



Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington

It Takes a Village to Keep Kids Safe

What you can do. What you must do.

DUTY TO REPORT

Where do kids need to be safe?

Everywhere in the Community.

Who should keep them safe?

Everyone in the Community.

You might think that it's someone else's job to keep kids in our community safe. The police. Children's Aid. Schools. That's true. But the best way to make this community safe for all children and youth is for the entire community to make it their job.

It takes a village to raise a child. It takes a village to keep them safe.

Here's Why

Child abuse and neglect is not what many people think it is. If you read the news, you might think most of the work we do involves sexual abuse. That happens, but so do a range of other forms of abuse and neglect. Some of the signs of abuse or neglect are easy to recognize, but many are not. They can be complicated and difficult to identify.

The parents we see are not that much different than you. Most are just ordinary people. Some have a mental health or addiction challenge. Others face a wide variety of other challenges. They're real people. They're your neighbours, people you work with, people you see when you go shopping.

The children and youth we serve are just like other kids. They have the same challenges that any other child or youth faces but they often face barriers that prevent them from being all they can be.

We help strengthen these families to try and keep them together. We often work with extended

families of children and youth to help take care of them. We connect families to services they need. The work we do with them is not always easy. But we can make a real difference.

We can't do what we do without you.

We can't be everywhere, but the community can. If you see a family that needs help, then help them by contacting us. That's the right thing to do and it's also the law in Ontario. If you see abuse or neglect, you have a duty to report it. We'll follow up. If they need help, we'll give it to them.

There are other things you can do, too. You can be a foster or adoptive parent. You can volunteer. You can donate to the charitable programs we offer that give bursaries to youth for university or college or that sends children to summer camp.

This is our community. These are our community's kids. If we want to keep them safe then we have to work together.

Here's what you need to know

The Law in Ontario is clear. Section 72 of Child and Family Services Act says that any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect child is being maltreated *MUST* report it. As well, the law says the person who sees the maltreatment *MUST* be the one to contact a Children's Aid Society. Even if you know a report has already been made about a child, you *MUST* make a further report if there are additional grounds to suspect maltreatment. In addition, if you are a doctor, teacher or other professional, the law specifically calls on you to take action.

What does abuse or neglect in children look like? It is not always easy to recognize. And children are affected in different ways.



WHAT YOU CAN DO. WHAT YOU MUST DO.

Here are some basic things to look for.

- **PHYSICAL:** Injuries that are not consistent with the explanation and/or that are of varying ages or that appear over time.
- **SEXUAL:** Injuries or discomfort in the genital area, stained or bloody undergarments, pregnancy in young girls.
- **EMOTIONAL:** Severe depression, extreme withdrawal, aggressiveness or attention seeking behaviours. Also can include frequent sickness or a general failure to thrive.

Domestic violence at home is related to child abuse and neglect. In many of the families where an adult partner is assaulted, children and youth are also assaulted.

But remember that these are only some of signs of abuse and neglect. There are many more that are not so obvious. Some situations involve parents who can't cope because of things like mental health issues or addiction. Or it could be situations where the family is in crisis due to financial issues, housing issues, trouble with the police and more.

There is no "one way" that abuse and neglect happens. Use your best judgement. If you think a child needs help, contact us.

Sometimes, a child or youth discloses abuse and/or neglect. If that happens, remember these steps:

- Support the child calmly, and control your own reaction
- Tell the child that you will need to tell someone who may help with the problem
- Document what the child said, as close to verbatim as possible
- Contact us as soon as possible

When you call

You can contact us in many ways, but the best way is to call us. We have people waiting to talk to you on the phone 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

Your call will be taken by an experienced child protection worker. These staff are trained to take the information, answer your questions about whether or not this is a call Family and Children's Services should be investigating, or

what other agency may be more appropriate.

You will be asked your name, your phone number and if you wish to remain anonymous to the client.

Our staff will want as much information about that family that you can give them. We need to know things like who the children are, where they live and how to contact them. We'll also ask about what supports and other services are involved with the family. We'll also need your contact information in case we need clarification, but this will not be given out to the family.

You may not have all or any of this information. Don't wait to gather more information. Contact us immediately when you see a child who needs help. If for any reason you can't get in touch with us or if the matter is urgent, call your local police or 911.

It takes a village to keep a child or youth safe

We all have one thing in common and that's family. Your family members look out for you and you look out for them. That's the spirit we need to keep children and youth safe. We're all part of a larger family we call community. By following these steps and working together, we can make a difference in the lives of these children and youth, and our community. *So, let's get started.*

Thank you for being a part of the work we do.



CALL NOW: 613-545-3227 / 855-445-3227

Don't wait. Call us now.
Thank you for being a part of the work we do.



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