2011
Guide for Families
What you need to know when your family is experiencing violence and is involved with the Child Welfare System
Dedication

The Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA) would like to dedicate this to all of the women, children and families we serve; many who are experiencing violence and are involved with the child welfare system.

We know that our families have struggled through many oppressive systems including the residential schools, the child welfare “60’s scoop” and the current child welfare “millennium scoop”. We believe that all families have the right to a life free from violence and that step by step we can work together to stop the cycle of violence that affects our families and communities. We believe that all families have strengths, and that strength begins with restoring women to their sacred positions as caregivers and empowering them to have the confidence to raise their children. It is with this strength that we will start to build the health and wellness of not only our family units, but also our communities.

Acknowledgements and Contributions

ONWA would like to acknowledge and extend their heartfelt gratitude to the following organizations and individuals that made this Guide possible:

ONWA Locals, for their invaluable contributions to the guide at the Aboriginal Women’s Resource Forum;

Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation, for their assistance in developing this guide;

The Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario, for their valuable feedback on this guide; and

Mark Anthony Jacobson/Rainbow Thunderbird, for donating the cover artwork for this guide.

About ONWA

The Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA) is a not for profit organization that was established in 1972 to empower and support Aboriginal women and their families throughout the province of Ontario. ONWA’s guiding principle is that all women of Aboriginal ancestry will be treated with dignity, respect and equality. Benefits and services will be extended to all no matter where one lives and regardless of Tribal heritage.

ONWA is affiliated with the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC). Like NWAC, ONWA is committed to being the voice of Aboriginal women in Ontario and to building relationships with all levels of government and other organizations to ensure all Aboriginal women and their families will live free from social and economic distress; to promote their sacred roles as valued and respected members in the community; and to preserve their culture, language and heritage.
Table of Contents

Introduction .......................................................................................................... pg. 1
What is the Child Welfare System? ........................................................................ pg. 2-3
What is Violence against Women? ........................................................................ pg. 4
Protecting your children ..................................................................................... pg. 5
Safety issues and thinking of leaving an abusive relationship ............................ pg. 6
What kind of help is available to me and my children? ...................................... pg. 7
Things to take if I decide to leave an abusive relationship .................................. pg. 8
My circle of support ............................................................................................. pg. 9-10
What is Child Abuse/Neglect? ............................................................................ pg. 11
What happens in a child welfare investigation? ................................................... pg. 12
Methods of Alternative Dispute Resolution ....................................................... pg. 13-14
What I need to know about the court process .................................................... pg. 15-16
What is a child welfare service plan? ................................................................. pg. 17
What are child welfare in-home services?.......................................................... pg. 18
What are out-of-home services? ......................................................................... pg. 19-21
What I need to know about visits with my children? ........................................ pg. 22
Rights of Aboriginal children ............................................................................. pg. 23
Family Reunification .......................................................................................... pg. 24
Key Points to Remember .................................................................................... pg. 25
Additional Resources ......................................................................................... pg. 26
Important numbers ............................................................................................ pg. 27
The Guide for Families is a tool for families who are involved with the child welfare system and who are experiencing violence. It is hoped that you will find this guide a helpful tool on your journey to strengthen your family.

If you are being abused in a relationship or if you are involved with the child welfare system or both, you may feel alone. You may be afraid for yourself or your children. You may feel that you need more information about what help is available to you and where to find that help. This guide will provide you with information to help you on your journey.

The child welfare system itself is a very confusing system and it is very important to learn all that you can in order to keep your family together or to get your family back together. Throughout the guide you will find **Your Rights and Responsibilities** sections. These sections are important because they will help guide you and give you knowledge about your rights when involved with the child welfare system. Remember, it is important that you take steps to address the issues that led to your family being involved with the child welfare system, but at the same time the child welfare agency has responsibilities to provide you with prompt services.

---

**Natural Protective Network Principle**

Simard, 2009
What is the Child Welfare System?

The Ontario child welfare system's purpose is to protect the safety and well-being of children.

There are 53 child welfare agencies in Ontario and their legal responsibility is to:
- Investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect
- Provide ongoing protection
- Provide residential care
- Provide adoption services
- Provide extended care for children in their care.

The child welfare agencies are governed by the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA).
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

Part ten (X) of the CFSA is called INDIAN AND NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
This part of the Act defines Customary Care and allows for the person caring for the child to receive a subsidy. This part of the Act also outlines how the ministry may designate a band or native community agency to become a fully mandated children’s aid society.
What is the Child Welfare System?

There are six fully mandated (authorized to provide protection services) Aboriginal managed child welfare agencies in Ontario:

- Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services
- Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Payukotayno James and Hudson’s Bay Family Services
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services
- Weechi-it-te-win Family Services

There are five pre-mandated (provide prevention services and are moving towards becoming protection agencies) Aboriginal managed child welfare agencies in Ontario:

- Kina Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services
- Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services
- Nog-da-wim-da-min Family and Community Services
- Mnaasged Child and Family Services
- Six Nations of the Grand River Child and Family Services

The Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) includes Native Provisions throughout the Act. These provisions are specific to Aboriginal people and Aboriginal agencies.

Part X, Section 213 outlines the requirements of the agency to regularly consult with the bands or native communities about the provision of services or the exercise of powers and about matters affecting the children, including:

- The apprehension of children and the placement of children in residential care
- The placement of homemakers and the provision of other family support services
- The preparation of plans for the care of children
- Status reviews under Part III (Child Protection)
- Temporary care and special needs agreements under Part II (Voluntary Access to Services)
- Adoption placements
- The establishment of emergency houses
- Any other matter that is prescribed
What is Violence Against Women?

**Physical Abuse**
Hitting, Pushing, Burning, Pinching, Punching, Shooting, Biting, Slapping, Kicking, Stabbing.

**Sexual Abuse**
Sexual Touching or sexual activity if you did not consent or if you are too young to consent.

**Emotional /Spiritual Abuse**
Making threats to harm you or your children, breaking your things, hurting or threatening to hurt your pets, isolating you from friends and family, humiliating you, insulting you, calling you names, not allowing you to attend ceremonies, isolating you from elders, forcing you to practice his spiritual beliefs.

**Economic Abuse**
Taking your paycheque or money without permission, withholding money so that you cannot pay for things you or your children need such as food, shelter, or medical treatment, making you sign documents to sell your house or to change your will.
Protecting your Children

How children are affected by violence in the home

• May live with tension & fear
• Can develop low self worth
• Learn they do not need to respect their future partners
• May be physically harmed

What can I do to protect my children?

• You may consider leaving the relationship
• Encourage nurturing relationships with people who are positive role models
• Talk with your children about abusive and respectful behaviour
• When talking to your children, focus on your partner’s behaviour, not on him as a person

TIPS to consider about protecting your children

• Make informed decisions
• Consult with a lawyer when considering leaving an abusive relationship or if you become involved with CAS

Children are impacted by living in a home where violence is occurring. If you are being abused it can make it harder for you to care for your children. It is important for you to take care of yourself so that you are able to take care of your children. Reaching out for support and help will benefit you and your children.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

If your child is being abused it is your responsibility to get help for your child. You can contact the local CAS of family service agency for advice, help or counselling.
Safety Issues and Thinking of Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Safety issues

- Has the person who abused you ever threatened to kill you or the children?
- Do they refuse to accept the possibility of separation?
- Do they take drugs or drink too much?

If you choose to leave

- Ensure you have enough support and help
- Shelters or Safe homes can be an excellent support and a safe place for you and your children
- If there are no shelters in your area, plan to have a safe place where you can go if needed

TIPS to consider about leaving

- Remember, you know your situation best. You know the risks you face in deciding to stay or leave
- Remember you are not alone
- Help is available

(Abuse is Wrong, 2009)

When thinking about safety and leaving an abusive relationship, remember that there are services available to help you. If you are fearful about your or your children’s safety, call the police and they will help escort you and your children to a shelter or a location where you will be safe.

---

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Contact and consult a lawyer regarding your rights when leaving an abusive relationship.
What kind of help is available to me and my children?

**Police**
- Can remove the person who assaulted you from your home
- Can bring you and your children to a safe place or shelter
- Can take you for medical treatment if necessary
- May have special training to help families involved with abuse

**Shelters**
- This is a safe place where you and your children can stay for a few days or weeks
- Staff and volunteers will give you information and support
- They can help you get legal advice, financial help, housing, food
- Staff will not tell the person who abused you where you are

**Counselling**
- Counselling is available at area shelters
- Crisis counselling is available in most urban communities
- Counselling may be available in your community at the social services or health building

(Abuse is Wrong, 2009)

Shelters may not be available in all areas. Some communities have set up Safe houses. Check with social or health care workers in your community to see if there is a Safe house identified. If there are neither shelters nor safe houses, you can plan for a safe place to go with family or friends. Some women have found it safer to stay with someone that they are less close to, such as a co-worker.

---

**Your Rights and Responsibilities**
Contact and consult a lawyer regarding your rights as well as custody issues.
Things to take with me if I decide to leave an abusive relationship

Things to take with you if you decide to leave

- Photocopy important documents such as passports, birth certificates, health cards, custody papers, SIN cards, court order papers
- Keep a copy of these documents at a friend or family member’s home

Other important things to take with you if you decide to leave

- Money, credit cards, cheque book
- Medicine
- House keys
- Driver’s licence and car keys
- Children’s favourite toys, clothing
- Pictures

(Abuse is Wrong, 2009)

Planning ahead is a good way to be prepared in case you need to leave quickly. Make sure to store photocopies of important documents away from your house.
My Circle of Support

Consider who your support system is. This can help you whether you decide to leave an abusive relationship or not. Knowing who you can turn to if you need to or who can support you in a time of need is very comforting. Try to surround yourself with supportive people.
Take some time to reflect and consider your own circle of support. Surrounding yourself with supportive people can help you gain the strength you need to face the challenges you are experiencing.
### What is Child Abuse/Neglect?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Physical Abuse</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sexual Abuse</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is any deliberate force or action (usually by a parent or caregiver) that results in or could result in injury to a child. Examples include punching, beating, slapping, shaking, burning, biting a child.</td>
<td>is any sexual exploitation of a child by an older person where the child is being used for a sexual purpose. Examples include sexual interference, an invitation to sexually touch, sexual exploitation of a young person, parent or guardian procuring sexual activity from a child, exposing genitals to a child, incest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Emotional Abuse</strong></th>
<th><strong>Neglect</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>occurs when the caregiver continually treats the child in such a negative way that the child’s concept of self is seriously impaired. Examples include constant yelling, demeaning remarks, rejecting, ignoring or isolating a child, or terrorizing a child.</td>
<td>occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, supervision, clothing or medical treatment. Indicators of neglect are: pale, listless, unkempt, frequent absence from school, inappropriate clothing for the weather, dirty clothing, engaged in delinquent acts, alcohol or drug abuse by child, poor hygiene, no dental work, consistent lack of supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Caregiver Capacity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Abandonment/Separation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is when no harm has come to a child, however the caregiver demonstrates or has in the past shown characteristics that the child would be at risk of harm without intervention. These characteristics can include a history of abusing/neglecting, being unable to protect a child from harm, mental health issues, alcohol/drug issues</td>
<td>occurs when a child has been abandoned, a child’s parent has died or is unavailable to exercise his or her custodial rights and has not made adequate provisions for the child’s care and custody. It also occurs when a child is in residential placement and the parent refuses or is unable to resume the child’s care and custody.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Your Rights and Responsibilities

If your family is involved with a child welfare agency, the agency has concerns in one of the above areas. It is your right to know what the child protection concerns are and what needs to be done for the agency to not be involved with your family.
What happens in a Child Welfare Investigation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report is screened using the Eligibility Spectrum</th>
<th>Agency receives report of suspected child protection concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision is made whether to start an investigation, make appropriate referrals or to close the case</td>
<td>Regular investigation where a criminal assault is alleged against a child and/or for extremely serious cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The safety of the children and possible need for temporary placement is assessed</td>
<td>Customized approach is a more collaborative approach that promotes a strength based model and encourages engagement of the investigation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police may be involved, forensic interviewing is used</td>
<td>Decision is made to either verify or not verify the child protection concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family is more involved in the interview process, decision is made to either verify or not verify the child protection concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your Rights and Responsibilities**

During an investigation you have the right to know why you are being investigated, you have a right to obtain legal advice, and you have a right to a support person or advocate attending meetings with you. The agency also has the legal obligation to notify your band.
What is Alternative Dispute Resolution?

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a strategy to streamline court processes and encourages alternatives to Court. It focuses on a more strength based, inclusive and collaborative approach to resolving child protection disputes, and encourages the involvement and support of the family, extended family, and the community, in planning and decision making for children. The Child and Family Services Act, as amended by Bill 210 identifies the following occasions where a prescribed method of ADR must be considered and/or may be used pursuant to the following provisions of the CFSA:

**Must be considered and/or may be used:**
- if a child is or may be in need of protection (Section 20.2 (1)).
- the court, at any time during a proceeding, and with the consent of the parties, may adjourn the proceeding to permit the parties to utilize a prescribed method of ADR to attempt to resolve the issues in dispute (Section 51.1).
- on applications to vary or terminate an openness order before or after an adoption, the court may, with the consent of the parties, adjourn the proceeding to permit the parties to utilize a prescribed method of ADR to attempt to resolve any disputes related to the proceeding (Section 145.2 (7) and 153.1 (10)).
A. Child Protection Mediation

A process where child protection workers and the family (including the child where appropriate) and any other person putting forward or proposing to participate in a plan for the child, work together with the aid of a trained and impartial child protection mediator who has no decision making power. The mediator assists the participants in reaching an agreement on the issues in dispute, in generating options for resolving their dispute and in developing a mutually acceptable plan that addresses the protection concerns identified.

B. Family Group Conferencing

A process that brings together the family (including the child where appropriate), the child’s extended family and community, child protection workers, and service providers to develop a plan that addresses the protection concerns identified. A trained and impartial coordinator, with no decision making power, assists the participants throughout the process. An integral component of family group conferencing is providing the extended family group with an opportunity to meet privately to develop this plan.

C. Aboriginal Approaches

Traditional methods of dispute resolution, including circle processes, which have been established by First Nations communities or Aboriginal organizations. Impartial facilitators who have no decision-making power and who are skilled in First Nation traditional methods, assist the participants in developing a plan that is supported by the participants and/or the First Nation community and addresses the protection concerns identified. Two examples are sharing circles and the Talking Together Program by Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation in Thunder Bay, ON.
What I need to know about the Court Process

**Form 8B: Application**
- This form tells you:
- Date and time of court
- Address of the court
- Names of the children in the case
- Names of people who have to be involved in the case (including your band if you are status Indian or eligible for status)
- What the CAS is asking the to do
- Why the CAS is going to court

**Form 14: Notice of Motion**
This form often is a request for the court to make a temporary order

**Form 14A: Affidavit**
An affidavit is a sworn statement that is used as evidence in court

**Form 33B: Answer and Plan of Care**
This form is filled out by you, with your lawyer’s help

(What You Should Know about Child Protection Cases, Ministry of Attorney General)

**Your Rights and Responsibilities**
Your band (First Nation) must be notified when your child is involved with the court process. Your band is a party in the proceedings. You can utilize your band representative as a support through the court process.
What I need to know about the Court Process

Checklist to help me with the Court Process:

- I have called the lawyer referral service
- I have applied for Legal Aid
- I have contacted a lawyer
- I have contacted my band (First Nation) to ensure they attend court
- My lawyer understands my situation
- My lawyer has experience with child welfare
- My lawyer accepts legal aid certificates
- I have filled out Form 33B: Answer and Plan of Care
- I have attended all court appearances
- I am completing the tasks the judge has ordered
- I am completing these tasks well before the court date
- I make sure to give my lawyer all the court papers I have been given
- I tell my lawyers everything I know about my case
- I am keeping in touch regularly with my lawyer
- I let my lawyer know of any changes in my address or situation

Your Rights and Responsibilities

*** You only have 30 days after you get the CAS court papers to file Form 33B: Answer and Plan of Care and to give copies to the people involved in the court case. If you do not do this, the judge may make decisions without your input.
What is a Child Welfare Service Plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Who is responsible to complete these</th>
<th>Time frames for completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Who should be included in Service Planning?

- All family members (including the child depending on the age)
- Relatives, extended family, community members, elders, healers
- Foster parents (when there are children in care)
- Collateral service providers (counsellors, parenting support workers, well baby workers, shelter counsellors, addiction workers)
- Band representative, other Aboriginal community representative, or the appropriate Aboriginal Child and Family Service agency

Your Rights and Responsibilities

The Service Plan is like your roadmap of what needs to be done and who needs to do it in order for your children to return home or for your file to be closed with the CAS. It is important that you participate in developing your service plan and that the goals you agree on are reasonable for you to attain within the time period agreed upon. This document can also help you ensure that your workers at the CAS are doing what they agreed to as well. A service plan can be changed if circumstances change or new goals are developed, but everyone has to agree.
What are in-home Services?

In-home Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services that are provided while your children remain in your home</th>
<th>Some in-home services will require you to have an open protection file and some will not, this will depend on the level of risk to your children</th>
<th>Some common names for in-home services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intensive Family Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Resource, Support and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Centered Casework Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your Rights and Responsibilities

This is the preferred method of child protection as it is the least disruptive to the children. These services have been developed to prevent children from entering foster care and to strengthen families while the children remain at home with their parents. If you become involved with the child welfare system, ask your worker if you can become involved with one of these programs.
What are Out-of-Home Services?

Out-of-Home services mean that your children are cared for in the foster care system. If your children need to be cared for by someone other than yourself for the time being, there are either voluntary (you are in agreement) or non-voluntary (you are not in agreement) ways for your child to be in foster care.

Voluntary Agreements
Part II CFSA

- Customary Care Agreement
- Kinship Care Agreement
- Temporary Care Agreement
- Special Needs Agreements

Non-Voluntary Agreements
Part II CFSA

- Temporary Care and Custody
- Society Wardship
- Crown Wardship
- Adoption Consent
What are Out-of-Home Services?

Voluntary Agreements Part II CFSA

**Customary Care Agreement** - the CFSA recognizes customary care as the care and supervision of an Indian or Native child by a person who is not the child’s parent, and according to the custom of the child’s Band or Native community. A Customary Care agreement is made between yourself, your child’s Band, the CAS, and the foster parents.

**Kinship In-Care Agreement** - for children who are in the care of a child welfare agency and are placed with a member of their extended family or community. Families are assessed the same way a foster parent is assessed and receive the same foster parent training and support.

**Kinship Service** - allows child welfare agencies to provide services that ensure child safety in circumstances where the child is NOT in the care of the agency and remains within the family/community system. Family members are screened by criminal record checks and interviews to ensure their home is safe for the child.

**Temporary Care Agreement** - Voluntary agreements between the Society, the parents and the child (age 12+) which transfers responsibility for care and custody of a child to the Society on a temporary basis, for an initial period not to exceed 6 months but renewable to a maximum of twelve months. ***You have the right to sign a shorter agreement than 6 months***

**Special Needs Agreements** - Cases where parents of a child under 18 are unable to provide the services required to meet their child’s special needs (behavioural, emotional, physical, mental, or other disability) and the parents have entered into a voluntary agreement with a Society to provide residential care and supervision.

---

**Your Rights and Responsibilities**

More Children’s Aid Societies are using Customary Care Agreements; ask the CAS you are involved in if they are able to contact your Band to use a Customary Care Agreement. Customary Care Agreements are more flexible to the needs of Aboriginal families involved with child welfare.
What are Out-of-Home Services?

Non-Voluntary Agreements Part III CFSA

Temporary Care and Custody - Cases where a child is ordered into the temporary care and custody of a CAS during an adjournment of a child protection hearing where a child has been apprehended and is in care prior to a first court appearance.

Society Wardship - Cases where the court has determined that it is in the child’s best interests to be placed in the care and custody of a society for a period of up to 12 months. With extensions, the wardship may extend to twenty-four months (continuous). Parents may agree but their consent is not required by the court to make the order.

Crown Wardship - Cases where the court believes that it is in the child’s best interests to make the child a permanent ward. Under this order, the society exercises the rights and responsibilities of a parent for the purposes of care, custody and control. While in most cases Crown Wardship continues until the child is eighteen, there are provisions for a review if the circumstances within a family change. Parents may agree but their consent is not required by the court to make the order.

Adoption Consent - Cases where the birth parents and children (age 7+), voluntarily consent to admission of the children into the custody of the children’s aid society for placement in an approved adoptive home pending completion of the probationary period.

---

Your Rights and Responsibilities

There are time periods established by the Child and Family Services Act to ensure that your child receives a permanency plan for their care.

The time periods are:

For children 6 years and under you have 12 months before the agency can go to court and ask for your child to be made a Crown Ward.

For children over the age of 6 you have 24 months before the agency can go to court and ask for your child to be made a Crown Ward.
What I need to know about Visits with my Children

Visits with your children are very important to both you and your children. Visitation with your children:

• Decreases their trauma
• Helps to maintain bonding and attachment between you and your children
• Helps your child adjust to their foster home
• Helps speed up family reunification

You have a right to access with your children, and depending on the reason your children went into foster care, these visits will be either supervised or unsupervised.

Many access visits start out being supervised, but as you work to address the reasons your child came into foster care these visits should become unsupervised.

Many access visits start at the agency, and again the work you do on your service plan should lead to visits occurring in your home or another public location.

**TIPS for parents when visiting your children**

Visit as often as possible
Come on time for visits
Keep a record of all visits
Prepare for your visit, try to plan an activity, bring pictures, snacks
Ensure that if you need to cancel a visit, call ahead and give as much notice as possible
Try to keep the visits about your children and keep case discussion for meetings with your worker
Rights of Aboriginal Children

Respecting that all communities have their own traditions, language, and cultural ways of living; the following are the ways of the Anishinaabe and inherent rights that the children have.

Anishinaabe children have the right.....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Anishinaabe wording</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To their name</td>
<td>Anishinaabe Izhinikazowin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To their clan</td>
<td>Doodem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be with the Family</td>
<td>Gootsiimag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To cultural and ceremonial practices</td>
<td>Anishinaabe Miinigiziwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To their identity</td>
<td>Anishinaabewin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To their language</td>
<td>Anishinaabemowin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a purposeful and zestful life</td>
<td>Mino Bimaadiziwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To their ancestral land</td>
<td>Anishinaabe Akiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the lifestyle of the Anishinaabe</td>
<td>Anishinaabebechigewin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a good education</td>
<td>Kinamaatiwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protection within the family</td>
<td>Zhanawenitasoowin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protection outside the family</td>
<td>Ganawenitasoowin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provided by Larry W. Jourdain, HBSW
The Family Reunification Process

Family Reunification in child welfare is the process of returning children in temporary out-of-home care to their families.

Family Reunification will be a planned process and will take into account the need for the child to reintegrate back into your home.

As you address your service plan goals, your visits will be increased and will usually be moved to your home (if you have a safe place to live).

The closer you get to accomplishing your service plan goals, the visits should become less supervised and allow for overnight visits.

Each CAS has their own process for family reunification, but it is a planned process and should be made clear to all persons involved in the case.
Key Points to Remember

You have Rights

Always take an advocate or support person with you to meetings or court

Always get legal advice before signing any document

Always keep notes or a journal of everything that happens with your case
Helpful Resources

Assaulted Women’s Helpline
www.awhl.org
1-866-863-0511

Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario
(Currently housed at Abinoojii Child and Family Services in Kenora, ON)
1-866-420-9990

Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth
www.provincialadvocate.on.ca
1-800-263-2841

Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies Complaint Brochure
www.oacas.org/childwelfare/Complaintbrochure.pdf
1-416-987-7725

Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies Review Decision Brochure
www.oacas.org/childwelfare/Reviewdecisionbrochure.pdf
1-416-987-7725

Ontario Native Women’s Association
www.onwa-tbay.ca
1-800-667-0816

Ministry of Attorney General “What You Should Know About Child Protection Cases” Booklet
www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/pubs/child_protection.pdf

Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation (Talking Together Program)
www.nanlegal.on.ca
1-800-465-5581

Legal Aid Ontario
www.legalaid.on.ca
1-800-668-8258
Important Numbers

Police

Local Police

My advocate/counsellor

My support person

People I trust

Public Legal Education Office

Victim Services

Crisis Line

Shelter

Mental Health Agency

Child Welfare Case Manager

Child Welfare Children’s Worker

Child Welfare Supervisor

Lawyer

Health Access Centre

Friendship Centre

911 in an emergency
Contact Information:

Ontario Native Women’s Association
380 Ray Blvd
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 4E6

Phone: (807) 623-3442
Toll Free: 1-800-667-0816
Fax: (807) 623-1104

E-mail: onwa@onwa-tbay.ca
Website: www.onwa-tbay.ca
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ONWA7