

For Immediate Release
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OLDER CHILDREN NEED FAMILIES TOO *November is Adoption Awareness Month*

TORONTO – During November, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and its member agencies are promoting Adoption Awareness Month to educate the community about adoption and find permanent families for older children. Older children in the care of Children's Aid Societies want and need permanent families.

Since last year, completed adoptions through Children's Aid Societies have increased by 21%. This is a big step in the right direction but more children and youth are still in need of a permanent family. Only 2% of children adopted through Ontario's public adoption system were ages 13-18 last year yet this age group represents 27% of the 2,800 children available for adoption. Many Ontarians looking to start or grow their family are not aware that there are older children available for adoption who need families.

'Where do I go for the holidays?' 'Who will walk me down the aisle?' 'Who will be a grandparent to my children?' These are questions asked by youth in the care of Children's Aid Societies (CAS). As children get older, they are more aware of what family means to them and what it means to have a permanent family. The need for a family does not diminish as a child gets older.

"Every child needs a family and a stable, permanent home," said Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services. "When children of any age are adopted, they know that they have a family they can rely on, and will always be a part of."

Having a permanent family helps children to have healthy development, creates a sense of self-worth and gives a feeling of belonging. School-aged children understand what it means to be adopted. Older children often know what they want in a family, which can help adoption workers find the right match for their interests. They can immediately become active participants in family life. Families can benefit from having more information about the child, including any information pertaining to special needs.

Creating permanency for children and youth is a key focal point for Ontario's Children's Aid Societies. Last year, CASs found permanent homes (kin, customary care and legal custody) to an additional 4,200 children and youth. For more information on adoption contact your local Children's Aid Society or visit www.useyourvoice.ca

About the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

Since 1912, OACAS has represented Children's Aid Societies in Ontario and provided service in the areas of government relations, communications, information management, education and training to advocate for the protection and well-being of children. We are the voice of child welfare in Ontario.

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