

GET INFORMED!

Every year in Ontario thousands of children are forcefully apprehended from their homes and loving families by children's aid agencies (CAS) in Ontario and placed into foster or group homes.

While some apprehensions are warranted, too often the apprehensions are done without proper investigations by incompetent and over-zealous CAS workers who are not even licensed as social workers in the province of Ontario.

In many cases, children end up being thrown into a child protection system which often does far greater damage to the children than if they had been left in care of their biological families.

While in CAS care, children have reported being the victims of many forms of abuse such as:

- **Being forced to take often dangerous mood-altering prescription drugs**
- **Physical and emotional abuse by CAS workers**
- **Personal possessions being stolen by CAS workers and group home residents.**
- **Sexual and physical assaults by other children in previous foster and group homes and by CAS workers themselves.**
- **Exposure to drugs and sex in CAS operated foster and group homes.**
- **Exposure to the influence of other children in care who are involved with various forms of criminal activities and drugs.**
- **Threats and coercion by CAS workers.**

As a result of being in care, many foster children end up being emotionally damaged and angry at the system itself for the mistreatment that they have been subjected to while in care. This anger and frustration can carry into any foster or group home that the child may be placed, often with devastating consequences.

Citizens who are thinking of becoming foster parents must educate themselves about the risks involved and be prepared to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families.

Foster Parents Can Be Sued!

Child Protection Agencies do not want foster parents to know about the risks of being taken to court. All foster parents should understand the risks of being sued and taken to court by foster children and their parents.

A child who has been in foster care can sue their foster parents at any time they become of legal age should the foster parents have engaged in any actions which resulted in what would be considered abuse or violations of the foster child's rights or freedoms.

Should a foster parent engage in actions such as locking a child in a room, listening in on a child's telephone conversations or taking a child's allowance without having written authorization of the agency, then the foster parents could be held legally responsible.

**Being a foster parent does
carry its risks**

**Get to know the risks and how
to lessen your exposure to
risk and potential lawsuit.**

**For further information about the issues about
the risks of becoming a foster parent, contact the
local organization indicated below**

Understanding the Risks of Being a Foster Parent! In Ontario

*Some helpful information that will
help parents avoid the costly
mistakes associated with being a
foster parent in Ontario*

Some things you can do to protect you and your own family before accepting the risks of being a foster parent

Ask to review the child's family court file and CAS case file

One way to familiarize yourself with any potential problems involving a foster child is to ask the CAS agency to provide you with a copy of the child's court file and also the CAS case file so that you can better understand the circumstances which originally brought the child into CAS care. If the CAS agency refuses to allow you to see the court file or tell you that this is against the law, chances are that there are things that they don't want potential foster parents to know about. In many cases, CAS workers don't want foster parents to find out the real history of the child or other side of the story which may come from the child's family.

Insist on speaking to the child's previous foster parents

If the child you are considering taking into your home has been in a previous foster home, then insist that you be allowed to speak to the previous foster home parents. If the CAS workers say that this is not possible because of privacy reasons, then chances are that they are trying to hide information about the child's past that they don't want the new foster parents to know about. CAS workers like to control information so that they can mislead potential foster parents about a child they are being asked to take into their home.

One foster family in Welland, Ontario took a troubled foster girl into their home who ended up murdering a younger child living also living there. Another family near Kingston, Ontario had a foster child start a fire which destroyed their business and left their family financially devastated.

How would you like to have your home burnt down or one of your own children murdered or sexually assaulted by a child brought into your home that CAS workers refused to disclose the child's past history with?

Ask if the child's case worker is registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers

In Ontario, child protection workers who engage in the practice of social work must be registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers. Many CAS workers do not belong to the College to avoid scrutiny by the College's complaints committee and thus bypass the protection of legislation intended to protect children and families. The competency and ability of CAS workers who are not members of the Ontario College of Social Workers should be considered suspect. To find out if a worker is registered then contact the College of Social Workers in Toronto at (416) 972-9882 or toll free at 1-877-828-9380.

Refuse to listen in on children's telephone conversations

CAS workers will sometimes ask foster parents to secretly listen in on a child's phone conversations. Never do this unless the child welfare agency provides this to you in writing and the child you are fostering has been made fully aware of this. Listening in on a child's phone calls and acting like a spy for a CAS and will only make the foster child more angry at having his/her rights violated. Secretly listening in on a phone conversation is also against the law under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Respect your foster child's privacy

Don't be a CAS spy by repeating information that the child may say to you back to CAS workers. If CAS workers think that what the child is saying may affect their power and control over the child or the child's family, the child protection worker may ask the foster parents to take steps to further punish the child or to restrict the child's rights and freedoms.

If you have opted to be a foster parent, then provide a safe home for the child but don't be misled by CAS into becoming a spy for them. Let CAS workers have their own meetings with the child so that they can ask their own questions.

Question why a foster child is on drugs

Children in care of CAS agencies have been found to be prescribed highly potent psychiatric medication which they often do not need or want. Often these drugs are used to mask the effects caused by the child being separated from his/her biological family and from abuse while in the care of CAS agencies. Children are sometimes turned into zombies to make them more tolerant of the abuse they are being subjected to while in care. CAS agencies get more money from the government by having children prescribed medication. You should question why a child is on medication and observe the child to see if the child is suffering from the anxiety of being separated from his/her own real family.

Don't interfere with a child's desire to speak to their parents, grandparents or extended family

In many cases, child protection workers will verbally instruct foster parents to stop a child from calling his/her parents and family members. Often CAS workers use this technique to isolate children from those they love and to make the child feel powerless in care. Foster parents are often told to do this dirty work by CAS workers.

Never prevent a child reasonable phone access to call family members unless you have instructions writing from the CAS workers **IN WRITING**. If the CAS workers are not willing to put specific instructions to you in writing, then chances are they don't want any written record made of their instructions. Acting on the undocumented instructions of some CAS worker could hold you liable in a lawsuit launched by the child or his/her parents at some time in the future.