

What if an F&CS worker comes to your door?

- ▶ If an F&CS worker is concerned about the safety of your child, the worker will ask to meet with you to talk about the concerns together.
- ▶ You might be nervous about talking to them or letting them in so you have the right to have someone you trust, or an advocate or lawyer with you when you talk to an F&CS worker.
- ▶ If you are alone with your child, you can ask the worker to wait until you can arrange to have someone else with you.

Your rights with F&CS

- ▶ You have the right to be treated with respect.
- ▶ You have the right to know how the decisions that affect you and your family are made.
- ▶ Whenever possible, you have a right to be involved in the decision-making.
- ▶ You have the right to services that respect your culture, language, race, ethnicity, faith, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- ▶ If your child cannot live with your family, you can ask F&CS to make sure the culture, language, race, ethnicity, faith, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity of your child are respected.



We value:

- ▶ The right of children and youth to be safe and secure
- ▶ The diversity of families
- ▶ Positive space that is inclusive
- ▶ Professional practice that begins with a strength-based approach
- ▶ An open and transparent organization
- ▶ Innovation and creativity
- ▶ Social justice and the importance of advocacy
- ▶ Working together to create positive change in our community

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FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Welcome to our positive and anti-oppressive space, where every individual, regardless of age, is valued and respected whatever their culture, faith, ethnicity, race, ancestry, class, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request.
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KEEPING KIDS SAFE: Roles and responsibilities



Your responsibilities as a parent

The law says that you, as a parent or guardian, are responsible for the care and safety of your children.

As a caregiver, you must make sure your child has enough food and clothing, a safe place to live, and health and dental care. You must give your children the emotional care and support they need to grow up safely.

F&CS responsibility: to protect children

In Ontario it is the responsibility of Family & Children's Services (F&CS or the Children's Aid Society) to make sure that children and youth are protected from abuse and neglect.

Children have the right to be safe from abuse and neglect

It is against the law for you to abuse or neglect your children. You must also protect your child from physical and emotional abuse, from sexual abuse and exploitation, and from neglect.

This is emotional abuse:

- ▶ A caregiver does not give their child normal affection or attention.
- ▶ A caregiver constantly criticizes or threatens a child, making the child feel worthless and afraid.
- ▶ A child sees violence or fighting at home.

This is physical abuse:

- ▶ A child is shaken, kicked, punched, beaten, or thrown.
- ▶ A child is burned or hit with an object on purpose or is choked or held under water.
- ▶ A caregiver uses a cruel method of punishment, like confining their child in a room without food or water for a long time.



F&CS will help

If your family is struggling with any of these issues, please call us at 519-824-2410.

Is it physical discipline or abuse?

Sometimes the line between physical discipline and abuse is hard to see. It is abuse to spank a child with an object like a stick or belt. It is abuse to hit a child hard enough to leave a mark or to hit a child on the face or head. You cannot spank teenagers or a child younger than two. At F&CS, we do not support the use of physical discipline in any situation.

- ▶ A child has marks or bruises from being hit by their caregiver.

This is sexual abuse:

- ▶ A caregiver engages in any sexual behaviour (looking, showing, or touching) with a child to meet the adult's interest or sexual need.

This is sexual exploitation:

- ▶ A caregiver uses a child as a prostitute or to make pornography (sexual pictures or movies) or makes a child do other sexual activities.

This is neglect:

- ▶ A child is left with caregivers who are using drugs or alcohol or who are too young to look after children.
- ▶ Children who cannot care for themselves are left alone in the house, in a car, or on the street.
- ▶ A child does not get health and dental care.
- ▶ A child does not have enough to eat.
- ▶ A child does not wear clothes that protect them from bad weather.

What happens if someone tells F&CS your child is abused or neglected?

- ▶ The law says that F&CS must look into every report of possible abuse or neglect. An F&CS family service worker may talk to you, to the child and to other people who know the child to decide how best to help.
- ▶ Most of what F&CS does involves finding the right supports to keep children safe within their own families and you may be asked to make changes so your child is safe and well cared for in your home. 96 percent of the children we work with continue to live with their own families.
- ▶ If F&CS determines that your child cannot safely stay at home, the worker can find somewhere else for your child to stay for a while.
- ▶ If F&CS removes your child, the worker will ask if you have relatives or friends who could care for your child.
- ▶ In some situations you and F&CS may go to court. In this case, you need to see a lawyer as soon as possible.