



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

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CHILDREN'S AID AND THE COMMUNITY

For the media and community partners

Children's Aid relies on the support of the media and our community partners to educate the public about their role to play in the well-being of children and families

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies are mandated by the Ontario Government to protect children from harm. Children's Aid is the only organization with the statutory responsibility to respond to all allegations of abuse and neglect – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Children's Aid provides critical and essential services to the most vulnerable members of our society, including child protection, family support, public adoption, and referrals to other community services.

Vulnerable families can become overwhelmed. Struggles with poverty, poor mental health, substance abuse, social isolation, or a legacy of prior family violence can in some cases be linked to family crisis and abuse.

Wherever possible, children should grow up safely with their own family, but a family in crisis is not always the safest place. The traumatic impact of emotional, physical or sexual abuse and neglect is long-lasting and can affect children or youth negatively well into adult life.

Children's Aid works with families early on, providing essential support that helps stop crises and family violence before they occur, allowing families to heal and strengthen. The work of Children's Aid has the potential to save the lives of young people and allow them the chance at the future they deserve, free from violence and fear.

We can't do all of this alone. Children's Aid relies on the voice of the media and our community partners to alert communities to their role in supporting the welfare of children and families. In October, we seek to raise awareness of everyone's responsibility to prevent child abuse. Every Ontarian has a moral and legal role to play in protecting children and supporting vulnerable families in our communities by being alert to the signs of abuse and knowing who to call to help a child at risk of harm.

Help us to make Ontario a safe place for our children, youth and families.

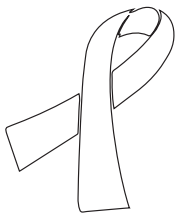


...Thanks to Children's Aid intervention on my behalf, I was able to finally get the services and help we needed as a family to change the direction that my son was going in... I thank the powers that be every day that they came into my life.

– Louise, mother previously in crisis



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
The voice of child welfare in Ontario



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THE FACTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

Substance Abuse In the most recent Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, it was reported that in 38 percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations the primary caregiver had alcohol or drug/solvent abuse issues.¹ Substance abuse can cause caregivers to neglect, abuse or endanger their children.

Poverty Twenty-seven percent of substantiated neglect investigations in Canada noted that the household regularly ran out of money for basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing.² One in seven children in Ontario live in poverty - that's 383,000 kids. The poverty rate is even higher for children living in marginalized communities, whether they are racialized, First Nations, living with disabilities or in a female-led single parent home.³

Mental Health Twenty-seven percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations in Canada reported that the primary caregiver had mental health issues.¹ In any given year, one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health or addiction problem.⁴

Community Resources In many cases, the needs of families that come to the attention of Children's Aid are best met through partnerships with local community service organizations, including mental health or addiction services. Community partnerships enable families to receive help early on before problems escalate or become entrenched.

Legacy of Prior Abuse In many cases, abuse is learned behavior. Abusive parents have often been abused themselves as children, perhaps never had a role model to show them positive parenting skills, or lack knowledge of normal child development. Many abusive adults have the capacity to change their behaviour with help, counselling, support and resources.

One call can save the life of a child or give a family in crisis the helping hand they need.

"...I give my all to make sure the youth I work with are given the opportunity to make their dreams come true ... Many forget that youth we work with today are often looking for guidance, love and someone they can trust. I am that youth worker who will re-connect youth with family, school or teach them the necessary tools needed to achieve their goals." -Sandra, child and youth worker

"...I was not taken - but rescued - from my abusive home at the age of ten. When apprehended by Children's Aid, I couldn't fathom living with strangers. It was terrifying but I had the support of experienced foster parents who taught me that no one had the right to harm me. My social worker became my mentor and I worked hard to live up to the potential she saw in me. I went on to university and became a social worker at the Children's Aid Society." – Maura, former youth in care

1 Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010). *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2008: Major Findings*. Ottawa, On.

2 Allan, K. & Lefebvre, R. (2012). *Household Source of Income by Primary Substantiated Maltreatment and Risk*. Retrieved from <http://cwrp.ca/infosheets/household-source-income-primary-substantiated-maltreatment-risk>.

3 Campaign 2000. (2013). *Strengthening Families for Ontario's Future*. Toronto: Anita Khanna, Laurel Rothman, Miles Rubin.

4 Smetanin et al. (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041.