

# Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

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## CAS Mandate

Children's aid societies (CASs) in Ontario are legislated by the *Child and Family Services Act* to

- investigate allegations or evidence that children who are under the age of 16 may be in need of protection
- protect children where necessary
- provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or preventing the circumstances requiring the protection of children
- provide care for children assigned or committed to its care
- supervise children assigned to its supervision
- place children for adoption

## Child in Need of Protection

The CAS must investigate complaints where children are alleged to be "in need of protection" in accordance with the *Child and Family Services Act*. The definition of a child in need of protection focuses on acts or omissions of either a parent or the person who has charge of the child that cause harm or create a risk of harm to a child.

## Definition of a Child

A child is a person who is under 16 years of age. Children actually or apparently 16 years of age or older, but under 18 are considered a child only if they are the subject of an existing order under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

## Duty to Report

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a CAS. If a person has made a previous report about a child, and has additional reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they must report this to a CAS. The person must make the report directly to the CAS and must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.

## What are reasonable grounds?

"Reasonable grounds" are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment would suspect.

Concerned about a child  
contact CAS

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Children's Aid Society  
LONDON & MIDDLESEX  
La Société d'aide à l'enfance