Navigating the Child Welfare System

A Guide for Ontario’s Black Community
Who are we?

One Vision One Voice is a program led by the African Canadian community. It is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services through the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies and addresses the overrepresentation of African Canadian families in the child welfare system.

The One Vision One Voice project developed a report and a Practice Framework, made up of 11 Race Equity Practices, which are the steps CAS’ should take to improve outcomes for African Canadian children and families.
Introduction to Child Welfare (Protection)
Community Organizations Should Transfer Their knowledge to the Black community

One Vision One Voice

Community Organizations/Support

Children’s Aid Societies (CAS)
The Child Welfare System was Developed within a colonial and anti-Black racist system

A system cannot fail those it was never designed to protect!
Too many black, Indigenous kids in Ontario child-welfare system, report finds

By Colin Perkel, The Canadian Press

POSTED APR 12, 2018 12:17 PM EST  LAST UPDATED APR 12, 2018 AT 3:36 PM EST

'Crisis' in Children's Aid over number of black children in care

Indigenous, Black children over-represented in foster care group homes, inquiry says

Discredited Motherisk hair-testing program harmed vulnerable families: report
Increase in wards

Black foster homes needed

The number of black children placed in foster homes has increased over the years. This has caused a strain on the Children's Aid Society and other agencies who are responsible for providing care for these children.

Margaret, a social worker, explained that the increase in placements is due to parents who are unable to care for their children due to various reasons. The Children's Aid Society has been working to ensure that these children are placed in safe and loving environments.

Some parents have lost their jobs, while others have moved away or are unable to care for their children due to illness. The Children's Aid Society has been working to support these parents and ensure that their children are not left without care.

The Children's Aid Society is looking for foster homes to take care of these children. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please contact the Children's Aid Society for more information.

A pair of Queens wins, Miss Black Ontario, Diane Foster, left, sits with Miss Montréal Carnival '78, Cindy Joseph, during the 15th annual Queen Magazine ball.

Photo by Claudio Lewis

The Queens were guests at the Queen Magazine ball during the occasion Miss Montréal travelled in Toronto especially to attend the Ball in the Masonic Temple last Saturday.

Look for it in CONTRAST

Beginning this week is our column, Look for It, which will feature articles on black women who are doing great things in our community.

The column will focus on different aspects of black women's lives, including their careers, personal achievements, and contributions to the community.

A Jamaican wife still missing after two weeks

Mrs. Taylor, who lives in Jamaica, is still missing after her husband reported her missing last week. According to the police, Mrs. Taylor was last seen on Tuesday. She was last seen wearing a red dress and carrying a white bag.

The police are appealing for information from anyone who may have seen Mrs. Taylor or know of her whereabouts.

Frankie Perkins shot

Popular Frankie Perkins was shot and killed on Monday night in an incident that occurred in a residential area.

Perkins was shot multiple times and died at the scene. The police are investigating the incident and are appealing for information from anyone who may have witnessed the shooting.

Augustine elected Grenada Association's president

Augustine has been elected as the new president of the Grenada Association. He had been serving as the vice president and had been a member of the association for many years.

Augustine has been active in the community and has been involved in various social and cultural events. He has been a mentor to many young people and has worked to promote education and community development.

The new president has been elected with the support of the majority of the association's members. He plans to continue working towards the goals and objectives of the association.
What the data doesn’t tell us: The experience of Black Youth in care

They experience negativity about their own race and internalized anti-Blackness

"I felt that CAS gave me some freedom. Freedom I would not experience in a Black home. I was with White people. The Black culture can be strict."

Limited horizons

"I don’t like that CAS supports me in sports not in my education. They push me to do more sports and put my education aside."

Lack of community/belonging

"Group homes are like jails. They are not good places to be."

Cultural and racial erasure

"I’m with a White family. I’m raised as White, but I can’t say I’m White. I’m Black. It upsets me that I lack the culture. I have to accept it. Where else is there for me to go?"

No sense of pride or belonging when not racially matched, but better outcomes when culturally and racially matched

"I was in the same foster home for 13 years. They were African Canadian. I belonged. I liked the food. Nobody asked if they were my real family."

Lack of empowerment/self acceptance and self love

"They can’t scrub my blackness away."

No links to appropriate supports

"There is nowhere to go to get help if the system is homophobic or foster parents are homophobic."
The Community Experience

Examples:

- Adoption of children without mother/parent knowing
- CAS offering Black teens more freedom than they would experience in Black home
- Arrest of mother/parent for refusing to let her baby go during an apprehension

Trauma
Fractured Families
Increased dependence on CAS
Criminalization
Child Protection vs. Child Welfare

**Child Protection**
- narrow and rigid focus on legislative rules, compliance based, problem solving approach and individual responsibility for child safety

**Child Welfare**
- based on family support and preservation, inclusion of multiple perspectives, strength-based, community oriented preventative practice, and includes efforts to understand broader systemic impact on the family
The Child Welfare System

- CYFSA
- Child Protection Standards and tools
- Mandate and Governance
- Mandatory service delivery and framework
- Investigations collateral check, safety & risk assessment, close or transfer file
- Intervention decision-making tool
- Case file
- Eligibility Spectrum
RACE MATTERS IN CHILD WELFARE

There are 539,205 African Canadians in Ontario, making up 4% of the provincial population.\(^1\)

While African Canadians represent 8% of the Toronto population, they represent 41% of all children and youth in care of the Toronto Children's Aid Society.\(^2\)

Statistics Canada projects that by 2031 the African Canadian population could double in size.\(^3\)

African Canadians are over-represented in care at 5 times their representation in the population.

ONE VISION ONE VOICE: Changing the Child Welfare System for African Canadians
Entry to the System

There are no significant differences in the overall incidence of child maltreatment between Whites and people of African descent. However, professionals and individuals are more likely to report people of African descent than Whites to child welfare. When a report to child welfare has been made, people of African descent are investigated twice as often as Whites.

Poverty, not the type or severity of maltreatment, is the single most important predictor of placement in foster care and the amount of time spent there.

White children who are abused or neglected are twice as likely as children of African descent to receive services in their own homes.
In the System

Children of African descent remain in foster care longer, move more often, receive fewer services, and are less likely to be returned to their home or adopted.⁹

When an investigation is found to have been substantiated, children of African descent are 36% more likely than White children to be placed into foster care.⁸

Most White children who enter the system are permitted to stay with their families, whereas most children of African descent are taken away from theirs. Child welfare for children of African descent usually means shattering the bonds with their parents.¹⁰
Exiting the System

Children of African descent exit foster care most frequently through adoption or "aging out" of the system. White children exit most frequently through reunification with families. 

There are a number of negative outcomes for children of African descent who remain in foster and institutional care until they "age out" of the system, including: not completing high school, teen pregnancy, homelessness, unemployment and involvement with the criminal justice system. They also experience isolation from family, culture and community.
The Child Welfare System

- Child Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)
- Case file
- Child Protection Standards and tools
- Eligibility Spectrum

Mandate and Governance

Mandatory service delivery and framework

Investigations collateral check, safety & risk assessment, close or transfer file

Intervention decision-making tool
Child Protection Legislation

Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) (2017)

- governs all child protection services
- the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services in Ontario funds and overseas all Children’s Aid Societies within the province
Purpose: to ensure the best interests, safety, and well-being of children.

(IMPORTANT - THIS IS THE ACT THAT CASs FOLLOW TO ENSURE A CHILD IS SAFE)
Areas Covered by the CYFSA

- Children’s and Young Persons’ Rights
- Funding and Accountability
- First Nations, Inuit, and Métis child and family services
- Child Protection
- Youth Justice
- Extraordinary Measures
- Adoption and Adoption Licensing
- Residential Licensing
- Personal Information (which comes into force on January 1, 2020)
- Miscellaneous Matters
Why is Understanding the Child and Family Services Act (CYFSA) critical?

- The CYFSA is the act that governs the work of Children’s Aid Societies across the province.
- Societies have a duty to support best practice according to the mandate and CYFSA, and will use the CYFSA to justify decisions.
- Understanding the CYFSA is critical to providing support and advocating for families caught up within the child welfare system.
In April of 2018 the new Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) was revised and came with new provisions

- **Services provided to children and families should be child centered**

- Children and families have better outcomes when services **build on their strengths** through prevention, early intervention, and community support

- Services provided to children and families should respect their **diversity** and the principle of **inclusion**

- **Systemic racism** and the barriers it creates for children and families receiving services **must continue to be addressed**
The Child Welfare System

- **Mandate and Governance**
- **Investigations**
  - collateral check, safety & risk assessment, close or transfer file
- **Intervention decision-making tool**
- **Mandatory service delivery and framework**
- **Eligibility Spectrum**
- **CYFSA**
- **Child Protection Standards and tools**
- **Case file**
Ontario Child Protection Standards (2016)

READ THE STANDARDS HERE:
Child Protection Standards –
**HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE**

- The standards are the mandatory framework within which child protection services are to be delivered.

- They clarify expectations regarding the minimum level of performance for child protection workers, supervisors and CASs.

- The standards are focused on producing positive outcomes.

- They are consistent with the purposes of Child, Youth and Family Services Act.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for All Phases of Child Protection Service Delivery</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1 Intake: Receiving a Referral and Determining the Appropriate Response</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2 Planning and Conducting a Child Protection Investigation</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3 Conducting a Safety Assessment and Developing a Safety Plan</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4 Conducting a Risk Assessment</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5 Concluding a Child Protection Investigation</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6 Transferring a Case</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7 Ongoing Service Case Management</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 8 Closing a Case</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A Community Caregiver Reference</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B Supervision Reference</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C Case Flow Diagram</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Companion to the Ontario Child Protection Standards

- Provides a set of required and supplementary instruments designed to assist Ontario child protection workers in their assessment and screening of situations in which a child is alleged to be in need of protection.

- Helps the child protection worker review each child protection decision point in an objective, systematic, strength-based, comprehensive manner.

1) Ontario Safety Assessment
2) Ontario Family Risk Assessment
3) Ontario Family Child Strength and Needs Assessment
4) Reassessment Tools
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Manual</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Assessment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Risk Assessment</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Child Strengths and Needs Assessment</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Risk Reassessment</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunification Assessment Tools</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOOLS**
## SECTION 1: SAFETY THREATS

Assess family home for each of the following safety threats. Indicate whether currently available information results in reason to believe a safety threat is present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|     |    | 1. Parent/caregiver caused serious physical harm to the child, or made a plausible threat to cause serious physical harm in the current investigation indicated by:  
  _____ Serious injury or abuse to child other than accidental  
  _____ Caregiver fears he/she will maltreat child  
  _____ Threat to cause harm or retaliate against child  
  _____ Excessive discipline or physical force  
  _____ Drug-exposed infant. |
|     |    | 2. Current circumstance, combined with information that the parent/caregiver has or may have a history of previously maltreating a child in his/her care, suggests that the child’s safety may be of immediate concern. |
|     |    | 3. Child sexual abuse is suspected and circumstances suggest that child’s safety may be of immediate concern. |
|     |    | 4. Parent/caregiver fails to protect child from serious harm or threatened harm by other adults or children in the home. This may include physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. |
|     |    | 5. Parent/caregiver’s explanation for the injury to the child is questionable or inconsistent with type of injury, and the nature of the injury suggests that the child’s safety may be of imminent concern. |
ONTARIO FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT

Agency: __________________________

Family Name: __________________________

Date of Assessment: __/__/____

Primary Parent/Caregiver: __________________________

Secondary Parent/Caregiver: __________________________

Worker Name: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neglect</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Complaint is for Neglect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A1. Current Complaint is for Abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2. Number of Prior Child Protection Investigations (assign highest score that applies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A2. Number of Previous Child Abuse Investigations (number: ____ )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. None</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. None</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. One or more, abuse only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. One</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. One or two for neglect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Two or more (actual number ____ )</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Three or more for neglect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3. Family Has Previously Received CAS Ongoing Child Protection Services (voluntary/court-ordered)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A3. Family has Previously Received CAS Ongoing Child Protection Services (voluntary/court-ordered)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Child Welfare System

- CYFSA
- Mandate and Governance
- Investigations collateral check, safety & risk assessment, close or transfer file
- Intervention decision-making tool
- Mandatory service delivery and framework
- Case file
- Child Protection Standards and tools
- Eligibility Spectrum
Eligibility Spectrum

Ontario Child Welfare – *Eligibility Spectrum*

- Designed to assist Children’s Aid Society (CAS) staff in making consistent and accurate decisions about eligibility for service at the time of referral.

- Aids in determining the legal requirements for initial and ongoing child welfare intervention.

- Denotes the reasons for service based on the legislation.

- Decision-making process includes:
  - Matching the situation with the section;
  - Determining the scale within the section;
  - Identifying the level of severity;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 1 Physical/Sexual Harm by Commission</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Minimally</th>
<th>Not Severe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Cruel/Inappropriate Treatment</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Threat of Harm</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 2 Harm by Omission</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Minimally</th>
<th>Not Severe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inadequate Supervision</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Neglect of Child’s Basic Physical Needs</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Caregiver Response to Child’s Physical Health</td>
<td>A, B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Caregiver Response to Child’s Mental, Emotional, and Development Condition</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Caregiver Response to Child Under 12 Who Has Committed a Serious Act</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 3 Emotional Harm</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Minimally</th>
<th>Not Severe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Caregiver Causes and/or Caregiver Response to Child’s Emotional Harm or Risk of Emotional Harm</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Child Exposure to Adult Conflict</td>
<td>A, B, C, D</td>
<td>E, F, G</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 4 Abandonment/Separation</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Minimally</th>
<th>Not Severe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Orphaned/Abandoned Child</td>
<td>A, B, C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E, F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Caregiver-Child Conflict/Child Behaviour</td>
<td>A, B</td>
<td>C, D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 5 Caregiver Capacity</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Minimally</th>
<th>Not Severe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Caregiver Inability to Protect</td>
<td>A, B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Caregiver with Problem</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Caregiving Skills</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Unranked Choices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request for Counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A, B, C, D, E, F, G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request for Adoption Services</td>
<td>1. Adoption Services for Potential Adoptive Families</td>
<td>Scale 1: A, B, C, D, E, F, G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Adoption Disclosure</td>
<td>Scale 2: A, B, C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Services for Birth Parent(s)</td>
<td>Scale 3: A, B, C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Considering Placing Child for Adoption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Adoption Probation Services</td>
<td>Scale 4: A, B, C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Post Adoption Services</td>
<td>Scale 5: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION 8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Based Care</td>
<td>1. Foster Care Services</td>
<td>Scale 1: A, B, C, D, E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Kinship Service for Child Who Has Been or Will Be Living with Kinship Service Provider(s)</td>
<td>Scale 2: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Kinship Service for Children and/or Youth in the Care of CAS</td>
<td>Scale 3: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eligibility Spectrum 2016
Questions
The Child Welfare System

- CYFSA
- Child Protection Standards
- Case file
- Eligibility Spectrum

Mandate and Governance

Mandatory service delivery and framework

Intervention decision-making tool

Investigations collateral check, safety & risk assessment, close or transfer file
INTERACTIVE CASE STUDY:
What do you need to know

- 13 year old girl of African descent is pregnant and shows up at the hospital.
- She is brought into the hospital by her school VP because she went into labour in the bathroom.
- Nurse and Doctor and VP are talking about the fact that she is 13 and will be calling social work. They say that the baby will be apprehended.
- She has hidden her pregnancy from her family and doesn’t know what to do.
- She says her dad will kill her. The teacher says her parents are very very strict.
- Previously the child came to school with a mark on her back.
- The teacher calls CAS
- CAS worker calls Police once the mark is reported
- She has two other siblings at the school
- Secondary worker shows up at the school to interview the kids without the parents permission
- The decision is made that new mom and baby and the other two children should be apprehended from the home
Case Study: QUESTIONS

You get a call from the pastor and his wife to support them?

QUESTIONS:

- What right does CAS have to interview a child at school
- When do the police get involved
- What happens if a child is placed in care
- What happens if a child is placed in protective custody
- What rights do I have to disagree with a CAS handling a case
- What is expected of a caregiver
- What are the rules regarding spanking
- When are children put up for permanent care
- What is Termination of Parental Rights
INVESTIGATIONS

Option: CAS investigates

- After an initial screening to check on the child, a Children's Aid Society (CAS) might decide to get more information about the child's situation. This is called a formal investigation.
- Depending on the risk of immediate harm to the child, CAS decides how quickly they need to start their investigation. This can be right away or within 30 days.
- As part of the investigation, a CAS worker must meet the child. They usually want to speak to the child alone.
- They must also speak the parent’s and the child's caregivers.
- The CAS worker might also speak to:
  - child's siblings or other children in the home
  - other adults living in the home, whether or not they're related to the child, for example child's grandparents, a step-parent, a roommate or a tenant
  - anyone who saw what was reported to CAS
  - any professionals who work with the child, such as their doctor, counsellor, teacher, or daycare worker
Mandated Referrers (BOOKLET PAGE 9-10)

• Doctors
• Nurses
• Daycare workers
• Family counsellors
• Social workers
• Religious leaders
• Teachers
Why do so many referrals to CAS come from the Education System?

- Teacher Biases
- Trite Reporting
- Cultural Gap
- Parenting Styles
- Stress of Microaggressions
- Overreporting
COLLATERAL CHECK

- Is a reference to the **job of parenting**
- A professional that can speak to the care a parent gives their child
- How engaged a parent is with the day care, school or health care system
- Speaks to a child’s reaction to their parent
SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Safety assessment is a tool completed within 24 hrs of speaking with a child
- 14 questions are answered
- Safe, safe with intervention or not safe

- Risk assessment to determine if a child is at risk of abuse or neglect
- 10 questions risk being low, moderate, high or very high
CLOSE OR TRANSFER FILE

- Open file, investigation starts, assessments are completed, collaterals are checked
- Children are safe and no concern a report is written and the file is closed
- If there are concerns and risk, transfer to a ongoing work (family service worker)
- Service goals are created, monitored hopefully risk is decreased or eliminated and then file closes
Rights of Children and Young Persons Receiving Services

Children and youth in care must be informed of:

- **Their rights**
- **Review procedures** (CFSRB, Internal Complaints Processes)
- **Their responsibilities** while in a placement, and
- **The rules governing day-to-day operation of residential care**, including disciplinary procedures when children and youth are admitted to a residential placement and at regular intervals, including the regular intervals that may be prescribed in the regulation.

- Children and youth in care now have a **right to receive instruction in and participate in activities** of their choice regarding their creed, community identity, and cultural identity, whereas before this was restricted to religious instruction and activities.
Navigating the Child Welfare System
A Guide for Ontario’s Black Community

KNOWLEDGE IS...
POWER!
Supporting outcomes for African Canadian families

(Booklet pages 16-17)
APPREHENSIONS and Court:

1. They will bring the child to a place of safety (formerly called “apprehending the child”)
2. Starting the Court Case (“Protection Application”)
3. What to do once you have your court papers
4. First court date within 5 days
5. Temporary Care & Custody Motion

6. Conferences and Meetings
7. Trial
8. Status Review
Permanency

If a child is under age 6 and has been removed from home. Parents have 1 year to have get a permanency plan in place. After 1 year the child becomes a crown ward and can be put up for adoption.
WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS? Page 18-19

- Kin/Kith
- Family support
- FAMILY Group CONFERNCING
- Court supports/Representation

(BOOKLET-19-20)
How to find support?

- OVOV website
- ByBlacks/directory – social services
- 211
- Ontario Legal Aid- Black Ontarians
- Call your local CAS:
  - Ask if there is an Anti Oppression Lead
  - Ask for an African Canadian Local Advisory Council
  - Ask for the African Canadian Affinity Group for staff at the CAS