

What are parents' rights?

Parents working with CAST have rights including:

- To be heard and represented when decisions affecting their interests are made
- To be given reasons for any decision that affects their interests
- To be heard when they have a concern about the services they are receiving and to be informed of complaint procedures
- In situations where consent is required, the right and opportunity to seek independent advice
- In most cases, to be informed of their child/youth's rights. To be informed of our Agency's obligation to take into account their child's identity characteristics and be given an opportunity to name a resource person(s) for their child to assist with/support this
- To access their personal records and the records of children under 16 years of age in their custody, with certain exceptions as set out in the CYFSA
- Should a child/youth be placed in the care of our Agency, parents may visit their child/youth in private, unless a judge decides that it's not in the child/youth's best interests. These visits may occur at a family home, in the community, or at the place where the child/youth is living. Parents, the CAST Worker, and the child/youth, will discuss when, where, and how often the visits should be

Are CAST's records confidential?

Yes. We must keep accurate records of all contacts with children/youth and their families to document our activities, and collect important information to help families.

All records containing personal information are confidential. Access to and disclosure of these records is strictly controlled in accordance with the CYFSA legislation.

People receiving services from CAST have the right to:

- Be informed how their information may be used or disclosed.
- Access to their own personal information. This access will not impact the service they receive, nor will it impact the privacy rights of another person receiving services from CAST.
- Request a record correction to their file. They are entitled to have information in their record explained to them.



Children's Aid Society of Toronto's Responsibilities and Service Users' Rights

As of December 2023



torontocas.ca



416.924.4646

Services provided by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST)

Our primary goal is to keep children and youth at home and within their own communities by providing services that support families and strengthen parents' capacity to safely care for their children.

- Our services are intended to support children, youth and families in order to reduce, prevent or eliminate child protection concerns. In addition to conducting investigations to assess child safety and determine if abuse/neglect is a concern, we provide access to services focused on prevention and support, Foster Care, Kinship Care, Adoption and assistance for expectant parents.

CAST's responsibilities

Child protection is our ultimate responsibility. We are legally mandated under the provincial Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) to intervene in any situation where a child or youth under the age of 18 in Toronto has been, or is at risk of, physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or neglect.

Our Agency must ensure that children/youth and parents are provided with opportunities to be heard when decisions affecting them are made and that decisions are made according to clear and consistent criteria. We also must provide families with information about our practices related to obtaining, storing, and sharing their information. At CAST we must:

- Provide services that are child/youth centred and whenever possible, build on the strengths of the family
- Address systemic racism and barriers
- Provide timely, culturally appropriate services to First Nations, Indigenous and Métis children/youth
- Respect and encourage connections to cultural, racial and other identity characteristics
- Provide early assessment, planning and decision making to achieve permanence for children/youth
- Provide French language services

Worker Name:

Phone number:

Email address:

How does CAST work together with families?

Our priority at CAST is to work together in partnership with families. That's why a significant part of the work we do involves speaking and meeting with family members. Input from family members is critical in assessing whether the family requires any ongoing support or assistance. When ongoing services are required, planning for the safety of a child/youth and deciding what services are required is done in collaboration with family members. Workers want to hear the family's ideas about their strengths and needs, information about what will be helpful, and insight into the family's identity and belief systems.

Can a child/youth be removed from their home?

9 out of 10 times the work we do is with children and youth in their homes.

If a child/youth appears to be in immediate danger and the only way to ensure their safety is by placement outside of the home, this can be done with or without consent. Some children/youth are placed with CAST voluntarily by their parents. This is done for a limited period of time, with consent of the parent(s) and consent of the youth who are 12 years of age or older and have capacity.

If the child/youth is removed without consent, CAST must present the situation to a Family Court judge within five days. The judge makes the decision about whether the child/youth should remain in our Agency's care, return home or be placed with family or community members. The parents and/or the child's primary caregiver can get a lawyer to help them in court. If the family cannot afford one, they can ask for assistance from legal aid.

Further resources and information

Based on your mobile device, you can use the QR code below to download the brochures: 'Process for raising a concern or complaint: for individuals who have sought or received service from CAST' and 'Rights of children and youth involved with CAST'. Or ask your Worker to provide you with copies if they have not already done so.

