

Review of the *Child and Family Services Act*

Youth Discussion Guide

The Review of the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) Youth Discussion Guide

WHAT IS THE CFSA?

- The *Child and Family Services Act* (referred to throughout the rest of this document as the CFSA) is the legislation that governs many of the province's programs and services for children and youth, including:
 - Child welfare;
 - Youth justice services;
 - Secure treatment;
 - Children's developmental services;
 - Residential services;
 - Community support services;
 - Indian and native child and family services; and,
 - Adoption within Ontario.

Purpose of the CFSA Review

For the 2015 review, Tracy MacCharles, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, will consider making changes to the CFSA. These changes relate to:

1. Improving outcomes for children and youth, with a specific focus on:
 - Supporting older youth who are in need of protection
 - Residential services and licensing
 - Information sharing
 - Permanency (seeking to provide permanent homes for children in care), including adoption
 - Supporting Aboriginal children and youth
2. Modernizing and clarifying the language of the Act

If there are other issues that you are interested in or concerned about, Minister MacCharles would be pleased to receive your comments on any part of the CFSA.



Ontario's young people

- There are over 2.8 million young people in Ontario
- In 2013, the government established the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities to engage youth, young professionals and community partners so they could provide advice on the Youth Action Plan and other issues impacting youth

CFSA Review—Quick Facts

- The CFSA was proclaimed in 1985 and, over the past 25 years, changes have been made to the Act a number of times.
- This is the third review of specified provisions in the Act. By law a review occurs every five years.
- The government has taken a number of actions in response to the findings from the 2010 CFSA review.



Youth Participation

In Ontario, children and youth between the ages of 0 and 18 make up more than a fifth of the province's population (21.3%).

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is committed to making sure that the voices of children and youth are heard across government.

We know that children and youth have unique insights and experiences. Your input helps improve policies, programs, and service systems. It is our goal to provide meaningful and safe opportunities for youth engagement so youth may express their views on government policy and decision making.

The ministry has made youth engagement a priority in the review of the CFSA. In addition to having youth and family specific regional engagement sessions, the ministry has created this discussion guide to get your suggestions on how to improve the CFSA.

Giving young people a voice in government policy and decision-making is essential to designing good policies, programs and services for youth.

2015 CFSA ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

In keeping with Ontario's commitment to Open Government and MCYS's commitment to including youth voice, this CFSA review is multi-faceted.

The ministry will meet with key stakeholders, including youth, parents, service providers and other partners to gather input. The public engagement process includes:

- Regional engagement sessions
- Engagement with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal partners
- Written submissions
- Social media engagement (@CFSAreview2014EN OR @CFSAreview2014FR)
- By E-Mail:

How to Have Your Say in the 2015 CFSA Review

The purpose of this youth discussion guide is to gather your input on how to improve the CFSA.

The questions are designed to help you frame your feedback, and under each question there is space for your reply. You do not need to answer all the questions—answer only those questions that are of interest to you. Please do not feel limited by the amount of space in this document or the format of the discussion guide, you can send your ideas and feedback in any form you want (words, images, etc.).

All information received will be considered, though it may not be possible to address all feedback in the CFSA review report. Any feedback that is not directly related to the CFSA will be sent to the appropriate department for consideration.

The personal information you provide will be collected in accordance with s.38(2) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.F31, as it is necessary to conduct a review of the *Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O. c.C11, in accordance with sections 224 and 226 of the Act.

Questions about the collection can be directed to the Manager of the Planning and Partnerships Unit at **416-326-1051** or at 101 Bloor St., 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2Z7.

To Send Your Response

Your response will be accepted in English or French, in writing or alternative formats, such as audio or video recordings. Your comments must be received by December 29th, 2014 at either:

CFSAreview@ontario.ca

or

MCYS at 101 Bloor St., 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2Z7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Youth who are provided with safe, nurturing and stable environments are more likely to graduate from high school, secure a job, and achieve other personal successes that will affect them into adulthood.

Children's Aid Societies deliver child protection services to children up to age 16, and up to age 18 if the child was already subject to a court order before the age of 16. Youth ages 16 or older who are not the subject of a protection order may access a range of services and supports in the community.

1. What supports and services do you think older youth (i.e. 16 or 17 years old) need to help them succeed in life?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Children and youth need safe, happy, and healthy environments in order to thrive. Children and youth may receive residential services in foster homes, group homes, youth justice facilities or respite homes.

2. How do you think residential services can better support the needs of children and youth who live there?

Children, youth and families may receive services from more than one service provider, but they shouldn't have to 'tell their stories' multiple times to get the services they need.

3. What changes do you think would help service providers to better share information while still protecting the privacy of children and youth?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Aboriginal population in Ontario is diverse, with differences based in culture, history, treaties, relationships, and geography. First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Aboriginal children, youth and families need services that reflect their cultures and values and respond to their unique challenges and priorities.

4. How do you think First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal young people can be better supported to lead healthy and successful lives?

For children and youth who cannot remain at home due to protection concerns, permanent placements can help them feel they belong, providing them with safe, nurturing and stable relationships, and opportunities for growth and development.

5. What services or supports could help place children and youth in permanent homes when they are unable to remain with their families due to protection concerns?

**Thank you for participating in the review of the
*Child and Family Services Act.***

**The findings of this review will be available in April 2015
at: <http://www.ontario.ca/child>**