



# The Children's Aid Society

## of the District of Thunder Bay

Roger Lepage  
President

Brad Bain  
Executive Director

11 December 2017

### Community Notification Letter

#### Expansion of the Child Welfare Mandate to Include 16 and 17 Year Olds

Informed by advocacy from the child welfare sector, community based professionals including the Offices of the Children's Lawyer and the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, but most importantly by the province's children and youth themselves, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has amended the *Child and Family Services Act* extending the sector's mandate to include child protection services to 16 and 17 year olds.

Effective 1 January 2018, child welfare agencies will be legally mandated to provide a full range of protection services for all children and youth from birth to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Access to the full range of protection services for 16 and 17 years olds will be guided by such legislative principles as family, community and cultural connections, youth-centred protection services, permanency planning, as well as the provision of culturally appropriate services for Indigenous youth and respecting diversity through an anti-oppressive and anti-racism perspective.

As a cornerstone component of the amended legislation, child welfare will also have capacity to provide service to 16 and 17 year olds through a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement. Such Agreements entered between a 16 or 17 year old and a child welfare agency where child protection concerns as defined by the Eligibility Spectrum exist, will allow for child welfare services in the absence of a court order.

The legislation also amends the Duty to Report provisions for 16 or 17 year old youth effectively eliminating mandatory reporting for this age group. The amended legislation simply states that an individual "may" make a report in circumstances where they believe a 16 or 17 year old youth is in need of protection.

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The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay welcomes the expanded mandate as another important mechanism to protect our community's most important resource, its children and youth.

For additional information on child protection services for 16 and 17 year olds please visit our website, [www.thunderbaycas.ca](http://www.thunderbaycas.ca).

Information on the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* may also be accessed through the Government of Ontario's website, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14>.

Should you have any questions or wish to further discuss this important initiative, please contact Ms. Rose Bakke, Director of Family Services ([rose.bakke@thunderbaycas.ca](mailto:rose.bakke@thunderbaycas.ca)) or myself.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Bain', written in a cursive style.

Brad Bain

Executive Director

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