



*Because children depend on all of us*

CAS of Toronto welcomes the opportunity to show our results in implementing the Auditor General's (AG) 2006 audit recommendations. We have achieved considerable progress on the procedures and expectations set out by the AG one year ago.

As the Auditor has noted, it is unusual for an organization to be audited again within such a short time frame. We are in agreement that it takes considerable time to fully implement new policies and procedures, and therefore we are pleased that our progress is consistent with the AG's expectations.

As a child welfare agency, our goal is to help to create stable, loving family homes for children, free from abuse and neglect. When that is not possible, we find that home within the child's extended family or the children's aid community. We help in the most sensitive of situations when children and families are at their most vulnerable. The families and children we serve are usually affected by one or a combination of poverty, mental illness, homelessness or inadequate housing; they may also be unable to reach out for help. Our professionally trained staff use clinical judgment, expertise and tools based on extensive research and more than 100 years of experience.

One of our challenges is that this clinical work and the needs of children and families might not always allow us to strictly adhere to policy and procedural expectations of the Auditor General. Short timelines and urgency in life threatening situations dictate a different priority than fully adhering to spending policies; a child's emotional stability, well-being and healthy development aren't always consistent with inflexible adherence to policies or the timely completion of front line staff's heavy administrative workload.

We take both our fiscal and service responsibilities very seriously. On the occasions where we must put the child and family's interests ahead of fiscal considerations, we know that the resources spent outside these strict policies today may mean considerable savings of provincial dollars 10 to 15 years later.

While implementing the AGs recommendations, CAS of Toronto has also been thrust into significant province wide changes that have been developed over a six year period. These include a more customized approach to our intake services, alternatives to court such as family group conferencing and mediation, as well as formal opportunities for family involvement such as kinship care.

We are confident that as we move forward, we will continue to demonstrate that we are providing the best service to the children and families who need us and spending taxpayer dollars very prudently.