organize local events and opportunities to celebrate and amplify the voices of children and youth in care in your community.
4. Participate in the Ontario Children's Advancement Coalition's event on May 13 from 12-1 PM in honour of the day and to learn more about the #ForgetMeNot campaign. OACAS CEO Nicole Bonnie will also provide opening remarks.
5. [Learn about what supports and services these young people need](#) and advocate for them with your local government officials. Raise their issues with provincial



candidates in the lead up to the provincial election on June 2, 2022, and with elected officials post-election.

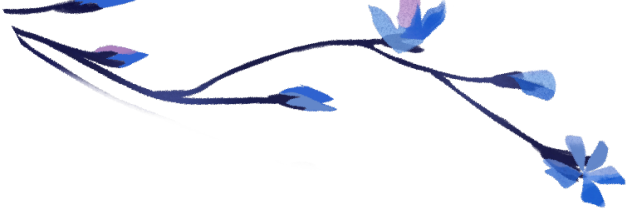
6. Invite young people to participate in your events, to sit at your tables, and to join your conversations to learn from them, seek their advice, and incorporate their feedback into your decision-making.

Former Youth in Care

1. Tell us your story. Submit your #ForgetMeNot video and share how you paved your own way, laid roots, and bloomed. Tell us who believed in, poured into, and encouraged you. Or, if you prefer, submit a video of your reading/singing/interpretation of the Forget Me Not poem. Submissions can be sent to youthcan@ocas.org.
2. Join us on social media on May 14 (see some suggested content below) and tell us how you blossomed, who supported you, and what issues are most important to you.
3. Participate in the Ontario Children's Advancement Coalition's event on May 13 from 12-1 PM in honour of the day and to learn more about the #ForgetMeNot campaign. OACAS CEO Nicole Bonnie will also provide opening remarks.

Community Stakeholders/Members

1. Learn how you can support the young people in your community through fostering, mentoring, tutoring, volunteering, donating, etc. Contact your [local Children's Aid Society](#) to find out how they can use your help. Other programs that may need your services include Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada ([Big Steps to Success Program](#)) and the Adoption Council of Ontario ([Never Too Late](#)).
2. [Learn about what supports and services these young people need](#) and advocate for them with your local government officials. Raise their issues with provincial candidates in the lead up to the provincial election on June 2, 2022, and with elected officials post-election.
3. Invite young people to participate in your events, to sit at your tables, and to join your conversations to learn from them, seek their advice, and incorporate their feedback into your decision-making.
4. Join us on social media on May 14 (see some suggested content below) and show your support for children and youth in care and the issues that are important to them.
5. Share the campaign assets (images, videos, poem) with your staff, stakeholders, partners, and volunteers. Engage them in the messages of the campaign and encourage them to participate on May 14.



Members of Provincial Parliament and Government Officials

1. Join us on social media on May 14 (see some suggested content below) and show your support for children and youth in care and the issues that are important to them.
2. Invite young people to participate in your events, to sit at your tables, and to join your conversations to learn from them, seek their advice, and incorporate their feedback into your decision-making.
3. [Learn about what supports and services these young people need](#) and make vulnerable children, youth, and families a priority in your election platform.

Social Media Content and Assets

Spread awareness about Children and Youth in Care Day on social media on May 14. Join the #ForgetMeNot conversation!

Follow us at [@ONT_youthCAN](#) and [@our_children](#) on Twitter and [@ontarioyouthcan.org](#) on Facebook.

Hashtags

#ForgetMeNot

#ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

www.oacas.org/forgetmenot

Social Media Messages

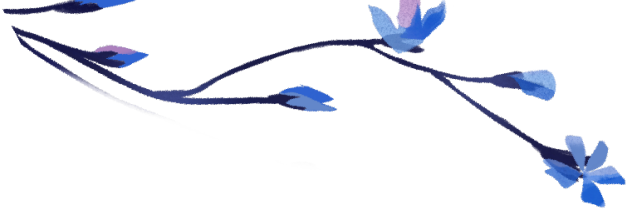
Twitter/Instagram

#ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay was created because of young people's tireless efforts. Let's bring renewed attention to the accomplishments and challenges of children/youth in care. Learn more at oacas.org/forgetmenot #ForgetMeNot

The #ForgetMeNot campaign is about sharing the stories of young people with experience in child welfare and reminding community, government, and service providers that they need critical supports. They cannot be forgotten. We all have a part to play in making sure they thrive. oacas.org/forgetmenot

#ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay was created because of the tireless efforts of young people in/from care. They wanted a day to be recognized for their contributions, strength, and resilience. On May 14 let's make sure they feel supported and know they are not forgotten. #ForgetMeNot

It only takes one person to make children and youth in care feel like they are not alone. On #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay, be that person. Make sure they know they belong to, and have the support of, community. Learn more at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ForgetMeNot



Children and Youth in Care Day is an opportunity to recognize the contributions of current and former youth in care, as well as reduce stigma and celebrate their strength, bravery, and resilience in the face of adversity. Happy #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay! #ForgetMeNot oacas.org/forgetmenot

Join us on May 14 to make sure children and youth in care know that they are not alone, that they belong, and that they have the support of their community. Learn how you can support their success at oacas.org/forgetmenot #ForgetMeNot

Forget-me-nots symbolize love and respect and represent a promise of remembrance. Like the flower, children and youth in care are resilient. But despite that strength, they need consistent care, attention, and tangible support to thrive. #ForgetMeNot oacas.org/forgetmenot

Do you have experience in child welfare in Ontario? Join our #ForgetMeNot campaign! Read our campaign poem on video and share it with us at youthcan@oacas.org. Or tell us your story of beating the odds, blossoming, and who helped you get there. oacas.org/forgetmenot

I'm sharing my #ForgetMeNot story because...

Facebook/LinkedIn

On March 25, 2014, 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. This important day was created because of the tireless efforts of young people in and from care and the stories and experiences they shared through the My Real Life Book report. On Children and Youth in Care Day we want them to know that they are not alone, they belong, that they have the support of their community. They will not be forgotten. oacas.org/forgetmenot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay #ForgetMeNot

This Children and Youth in Care Day on May 14, OACAS is launching a new campaign aimed at bringing renewed attention to the accomplishments and challenges of children and youth in the Ontario child welfare system. The #ForgetMeNot campaign is about sharing the stories of young people with experience in the system and reminding community, government, and service providers that these young people continue to need critical supports. They cannot be forgotten. Learn more, including how you can participate, at oacas.org/forgetmenot. #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay

Children and Youth in Care Day is an important reminder that children and youth in care face many unique challenges. They require allies, advocacy, and collaboration to help them reach their full potential. Children and youth in care need to know they are not alone. They need to know they are not forgotten. Join us on May 14, 2022 and amplify the voices of children and youth in care. oacas.org/forgetmenot #ForgetMeNot #ChildrenAndYouthInCareDay



Campaign Assets

The visual elements of the campaign include photographs and stories of former youth in care, a video reading of the “Forget Me Not” poem, and more.

All campaign materials will be available at www.oacas.org/forgetmenot.