Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
Société d'aide à l'enfance catholique de Hamilton

Learn More

To learn more about the HEART and SPIRIT program through CCASH, please contact:

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hccas.ca/reconciliation-and-indigenous-relations

This brochure highlights our agency's commitment to culturally safe practices and does not claim ownership of the HEART and SPIRIT program.

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton integrated the HEART and SPIRIT program into our services with the guidance of ANCFSAO along with staff from The Hamilton Regional Indian Center, The Ontario Native Women's Association, NIWASA, De dwa da dehs nye >s (Aboriginal Health Center of Hamilton), and Elder Renee Thomas-Hill from Six Nations of the Grand River.

We gratefully recognize the financial commitment RBC has made to the Heart & Spirit Program.

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Heart & Spirit

Indigenous Community Service Providers & Partners

Our Commitment

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CCASH) is committed to fostering culturally safe and respectful practices when working with Indigenous families, children, and communities. We aim to ensure that every child and family we serve is supported in a way that honours their cultural identity and traditions. By integrating Indigenous perspectives and practices into our work, we strive to build stronger, more respectful partnerships with Indigenous caregivers and families.

What is Heart & Spirit?

The HEART and SPIRIT Program, developed by ANCFSAO*, provides CCASH social workers with a more culturally appropriate and effective approach to engaging caregivers to care for Indigenous children and youth in the Hamilton area.

Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario

The program is grounded in Indigenous family life, philosophies, values, and practices focused on child and youth caring traditions. It is designed to support potential caregivers of Indigenous children and youth in learning about these traditions as well as the impacts of historical events that have disrupted them.

How the Program Supports Indigenous Families

- Caters to the unique learning styles of Indigenous peoples.
- Ensures training curriculum can be applied in specific cultural contexts due to diversity within the Indigenous population.
- Fosters a partnership approach with potential caregivers based on respect and understanding.
- Provides a support system to help caregivers understand historical trauma and impact.

This program is now used as an alternative to SAFE and PRIDE.

The **Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) is a provincial organization that supports and advocates for **Indigenous child and family well-being** in Ontario. It works with Indigenous child welfare agencies to promote **culturally appropriate services, policies, and training** that reflect Indigenous values and traditions.

Program Components

HEART: Helping Establish Able Resource-Homes Together
Includes seven HEART engagements where CCASH workers visit with caregivers in their home to assess the suitability of the home.
Purpose: To enhance caregiver learning, sharing, and awareness of what is involved in opening their home to a new child.

SPIRIT: Strong Parent Indigenous Relationships Information Training
Includes ten SPIRIT group training sessions and a pre-session, delivered to caregivers with specific learning goals.
Purpose: To engage, prepare, and develop participants to become caregivers for Indigenous children and youth.

IFDA: Indigenous Family Development Assessment
The IFDA is an assessment tool used to evaluate and develop potential caregiver homes, ensuring they align with Indigenous child and youth caring traditions.
Purpose: To ensure that potential caregivers are evaluated in a culturally appropriate way that aligns with Indigenous traditions, values, and child-rearing practices.

Process for Caregivers

1. Initial contact with CCASH Reconciliation Team
2. Meet with Reconciliation Lead to learn about process and determine next steps
3. Commit to begin HEART & SPIRIT process
4. Complete HEART engagements and SPIRIT training
5. Become Alternative Care Provider with CCASH