



Our adoptive families come from all backgrounds. They go through rigorous screening processes and take part in parental training before we place a child with them.

Our staff counsel pregnant women and youth, and provide information for families who wish to adopt. We also help adopted adults who are looking for their birth families and birth families who are looking for information about a child they placed for adoption.

### WORKING WITH OUR VOLUNTEERS

F&CS Volunteers play an important role in the lives of children, youth and families and have a lasting and positive impact on their future. Volunteers contribute a variety of skills, experience and knowledge and represent a variety of sectors in the community.

There are different volunteer opportunities available: child or youth mentor; parent aide, tutor, volunteer driver, childcare assistant, group facilitators. Other opportunities include volunteering with special projects and events, and fundraising.



### ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY

At F&CS, we are committed to being responsive to the needs of our wonderfully diverse community. We welcome staff, foster parents, adoptive parents, volunteers and community partners from all backgrounds. We encourage support and involvement from everyone in Guelph and Wellington County.

We are committed to delivering programs and services, in ways, actions and languages, that are respectful, accessible and relevant to all of our community regardless of race, ancestry, colour, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, same-sex partnership status, disability or financial means.

### CHILDREN FIRST FUND

The Children First Fund is the fundraising arm of Family & Children's Services. Donations provide financial assistance to programs which assist vulnerable children, youth, and families served by F&CS that are not funded through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Programs can include post-secondary education support, prevention and early help, financial literacy education, and helping children and youth reconnect with their relatives. For more information or to make a donation go to [www.fcsgw.org](http://www.fcsgw.org)

## MISSION, VISION, VALUES

- ▶ **The mission of F&CS** is to work together with children, youth, their families and the community for the safety and well-being of children and youth.
- ▶ **We envision** a supportive community where children and youth are safe, secure, and nurtured in permanent loving families.
- ▶ **As an organization we value** the right of children 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; and working together to create positive change in our community.

**We are here** to help 24 hours a day, seven days a week with any child welfare concerns you may have. Call us during business hours to learn more about our service programs, adoption and foster care or volunteering.

[www.fcsgw.org](http://www.fcsgw.org)

**T:** 519-824-2410 or 1-800-265-8300

**F:** 519-763-9628

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**Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request.**

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**POSITIVE SPACE**



#### 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.



protecting  
children



supporting  
families

[www.fcsgw.org](http://www.fcsgw.org)

**1.800.265.8300**



**A**t Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County (F&CS), also known as the Children's Aid Society, we work with families and communities to help keep children protected from physical, emotional, and sexual harm. We have a team of caring workers, foster and adoptive parents and volunteers. We build relationships with parents, caregivers, youth and children as we work toward one primary goal: the safety and well-being of children. Sometimes we engage a wider network of people to create a safety network. We also partner with other agencies in Guelph and Wellington County to strengthen networks and deliver programs that help families and children.

F&CS is a charitable, non-profit agency. The Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services regulates F&CS and is our primary funder.

### PROTECTING CHILDREN

Child welfare is a community responsibility. Anyone who believes or suspects a child is being harmed because of something that someone has done to them (abuse) or has not done (neglect) must, by law, report those concerns to F&CS.

As part of its legal duty, F&CS must look into every report. Our Initial Intake Team first takes calls from the community regarding the safety of children and youth in Guelph and Wellington County. An F&CS family and community services worker may then talk to the parents, child and other people who know the child to decide how best to help.

The family is the best place for children to receive the love and care they need to grow into healthy adults. Sometimes families need support with the daily struggles that come with raising children. We are committed to working with families to ensure the well-being of their children and to help children and youth remain safely with their families wherever possible. Over 96% of the children whose families we are working with are safely cared for in their own families. In the small percentage of children who are

not able to live with their own family, we work with the caregivers to arrange for the children to be cared for by another family – relatives, friends or a foster family.

### SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Our goal is to help families care for their children. Most of our work is done to support families to keep their kids safe.



### PROVIDING FOSTER CARE

Foster families provide stable and supportive temporary homes for children and youth who are unable to live with their own families. Depending on the circumstances, children may need foster care for a few days, a few weeks or sometimes months.

Our foster families come from all backgrounds and go through a rigorous screening

process. They receive ongoing training and support from F&CS staff and some financial assistance.

We work with the child's parents and foster parents to ensure that children are placed in environments where they will be cared for and supported. Kinship Care is the same as Foster Care except the foster parent is known to the child. This means a relative, family friend or someone from the community connected to the child can become that child or youth's foster parent.

### ADOPTION PLANNING AND SUPPORT

We are responsible for ensuring that children and youth experience stability and are cared for in homes by adults who can take care of them and their needs. When children and youth live with adults who love them and care for them, they have the greatest chance of being successful in all areas of life.

In the adoption process, children become a permanent and legal part of a new family. Children and youth need adoptive homes when they no longer have a legal parent.

Each family's needs are unique and each family has its own strengths which means that our services are different for each family. We may do some hands-on teaching of parenting, life, or coping skills. Or we may help families get help from other community groups. Our family support workers provide in-home support for families who need immediate help.

F&CS also believes that it is best to help prevent children and youth from being harmed in the first place, so we work to provide outreach to parents before their life situations could become a risk to their children. We work with other community organizations and neighbourhood groups. We have an office at the Sheldale Centre in the Onward Willow neighbourhood and support Parent Outreach Workers in the Brant, Two Rivers, and Grange Hill East Neighbourhood Groups. We also have an office in Elora.

