



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES SUBMISSION TO
THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

2023 Review of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*

JULY 14, 2023

About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) is a provincial membership organization representing 47 of Ontario's 50 mandated children's aid societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies, as well as 2 pre-mandated Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies. We support members by providing practice tools, educational opportunities, and training, as well as communication and advocacy supports to help achieve improved, equitable outcomes for children, youth, and families.

OACAS and its members welcome the opportunity to provide input on the first review of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA) since proclamation. We appreciate efforts to engage those with experience providing and receiving services under the CYFSA, including children's aid societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies.

Introduction

The OACAS submission is informed by feedback from our members, as well as youth with lived and living experience in the Ontario child welfare system. OACAS held two virtual engagement sessions with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and gathered written feedback from internal working groups made up of sector leadership and partners. We applaud all those who took the time to share their reflections and insights with OACAS. This submission would not have been possible without your commitment to advance systems-level thinking and transformative change.

The CYFSA can be improved to truly realize its principles and better promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children and youth. Please see below for a list of recommended changes to the CYFSA and associated policies, tools, and protocols that guide practice and service delivery in the child welfare sector. Recommended changes have been organized thematically using the 6 key areas MCCSS identified. Additional recommendations outside of these thematic areas can be found at the end of the submission.

As the province considers feedback and explores opportunities to improve the CYFSA, we request the government remain mindful of the financial and administrative impacts of potential amendments as well as the increasingly complex nature of cases. Further, we ask that Ontario consider mandating continued education for judges as it relates to the CYFSA and the distinct needs of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth, and families when interacting with the child welfare system. Judges play a critical role in promoting the safety and well-being of children and youth. It is essential judges across the province consistently consider the importance of all aspects of identity, including culture and community, when overseeing CYFSA proceedings.

The effectiveness of the CYFSA is intrinsically linked with the human and community services sector. OACAS and its members strongly urge the province to identify funding measures that will ensure the sector is adequately supported and bolster the principles of the CYFSA and its objectives. It is critical the province make enhanced investments in community-based care so children, youth, and families have access to holistic, wraparound services that will promote their health, safety, and well-being. Enhanced investments will also support the implementation of the Ontario Child Welfare Redesign Strategy, namely *Pillar 1: Supporting Child, Youth, Family and Community Well-Being*.

We hope our feedback is helpful as the Ontario government assesses the effectiveness of the CYFSA and considers opportunities for improvement.

OACAS Recommendations

Child and youth rights

Through the virtual engagement session with youth, we heard the current rights outlined in the CYFSA are not being consistently upheld. We strongly urge the Ontario government to explore opportunities to deeply embed the rights of children and youth across the continuum of care to ensure the current provisions are upheld in all settings. It is also critical to explore measures that will ensure children and youth truly understand their rights. Youth noted there is a difference between being *informed* of their rights versus *understanding*.

Youth also called for enhanced mechanisms that would promote comprehension and stressed the use of truly accessible language. Youth suggested the use of multimedia products to build their understanding of rights provisions and that information regarding rights provisions be reviewed with youth consistently (i.e., at regular intervals). Youth stressed enhanced efforts to promote understanding are critical so they can identify instances where their rights are not being upheld, particularly as it relates to privacy and mistreatment by caregivers and service providers.

Additionally, the CYFSA should clearly outline the rights of children and youth to:

- Continued connections to family, culture, community, and other caring adults in extended kin/kith networks. The CYFSA and associated policies, tools, and protocols must ensure *all* children and youth be placed with family, kin/kith, and/or caring adults within their community to ensure continued connections to family, culture, and community. This is integral to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black children and youth as well as the disparities in outcomes for Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth.
 - Note: OACAS strongly encourages adding a section to the CYFSA to complement the section regarding the rights of children and youth. The

complementary section should clearly outline the rights of families, kin/kith, other caring adults, and communities as it relates to children and youth receiving services. In this section, it is essential the CYFSA acknowledge the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities and ensure the CYFSA does not promote exclusionary definitions of kin/kith, family, or extended family that undermine Kinship Service, Kinship Care, or Customary Care.

- Play a meaningful role in decision-making processes as it relates to their care and delivery of services. It is critical that children and youth be included and provided with consistent opportunities to meaningfully participate to ensure their voices remain at the centre of all decisions. To this end, OACAS suggests moving away from language that stresses children and youth feel “heard” and “considered.” While this language aims to promote an active role for youth, it does not consistently facilitate a meaningful role in practice. Language used to describe the role of children and youth in decision-making processes as it relates to their care and service management should clearly reflect their entitlement to an active role, similar to *Ready, Set, Go*.
 - Note: Updated provisions embedding the entitlement of children and youth to an active role must also acknowledge the right of Indigenous children and youth to consult with their First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. Further, the section must reflect that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities are entitled to establish their own culturally relevant levels of accountability through inherent jurisdiction.
- Meaningfully inform the collection, use, and disclosure of their personal information. This is critical to supporting the health, safety, and well-being of 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth who use pronouns not associated with those assigned at birth and/or identified names different from their legal names. Service providers should not disclose the sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression of a young person without their consent. (Nor should disclosure be required for the management of services.) Further, information should be shared with compassion and free of bias.
- Access personal documents and information. This is of critical importance to newcomer children and youth as it relates to immigration processes.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples

Changes are needed to improve how the CYFSA governs services for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We urge the Ontario government to:



- Increase the availability, accessibility, and delivery of culturally relevant, trauma-informed services for First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous children, youth, and families. Culturally relevant, trauma-informed services for Indigenous children, youth, and families are underfunded. It is important to note that the inaccessibility of culturally relevant, trauma-informed supports and services is acutely felt by children and youth with intersecting identities, such as children and youth who identify as Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, and/or LGBTQ+. The work to increase access and availability must involve supporting Indigenous organizations and communities in designing and developing their own models of care, including those governed under Indigenous law.
- Clearly delineate the rights of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.
- Bring the CYFSA and associated policies, tools, and protocols into alignment with federal legislation, such as *An Act respecting First Nation, Inuit and Métis children, youth, and families* as well as:
 - The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
 - Calls to Justice from the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.
 - Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Recognize the impact the child welfare system has had and continues to have on First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous children, youth, and families. This must involve a review of the Eligibility Spectrum. We urge the Ontario government to examine the ways in which risk is assessed for Indigenous children, youth, and families and remove barriers that frustrate the ability of agencies to provide both protection and prevention services. It is critical to update this tool to ensure agencies are able to assess if a risk is urgent versus chronic and effectively manage services accordingly to ensure children, youth, and families receive timely support. This is intrinsically linked with efforts within the child welfare sector, and external mandated referrers, to shift from a duty to report framework to a focus on the duty to *support*.
- In acknowledgement of the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities, address legislative barriers within the CYFSA as it relates to the confidentiality of adoption records, adoption disruption, adoption breakdown, and purview of agencies to confirm identity details.
 - Note: The CYFSA requires agencies to make all reasonable efforts to assist a young person in maintaining relationships with persons who are beneficial and meaningful to the child or youth when an adoption is not finalized or when they return to care after an adoption order was made. The confidentiality of

adoption information presents a challenge for agencies to share information from closed/sealed adoption files. This is inconsistent with federal and provincial commitments to advance reconciliation. It is essential to ensure agencies can provide limited identifiable information to support First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous children and youth in care — or formerly in care — connect, reconnect, and/or maintain relationships with birth families and their communities. Further, language within the CYFSA should be strengthened to direct agencies to not just make “reasonable efforts” but to demonstrate they have made every effort possible (i.e., demonstrate an exhaust of) to assist a young person.

- Recognize Indigenous data sovereignty as it relates to ownership, control, and access to data.
- Allow for greater flexibility in the departure from standard and permanency timelines to prioritize continued familial, cultural, and community connections for First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous children, youth, and families.
- Integrate Indigenous-specific recommendations in recent inquests and reports.
- Improve the compliance of children’s aid societies with obligations when working with Indigenous Child and Family Well Being Agencies, First Nations, Inuit, Métis communities and when serving Indigenous children, youth, and families.

Equity and anti-racism

There are opportunities for the CYFSA to eliminate inequities, improve outcomes, and address systemic oppression and discrimination. This must include:

- Acknowledging the importance of all aspects of identity, including culture and community, in service planning, particularly for Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth, and families.
- Recognizing the disparities and disproportionality experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth. Members have observed an increasing number of 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth, especially trans and non-binary young people, interacting with the child welfare system due to a lack of support and identity rejection by primary caregivers.
- Acknowledging the Black community as a distinct and recognizable group and that their historical and current relationship with the state has resulted in the over-surveillance, over-policing, and over-reporting of Black families into child welfare.



Further, it is critical the CYFSA, and associated policies, tools, and protocols integrate language that recognizes the specific form of racism experienced by Black children, youth, families, and communities. It is recommended the CYFSA be updated with a section dedicated to addressing the unique needs of Black children, youth, and families.

- Integrating and utilizing clear, direct language that acknowledges Black culture and identity as a protective factor. Service providers, including agencies, should be mandated to apply an anti-Black racism framework that takes into consideration the impact of white supremacy, systemic oppression, anti-Blackness, and colonization on Black children, youth, and their caregivers when they are being assessed.
- Updating the duty to report to address the impact of anti-Black racism as the inherent risk that contributes to the overrepresentation of Black children, youth, and families in child welfare.
- Clarifying the definition of "reasonable grounds." Currently, the definition lends itself to personal discretion and perspectives of what harm or risk means. This does not safeguard against biases or assumptions and contributes to over-surveillance, over-policing, and over-reporting. Further, the duty to report should establish joint protocols and referral mechanisms to provide early intervention, diversion, and community-based support to help reduce involvement with the child welfare and justice systems.
- Improving practice within the child welfare sector to better protect children, youth and families from racism and discrimination in services. Part of this work should involve promoting programs and initiatives that empower Black children, youth, and families to advocate for themselves and participate in decision-making processes. It should also involve enhancing and increasing equity and cultural competency through mandated training and continued learning opportunities.
- Strengthening supports and requirements to reduce the overrepresentation of specific communities in child, youth, and family services.
- Ensuring the CYFSA and associated policies, tools, and protocols used to inform service delivery within the child welfare sector are equity-based, culturally relevant, and trauma-informed. The Ontario government should urgently review tools and protocols (including standards) and introduce a mechanism to ensure tools and protocols are reviewed routinely going forward alongside the CYFSA.
 - Note: An immediate priority is the Eligibility Spectrum. We urge the Ontario government to collaborate with OACAS to review the ways in which risk is assessed for Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth

and whether the existing tools reduce racial inequities and improve outcomes for marginalized children and youth. It is critical to update this tool to support efforts both within the child welfare sector, and for external mandated referrers, to shift from a duty to report framework to a focus on the duty to *support* vulnerable Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth.

- Improving how identity-based data is collected. To this end, the collection of identity-based data (at the earliest opportunity) should be clearly delineated within the CYFSA. Further, the CYFSA should ensure the data is collected in a way that is culturally relevant and trauma-informed and clarify how the data will be used to measure and improve outcomes for Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth. It is essential the CYFSA emphasizes consent be gathered in a way that is culturally sensitive, clear, accessible, and in consideration of the specific perspectives of those accessing services. The Ontario government should also be mandated to analyze identity-based data and release a public report as it relates to overrepresentation and disparities in outcomes to facilitate the development of responsive policies and programming.
- Supporting the development and implementation of service models and best practices in partnership with community-based organizations, particularly those that are tailored to the distinct needs of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth, and families.
- Updating the language of the French version of the CYFSA so it accurately includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Addressing legislative barriers within the CYFSA as it relates to the confidentiality of adoption records, adoption disruption, adoption breakdown, and purview of agencies to confirm identity details. This would support the sector in prioritizing continued familial, cultural, and community connections and support efforts to address overrepresentation and disproportionality of Indigenous and Black children, youth, and families.
- Improving the representation of Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ communities at all levels within the sector workforce.
- Allowing for greater flexibility in departing from permanency timelines to prioritize continued familial, cultural, and community connections for Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth.

Prevention and community-based care

Improving early identification, early intervention, prevention, and community-based care requires promoting a shared responsibility across sectors and ministries to the health, safety, and well-being of children, youth, and families. This is of particular importance to children and youth with marginalized and intersecting identities, as well as those with complex social, developmental, emotional, and mental health needs. The CYFSA should:

- Reduce legislative barriers to cross-sectoral, -ministerial, and -jurisdictional collaboration so children, youth, and families have access to holistic, wraparound services critical to their health, safety, and well-being, regardless of where they live. Multiple intersecting systems, sectors, and ministries have a role to play. It is essential this shared responsibility be directly acknowledged in the CYFSA. Community-based supports and services have become increasingly scant, splintered, and siloed. This means the most vulnerable children, youth, and families in need of early intervention and prevention support are increasingly interacting with the child welfare system. Agencies are filling in gaps in instances where community-based services – not protective – are required.
- Clearly define what early identification, early intervention, prevention, and protection means. Further, the CYFSA and associated policies, tools, and protocols should provide guidance on the respective purviews of service providers and their role in collaborating with children's aid societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies to ensure children, youth, and families are able to easily access the services they need regardless of where they live (i.e., jurisdiction).
- Acknowledge and outline the rights of family, kin/kith, other caring adults, and communities as it relates to interacting with the child welfare system. This should include their role in guiding service delivery, as well as the development and implementation of plans of care and plans of safety. We strongly encourage outlining the role of family, kin/kith, other caring adults, and communities in ensuring the continued connection to identity and culture as part of plans of care and safety plans.
- Recognize that the safety and well-being of children and youth is intrinsically linked with that of their families, caregivers, and communities. This should be reflected in how the CYFSA describes the functions of agencies. We suggest the CYFSA clearly state the obligation agencies have to work with families, caregivers, kin/kith, communities, and organizations in promoting the safety and well-being of a young person.



- Ensure early identification, early intervention, prevention, and protection services are responsive to mental health challenges, substance misuse, gender-based and intimate-partner violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation.
- Promote knowledge and information-sharing across sectors and ministries, with special attention to child welfare, education, and health, to foster understanding, empathy, and respect for the unique needs of children and youth in care.
- Facilitate the development of culturally relevant services focused on early identification, early intervention, prevention, and protection tailored to the unique needs of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth. Service providers (including agencies) must develop programs that celebrate and affirm culture and community as well as all intersecting dimensions of a young person's identity. Further, if they are not able to directly deliver services, providers must support children and youth in accessing the care and services they need. This must include supporting children and youth to access primary care that affirms their sexual identity, gender identity, and gender expression.

Quality Services

Further action is required to facilitate the delivery of high-quality CYFSA-governed services. Of particular interest to the child welfare sector:

- Improving the definition of terms and concepts that inform and guide service delivery, such as:
 - *Service Recipient*: Part X of the CYFSA does not provide a clear definition of who a service recipient is. Clarifying with an updated definition would bring consistency to practice for agencies as they manage and complete access to information requests.
 - *Extended Family*: To promote continued familial, cultural, and community connections, the definition should be expanded to better include kin/kith, community members, and other caring adults who can play a role in the lives of children and youth.
 - *Client*: To better protect the privacy of children and youth, the CYFSA should clarify that a foster parent is not considered to be a client under Part X.
 - *Child in Need of Protection*: Physical, sexual, and emotional harm are recognized under Part V. It is essential to also recognize harms related to racism and cis-heteronormativity, as well as gender-based and intimate-partner violence.
 - *Police Record Check*: The CYFSA does not specify the type of police record check that is required of workers (i.e., Vulnerable Sector Check). It would be

helpful to include the types of policy record checks required for service providers to maintain consistency with requirements and expectations (i.e., the need for Vulnerable Sector Check for frontline protection staff who work directly with the vulnerable population).

- Enhancing the quality of services children and youth receive in out-of-home care settings.
- Ensuring enhanced regulatory requirements do not undermine family-based care nor frustrate continued connections to family, culture, community, kin/kith, and other caring adults. This must involve developing flexible, balanced policies and processes that truly support the efforts of families to promote and maintain the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth in their care.
- Adjusting the turnaround time for access to information requests from 30 calendar days to 30 business days.
- Addressing inconsistencies between the CYFSA and associated policies, tools, protocols, and government initiatives related to children and youth in care. For example, regulatory changes associated with the Quality Standards Framework direct service providers to restrict the accessibility of medicine to children and youth but *Ready, Set, Go* directs agencies to provide access as part of transition planning.
- Updating the CYFSA and associated policies, tools, and protocols to exempt Kinship Care alongside Customary Care.
- Ensuring agencies identify and engage kin/kith whenever possible. The CYFSA must include clear provisions that direct agencies to search for and engage family, kin/kith, community members, and/or other caring adults at the earliest opportunity and across the continuum of care. Consistent and sustained efforts to identify family, kin/kith, community members, and other caring adults is essential to stability, permanency, and improving outcomes.

Accountability

It is essential service providers governed by the CYFSA remain accountable. Opportunities to promote greater accountability include:

- Enhanced oversight, complaints mechanisms, data collection, and outcomes measurements.



- Note: Youth described the current complaint mechanisms and associated systems as unresponsive and difficult to navigate. In addition to ensuring youth have a strong understanding of rights provisions, youth stressed the need to understand accountability mechanisms, how to use them, and how to navigate associated systems.
- Increasing the compliance of service providers in meeting distinct obligations when serving First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous children, youth, and families, as well as Indigenous communities and organizations.
- Ensuring societies are effectively using data to monitor, assess, and make improvements to services, including addressing overrepresentation and disproportionalities. This should include a balance of qualitative and quantitative approaches to facilitate a comprehensive assessment of data.
- Aligning the funding formula with service principles and objectives to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black children and youth, as well as improve outcomes of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth.
- Increasing and strengthening oversight mechanisms as it relates to out-of-home-care providers.
- Supporting a modern and sustainable private adoption sector through greater accountability and consistent practices. This should involve removing the authority of agencies with voluntary relinquishments where child protection concerns are absent. These adoptions should be referred to private adoption agencies to prevent conflicts of interest.
- Reducing the unnecessary reporting that limits front-line providers capacity to spend time building meaningful relationships with children, youth, and families.

Other Considerations

Additional recommendations, outside of the 6 key areas, include:

- Removing legislative barriers that complicate efforts to address human trafficking. Members have observed that traffickers seem to be aware of discrepancies in child protection laws between provinces. It appears traffickers move youth to Ontario on purpose, where the ability for agencies and police to intervene with youth under the age of 18 is limited to removal for up to 12 hours to offer voluntary services. Provinces have obtained warrants to remove youth from trafficking situations but if the youth is



located in Ontario, the CYFSA limits the ability to intervene and return youth to safer environments with supports.

- Defining how to count the 5 days between a removal from a parent and the first court date. The approach to counting the days among agencies is not uniform. Caselaw is also inconsistent.
- Clarifying the use of Youth Court Records and their use in CYFSA proceedings. The law on this remains unsettled. Section 119 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) provides statutory direction for the retention and destruction of youth court records that do not align with Part X or current harmonized CPIN business practices. CPIN does not provide a mechanism for removing/destroying youth court records. This presents a challenge for the child welfare sector; agencies are vulnerable to noncompliance. It also presents barriers for child welfare workers who are providing ongoing service for youth in care.
- Addressing the legislative gaps, such as:
 - Urgent basis placements of 16- and 17-year-olds who do not have capacity. The CYFSA does not provide a mechanism to commence a protection application on an urgent basis for youth over the age of 16.
 - Emergency medical decisions for children and youth that are brought into care during the initial 5-day period prior to the removal hearing.
- Reconciling inconsistencies in timelines as it relates to Kinship Care versus Kinship Service. Currently, agencies have a 60-day timeline to complete all requirements needed to become a licensed resource placement for kin and kith but a 90-day timeline for a child or youth in Kinship Service.
- Permitting kin/kith caregivers to provide consent on behalf of a child or youth in their care with complex needs to receive necessary services in the absence of consent in instances where placement is voluntary and out of court. Kin/kith should also be permitted to make applications as it relates to identity documents.

Conclusion

OACAS remains committed to working towards an effective system that supports children, youth, and families and provides care that is affirmative of *all* aspects of their identity, including culture and community.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to support the first legislative review of the *Child, Youth, and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA). We encourage Ontario to carefully review and consider feedback submitted by children's aid societies and Indigenous Child



and Family Well-Being Agencies across the province alongside sector partners, including children, youth, and families with lived and living experience.

We also encourage the province to review the following resources:

- Bonnie, Nicole; Facey, Keishia; with support from King, Bryn; Fallon, Barbara; Joh-Carnella, Nicolette; Edwards, Travonne; Kagan-Cassidy, Miya; Black, Tara; William, Kineesha; Patrick-Drakes, Vania; Anucha, Chizara. "Understanding the overrepresentation of Black children in Ontario child welfare services. (2022). Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2018. *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2023*. [Black-Children-in-Care-OIS-Report-2022-Final.pdf \(oacas.org\)](#)
- Edwards, Travonne; McManamna, Nakema; King, Bryn. "The absence of language: A critical race discourse analysis of Ontario's child welfare legislation and the impacts on Black families." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 143. (2023). <https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1hCpBX18YVgA%7E>
- Fallon, Barbara; Lefebvre, Rachael; Trocmé, Nico; Richard, Kenn, Hélie, Sonia; Montgomery, H. Monty; Bennett, Marlyn; Joh-Carnella, Nicolette; Saint-Girons, Marie; Filippelli, Joanne; MacLaurin, Bruce; Black, Tara; Esposito, Tonio; King, Bryn; Collin-Vézina, Delphine; Dallaire, Rachelle; Gray, Richard; Levi, Judy; Orr, Martin; Petti, Tara; Thomas Prokop, Shelley; Soop, Shannon. "Denouncing the continued overrepresentation of First Nations children in Canadian child welfare: Findings from the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2019." (2021). Ontario: Assembly of First Nations. [FNCIS-2019 - Denouncing the Continued Overrepresentation of First Nations Children in Canadian Child Welfare - Final 1\(2\).pdf \(cwrp.ca\)](#)
- Fallon, Barbara. *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2023 (OIS-2023)* [PowerPoint slides]. https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/OACAS%20webinar_final%20final.pdf
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services. "Serving 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth in the child welfare system: A resource guide." (2018). <https://www.ontario.ca/document/serving-lgbt2sq-children-and-youth-child-welfare-system/introduction>
- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. "Ontario child welfare 2SLGBTQ+ organizational self-assessment: Provincial report." (2021). [Report-Ontario-Child-Welfare-LGBT2SQ-Organizational-Self-Assessment-February-2021.pdf \(oacas.org\)](#)

Following the review of the CYFSA, OACAS and members recognize there may be amendments that will impact policies, tools, and protocols that guide service delivery and



approaches to care within the child welfare sector. Among others, updating the Eligibility Spectrum is a priority. We call on the Ontario government to work with OACAS and its members, alongside those with lived and living experience receiving services, to refine this tool as soon as possible. Updating this tool is critical to advancing efforts both within the child welfare sector, and for external mandated referrers, to shift from a duty to report framework to a focus on the duty to support children, youth, and families, particularly those with marginalized and intersecting identities.

For more information, or to discuss the OACAS submission, please contact:

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