



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child welfare organizations are still #HeretohelpON during COVID-19

Toronto – Today, the #HeretohelpON online campaign is being launched jointly by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO). The cross-sectoral campaign is designed to unite participating organizations in letting Ontarians know that despite the ongoing state of emergency in Ontario, services are still in place to support children, youth, and families. The goal of the campaign is to encourage the public to reach out for assistance, whether it be for themselves, loved ones, neighbours, or others for whom they have concerns.

VIDEO: [Ontario's Social Services are #HeretohelpON during COVID-19](#)

"We want Ontarians to know that they are not alone during the pandemic," said Nicole Bonnie, Chief Executive Officer of OACAS. "It's important they know, now more than ever, that no matter their gender, sexual identity, race, or culture or the challenges they're facing, they have people and places they can reach out to for support."

"We know the pandemic has led to increased isolation and added pressures for many families, and presents unique challenges to Ontario's Indigenous communities," said Amber Crowe, Board President of ANCFSAO. "We want the communities we serve to know that Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies are committed to supporting them through this difficult time and to keeping them connected with Indigenous services, communities, and culture."

Organizations who provide services aimed at children, youth, and families are encouraged to share the campaign materials with their followers and provide their own contact information and/or outline of the services they are offering during the pandemic. The package includes a video created remotely by leaders of essential services from across Ontario, including children's mental health, police services, and the violence against women sector. The video's message is that while it may seem as though the entire world has paused, Children's Aid Societies, Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies and many more service providers are here and ready to help.

“The campaign is being led by child welfare, but we have so many partners across the province who work with us to keep children, youth, and families safe,” said Nicole Bonnie. “Many of us have had to modify our service delivery models, but we need our most vulnerable community members to know how they can continue to reach us in their times of need.”

Additional information about the campaign and the package of materials, both English and French, can be accessed on the OACAS website at www.oacas.org/heretohelp.

About OACAS: For over 100 years, the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS) has been enhancing and promoting the welfare and well-being of children, youth and families in Ontario. OACAS works to create a highly effective system of services for children which has the confidence of Ontario families and communities. For more information visit www.oacas.org.

About ANCFSAO: ANCFSAO is a provincial organization mandated to build a better life for all Indigenous children through promoting the delivery of culturally-based services to Indigenous children, families, and communities. The Association acts as a resource in assisting its member agencies towards the provision of high-quality, community-based child welfare and family well-being services to Indigenous people through education and training, policy development and analyses, and research and advocacy. Visit www.ancfsao.ca for more information.

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