



# Make a difference in a child's LIFE.

## FACTS ABOUT ADOPTION

NOVEMBER IS ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

One day, every child in Ontario will have a family

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) believes that every child deserves a family that will love and nurture them always. For some children, that is simply not a reality because they have parents who are unable to care for them. Currently, there are more than 2,800 children legally available for adoption through Ontario's public adoption system.

THE FOLLOWING ARE FACTS ABOUT ADOPTION:

### It's all about the right match.

Matching the needs of the child to the family and vice versa.

### You don't have to be rich to adopt.

You do not have to be wealthy to adopt; you just need to be sure that you can meet the needs of the child(ren). Adopting through Children's Aid is a free service.

### Every child needs a family.

Race, culture and ethnicity are some but not all of the factors weighed when trying to determine the best match for a child.

### Every child wants a family.

Children want and need families.

### Every child is unique.

While every child is unique, the one thing that each child has in common is the need for a family.

### Everyone benefits from adoption.

There can be nothing as rewarding as providing a child with a permanent home.

### It takes time.

To find the right match, a homestudy and training must be completed.



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[useyourvoice.ca/adopt.html](http://useyourvoice.ca/adopt.html)



Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies  
The voice of child welfare in Ontario



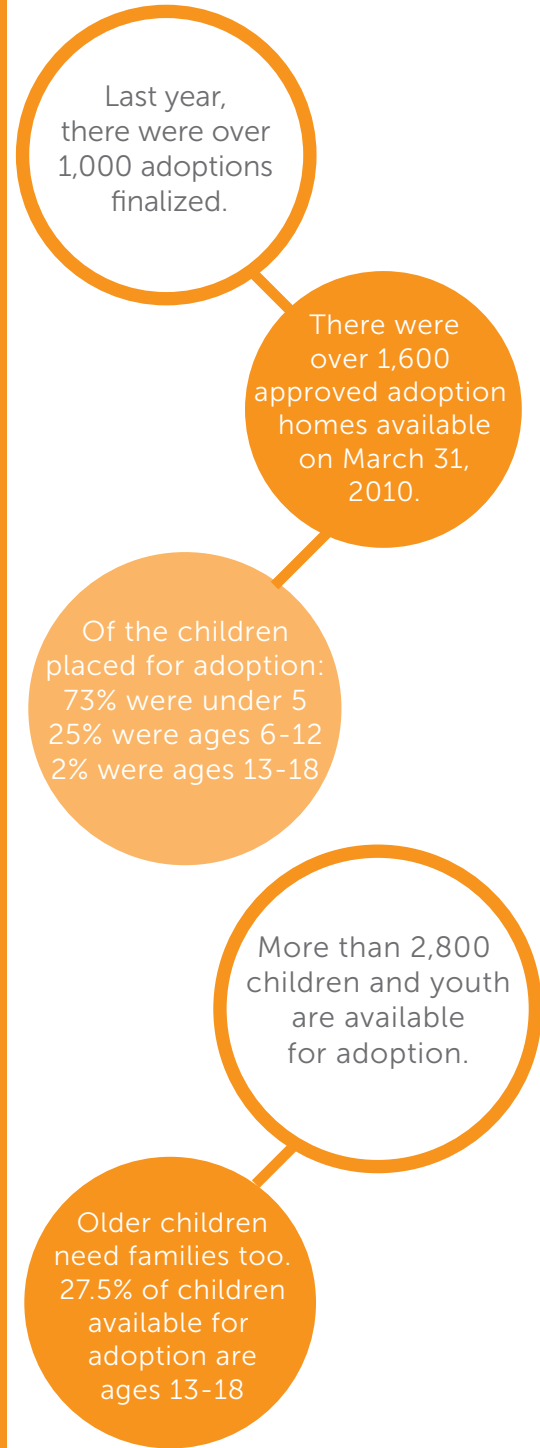
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Children need to have roots. To experience healthy development and create a sense of self-worth, children need to feel a sense of belonging, with a permanent family who cares for them.

The reality is that for some kids this is not possible, and children come into the care of Children's Aid. Sometimes it is because they have parents who are not able to provide a safe living environment. In other cases, parents choose to make an adoption plan for their child.

Children who are in the care of Children's Aid may become available for adoption into a permanent family. Children's Aid helps children to make successful transitions into their adoptive families.

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\*Statistics reflect numbers from the public adoption system

# WHAT IS ADOPTION?

Adoption is a compassionate gift of family to a child in need of a permanent, loving relationship. Adoption creates security and acceptance.

Adoption is the legal process that gives children a new family when their birth families are unable to care for them. It is intended to provide children with the stability and lifelong security that comes from a permanent home. In Ontario, there are several ways in which you can adopt, and people often explore options in all three systems:

1. The public adoption system (local Children's Aid)
2. A private adoption agency
3. An inter-country adoption agency

## MAKING THE BEST MATCH

Adoption placements are based on the child's needs, so the waiting time depends on the best possible match for the child and the adoptive family. If the match is right, the process can happen very quickly!

Once the decision is made, there are several visits to allow the child to get to know the new family and surroundings before actually moving into the home.

By law, adoptions are legally finalized typically six months or more after the child moves into his or her new home. The length of time depends on the needs of the child and the adoptive family. This adjustment period allows the child and family time to work out any problems that might arise.

When everyone is ready to complete the adoption, the Children's Aid or private adoption practitioner applies to the court for an adoption order. After the court order is made, adoptive parents are the child's legal parents and the child is a legal member of their family.

# WHO CAN ADOPT?

People wanting to adopt understand the importance of providing a child with a safe, loving and nurturing environment – a home where the child can reach his or her full potential. Adoptive parents can be individuals or couples, people unable to have children of their own, parents who already have children and want to add to their growing family, as well as adults whose first choice for building a family is through adoption.

People from diverse cultural backgrounds, single people or same-sex couples are encouraged to consider adoption. People who are open to parenting special needs children, sibling groups or older children are also encouraged to consider adoption.



## WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?

Children range in age from infants to teens and come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Some are siblings, waiting for a family who can keep them together. Others are special needs children who require parents willing to learn the skills to care for them. Although some children may have challenges, they all have one thing in common – a need for a safe and loving home for a lifetime.

[useyourvoice.ca/adopt.html](http://useyourvoice.ca/adopt.html)



## JON'S STORY

I came into care at age 9, as the only survivor of a car accident that took the lives of my mother, my two younger sisters and stepfather. Following various placements, my two dads adopted me at the age of 16. I always had an interest in aviation and by the time I was 20 I had both my commercial pilots license and my instructor rating. Now, I am attending college to develop my skills as an entrepreneur in the business program, and I am a resource person for future foster and adoptive families during their training.

## HOW DO I ADOPT?

To find out if adoption is right for you, contact your local Children's Aid, private adoption practitioner or AdoptOntario.ca. By working together, a decision can be made about whether adoption is the right plan for you as well as the kind of child or children you could parent.

The process for adopting a child is one that is carefully planned with the child's well-being in mind. Parents will undergo a home study that involves several visits to their home. During the homestudy period, parents will be encouraged to assess their own attitudes and abilities. Training, education, and on-going support will be offered to parents to make sure the adoption process is successful.





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### Why adopt from the public system?

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies provide a free, public adoption system in Ontario, which includes support, training and education.

In the public system, the primary focus is on the child. The work involves recruiting, screening and training prospective adoptive parents in order to find the best match for the child and the adoptive family. Not only are services free of charge, the system is highly structured, regulated and monitored. It affords the government and the public confidence in the trust placed in CASs as they screen, prepare, and match families so that they can be the best parents possible for children who are disrupted from their biological roots. Children can be adopted and have connections to members of their biological families - grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles – especially sisters and brothers. CAS adoptive parents who are open to these contacts give testimony to how this helps them be better parents and how it helps reduce the trauma of separation and loss for their children.

There are many successes in Ontario's public system. Last year, more than 1,600 families were approved as potential adoptive parents and over 1,000 adoptions were completed, giving children and youth loving families. There is so much more potential.

Ontario's public adoption values the best match for the child. Unlike many of the international experiences, Ontario CASs welcome diversity in adoptive parents - including single parents, all ethnicities and religions, same-sex couples, older adults and those with modest incomes.

Adoptions in the public system offer the assurance of sound assessments of children and parents, access to extensive training, services and supports through the adoption process and pre-adoption and post-adoption advocacy for special health and educational services.

The Government of Ontario provides special post-secondary grants for all former Ontario Crown wards, including many of those who are adopted, demonstrating that the government is committed to the success of these children and families through long-term investment in their futures.

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies have over 100 years experience in providing public adoption services and helping find permanent, loving homes for children and youth. Building strong families for life is extremely important for Ontario and is critical for those children who desperately need to belong to a family.



**Ontario Association of  
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The voice of child welfare in Ontario

If you are ready to build your family through adoption by providing a loving nurturing home for a child, you can contact your local Children's Aid Society.



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## What is adoption and is it right for me?

In Ontario, there are several ways in which you can adopt and people often explore all three systems. Families interested in adoption can learn about the public child welfare system, through their local Children's Aid Society, or private and inter-country adoption through private practitioners. To find out more about public adoption, visit [www.useyourvoice.ca/adopt.html](http://www.useyourvoice.ca/adopt.html)

## What kinds of people adopt?

Adoptive families come in all shapes and sizes - single parents, couples, families with children. Children need loving, safe and nurturing families who are committed to helping them grow and develop. Understanding the adoption process requirements will help parents understand that they don't have to fit into a certain profile to be an adoptive parent.

## What kinds of children are available for adoption?

Some children are placed at birth by their birth families through a private or CAS adoption. Some children are living in CAS foster homes and are legally available for adoption. Some children are living in foster homes or orphanages in foreign countries. Some children will have medical or emotional challenges that they will need help dealing with. Education and networking will help a family understand these children to make decisions about which child will fit best in their family.

## How much does it cost?

Adoption through a Children's Aid Society is a free service. Private and inter-country adoption fees are covered by the adoptive family. Understanding the costs is an important part of learning about adoption. Fees will vary with services required and activities involved in the adoption process and can range from \$5,000 to \$40,000. For specific prices on a range of adoption services, please visit [www.adoption.on.ca](http://www.adoption.on.ca).

## Will it take a long time?

The length of time will vary greatly and is hard to predict. Timing can be influenced by the current number of applicants, timing of training and willingness to consider children with complex needs. The matching process is the most important part of the process.



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"I Am Your Children's Aid."



## Judy's Story

I believe that every child should be in a home. How would you feel if you didn't belong to anybody? I had always wanted to have more children, so when my two daughters were grown and my son was nine I decided to look into becoming a foster parent. Our family completed the training but before we began fostering our worker told us about how many older children were available for adoption. Adoption is a family decision and changes everyone, so we all discussed it before we decided that it was right for us. When we saw the picture of Kevin, who was eight at the time, something just clicked. I didn't really believe it would happen, but we spent a week with him and that was it. Everything fell into place so quickly and it is like he has always been a member of our family. Recently, our oldest daughter had a baby girl so now we are grandparents and Kevin is an uncle. We are truly blessed with such a rich life. Kevin reminds me of this every day and likes to say "Before you found me I didn't have a family of my own." When I try and put myself in his shoes I think that we might just have to make more room in our family for another older child or youth who is still waiting to be "found."

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Children's Aid Societies**

# Get involved with Your Children's Aid.

Children's Aid Society of Algoma  
[www.algomacas.org](http://www.algomacas.org)

Children's Aid Society of Brant  
[www.casbrant.ca](http://www.casbrant.ca)

Children's Aid Society of the  
County of Bruce  
[www.brucecas.ca](http://www.brucecas.ca)

Chatham-Kent Children's Services  
[www.ckics.com](http://www.ckics.com)

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care  
[www.dilico.com](http://www.dilico.com)

Dufferin Child & Family Services  
[www.dcafs.on.ca](http://www.dcafs.on.ca)

Durham Children's Aid Society  
[www.durhamcas.ca](http://www.durhamcas.ca)

Family & Children's Services of  
St. Thomas and Elgin County  
[www.caselgin.on.ca](http://www.caselgin.on.ca)

Children's Aid Society of the City of  
Kingston and County of Frontenac  
[www.casfrontenac.ca](http://www.casfrontenac.ca)

Children's Aid Society of Owen  
Sound and the County of Grey  
[www.greycas.org](http://www.greycas.org)

The Children's Aid Society of  
Haldimand and Norfolk  
[www.cashn.on.ca](http://www.cashn.on.ca)

Halton Children's Aid Society  
[www.haltoncas.ca](http://www.haltoncas.ca)

Catholic Children's Aid Society  
of Hamilton  
[www.hamiltonccas.on.ca](http://www.hamiltonccas.on.ca)

Children's Aid Society of Hamilton  
[www.hamiltoncas.com](http://www.hamiltoncas.com)

Hastings Children's Aid Society  
[www.hastingscas.org](http://www.hastingscas.org)

Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society  
[www.h-pcas.ca](http://www.h-pcas.ca)

Services Familiaux Jeanne Sauvé  
Family Services  
(705) 335-2445

Jewish Family & Child Service  
of Toronto  
[www.jfandcs.com](http://www.jfandcs.com)

Kawartha-Haliburton  
Children's Aid Society  
[www.khcas.on.ca](http://www.khcas.on.ca)

Kenora-Patricia Child and Family  
Services  
[www.kpcfcs.com](http://www.kpcfcs.com)

Children's Aid Society of the  
County of Lanark and the Town of  
Smiths Falls  
[www.lanarkcas.ca](http://www.lanarkcas.ca)

Children's Aid Society of Brockville  
and the United Counties of Leeds  
and Grenville  
[www.casbrock.com](http://www.casbrock.com)

Lennox and Addington  
Family and Children's Services  
[www.lafcs.org](http://www.lafcs.org)

Children's Aid Society of London  
and Middlesex  
[www.caslondon.on.ca](http://www.caslondon.on.ca)

Family, Youth & Child Services of  
Muskoka  
[www.fycsm.ca](http://www.fycsm.ca)

Family & Children's Services  
Niagara  
[www.facsniagara.on.ca](http://www.facsniagara.on.ca)

Native Child and Family Services  
of Toronto  
[www.nativechild.org](http://www.nativechild.org)

Children's Aid Society of the  
Districts of Nipissing and Parry  
Sound  
[www.parnipcas.org](http://www.parnipcas.org)

Children's Aid Society of  
Northumberland  
[www.northumberlandcas.org](http://www.northumberlandcas.org)

Children's Aid Society of Ottawa  
[www.casott.on.ca](http://www.casott.on.ca)

Children's Aid Society of Oxford  
County  
[www.casoxford.on.ca](http://www.casoxford.on.ca)

Payukotayno James and Hudson  
Bay Family Services  
(888) 298-2916

Peel Children's Aid Society  
[www.peelcas.org](http://www.peelcas.org)

Integra for Children and Adults  
of Prescott-Russell  
[www.seapr.ca](http://www.seapr.ca)

Children's Aid Society of the  
County of Prince Edward  
(877) 476-7957

Family and Children's Services of  
the District of Rainy River  
[www.facsrr.ca](http://www.facsrr.ca)

Family and Children's Services  
County of Renfrew, City of  
Pembroke  
(613) 735-6866

Children's Aid Society of the City of  
Sarnia and the County of Lambton  
[www.slcas.on.ca](http://www.slcas.on.ca)

Children's Aid Society of Simcoe  
County  
[www.simcoecas.com](http://www.simcoecas.com)

Children's Aid Society of the United  
Counties of Stormont, Dundas  
and Glengarry  
[www.cassdg.ca](http://www.cassdg.ca)

Children's Aid Society of the  
Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin  
[www.casdsm.on.ca](http://www.casdsm.on.ca)

Children's Aid Society of the  
District of Thunder Bay  
[www.thunderbaycas.ca](http://www.thunderbaycas.ca)

Services à l'enfance et à la famille  
du Timiskaming Child and Family  
Services  
[www.timiskamingchildren.org](http://www.timiskamingchildren.org)

Child and Family Services of  
Timmins and District  
[www.timminschilfamily.org](http://www.timminschilfamily.org)

Catholic Children's Aid Society  
of Toronto  
[www.ccas.toronto.on.ca](http://www.ccas.toronto.on.ca)

Children's Aid Society of Toronto  
[www.torontocas.ca](http://www.torontocas.ca)

Family & Children's Services of the  
Waterloo Region  
[www.facswaterloo.org](http://www.facswaterloo.org)

Family & Children's Services of  
Guelph and Wellington County  
[www.fcsgw.org](http://www.fcsgw.org)

Windsor-Essex Children's Aid  
Society  
[www.wecas.on.ca](http://www.wecas.on.ca)

York Region Children's Aid  
Society  
[www.yorkcas.org](http://www.yorkcas.org)

Go to [useyourvoice.ca](http://useyourvoice.ca)



# Finding kids safe, nurturing homes

**C**onnie Blair is determined to provide children with something she was denied: a happy childhood.

Ms. Blair's early years were spent in and out of foster care, creating a heart-wrenching cycle of acceptance and rejection until adoption at the age of nine finally settled her into a safe, happy home.

Today, she's the birth mother of three, adoptive mother of four, foster parent of four and legal custodian of one. Her childhood experiences have left her committed to providing unconditional love and acceptance to her family of 12.

To the Blairs, every child is welcome.

"When my husband and I got into fostering, we didn't want children that were easy to place. We wanted children that other people had pretty much given up on," she says.

One of their sons had been headed to a group home, while another was on his way to treatment; two of their kids have fetal alcohol syndrome;

one son has spina bifida; one teenage daughter has severe developmental delays; and their two youngest daughters have physical and developmental challenges.

"I had been placed in a few foster homes and, until I was adopted by my parents, was always returned back to the orphanage," says Ms. Blair. "I didn't want other children to go through that. Every child deserves a happy childhood ... and the knowledge that when they come in my door, they are in a safe place."

While Ontario's Children's Aid Societies aim to do all they can to return children to rehabilitated and supported birth families, some become Crown wards. From there, they are placed in foster care, with the ultimate goal of finding permanent, adoptive families.

As of March 2009, more than 9,200 children and youth were under the permanent care of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies. Of these, over 2,600, or almost 30 per cent, had no access to their biological families and need perma-

nent homes. An additional 6,600, or 70 per cent, had some contact with their biological families, but adoption was still an option.

That same year 1,461 homes were approved for

adoption, 819 adoptions were finalized and 865 children were in the process of being adopted.

Child welfare worker Nandita Junnarkar notes that, before children are placed in

adoptive homes, the Children's Aid Society works very hard with biological parents and families to create safe, nurturing living conditions. Many times that works out, but sometimes it doesn't.

"My first case where children became Crown wards involved two children who were living in severe neglect," says Ms. Junnarkar. "They were living in their grandparent's basement with their mom, and there were beer bottles and dirty diapers everywhere, feces, urine and everything. We tried very hard to work with the family, but nobody was willing to make a plan for the children.

"The mom didn't come to any of the visits with her children, and the dad started just not showing up at all. That was a good story in the end, because the foster mother for those children was a good fit and ended up adopting them."

Candy, who requested her last name be kept confidential, grew up in a situation of abuse and neglect. When she was just 14, she did everything she

could to have her infant sister removed from the care of her alcoholic and physically abusive parents. "I knew my parents were going to beat me up when I got home, but after my sister was born and my parents were still abusive, I got myself out and I took my sister out," says Candy, a former foster child whose sister was placed in an adoptive home.

Entering into the care of a Children's Aid Society turned Candy's life around. Now an event planner, she chose to spend her internship at the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. "I would not be the person that I am today if it wasn't for Children's Aid. I have such love for them, such respect," she says. ■


## Societies answer call of children in need

In 2009, Ontario's Children's Aid Societies (CASs) investigated more than 78,500 referrals from families, teachers, doctors and neighbours concerned about the protection, safety and well-being of children and youth at risk of abuse and neglect. That same year, more than 27,000 children needed substitute care for protection from abuse or neglect.

CAS makes a difference in the lives of kids by providing assessments, crisis intervention, positive parenting programs, individual or group counselling, peer support groups and referrals to other community services.

If children can't stay at home because of serious safety concerns, CAS finds a safe living arrangement in the home of a relative or family friend, foster care, a group care home or with a customary caregiver. If being reunited with family is not an option, the ultimate goal is finding an adoptive family and permanent home for every child.

Share your story, thoughts and comments online at [www.useyourvoice.ca](http://www.useyourvoice.ca). Or for more information about the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, visit [www.oacas.org](http://www.oacas.org).



**CONNIE**  
Adopted Child  
Foster and  
Adoptive Parent

“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”

“When my husband and I got into fostering, we didn’t want children that were easy to place. We wanted children that other people had pretty much given up on. I always had said when the time came we would give kids a home that I wish I’d had when I was growing up. I had been placed in a few foster homes and, until I was adopted by my parents, I was always returned back to the orphanage. I didn’t want other children to go through that. Every child deserves a happy childhood ... and the knowledge that when they come in my door, they are in a safe place.”

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**JON**

**Pilot**

**Entrepreneur**

**Student**

**Former youth in care**

I came into care at age 9, as the only survivor of a car accident that took the lives of my mother, my two younger sisters and stepfather. Following various placements, my two dads adopted me at the age of 16. I always had an interest in aviation and by the time I was 20, I had both my commercial pilots license and my instructor rating. Now, I am attending college to develop my skills as an entrepreneur in the business program, and I am a resource person for future foster and adoptive families during their training.

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96% of Canadian adults believe children  
in foster care have the right  
to a permanent home.

Find out more about how you can make a difference in the life of a child.  
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## ANDRÉ

### Adoptive Parent Family Recruitment Worker

"I fostered preteens and teenagers for 11 years. My husband and I adopted our son when he was 16 years old and I am proud to say through all the ups and downs he is now a pilot and flourishing. Seeing and feeling the difference that I was able to make in the lives of my foster and adopted children and their biological families gave me a sense of fulfillment and gratification. Due to this inspiring experience, I now work with the Children's Aid as a foster and adoptive family recruiter."

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74% of Canadian adults believe that the parents will feel the same satisfaction and reward from adoption as from raising a child from birth.

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## WENDY AND LINDA

### Adoptive Parents

"Our hearts were forever changed when we adopted an 11-year old boy. He is now 12 years of age and simply flourishing. We feel that our family is now complete, it's like he's always been with us.

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**LEXI**

## **Adoptive Parent**

"We adopted Aleisha when she was 11. We always knew that we would be able to fall in love with an older child. And with fewer people interested in adopting older children, there were more available. The adoption process has not been easy. There is a lot of pain to work through. I believe when parenting an adopted older child a family goes through a lot of the same stages as having a baby – but it is happening with someone who is able to tell you how they are feeling. And you don't have to do it alone. We have always taken advantage of all of the community supports and got connected with the services around us from the very beginning. In the end, you get it all back plus more. We are a family and as Aleisha likes to say, "through it all we stuck it out together like peanut butter and jam."

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60% of Canadians know someone  
who was adopted.

Find out more about how you can make a difference in the life of a child.  
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## CONNIE

### Adopted Child Foster and Adoptive Parent

"When my husband and I got into fostering, we didn't want children that were easy to place. We wanted children that other people had pretty much given up on. I always had said when the time came we would give kids a home that I wish I'd had when I was growing up. I had been placed in a few foster homes and, until I was adopted by my parents, I was always returned back to the orphanage. I didn't want other children to go through that. Every child deserves a happy childhood ... and the knowledge that when they come in my door, they are in a safe place."

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“When my husband and I got into fostering, we didn’t want children that were easy to place. We wanted children that other people had pretty much given up on. I always had said when the time came we would give kids a home that I wish I’d had when I was growing up. I had been placed in a few foster homes and, until I was adopted by my parents, I was always returned back to the orphanage. I didn’t want other children to go through that. Every child deserves a happy childhood ... and the knowledge that when they come in my door, they are in a safe place.”

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One day, every child in Ontario will have a family  
GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN’S AID. [GO TO USEYOURVOICE.CA](https://www.useyourvoice.ca)

**Ontario Association of  
Children’s Aid Societies**



**JON**

Pilot

Entrepreneur

Student

Former youth in care

“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”

I came into care at age 9, as the only survivor of a car accident that took the lives of my mother, my two younger sisters and stepfather. Following various placements, my two dads adopted me at the age of 16. I always had an interest in aviation and by the time I was 20, I had both my commercial pilots license and my instructor rating. Now, I am attending college to develop my skills as an entrepreneur in the business program, and I am a resource person for future foster and adoptive families during their training.

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**ANDRÉ**

Adoptive Parent  
Family Recruitment Worker

“I Am Your Children’s Aid.”

“I fostered preteens and teenagers for 11 years. My husband and I adopted our son when he was 16 years old and I am proud to say through all the ups and downs he is now a pilot and flourishing. Seeing and feeling the difference that I was able to make in the lives of my foster and adopted children and their biological families gave me a sense of fulfillment and gratification. Due to this inspiring experience, I now work with the Children’s Aid as a foster and adoptive family recruiter.”

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