



PROTECTING
children and
strengthening
families

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PROTECTING children and strengthening families

MISSION STATEMENT The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, on behalf of the Catholic community is committed to providing social services that protect children and strengthen family life.

We value



Human Dignity

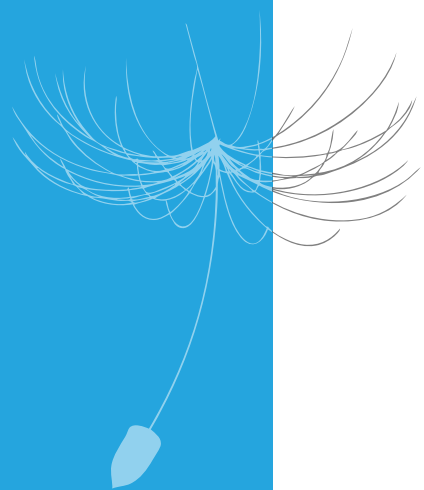
The Courage and Integrity to Take a Stand

Partnership and Teamwork

Cultural, Racial and Individual Differences

Professional Excellence

For the LOVE
of Children



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Letter from the President & the Executive Director

Over the past year, many high profile, significant and interconnected issues have impacted the child welfare sector and its future direction. In December 2015, The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario released the results of its audit of child welfare including provincial oversight and administration of the sector. The Auditor General Report (AG Report) identified issues of timeliness and completeness of child abuse investigations, service planning with families and services to children in care. As well, rates of recurrence of child protection concerns were flagged in the report. All Children's Aid Societies are working to address the issues identified by the Auditor General.

As the AG Report was released, The Honourable Justice Lang's report on the Motherisk Drug Testing Laboratory at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto was made public. Justice Lang's report concluded the hair analyses conducted by the hospital were inadequate and unreliable for use in child protection and criminal proceedings. Independent Commissioner Justice Beaman was appointed to oversee the review of cases where individuals may have been impacted by a positive test. Children's Aid Societies responded with comprehensive case reviews and offered therapeutic support, alternate dispute resolution services to agencies, families, adoptive parents and children. Our Society developed an intensive process for a case-by-case review with a focus on clinical decisions and we have been working with families who were affected by these findings.



Richard Piatti, Board President

"The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto is blessed to have dedicated compassionate and professional staff who focus on the best interests and well being of children."

The inquest into the death of Katelynn Sampson which began in November of 2015 concluded in March. There were many parties involved in this inquest including two Children's Aid Societies, the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Toronto District School Board and unions representing child welfare workers. Katelynn Sampson's death was tragic and impacted the child welfare sector profoundly. There will be a province-wide approach to addressing the factors that contributed to her death, including the way child welfare is practiced in Ontario. One of the most important recommendations from the jury is called "Katelynn's principle" compelling all service providers to keep the child at the centre of all service planning and delivery. As well, both the Interagency Protocol that guides



Janice Robinson, Executive Director

the transfer of records, referrals, and cases between Children's Aid Societies and the Eligibility Spectrum which guides the process by which cases are coded and opened have been updated. There will be more changes to policy and practices in the months to come.

As part of our Society's commitment to protecting children in the Catholic community and strengthening families, we have continued work on our Service Plan. The plan was developed in consultation with staff across the Society and includes the following priority projects: a focus on services to African Descent children and families; worker safety; and the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN). We are committed to addressing issues of disparity and disproportionality in child welfare services for the African Descent community, working together with them and community partners to develop a respectful and responsive service approach.

Our CPIN leads continue to coordinate the external work of CPIN development and our internal sustainment activities. From a provincial perspective, our Society is participating in many committees and workgroups to improve CPIN and harmonize the practices of the eleven agencies currently on the system. We are also proud to report that we have mentored several agencies as they deployed CPIN and we will continue to play an active role in supporting our fellow agencies.

This past year, we have taken another step towards improving the quality and consistency of our services by publicly reporting our Performance Indicators in five key areas. Our Society joined all other Children's Aid Societies and the Ministry in building a baseline from which we can track improvement in performance and the achievement of positive outcomes for our children, youth and families.

The year ahead promises to be another significant one for child welfare. In early 2016, the field launched an eight-point plan as a direct response to concerns over the quality and consistency of its service delivery. The Call to Action plan aims to deliver the best outcomes for families and create a stronger, more efficient and effective child welfare system.

We don't know what shape the sector will take at the end of the process that is before us, but we are confident these efforts will result in better services to families across the province, ensuring consistency, good planning and appropriate oversight.

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto is blessed to have dedicated compassionate and professional staff who focus on the best interests and well being of children. We share our knowledge and collaborate with other service providers, providing leadership and developing a learning culture in the organization. We are supported by a skilled and knowledgeable Board of Directors who support the work of the Society and are ambassadors for our agency. We gratefully acknowledge the passion and care of our foster, kin and adoptive parents. Our volunteers dedicate their time and commitment to serving children, making lives brighter. We thank our community partners who work beside us to protect children and strengthen family life. Together, we all work toward safer, happier, and permanent outcomes *For the Love of Children*.

Richard Piatti, Board President

Janice Robinson, Executive Director

our STORY IN NUMBERS

CCAS provides a broad range of services to children and families where there are concerns about safety and wellbeing. In addition to visiting children and families in their home, our workers will help families obtain the services they may need, such as parenting or treatment programs for problems such as addictions, mental health, and anger management.

We partner with a network of community organizations to provide critical resources and services to families.

97% of children remained at home

245 children were admitted into Care

7,298 children remained at home in total

SERVICE RESULTS

97%
out of CARE

245
IN CARE

7,298*
REMAINED AT HOME

*Estimate of Children Served

PROTECTING
children *and*
strengthening
families

OUR GOAL

Our goal, first and foremost, is to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. In 2015-16, CCAS was able to work successfully with children and their families so that approximately *97 per cent of children remained at home.

CCAS is committed to providing in-home visits and support for families that are struggling.

*Statistic generated from children served in the community at investigation and ongoing services.





CCAS Staff and Community Partners Supporting Family Connections (from left to right): Kimberley Price, Natalie Torrado, Priscilla Manful, Carol Wade, Charmaine King, Grace Williams, Ciddalia Pereira, Laura Fajardo, Jacqueline Jean-Pierre

I encourage many families to participate in this program as I believe they will benefit from the sessions and the additional community resources.

–Jacqueline Bittencourt

Supporting Family Connections

Worker comments

One of my responsibilities is to refer families to the Supporting Family Connections program. The program counsellors execute sessions in a professional manner, explaining to each family member their role and what is expected of them. These counselling sessions are often intense, done mainly in the comfort of the family's own home, and keep the family's needs top of mind. The sessions can be facilitated in Spanish or English. Our families have reported back that they were satisfied with the services provided to them in the 12 week sessions, but found that it was too short and wanted to continue to work and address their issues with their counsellors.

“I like the program, I learned a lot from it and really appreciate the support from my worker.” – E.B., parent

As the Society worker, **I like that we meet with the family,** review the plan of service and expectations, clarify the concerns and issues the family needs to address. The counsellors also report back to me with updates, consult on changes to the plan of service and suggest additional meetings to address new concerns or evolving issues.

Upon completion of the sessions, I receive a final report outlining recommendations, which in turn, allows me to continue working with the families in a more positive manner. The counsellors also work with the family providing them with additional information on other programs that may be helpful.

Our community partners also offer other services such as settlement programs to our immigrant families.

– Jacqueline Bittencourt, CCAS Child Protection Worker

OUR PARTNERS: Abrigo | Centre Francophone de Toronto | Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (Formerly JCA) | Mennonite New Life Centre | Oolagen

BY THE

numbers

*PAST FISCAL YEAR

The program supports and overcomes cultural and language barriers through its services.

54



FAMILIES SERVED

10

INTO CARE OF
THE SOCIETY

122



CHILDREN/YOUTH SERVED

ONE

CHILD PLACED
WITH KIN

CRITERIA:

- Admission prevention – there is risk that the child(ren) will be removed from their family.
- Family has capacity and willingness to participate in this service.
- Family's situation could benefit from short-term intensive service.

111

CHILDREN WHO
REMAINED AT HOME

My counsellor, Hugo, has helped me get along with my daughter. He always makes himself available, and I seem like a priority to him. When I call he talks on the phone with me. I am having a hard time accepting that my daughter wants to be a boy. This is very hard, and it is nice to have someone like Hugo to talk to.

I feel that our counsellor is also helping my daughter. He encourages her to be in school and talks to her about her peers. Hugo is understanding, and a person who really listens to us. Anything he can do, he will do. He also has helped me see what my daughter is going through. It has not been easy but now when we get mad at each other we talk and before I wouldn't talk to her. I feel that I am willing to compromise more and this helps our relationship.

I want to work it out with my daughter. I don't want her to go into foster care. There are ups and downs with my daughter but **I want to work on this relationship.** I am lucky to have a daughter and I want her to visit me when I am older. We have fun time times together too, we like to play around with my old car and drive around in it.

Hugo has helped us stay together. I strongly recommend this program. There would be a big risk if Hugo was not involved in our life, and my daughter would likely be in foster care. He has helped me with decisions, supports me, attends doctor appointments, and meetings at school. I do not feel alone in these meetings, he has helped me to better understand my daughter.

I am happy to say that my daughter is still in school and is mostly respectful towards me. I am thankful to Hugo from the 'Supporting Family Connections program' for helping me feel closer to my daughter.

Sincerely,
Loving Dad

Susan L is a mother of three children who had recently been reunited with her adolescent son. To ensure that this reunification was successful, Susan agreed to participate in our community partnership program called Supporting Family Connections. Susan asked that the focus of the support include some advocating, enhancing the communication between herself and her son, as well as networking community services for ongoing support.

The program helped me to get ahead. During our weekly meetings we discussed problems, came up with ideas and processes to do things in a better way. My worker, Jacqueline, was very supportive. **I developed greater communication with my son.** I am now connected to Geneva Centre, Holland Bloorview and Integra for support as my son has Aspergers. **This program is support-based,** it enhanced togetherness and I would recommend this program to other families. I feel that I am better able to stay on top of things now. – Susan L, Parent

Susie is amazing. I call her Susie. A real determined mother, and a go getter. I wish all my clients were like her...determined to fight and get her life back on track. I cannot speak enough about her. She understands the complexities of her situation and lives life by our motto, "one day at a time". She is such a pleasure... The thing that made a difference was the advocacy, as it seemed to empower her. She saw that she could do things and found herself taking them on. She ran right out of the gate at that point.

– Jacqueline, Facilitator

We have benefitted a lot from the program, it has helped my entire family to have a better understanding about what effective parenting looks like. – C.P., Parent

Facilitated Conferencing Model

“It takes a village to raise a child.” – African proverb

For child protection workers, the decision to remove a child or youth from their home is often a gut-wrenching one that can cause many sleepless nights. It's an agonizing and careful weighing of the concerns and risks to the child's safety with the distress that can be caused by separating the child from their family and everything familiar to them.

For Cameron, 12, and his three younger brothers, this decision was made in January. All four boys lived with their father, Joseph, who did his best to look after them. Their mother, Corey, visited weekly. Cameron has autism and attends a special school program which he really enjoys. His behaviour can be challenging at times and on this January morning when Cameron wasn't listening and all the boys were acting up, Joseph physically disciplined Cameron and he was hurt. A teacher saw his injury and called CCAS and police to investigate. Joseph was charged by police and the three younger boys were placed in foster care on the same day; Cameron had left on a school trip and would be returning by the end of the week.

CCAS Child Protection Worker at Intake, Christina Pereira, wanted to invite the family to participate in decisions being made during this time of crisis. She learned that the paternal grandmother and uncle lived in a separate apartment upstairs and helped out a lot. She wondered about how other family members could help. Christina requested that the family come together quickly in order to share information and participate in decision-making for the children. A conference was organized within two days.

The conference was facilitated by Sonia Tramontin, one of the Society's four Conference Facilitators. The facilitator ensures all participants – both family and professional – have a voice in the decision-making and have an opportunity to provide their input. The process has a strength-based focus and seeks to understand the resources and strengths within the family as well as the concerns. A plan is agreed upon and is written by the Conference Facilitator and distributed to all participants.

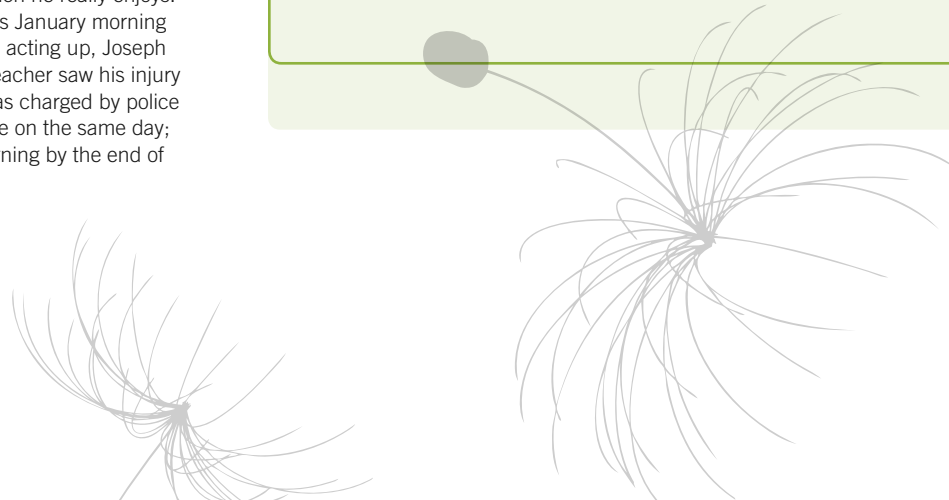
At the conference for Cameron's family, both parents attended along with the paternal grandmother and uncle. Many strengths were evident. Joseph talked about his remorse over Cameron's injury and explained what happened, including expressing his need for support. The family was able to propose a plan for the three younger children to return to their father's care with support and supervision by extended family members. As well, arrangements were made for Cameron to stay temporarily with his maternal grandparents.

Two weeks later, a follow-up conference was held and more family members were present to participate and offer support to the grandparents so they could continue to care for Cameron. Eventually, at a third conference which occurred one month later, Corey had obtained housing and was ready to care for Cameron on a long-term basis. The extended family members developed plans to ensure the children have contact with each other and that each of the parents had support and relief.

For Cameron, bringing his family together to have a voice in decisions being made about his life allowed him to stay with relatives, continue at the same school and maintain his routine while a long-term plan with his mother was arranged. His siblings, who spent a few days in care, were able to return home quickly with supports in place for their father.

“There were so many moving parts and factors to consider in this case. Through conferencing we were able to get the family members all together in one place to brainstorm a solution in the best interests of the children.”

– Christina, Child Protection Worker





Bringing family together so everyone is a part of the decision making – everyone has a voice.

CCAS Facilitated Conferencing Team (from left to right): Bervin Garraway, Kristin Baskin, Sonia Tramontin, Charlotte Akuoko-Barfi

You will always have a home with us:

Adoption Story

In her early 20s, Ann never dreamed she would have a big family. Now, at age 63, she has an incredible story to share about adopting seven children and fostering approximately 166 over the past 35 years.

Ann's household is a whirlwind of activity - on any given day, there may be nine children all vying for their mom's attention and competing for food in the fridge. The mornings and after school are especially busy. Ann wakes up early to the sound of her children's voices and gets them ready to catch the school buses and in the afternoon is busy making snacks and preparing dinner.

"It's so normal for us; it's hard for me to think of our family as unconventional. But I can appreciate others may think so. You meet people on the street, school, grocery store or bank and they are blown away, they are very shocked. For me it is the norm, because our adopted kids fell into the same timeline as if we had nine biological children - age-wise they fell into a natural rhythm," explains Ann.

Ann has two grown biological children, seven adopted children and fosters three children under the age of five. Growing up in a large family where her siblings and cousins were always around, it seems natural that as an adult, her life is surrounded by children

even if it took her by surprise when she was younger.

With all the hustle and bustle of a busy household, the moments most cherished are the ones of laughter, silly pranks and jokes among the children.

"Every day is something new with my children. They do such funny things - from the faces they make to the way they hold their fork when they are eating macaroni and cheese. My youngest thinks he's five years old instead of 18 months. We have a Darth Vader helmet that plays music and one day he picked it up and put it on his head and started singing Dun, Dun, Dun, Dun, Dun, Dun, Dun. Oh my goodness! I said. How do you know this?" recalls Ann.

Striving to make every child feel a part of the family, Ann and her husband, Ande, have opened their arms to accept and provide a home to both their foster and adoptive children.

"Most of my kids came into care when they were infants then we adopted them when they were around two years old. I have instilled enough sense of family into my kids that they don't question whether they're a part of the family. I don't feel any different

about my adoptive kids than I do about my biological kids. I would walk across fire for any of them," says Ann.

Adoptive parents, are critical to CCAS. They provide safe and secure homes for many of the children who first come into the care of the Society. When children can no longer live safely with their birth parents, CCAS works to create stability for them by finding them a home with relatives, adoptive parents or foster caregivers. Creating a place of safety and security and promoting attachment is pivotal to healthy child development and wellbeing.

"There is no out in parenting - no matter what they do - that's it. Creating a permanent home means that the kids know you will be there for them forever. Whether they move out at 17 and later realize they have made a mistake, they can always move back home. The home - the family is still there," reflects Ann.

Adopting seven children hasn't been the easiest ride, Ann admits - from processing paperwork to the slow process of the court system.

Continued on next page...



Ann preparing a nutritious snack for her kids. Opposite: Ann and her husband, Ande.



"Out of adversity comes the sweet spot - it all falls into place eventually and then you forget about the hard times," recalls Ann.

"As an adoptive parent, I lucked out with my kids. I'm happy with my children - not that they are easy by any stretch of the imagination - they are not. But, they are my heart and soul and I couldn't imagine life without them."

To learn more about adoption, visit
<http://www.torontoccas.org>
or call 416-395-1500.



IMAGINE

having to choose between buying groceries for your family or purchasing a new crib for your baby.



“I don’t know what I would have done without the crib. I guess I would have gone without. I am grateful for the donation and my baby is sleeping safely because of it.”

– Nadia, single mother, recipient of crib



The Hope for Children Fund supports the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CCAS) by raising funds for education and poverty relief programs for children, youth and families who receive services from CCAS. We believe by investing in our children and youth, and by helping families through their difficult times, we can transform our community.

SLEEP TIGHT CAMPAIGN

93

babies have a safe place to sleep thanks to our donors



Statistics are based on the past fiscal year.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

\$226k
FOR SCHOLARSHIPS



86

SUMMER CAMPS

\$25,180

to send kids
to camp



164
CAMPERS

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Thank you note from a family

To our generous donor(s): Thank you so much for all the presents we received and the grocery gift cards. You helped to put a smile on my daughter's face on Christmas morning. We will always remember your generosity. You are an inspiration for others to do good in the community. I pray that this letter finds the readers in the best health and spirit. I wanted to thank you and the staff for all of your kindness and help during the holiday season. As a parent, we try to do our best for our little ones but when you are unable to have a job and left with two kids and one has Autism and limited social skills it's not easy... I never thought in a million years that someone could do so much for a person they don't even know, I honestly cried and still have tears in my eyes when I put on my red velvet robe which is cozy and beautiful and wonderful. (I could never afford one for myself). Sometimes we can't control life's plot twists. This year was a bad series of events...I cannot work because of my daughter's condition - she needs 24 hour care. I tell you this so you truly understand the depth of my gratitude and happiness we feel. There are no words to describe the feelings of gratitude upon

237 FAMILIES ADOPTED
THROUGH
ADOPT-A-FAMILY

receiving your gifts for my daughter, son and myself. The blessings were overwhelming. It was everything we needed and so personalized for our family. I was not expecting such love and kindness. I always have a difficult time financially and it would have been a sad Christmas for my two children if it weren't for you. I send a great big hug to you with all my gratitude, appreciation and love. Our prayer is that God blesses you for your kindness in his perfect way not only this year, but each year to come.

Thank you again; you will never be forgotten.

Sincerely,
Grateful Family

EMERGENCY GRANTS

357
FAMILIES
HELPED

\$50,838
TOTAL
AMOUNT



“The Call to Action” - The Year Ahead for Child Welfare

Gandhi wrote,
“You must be the change you wish
to see in the world.”

Over the past ten years, the child welfare sector has embraced Child Welfare Transformation, a policy agenda of the government which encourages individualized responses to children and families, promotes evidence-based practices, and focuses on permanence for children as a primary outcome of child welfare work. We are seeing positive results from the Transformation policy such as an increase in kinship placements for children and a customized investigation response uniquely tailored to the needs of each family.

Now, new calls for change are before our sector. Children’s Aid Societies are committing to work as a provincial system, collaborating with one another and with government to improve the quality and consistency of services to children, youth and families across Ontario. The result of this commitment is the provincial **Call to Action** statement which contains eight priority areas for collective change to the child welfare system. A key feature of the **Call to Action** is the sector-wide move to transparency and accountability, sharing data and holding each other accountable for system wide improvement and outcome measurement. Service delivery will be standardized, reducing undue variability while promoting unique community programs and services. The **Call to Action** represents an unparalleled body of work which answers the questions raised by our stakeholders and the public about the quality of child protection services in Ontario.

Our Society is both a leader in this process and an active participant on many of the working committees delivering on this historic **Call to Action**. The work is both challenging and ground-breaking and we are committed to reporting back to the community a year from now to share the changes to the field and our collaboration on the road ahead.

2015 SERVICE - 16 STATS

4,673	Families Served in Community with protection concerns
7,298	Children Served in Community with protection concerns
2,180	Ongoing Services Families Served at Ongoing
486	Staff/Volunteers/Foster Homes Staff
155	Volunteers
124	Foster Homes (foster and CCAS group)
296	CCSY*

*Continued Care and Support for Youth Program

Children Served

Children Served	7,298
Children in Care	1,067
Youth Served through CCSY	296
Adoptions Completed	36
Total days of care provided	294,687

97%
out of CARE

— 97 per cent of children remained at home with their families

Total Referrals involving protection



Anonymous*		24.1%
Police		20.0%
School		19.8%
Other		7.1%
Medical		6.4%
Birth Parent		6.1%
Other Social Worker/ Other CAS/ Other Social Agency		5.9%
Unknown		4.6%
CCAS Worker/ Supervisor/ Care Provider		1.3%
Legal/Court/Lawyer		1.3%
Neighbour/Friend		1.1%
Relative		1.1%
Daycare		0.8%
Child/Self		0.4%

Total Calls about children & youth.....12,076

Total Referrals involving protection.....4,954

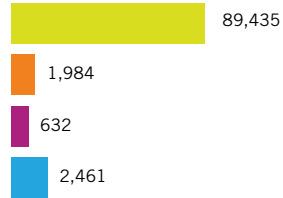
Total Investigations Completed.....3,063

* Our Child Protection Information Network database allows for anonymous reporting

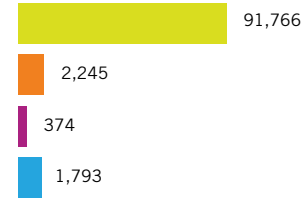
2015-16 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE (in thousands of dollars)

Year ended March 31, 2016



Year ended March 31, 2015



TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2016
94,512

TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2015
96,178

- Province of Ontario
- Government of Canada
- Hope for Children
- Other



(in thousands of dollars)

TOTAL COSTS
Year ended March 31, 2016
95,820

TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2015
95,703

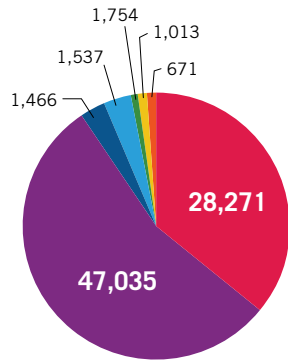
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year

Year ended March 31, 2016
(1,308)

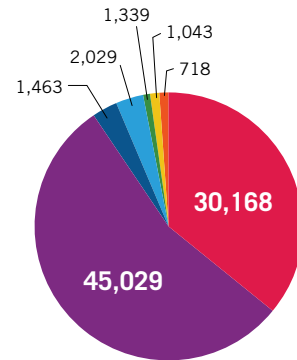
Year ended March 31, 2015
475

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES COSTS (in thousands of dollars)

Year ended March 31, 2016



Year ended March 31, 2015



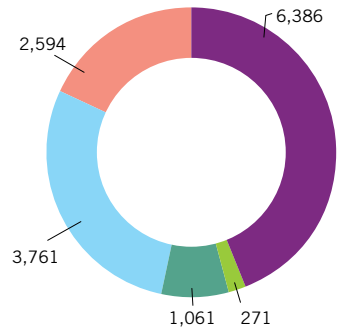
TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2016
81,747

TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2015
81,789

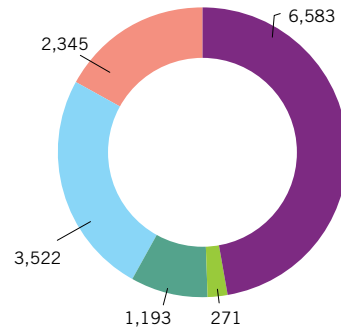
- Board rate payments
- Salaries and benefits
- Health and related services
- Purchased services
- Travel
- Children's personal needs
- Financial assistance and special programs

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (in thousands of dollars)

Year ended March 31, 2016



Year ended March 31, 2015



TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2016
14,073

TOTAL
Year ended March 31, 2015
13,914

- Salaries and benefits
- Building occupancy
- Office Administration and other
- Technology and purchased goods and services
- Training and recruitment

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto

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30 Drewry Avenue
Toronto, ON M2M 4C4

Child Protection Services - South

Intake Services
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