

What rights do I have when I get older?

On January 1, 2018, the age of protection was raised from 16 to 18. This means if you are under 18 you can get support from a children's aid or Indigenous child wellbeing society to help you and your family stay together, or to help you live away from home.

If you are over the age of 12:

- You have a right to see information in your children's aid society file except for confidential information about other people.
- You have a right to be notified of, and to attend, court hearings that may affect your life – unless the court decides it's not in your best interest.
- You have a right to request placement review if you become unhappy where you are living. You can ask your worker, lawyer, parent, foster parent or advocate to help you with this.
- If you are in extended care service you have the right to help for you to achieve your goals for self support until you turn 21.

We want to help you to succeed and do your best. If you want to attend university, college or a specialized training program, talk to your social worker about options and opportunities.

How do I make a complaint?

You have a right to complain to someone you trust if you think your rights are not being respected.

There are people who care about you and will help you fill out complaint forms or make phone calls if you ask.

- * Talk to your worker/ foster parents
- * Talk to your worker's boss (supervisor)
- * Fill out a complaint form on paper or online at www.hamiltonccas.on.ca
- * You have the right to contact the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman to promote your views and encourage action on your concerns. Reach the Ombudsman's Office at: info@ombudsman.on.ca 1-800-263-1830 (toll-free)
- * If you need to talk to a lawyer, call the Office of the Children's Lawyer at: (416) 314-8000

**THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE
AVAILABLE TO HELP!**

Rights and Responsibilities for Children and Young Persons in Care

OUR SHARED VISION

Safe and thriving children and youth

Empowered families

Stronger communities

How can this booklet help me?

Living in care is a big change for some kids. It can be hard to get used to living in a different place, new rules and new people.

It is very important for you to know that you have rights which are guaranteed by law.

It is the job of the Children's Aid Society to make sure that your rights are protected. You have a right to a safe, healthy environment and to have respect from people around you. You have the right to ask questions and seek clarification if you don't understand the answers. You have the right to be involved in decisions about your life.

With rights, come responsibilities for you. This brochure is meant to tell you about these.



What are my rights and responsibilities?

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MY RIGHTS

- * You have the right to tell the adults working with you what you really think about what is happening in your life SAFELY and FREELY. Who you are, your identity and the community you belong to are very important when decisions are made about you.
- * You have the right to have adults working with you talk to you about why decisions are being made about your life, listen to your thoughts, and answer your questions about those decisions. They will consider what you want.
- * You have the right to have people ask you about the services you think will best help you and your family. When decisions are being made, what you have to say will be considered.
- * You have the right to participate in planning your care. This includes being part of your Plan of Care meetings. It also means being listened to when important decisions are being made about your care such as your schooling, your treatment, training or work programs, services you are offered or involved in, and your placement.
- * You have the right to tell the adults that work with you if you are unhappy with the decisions that are being made or the services in place. The adults who work with you will not get mad at you, treat you differently or punish you.
- * You have the right to receive good care which means you receive healthy meals, education that suits your abilities, regular medical and dental care, age appropriate clothing, participation in extra curricular activities.
- * You have the right to participate in activities that are important to your culture, heritage and individuality. This includes activities related to your race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and all other identity characteristics.
- * You have the right to tell the adults working with you if there are people in your life that could help them make the best decisions for you and your family.
- * You have the right to privacy. This includes:
 - * Visit with your family in private (unless a judge or social worker decides it's not a good idea);
 - * Speak with your lawyer privately;
 - * Have a place for your things and time to be alone;
 - * Send and receive mail that has not been read by others. (In some cases your mail can be read or examined in your presence and prohibited items removed or withheld for your safety.)
- * You have the right to be told in a way that you understand that if you have concerns you can make a complaint at the Society, or contact the Ontario Ombudsman's Office who could hear your concerns and assist you in promoting your views.
- * You have the right to appropriate discipline. If you break the rules of the place in which you are living, you may lose your regular privileges. But no one has the right to hit, hurt or mistreat you.
- * You have the right to receive services from the Society that are free from violence. You have the right to not be detained or restrained except as the law permits.

- * You have the right to be told about these rights in a way that you understand, in a language you understand.
- * You have the right to ask your worker for help from another person to better understand your rights.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

If you have rights, you have responsibilities towards people around you.

While you are in care, people will expect you to:

- * Keep in touch with your worker
- * Attend school and do your homework as required
- * Talk to your foster parents about your plans for the day and where you will be when you are not home
- * Show up for your appointments
- * Respect other people, neighbours and property
- * Respect the privacy of others
- * Respect other people's differences in gender, ability, race, colour, culture, religion, gender identification and sexual orientation
- * Be helpful to others in the home and do your share of household chores that are appropriate to your age/ability
- * Take good care of your body
- * Take responsibility for yourself and your actions.