



April 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Frontline professionals have always been the greatest strength of Ontario's child welfare system. Today, we would like to address those individuals who work directly with children, youth, and families in their communities.

Supporting children, youth, and families during this time is complex, challenging, and courageous work. On behalf of the entire sector, we want to say thank you and acknowledge your tremendous dedication, compassion, and fortitude throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

It is difficult to imagine a more critical time for child welfare services than now – when social, cultural, and spiritual gatherings are not permitted and schools, libraries, places of worship, recreation centres, and other community spaces are closed. Supporting and strengthening families and ensuring the safety and well-being of children and youth in meaningful and innovative ways is crucial work.

We are incredibly grateful for your tireless work and unwavering commitment to serving those who are among the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized in Ontario.

Please know that OACAS and ANCFSAO, in partnership with sector leadership, are making every effort to support you and the essential work you do.

We are making all our decisions based on the best public-health advice and information available, and with considerations for your health, safety, and well-being in mind. We have released new evidence-based recommendations for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in child welfare, and we continue to work with the Ministry and advocate for the necessary PPE supplies when working in your communities.

We are also soliciting guidance and gathering perspectives from agencies and partners at the local level, identifying and reviewing new information, and developing and updating contingency plans for different areas of service delivery.

Your supervisors, managers, directors of service, and other senior leaders are well-positioned to support you during this time of unprecedented change. They can also pass on any challenges you are encountering to OACAS and ANCFSAO for consideration and discussion at the provincial level. Likewise, they can also bring forward any innovative ideas you have to improve services in these challenging times. OACAS and ANCFSAO will continue to develop and share resources for the entire workforce regarding COVID-19 developments, implications for service, and other advocacy matters.

Thank you again for all that you do to ensure that families and children are cared for and supported.

Sincerely,

Nicole Bonnie, CEO, OACAS  
Amber Crowe, Board President, ANCFSAO