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Mandate

Children's Aid Societies are independently governed agencies that are responsible for providing mandatory and critical services. Children's Aid Societies have been providing these services to communities in Ontario for over 100 years.

They are legislated to perform certain functions under the provisions of Section 15 of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*¹. The mandate of CASS, as described in this section of the *CFSA*, includes the following functions:

- Investigate allegations or evidence that children who are under the age of sixteen years or are in the society's care or under its supervision may be in need of protection;
- Protect, where necessary, children who are under the age of sixteen years or are in the society's care or under its supervision;
- Provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children;
- Provide care for children assigned or committed to its care under this Act;
- Supervise children assigned to its supervision under this Act;
- Place children for adoption under Part VII; and,
- Perform any other duties given to it by this or any other Act.

This legislation and the supporting regulations, directives and standards prescribe specific and detailed requirements for what services CASS must provide, how they must provide these services, including services to Aboriginal children and families and French language services, as well as the timelines in which these mandatory services must be provided.

CASS provide critical and essential services which are a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our society – infants, children and youth who are at risk of or are experiencing physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect or abandonment. CASS are mandated to intervene if a caregiver cannot adequately care for or provide for a child.

Children's Aid Societies protect and safeguard most children while they remain with their families in the community. This family-based support takes the form of intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers, as well as ongoing supervision of the child while he/she remains in the family home. These are complex cases in which child protection concerns have been verified and there are risks of, or actual, abuse and neglect. As such, the work must be performed by skilled, qualified child welfare staff.

¹ Child and Family Services Act

Serving these children in the context of the home – when it is safe to do so – is consistent with the legislative and regulatory mandate and with the policy direction of government.