

# Toolkit: Dress Purple Day 2025

OCTOBER 16, 2025



Ontario Association of  
Children's Aid Societies

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# How to Use the Dress Purple Day 2025 Toolkit

This toolkit is intended to support child welfare agencies, community-based organizations, service providers, direct service staff, provincial partners and individuals in recognizing and participating in Dress Purple Day 2025, taking place on Thursday, October 16.

Join us in highlighting the important role individuals and communities play in supporting children, youth, and families facing challenges and advocate to government to do more to help them thrive.

This Toolkit Includes:

[About Dress Purple Day, Dress Purple Day 2025, and Historical Context](#)

[Core Purpose](#)

[Goals of Dress Purple Day 2025](#)

[Key Messages](#)

[A Call to Better Support Children, Youth, and Families](#)

[Join the Campaign](#) *(including social media messages, visual assets, and additional resources)*

## About Dress Purple Day

Every October, the [Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies](#) (OACAS) and children's aid societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies (child welfare agencies) across the province, in partnership with government, community-based organizations, service providers, direct service staff, and individuals, raise awareness about the important role individuals and communities play in supporting children, youth, and families facing challenges through the provincial Dress Purple Day campaign.

The Dress Purple Day campaign aims to raise awareness about the supports and services available in communities across Ontario, including through child welfare agencies, and how they can be accessed. It reminds community-based organizations and service providers about the importance of working in partnership to provide early intervention and prevention services to children, youth, and families that need short- or long-term support. The campaign also reminds children and



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youth that they have rights to safety and well-being in all spaces, including at home, at school, and in their community.

This year, Dress Purple Day will take place on **October 16, 2025**.

## Dress Purple Day 2025

In 2023, OACAS called on government, community-based organizations, service providers, direct service staff, provincial partners, and individuals to share what Dress Purple Day meant to them and to remind children, youth, and families facing challenges that services and supports are available. However, we know that many children, youth, and families do not have easy and equitable access to community-based programming and initiatives vital to their health and well-being. In some communities, the necessary supports and services just do not exist or there are lengthy wait times that make access impossible.

That's why OACAS has called upon Ontario to step up and strengthen social infrastructure in communities across the province. Children, youth, and families should have timely access to high-quality, trauma-informed supports and services that are identity-affirming and inclusive, and meet their unique needs close to home. We hope you will lend your voice and join OACAS in urging the province to ensure this is the reality for children, youth, and families in their communities.

## Historical Context

In 1992, the "purple ribbon campaign" emerged to educate the public in Ontario about child abuse. The campaign evolved from there to a province-wide, month-long campaign called Child Abuse Prevention Month. Every October, child welfare agencies, OACAS, and partners (i.e., government, community-based organizations, service providers) worked to teach the public about the signs of abuse and neglect, and the duty to report concerns of maltreatment to their local child welfare agency. The campaign was successful as a public education initiative; however, it had unintended negative consequences.

Indigenous and Black families shared that the campaign's emphasis on reporting led to heightened and unwarranted surveillance. In many ways, the campaign was more harmful than helpful. Based on this feedback, in 2021, OACAS took the campaign in a different direction. OACAS focused the campaign on the importance of supporting



children, youth, and families facing challenges and reminding the most vulnerable that they are part of a community that cares. Read more about that shift [here](#).

## Core Purpose

- Dress Purple Day raises awareness about the role that individuals, communities, and organizations play in supporting the well-being and safety of children, youth, and families.
- It is about **creating a community where every child and youth feels safe, supported, and celebrated**.

## Goals of Dress Purple Day 2025

1. To highlight how child welfare agencies work in partnership with local community-based organizations and service providers to support children, youth, and families facing challenges;
2. To advocate to government for the need to invest in social infrastructure so children, youth, and families can access the right care, at the right time, close to home;
3. To raise awareness that every child and youth has a right to safety and well-being in all spaces and that the community plays a role in protecting those rights; and
4. For OACAS and child welfare agencies to strengthen relationships with local community-based organizations and service providers supporting children, youth, and families, through virtual and/or live events and social media on October 16, 2025.

## Key Messages

1. **Community Responsibility**
  - Every Ontarian has a role to play in supporting children, youth, and families.
  - Child and youth well-being is a shared responsibility across schools, health care, social services, justice, and neighborhoods.
2. **Well-Being Beyond Safety**
  - Children and youth thrive when they have supportive relationships, access to services, and safe, inclusive spaces.
  - The day highlights the importance of **mental health, belonging, and inclusion**, not only safety from harm.



### 3. Supporting Families

- Strong families are the foundation for children's success.
- Communities must ensure families can access the supports they need before challenges become crises.

### 4. Equity and Inclusion

Dress Purple Day is More than a Symbolic Act:

- It is an opportunity to reframe how we embed equity and inclusion into the care and well-being of children and youth.
- The day calls on us to actively integrate equity, anti-racism, and culturally safe approaches into everyday practice.
- By acknowledging and centering the diverse experiences of Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, newcomer, and marginalized youth, we move beyond recognition toward creating significant and affirming support.

### 5. Call to Action

- By wearing purple, individuals show children, youth, and families that they are not alone.
- Everyone can be part of the network that **nurtures, protects, and strengthens young people's futures.**

## A Call to Better Support Children, Youth, and Families

### What Child Welfare Agencies Do

Child welfare agencies are part of the network of community-based organizations and service providers dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of children, youth, and families across Ontario.

Child welfare agencies help protect children and youth who are experiencing abuse or are at risk of experiencing abuse physically, sexually, emotionally, or through neglect or abandonment. Child welfare agencies also provide early intervention and prevention services. They work in partnership with local organizations and service providers in their communities to ensure children, youth, and families get the right care, at the right time, close to home, so they can thrive and stay together.

Most cases that child welfare agencies encounter are not ones of extreme abuse or neglect. Families they support often face challenges such as poverty, inadequate

housing, unemployment, mental health and addictions, as well as intersecting systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Indigenous and Black children, youth, and families face systemic anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism across sectors and over-reporting, over-surveillance, and over-policing.

In 97% of investigations, children and youth remain at home, and their families may receive early intervention, and prevention supports and services so they can thrive and stay together. When it is not possible for children and youth to remain at home, child welfare agencies coordinate out-of-home care with kin and alternate caregivers, as well as community-based organizations and service partners. Most children and youth receiving out-of-home care are placed in kinship service or customary care (2% of investigations) and fewer are placed in kinship care or other placement types (1% of investigations). (Source: [Ontario Incidence Study, 2018](#)) Over the past ten years, there has been a 19% increase in the number of children receiving out-of-home care being placed with kin and alternate caregivers.

## What Children, Youth, and Families Need

Child welfare agencies should be able to easily connect children, youth, and families to the right care, at the right time, close to home. But this is not the reality. Community-based organizations and service providers delivering culturally relevant, responsive and identity-affirming supports that centre the social determinants of health have become increasingly scant, siloed, and splintered due to chronic underfunding.

## Social Media Messages

### X & Instagram

- On #DressPurpleDay2025, Ontario child welfare agencies raise awareness about the role that individuals and communities play in supporting vulnerable children, youth, and families. Join us Oct 16! #IDressPurpleBecause
- #DressPurpleDay2025 is a chance for [organization name] to show our support for the vulnerable children, youth, and families in Ontario. On October 16, we will dress purple. [oacas.org/dresspurpleday](https://oacas.org/dresspurpleday) #IDressPurpleBecause
- At [organization name], our mission is to support vulnerable children, youth, and families in our community. That's why we will dress purple on October 16



for #DressPurpleDay2025. Find out more at [oacas.org/dresspurpleday](https://oacas.org/dresspurpleday) and join us! #IDressPurpleBecause

- I'm here to help the children, youth, and families facing challenges in my community. That's why I dress purple on October 16 for #DressPurpleDay2025. Find out more: [oacas.org/dresspurpleday](https://oacas.org/dresspurpleday) and join me! #IDressPurpleBecause
- I'm showing up for the vulnerable children, youth, and families on #DressPurpleDay2025 by dressing purple and calling on government to invest in our communities so we can access the services we need, when we need them. Act with me! Learn more at [oacas.org/dresspurpleday](https://oacas.org/dresspurpleday).

### Facebook/LinkedIn

**We will dress purple on October 16 to show support for Ontario families. Will you?**

[organization name] is joining this year's Dress Purple Day campaign to raise awareness that we all have a role to play in supporting the children, youth, and families in our community who are facing challenges and to call on the Ontario government to do more to support those who need it most. Learn more about the campaign at [www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday/](https://www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday/) and join us! #DressPurpleDay2025

**We all have a role to play in supporting vulnerable children, youth, and families in Ontario.**

On October 16, [organization name] will be dressing purple to show our support for the children, youth, and families in our community facing challenges. Find out more about the campaign at [www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday](https://www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday) and join the Dress Purple Day campaign to show your friends, family, neighbours and community that you are available to help. #DressPurpleDay2025

**This Dress Purple Day we remind families that help is available, and no one is alone.**

Dress Purple Day is an opportunity to make sure children, youth, and families know that there are resources and services available to help them. On October 16, we will dress purple to remind them we are one of those places' families can turn to for help. Find out more about the campaign at [www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday/](https://www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday/). #DressPurpleDay2025



## Campaign Assets

The visual elements of the campaign include:

- Graphics for Instagram, Facebook, and X/Twitter
- A Zoom background
- Profile picture filter

Download all assets at [www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday](http://www.oacas.org/dresspurpleday).

## Additional Resources

- The [Dress Purple Day Provincial Classroom Resources](#) were developed to support educators to engage in conversations with elementary, middle, and high school students about their safety and well-being in all aspects of their lives and their networks of support.
- Read our campaign brochure [Child Welfare in Ontario: A Shared Responsibility](#)
- Watch [our video to better understand child welfare](#).