



# Has Children's Aid contacted you or taken your kids?



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Get legal advice immediately  
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**whether your child or children are taken into care, or you are dealing with an agency outside the court process.**

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies and Indigenous organizations work to protect children from physical and emotional harm.

Children come into the care of child protection agencies for a variety of reasons, including allegations of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

Sometimes, a child protection agency places children into care through a court order.



# Legal rights

You have the right to:

1

Court documents or the child protection agency report that explain why your child was removed.

2

Ask for a letter stating what terms and conditions that the child protection agency is expecting you to complete to have your child returned to your care.

3

Ask for a mediator or alternative dispute resolution service to help you work out an out-of-court agreement.

4

Ask for visits with your child.

**If a child protection agency becomes involved with your family, [speak to a lawyer before signing any documents.](#)**

# Legal help

## A lawyer can:

- 1 Represent you in court
- 2 Prepare court documents
- 3 Bring forward motions
- 4 Participate in settlement negotiations
- 5 Conduct an in-depth file review
- 6 Help a “third party caregiver” (e.g., grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling or close family friend) gain permission to keep the child in their care.
- 7 A lawyer can also help negotiate a resolution of your case outside of the courts.

You may qualify for a legal aid lawyer to help negotiate one of the following types of care agreements:

**A voluntary agreement** whereby you work with Children's Aid to make sure you can care for your child/children. For example, you may have to agree to get counselling or undergo drug testing.

**A customary care agreement** where someone (not child's parents) cares for a First Nations, Métis or Inuit child so that they can stay connected to their community and culture.

**A temporary care agreement,** which is when Children's Aid agrees to take care of your child/children for a short time because you cannot, and you do not have friends or family who can. For example, if you require medical treatment or must leave the country suddenly.



Legal Aid Ontario provides free legal services to low-income people across Ontario. Every day we help almost 4,000 low-income people with their family law problems.



**Call us**

We'll ask you a few questions and let you know whether you qualify for legal aid. Even if you don't qualify, we'll do our best to refer you to another service provider or guide you to helpful information.



**1-800-668-8258**  
**(toll-free)**



**416-979-1446**  
**(Toronto)**



**TTY: \*711**

[legalaid.on.ca/childrens-aid](https://legalaid.on.ca/childrens-aid)

