



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Children's Aid Societies Need to Better Adhere to Protection Standards and May Be Closing Cases Too Soon, Auditor General Says

(TORONTO) Ontario's Children's Aid Societies (Societies) are not always meeting provincial protection standards, may be closing child-protection cases too soon, and are taking too long to complete investigations of possible abuse, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2015 Annual Report*.

"Our audit also found differences in the levels of service and support provided by Societies across Ontario," Lysyk said. "This means that children in need of protection can receive different degrees of support depending on where they live."

The 47 not-for-profit Societies received \$1.47 billion in funding in the past year from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ministry) to provide services to about 27,000 families and about 16,000 children who have been taken into the Societies' care, and completed almost 82,000 investigations.

The Report noted that case workers at the various Societies had vastly different workloads, with the average number of cases per worker ranging from eight to 24 per month for children in care, and eight to 32 per month for children still living with their families. These differences could affect the consistency of care and support to children and families across the province.

Among the findings in the Report:

- In more than half the files reviewed that were subsequently reopened, the circumstances and risk factors that led to reopening of the case were present when the case was initially closed. On average, the subsequent re-opening of cases occurred within 68 days of the initial closure.
- In more than half of the files reviewed, case workers visited children still in the care of their families at home only once every three months instead of once a month as required.
- None of the child protection investigations reviewed at the Societies visited were completed within the required 30 days of the Society receiving a report of child protection concerns. On average, the investigations were completed more than seven months after receiving the report.
- Societies did not always complete and review on a timely basis the Plans of Care for children according to the Ministry's protection standards. These plans are designed to address, among other things, a child's health, education and emotional and behavioural development.
- Societies did not always conduct history checks of individuals involved with children including for example checks with the Ontario Child Abuse Register. This increases the risk that children could be left in the care of people with a history of child abuse.
- Opportunities exist to use funding more effectively to provide services directly to children.

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For more information and to view the full report, please visit [www.auditor.on.ca](http://www.auditor.on.ca)



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