

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IN CARE



York Region
Children's Aid Society
Société d'aide à l'enfance
de la région de York

As a young person in care, you have extremely important rights which **must be followed and respected** by your caregiver, worker and team.

The following items should be discussed between yourself and your caregiver to identify areas which you will be responsible for assisting (i.e. laundry, chores, etc.). If you choose to not assist as agreed with your caregiver it does not mean your rights are not being met and you should speak with your caregiver and worker further.

Your safety is important, all examples below must take your safety and others safety into consideration when being followed. Review this document fully for further explanations and details on the information listed below:



You have a right to... **GOOD CARE**

- Access healthy, good quality food
- Appropriate clothing.
- Education that meets your needs.
- See a doctor and dentist.
- Make decisions about your health care.
- Have your own things.
- Reasonable privacy.
- See your family unless a judge says you can't.
- Play sports, make art, and do other activities.



You have a right to... **SAFETY**

- Not be hit as punishment.
- Not be physically restrained unless authorized by law.
- Not have basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing or bedding taken from you.
- Not be humiliated or shamed by a service provider.
- Know the rules you must follow.



You have a right to... **YOUR FILE**

- Access your file, no matter how old you are.
- Write down anything you disagree with in your file and have it added.*
- Be notified right away if anyone breaches your privacy.*
- Complain to the Privacy Commissioner if you think a service provider has breached your privacy.
- *This does not include Youth Criminal Justice Act records.



You have a right to... **IDENTITY**

- Participate in activities of your choice connected to your creed, community identity and cultural identity.
- Services provided to you should be appropriate for who you are and how you identify. They should take your race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, disability, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression into account. If you are First Nations, Inuit, or Metis, the services provided to you should recognize your culture, heritage, tradition, connection to community, and the concept of extended family.



You have a right to... **GET HELP**

- Be told how to make complaints.
- Complain without worrying about the consequences.
- Be told how to appeal your placement if you are unhappy where you live.
- Have service providers respond to your complaint and try to resolve it.
- Privately contact people who can help you, such as your lawyer, the Ombudsman's Office, or Member of Provincial Parliament.

Service providers are required to help you exercise your rights, including the right to complain.



You have a right to... **FAIRNESS**

- Express your opinion on any matter that affects you.
- Be consulted on the services provided to you.
- Be told why and how decisions that affect you were made and be involved in discussions about those decisions.
- Have decisions that affect you made based on clear, consistent criteria.

Service providers are required to document how and when they gave you the opportunity to participate in decisions.

You have a right to...

GOOD CARE. This includes examples like....

✓ Access healthy, good quality food.

✓ Whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables, protein foods – are examples of healthy food categories.

Eat foods you enjoy that make you feel comfortable, including following cultural traditions without feeling judged while ensuring you maintain a balanced diet.

- ✓ Have your dietary restrictions and allergies respected.
- ✓ Be open to new foods, having a choice in what is purchased and compromising on meal choices when needed or appropriate with your caregiver.
- ✓ Three meals per day and snacks (i.e. if you're working late, you get dinner still).
- ✓ Know what food is available to eat when you are hungry without having to ask, you should not feel judged or condemned for eating food/being hungry but need to ensure you are eating healthy, balanced meals also. You are not required to eat food or meals which you do not enjoy, but you are encouraged to try different foods.

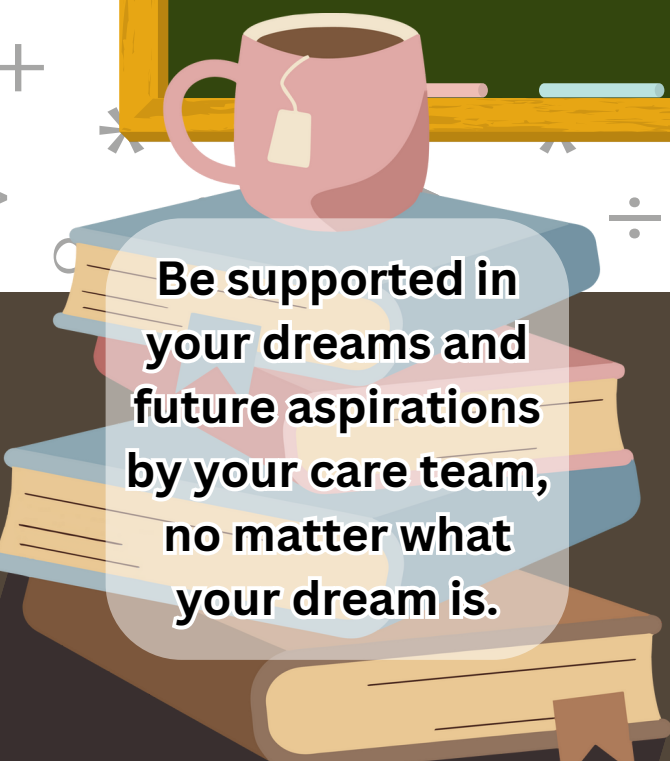
Junk food is ok in moderation. No one wants you to get sick!

You have a right to...

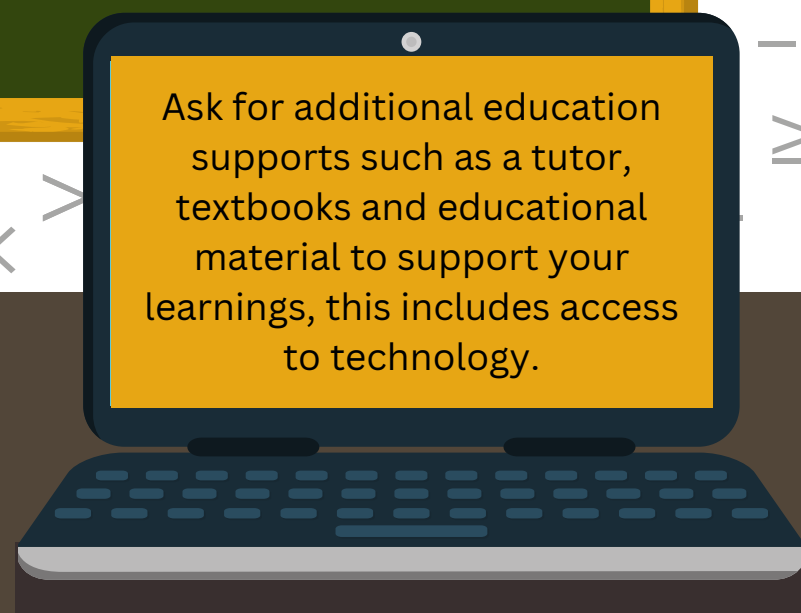
EDUCATION THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS

This includes examples like.....

- Attend a Public or Catholic School, the same type of school that you attended prior to living with CAS. If you attended a different type of school speak with your caregiver and worker.
- Be supported in resources and accommodation planning at school including using things such as a quiet space, additional test time, etc. as identified within an IEP meeting which you may participate in (if you choose).
- Ask for testing and assessments to help with your learning needs, learning style and future employment opportunities. (i.e. psycho-educational assessment for learning or vocational assessment for career planning).
- Learn about post-secondary education, trades and other avenues of education beyond High School, including funding available to you (pending status in care).



Be supported in your dreams and future aspirations by your care team, no matter what your dream is.



Ask for additional education supports such as a tutor, textbooks and educational material to support your learnings, this includes access to technology.



You have a right to...

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

This includes examples like.....

- Having educational conversations with your caregivers and worker about safety and how people in the community may respond to you is important- be confident in yourself while being safe! Consider your surroundings and activities when choosing your clothing (i.e. for job interviews vs. with friends).
- Clothing you have should be laundered and clean. You should not need to wear dirty or worn clothing at any time. Depending on your circumstance, you may be responsible for your own laundry to help promote life skills. If you choose not to do your laundry it isn't your caregiver's responsibility or fault.





You have a right to...

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

This includes examples like.....

Receive a monthly clothing allowance to be used to purchase clothes. Speak with your foster parent, caregiver or worker to confirm the amount, how it is paid and how you will access it to purchase items.




Have access to enough clothing and undergarments for one week or more, including PJs, underwear, bras, socks, and gender-affirming undergarments.



Choose the clothing style you want, ensuring you are within your budget for each month/season. You should not feel judged or shamed for your clothing purchases or style.

Have access to seasonal clothing and footwear – winter boots, hats/gloves, winter coats, sandals, running shoes, etc. that are appropriate for each season.



-  [Binding, Packing, Tucking and Padding](#)
-  [Gender Affirming Gear](#)
-  [GenderGear Guides](#)






You have the right to.....

SEE A DOCTOR OR DENTIST AND MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE

This includes examples like.....

- CAS helps pay the cost of prescriptions and required/urgent dental work – you should not be afraid to go to the doctor or dentist due to the cost. OHIP+ and Greenshield are available to you - speak with your foster parent or worker to confirm details.
- See a doctor or dentist who you are comfortable with, aligns with your culture/beliefs and attend with a support person who you choose. You do not need to provide an explanation about why you are requesting to see any doctors, dentists, optometrist, etc.
- See a mental health professional, doctor/counselor, psychiatrist, etc. Medication to treat mental health does not need to be the only treatment you receive.
- See a doctor once per year for a physical or as needed for other health needs including requesting any tests (i.e. STD/STI, pregnancy, etc), sexual health education (i.e. contraceptives, gynecological check ups), gender affirming care (i.e. hormone therapy, etc.), addiction services and any
- other health related concerns you have.



SEE A DENTIST EVERY SIX MONTHS FOR A CLEANING/CHECK UP OR AS NEEDED FOR OTHER HEALTH NEEDS.



You have the right to.....

SEE A DOCTOR OR DENTIST AND MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE CONTINUED....

This includes examples like.....

- See an optometrist to check your eyes once per year if you are having vision problems or as needed for any other health needs
- Ensure all of your medical and health needs are being met by attending all recommended appointments.
- Be part of all discussions about your health care, your voice to be included in planning for your medical needs and decisions.
- Refuse medical care which makes you uncomfortable or feel unsafe (unless it is a life-threatening situation). You should be open to educational discussions, asking questions and advocating to understand why a treatment is recommended to ensure your health needs are being met. Just because you are uncomfortable doesn't mean you should avoid medical care (i.e. get a second opinion, different doctor, etc.).
- Not feel pressured about health care decisions and should receive honest and clear information from someone you trust when making health care decisions.

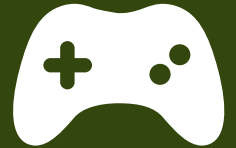


Request and attend medical appointments in private with your doctor and request that details of your appointment remain confidential (unless it is a life-threatening situation).

You have the right to.....
HAVE YOUR OWN THINGS

This includes examples like

- Keep belongings and items which are meaningful to you in a safe and secure place that is available for you to access. Items which may be considered a weapon need to be discussed with your caregiver and worker to develop a plan for safe use and storage.
- Have belongings which are just for you, not shared with others in your placement.
- Take your own belongings when you move from your placement, this includes gifts given to you.
- Personal hygiene items of your choice (i.e. body wash, menstrual products, shampoo, etc.). Discuss with your caregiver/worker if you wish to purchase your own items and how funding can be made available to you.
- Have your own clean mattress and bedding.



You have the right to.....
REASONABLE PRIVACY

You have a right to...

- Personal space when you need it, somewhere quiet without interruptions (as long as you are safe to be alone and the reason is explained to you).
- Use the washroom in private, this includes bathing/showering, changing clothing/outfits.
- Keep your belongings which are important to you, your items should not be thrown away or taken from you without your agreement (unless it is a safety concern which is explained to you).
- Keep items private, including letters, which may be important to you (unless there is a safety concern which is explained to you).
- Ask that your information is not shared with people outside of your care team (i.e. with school teachers, bio-family members, etc.).
- Decide who is present at your Plan of Care or other planning meetings, you may request people attend or not attend for all or parts of your meetings.
- Meet with your worker in private and information not be shared with your caregivers.



You have the right to.....

IDENTITY

This includes examples like

- Participate in activities of your choice connected to your creed, community identity and cultural identity.
- Services provided to you should be appropriate for who you are and how you identify. They should take your race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, disability, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression into account. If you are First Nations, Inuit, or Metis, the services provided to you should recognize your culture, heritage, tradition, connection to community, and the concept of extended family.
- Not feel pressured or forced to participate in any cultural or religious ceremonies which you do not feel comfortable participating in.
- Keep religious and cultural belongings such as Bibles, Quran or other items which align with your culture, creed or identity and are important to you.
- Speak any language or be taught any languages you would like to learn.



Keep religious and cultural belongings such as Bibles, Quran or other items which align with your culture, creed or identity and are important to you.

- Express yourself in a safe, secure and caring environment while learning about yourself, growing and developing your identity and being part of the community which you identify with.
- Participate (or not) in family activities and traditions with your caregivers which are important to you. You also can participate in family activities and traditions which are important to your caregivers if you choose

You have a right to...

SEE YOUR FAMILY UNLESS A JUDGE SAYS YOU CAN'T

This includes examples like



- Know why you cannot see your family and have your questions answered.
- Have others not speak negatively about your family, despite the circumstances. You should not feel uncomfortable about seeing your family or asking questions about your family (if you choose to do so).

- Stop visits with your family if you wish and speak with a lawyer if you feel your wishes are not being followed to understand what other options may be available (i.e. restraining order).
- Request information about your biological family, including asking for assistance in finding other family members (i.e. through kinship-finding workers).



You have a right to...

PLAY SPORTS, MAKE ART, AND DO OTHER ACTIVITIES

This includes examples like



Participate in and be supported to attend activities you enjoy at school and in the community (i.e. sports, theater, music, etc.). Speak with your caregiver and worker about funding available to pay for these activities.

Having the responsibility to participate in life skills activities such as meal preparation, laundry, household chores, etc. as an equal member of the household.



Participate in birthday parties and celebrate your birthday with your friends, including having a party if you wish. Speak with your caregiver and worker about funding available for gifts to give to other people.





You have the right to.....

SAFETY

This includes examples like

NOT BE HIT AS A PUNISHMENT

- This includes any other physical, sexual or other force or violent act towards you whether visible or not (i.e. no emotional or verbal abuse).
- Or for any other reason (i.e. frustration, joke, degrading statements, etc.).

NOT BE PHYSICALLY RESTRAINED UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY LAW

- Your caregiver must have completed a training program on restraints and be in an approved setting to use them.
- For someone to explain why you were restrained and ask questions.
- Talk about your feelings when another youth has been restrained.

NOT HAVE BASIC NECESSITIES SUCH AS FOOD, SHELTER, CLOTHING OR BEDDING TAKEN FROM YOU

NOT BE HUMILIATED OR SHAMED BY A SERVICE PROVIDER

- Jokes and funny statements should not make you uncomfortable or upset.
- Feel safe expressing your identity as you wish, ensuring you are expressing yourself while treating others with respect.

KNOW THE RULES YOU MUST FOLLOW

- Rules that are explained to you by your caregiver when you arrive, they should not be a surprise.
- Be told of any consequences which may occur as a result of not following rules.
- You have the responsibility to follow these rules.

BE SAFE IN THE COMMUNITY

- If you feel unsafe, have anything occur towards you or become upset outside of your placement you can talk with your caregiver, worker or anyone else you trust to help you address the situation.

SAY NO

- To anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- To hugs or any physical contact (including sexual) with other people.



You have a right to...

GET HELP

This includes examples like

- Be told how to make complaints.
- This includes with Children's Aid and the Ombudsman's office.
- Complain without worrying about the consequences.
- Be told how to appeal your placement if you are unhappy where you live.
- Have service providers respond to your complaint and try to resolve it.
- Privately contact people who can help you, such as your lawyer, the Ombudsman's Office, or Member of Provincial Parliament. Service providers are required to help you exercise your rights, including the right to complain.





You have a right to...

FAIRNESS

This includes examples like

- Express your opinion on any matter that affects you.
- Be consulted on the services provided to you.
- Be told why and how decisions that affect you were made and be involved in discussions about those decisions.
- Know that service providers are required to document how and when they gave you the opportunity to participate in decisions.
- Receive an allowance to spend on yourself, given to you at least monthly.

You have a right to...

YOUR FILE

This includes examples like

- Access your file, no matter how old you are.
- This means while you are IN or after you have left care.
- There is no reason why you cannot access your file, you can request it online at www.yorkcas.org under request personal information.
- Write down anything you disagree with in your file and have it added.
- Be notified right away if anyone breaches your privacy.
- In some circumstances your information cannot be shared without your consent. If information has been shared without your consent you should speak with your worker or a caregiver to express your concerns.
- Complain to the privacy commissioner if you think a service provider has breached your privacy.



If you feel your rights aren't being met or respected, you have the right to make a complaint to any of the following places:

1 YORK REGION CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY'S INTERNAL COMPLAINT REVIEW PANEL (ICRP)

A: Write a letter to the Children's Aid Society that includes details of your concerns or complete the Formal Complaint to a Society's Internal Complaints Review Panel (ICRP) [form](#).

B: Send your concerns to:
York Region Children's Aid Society
Internal Complaints Review Panel
16915 Leslie Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 9A1
Fax: (905) 895-2113
Email: feedback@yorkcas.org

C: We know that it can be difficult to put your concerns in writing and the Children's Aid Society can provide you with help to write the letter or complete the form. Email us at feedback@yorkcas.org.



2 OMBUDSMAN OF ONTARIO

A: The Ontario Ombudsman's Office can also take complaints about services received from a Children's Aid Society. The Ombudsman has created dedicated units of specialized staff to answer questions, address concerns, conduct investigations, and review complaints.

B: Send your concerns to:
Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
483 Bay Street
10th floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

C: Toll-free (inside Ontario only): 1-800-263-1830
Outside Ontario: 416-586-3300
TTY (teletypewriter): 1-866-411-4211
Fax: 416-586-3485
Email: info@ombudsman.on.ca
Website: ombudsman.on.ca



3

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

You can also make a complaint to the Child and Family Services Review Board at any time. This means that a complaint can be made directly to the Child and Family Services Review Board either before or during involvement with the Children’s Aid Society’s Internal Complaint Review Panel.

A: To submit an application to the Child and Family Services Review Board, complete Form 2: Application about Complaints Against a Children’s Aid Society (available here [CFSRB: Forms & Filing | Tribunals Ontario](#))

B: Send your concerns to:
Child and Family Services Review Board
15 Grosvenor Street, Ground Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2G6
Toronto Area: 416-327-0111
Long Distance: 1-888-777-3616
TDD/TTY: Call the Bell Relay Service at 1-800-855-0511
Email: cfsrb@ontario.ca
Website: tribunalsontario.ca/cfsrb/



Tribunals Ontario
Child and Family Services
Review Board

4

RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RPAC)

If you are unhappy with your placement you have the right to request a placement change. If you are 12 years old or older, you have a right to a review of your placement by a Residential Placement Advisory Committee (RPAC).

A: Central East Region RPAC Office
B: Phone: 705-748-3220
C: Fax: 705-748-4149



MINISTRY OF CHILDREN
AND YOUTH SERVICES

5

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S LAWYER (OCL)

A: Central East Region RPAC Office
B: Phone: 705-748-3220
C: Fax: 705-748-4149





6 ONTARIO211.CA

[Ontario211.ca](https://ontario211.ca) offers a wide variety of resources, supports and other helpful information.

5 OTHER RESOURCES

Not sure how to ask for help? Want someone to be with you while making a phone call or writing a letter? Speak with someone you trust and ask them to support you in speaking up for yourself. Teachers, family members, workers, lawyers, police officers, counselors, trusted friends and anyone else important to you can help you put your ideas and words together and ask for help.

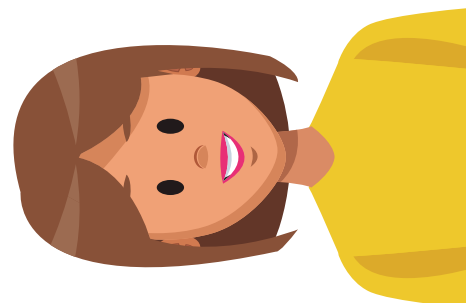
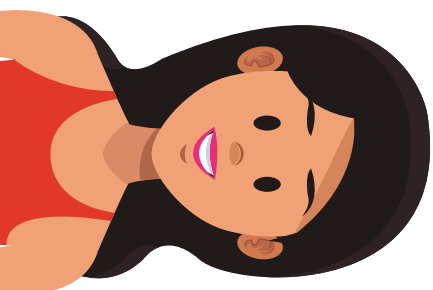




**CONTENT
PROVIDED BY:**



**DON'T LET OTHERS DEFINE YOUR GOALS,
WE ARE ONE VOICE**



York Region
Children's Aid Society

Société d'aide à l'enfance
de la région de York

