

It is time to act to change the lives of Ontario's vulnerable children

OACAS releases new report on priorities aimed at protecting children and standing up for their needs

TORONTO - The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) released their annual Child Welfare Report today. The 2014 Child Welfare Report identifies six areas as the focus for change. These priorities highlight the need for a comprehensive strategy to support continuous improvement to the system that protects the most vulnerable members of our society. The issues and gaps have been identified not only by Children's Aid Societies but also by the communities they serve and the social service partners they work with. While there has been significant change in the sector, there are still areas that need attention.

OACAS and Ontario's Children's Aid Societies call on the government to:

- **Support families to protect children at home.** Continue to focus on early involvement with at-risk families and provide additional investments to supporting social services so that they are available to help prevent escalation of family problems to the point where child protection concerns increase.
- **Extend the age of protection to 18.** Revise legislation to allow for Ontario's child welfare agencies to protect children up to the age of 18, bringing the age of protection in line with the rest of Canada.
- **Broaden subsidy programs to give all children and youth a chance settle in a permanent family.** Extend a standard provincial subsidy program, which supports all children and youth to the age of 21 to afford the best opportunity to create permanent families.
- **'Staying Put' – changing the culture of care so that youth stay at home until they are finished school.** Modernize policy for youth, giving them the same opportunities and supports as their peers who are not in care.
- **Support an agenda for sustainable Aboriginal and First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) child welfare services defined by Aboriginal and FNMI communities.** Realize the right for Aboriginal and FNMI communities to deliver and determine services to their own people and acknowledge and address the specialized needs of these communities.
- **Continue to develop a sustainable, accountable and transparent child welfare system.** Support and resources to build strong governance models, further develop the performance measurement system, strengthen human resource practices, ensure a sound funding model, and align and fund social services for children and families.

It is time to act on these priorities. The children, youth and families who rely on the services of Children's Aid Societies deserve to have a sustainable, continuously improving system that protects them and stands up for their needs.

Read the full report in [English](#) and [French](#).

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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.

For more information:

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