



Ontario 

Youth Discussion Guide

**2023 Review of the Child, Youth and Family
Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)**

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Table of Contents

About the Child, Youth and Family Services Act	3
Purpose of the Review	4
How to Have Your Say.....	4
All questions are optional	5
Get support if you need it	5
Please don't share personal information.....	5
Child and Youth Rights	7
First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.....	8
Equity and Anti-Racism.....	9
Prevention and Community-Based Care.....	10
Quality Services	11
Accountability.....	12
Anything else?.....	13

About the Child, Youth and Family Services Act

The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* is a law in Ontario. It sets out the rules for certain programs and services for children, youth and their families.

The law's main purpose is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children and youth.

For the rest of this document, we'll refer to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 as the CYFSA. Here are some examples of the child, youth and family services included under the CYFSA:

- services for children with developmental or physical disabilities and their families
- mental health services for children or their families
- services that are related to out-of-home care (called residential care in the law) for children
- services for children or their families who may need protection
- services that are related to adoption
- counselling for a child or for a child's family
- services that support children and families or help prevent child abuse and neglect
- services and programs for young persons involved in the youth justice system

The CYFSA also recognizes First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples should be entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services. The CYFSA says that when services are provided to Indigenous peoples, the services must recognize their cultural traditions, heritage, and connection to their community. This is called being "culturally responsive."

Purpose of the Review

The CYFSA also requires a review of the law every five years to make sure it meets its main purpose.

We would like to hear from youth, families, and caregivers about what changes to the law the government should consider so that all children, youth and families seeking or receiving services under the CYFSA have the supports they need to succeed and thrive.

The 2023 CYFSA review is focusing on 6 key areas:

- Child and Youth Rights
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples
- Equity and Anti-racism
- Prevention and Community-Based Care
- Quality Services
- Accountability

Once the feedback has been reviewed, the government will post a report on the CYFSA website about what we heard needs to be changed with the CYFSA.

How to Have Your Say

Your voice is important. We know that children, youth and families have unique insights and experiences and can provide valuable input to help improve policies, programs and services.

We also know it is important to hear the voices of children, youth, caregivers, and families from communities who are Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, people with disabilities and Francophone individuals.

The government has created this discussion guide so that all youth and families have a chance to have a say. We want to hear your ideas on how to improve the CYFSA.

Visit the 2023 CYFSA review website at www.ontario.ca/CYFSA. Follow the prompts to open the survey.

All questions are optional

You do not need to answer all the questions. You can choose to answer only those that are important to you.

Get support if you need it

We understand that some of the topics can be hard to talk about. If you need to talk to someone, please reach out to the [Kids Help Phone](#).

Please don't share personal information

You can choose to email or mail us your feedback if you don't want to use the online form. Your responses can be in writing or another format like a drawing or voice recording. To be considered, your input must be received by **July 14, 2023**.

By E-Mail

CYFSA@ontario.ca

By Regular Mail:

CYFSA Review
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
CYFSA Review Branch,
2 Bloor St West, 30th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2T2

Please consider answering these questions in your reply. This will help us better understand the comments you provide and your connection to children, youth and family services.



Thinking about services covered under the CYFSA, are you:

- someone who is currently receiving services or supports
- someone who has previously received services or supports
- a family member of someone who is receiving or has received services or supports
- a friend of someone who is receiving or has received services or supports
- a parent, foster parent, a formal customary caregiver, or a kinship caregiver
- other (please explain)

While we are not asking you to give us any information about yourself or others that would identify you or someone else (also known as “personal information”), if you choose to share personal information with us, it will be collected as permitted by law as part of activities related to the review of CYFSA.¹

If you have any questions about how your personal information will be collected and used, you can contact Aly N. Alibhai, Director, Child, Youth and Family Service Act Review Project.

Phone: 647-535-3149

Email: Aly.Alibhai@ontario.ca

Mailing Address: 3rd Flr, 315 Front St W, Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

1. Personal information is collected in accordance with s.283(1) of the CYFSA and s.38(2) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.F.31, as part of the activities related to the review of the CYFSA.

Child and Youth Rights

Children and youth receiving services under the CYFSA have the right to feel safe, heard and cared for. This includes the right to have a voice in decisions that affect them, to share their views on services they receive and to ask for changes to their care, if they want or need them.

Children and youth also have rights about how service providers (organizations that provide services set out in the CYFSA) collect, use or share their personal information (for example, race, gender, or any information that can identify you). Service providers are responsible for making sure that the rights of children and youth are respected.

We want to make sure that the rules about how children and young people are treated are clear and are being followed. We also want to hear about what changes could be made to better protect children and youth when they access services.

1. **What supports would help you better understand your rights under CYFSA and encourage you to have a voice in decisions that affect you? What supports would help you if your rights are not being respected?**
2. **Have you ever felt that your personal information was used in a way that didn't respect your privacy? Please tell us how we can change or improve your experience.**

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples

Residential Schools have had an enduring effect on First Nations, Inuit and Métis families and communities across Ontario.

The [CYFSA](#) recognizes that First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples should be able to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services. As well, all services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes and is responsive to their cultures, heritages, traditions, connection to their communities and the concept of the extended family.

We want to know what else should be done, through the law, to better meet the needs of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

3. Do you feel like the child and family services that you receive recognize and value your identity, culture(s) and traditions?
4. Please tell us how we can change the way that services are delivered to be more culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

Equity and Anti-Racism

The [CYFSA recognizes](#) the importance of diversity, inclusion and addressing racism and the barriers it creates. It also recognizes that connections to family, culture and community are important rights of all children and youth.

Throughout the act, there are requirements that services must take into account a child or young person's race, culture and other parts of their identity.

The government wants to do more to strengthen equity (equity means giving everyone, regardless of race, what they need to succeed).

5. Black, Indigenous, and other racialized populations, and children and youth with disabilities are overrepresented in services, such as child welfare and youth justice. Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your race, culture, sexual orientation, or other parts of your identity when receiving services under CYFSA? What could have been done better?
6. How could child, youth and family services take your unique needs and identity into account to better support you?

Prevention and Community-Based Care

Prevention and early intervention services are intended to help children, youth and families before a situation escalates. These supports should help build on a family's ability to face challenges.

Examples of prevention or early intervention programs include services like mental health services, parenting supports, youth mentorship for at-risk youth, student nutrition programs and access to early developmental services.

Examples of community-based care include services that keep children safe in family-based settings such as customary or kinship care.

We want to know how to increase opportunities for prevention, early intervention and community-based care in the CYFSA.

- 7. How well do the child, youth and family services you receive support you and/or your family to build on your strengths and help you and/or your family face future challenges? What would it look like if the services provided always did this? What is important to consider?**

Quality Services

High-quality services are important to help children, youth and their families thrive. In the past, the government has heard that high-quality services should be:

- available and easy to access
- centred around the child, youth and their family
- reflective of culture, identity and circumstances
- responsive to all the different needs of families

We want to hear from you about how to improve the quality of services for children, youth and families.

- 8. If you or your family have received services or supports under the CYFSA, what was your experience like? Do you feel that the services you received were “high quality”? Why or why not? What would help to improve the quality of the services?**

Accountability

Accountability means that service providers take responsibility to make sure they follow the law for the services they provide and work to address issues when they arise.

Accountability can include things like:

- oversight (government being able to review services)
- complaint and feedback processes, (children, youth and families having their concerns about services looked at)
- and data collection (information about who is accessing services and their experiences)

We want to further improve accountability of services to help all children, youth and families get the supports they need.

9. If you have ever tried to make a complaint about a child, youth and family service you received, what was your experience? What could be done differently to make sure the voices of children, youth and families are heard, and used to improve services?
10. How do you think the government should assess child, youth and family service providers to know if they are doing a good job providing services to children, youth and families?

Anything else?

We want to know if there is anything else you think is important and related to child, youth and family services.

- 11. What other possible changes would help to improve experiences and outcomes for children, youth and families?**

Ontario

