

To experience healthy development, and create a sense of their own self-worth, children need to have roots and feel they belong to a family that cares for them. Individuals and couples who can't have children of their own often want to adopt children. Parents who already have children may want to adopt to enlarge their families.

### Make a donation or bequest

Your donation or bequest to the Quinte Children's Foundation will help fund a range of programs that aim to prevent abuse and neglect, and promote the healthy development of disadvantaged children.

### Learn more about us

Staff members, foster parents and volunteers are available to speak to community groups and professionals about child welfare issues and the work of the Hastings CAS.

### For more information about our organization see contact information on back.

The Hastings Children's Aid Society is a not-for-profit agency that protects children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect.

For more than a hundred years, we have been keeping children safe, helping parents build healthy families, and providing safe, nurturing environments for young people who can't live at home because of family problems.



Serving the City of Belleville the City of Quinte West the County of Hastings

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

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Special thanks to Gena McMullan for supplying pictures from her portfolio.



#### OUR VISION

Our vision is that every child lives and develops in a safe, nurturing environment, free from maltreatment.

#### OUR MISSION

To be guided always by the best interests of the child.

To respond to the needs of children requiring protection and care.

To provide ongoing support to families and the community.

To address the causes of child maltreatment and thus prevent such maltreatment.

To collaborate with community partners in the fulfillment of our role.



## Helping Children



*Protecting children and helping build healthy families*

## *A history of compassion and care*

Our dedicated group of professionals and volunteers carry on the tradition of care and compassion toward children started by concerned citizens over a century ago.

Today the government of Ontario funds us for child protection services we're required to provide by law. The Quinte Children's Foundation, a registered charity, raises and distributes money for services that the province doesn't fund including education, enrichment, and prevention.

### **Keeping children safe by supporting healthy families**

Raising children is not easy. Even in the best of circumstances it's a job that takes a lot of time, energy and patience.

It's even harder when you have to cope with serious problems like poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, ill health, relationship breakdown, or the challenge of caring for children with physical, emotional or developmental difficulties.

Families in these circumstances come under a lot of stress. This can harm family relationships, and distressed parents may abuse or neglect their

children. Sadly, the cycle of abuse often perpetuates itself – with abused children becoming abusive adults.

### **Prevention is key**

We believe that the best way to deal with child abuse and neglect is to prevent it. That's why we encourage people to contact us before their family problems get out of control. We can help them through the rough times, and support and strengthen their family so they're able to parent their children safely.

### **Child protection is our responsibility**

Child protection is our ultimate responsibility. Therefore, the CAS must intervene in any situation where a child under 16 has been, or is, threatened with physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or neglect.

Because children are almost always better off growing up in their own homes, we try to keep families together whenever we can. Most of the families we work with receive help through counselling and various support services to create safe homes for their children.

If that fails, we may seek a court order to supervise children in their own homes, or place them in an alternate home.

### **We are here to help**

If you are having difficulties caring for your children, help is available through the CAS and other community agencies.

We'll help you learn how to provide a safe and loving environment for your children and help you to deal with problems such as anger and stress. We can also teach you new ways to deal with problems, and help you develop skills for handling crises.

It's always better to get help early, before your problems get worse. Regardless of your background, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you're worried about your children, or someone else's, don't hesitate to contact us.



### **Providing a safe place for children**

When parents are unable to safely care for their children, we find places for their children in the homes of friends or relatives, in foster homes, or in other kinds of residences. Some of these residences are managed directly by the CAS, and some by other community agencies.

Placements are usually short-term and most children are returned to their homes when their family situation improves. In the meantime, we help parents learn how to provide better care for their children. In some cases, however, children need to be placed permanently away from home. Whenever possible, we try to arrange adoptions. If adoption is not feasible, we strive to keep the child in touch with his or her family if this is in the child's best interests.

### **Leaving our care**

When young people are ready to leave CAS care, we help them learn important life skills so they can manage on their own. When adopted children grow up, we can arrange for them to meet their birth parents, if both parties agree.

### **You can help keep children safe**

Here is what you can do to protect children from abuse and neglect

Be aware of your duty to report a child's need for protection – and act on it!

Children are dependent on adults for love, support and nurturing. Therefore we're all responsible for protecting them from abuse; whether by a parent, sibling, babysitter, relative, family friend or stranger.

If you think a child is being abused or neglected, it's your legal duty to report the situation to a Children's Aid Society, even if you've already reported it on a previous occasion.

You're protected from any kind of legal action, provided the report is not a deliberately false accusation. For the child's sake, you should report the situation without delay by contacting Hastings CAS – phone lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **Become a volunteer**

We began as a volunteer organization, and we couldn't reach the children who need our help today if it weren't for the efforts of our dedicated volunteers.

Our volunteers create a vital link between the CAS and the community we serve. Some volunteers develop supportive relationships with the children and families by becoming special friends or tutors. Others participate in children's groups, take part in programs that benefit both children and their parents, help with driving, or serve on our Board or Committees.

### **Consider becoming a foster parent**

Foster parents are special individuals or couples who have the time, understanding, and patience to provide safe, stable and caring homes for children and youth who can't live with their parents because of family problems. Foster parents also contribute to the physical and emotional growth and development of the foster children in their care.

### **Adopt a child**

Adoption is the legal process that gives a new family to a child whose birth family can't care for him or her. Adopting a child is a life-long commitment.