



Jerry Acchione
Mayor
City of Woodstock
500 Dundas St.
Woodstock, ON N4S 0A7
519-539-2382 x2100
mayor@cityofwoodstock.ca

The Honorable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1
Via email premier@ontario.ca

The Honorable Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
Via email MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear The Honorable Doug Ford and The Honorable Michael Parsa,

I am writing on behalf of Woodstock City Council to express the urgent and pressing need for adequate and sustainable funding for the Children's Aid Society of Oxford County and other child welfare agencies throughout Ontario. These organizations play a vital role in safeguarding and enhancing the health, well-being, and safety of our children, youth, and families and deserves appropriate support and attention from our elected officials.

Our community, like many across the province, relies on the Children's Aid Society and other child welfare agencies to not only protect children and youth from abuse or neglect, but provide critical crisis intervention, early intervention, and preventative services. Their work ensures children receive necessary care at the most crucial times, close to their own homes, allowing families to remain intact and thrive together.

The lack of access to healthcare, mental health supports, poverty reduction initiatives and affordable housing is taking a toll on families and caregivers. These systemic shortfalls propel child welfare agencies into roles they were never intended to assume, filling gaps in services to ensure the well-being of children, youth, and families.

Without sufficient financial backing, these agencies are strained to a breaking point. They operate without the ability to deny families the services they desperately need. They cannot turn clients away, manage waitlists, or declare services unavailable. Yet, even with remarkable community partnerships, these agencies lack the means to expedite or ensure access to necessary treatments for those in their care.

The repercussions of this funding deficit extends well beyond individual families, affecting the community at large. Our local Children's Aid Society is supporting an ever-increasing number of youth exhibiting complex behaviors. These challenges translate into higher intervention costs, increases costs for and pressure on police and emergency service providers.

The lack of access to critical early intervention services is correlating to a distressing rise in youth homelessness. The financial sustainability and stability of the child welfare sector can no longer be deferred

for debate. It is imperative the funding formula is updated to prioritize trauma-informed, culturally relevant and proactive care.

On behalf of Woodstock City Council, I urge the province to prioritize and support the financial needs of these vital agencies. All levels of government must work together to improve upstream intervention and support to prevent the tragic outcomes we are seeing as a result of inadequate funding.

Thank you for considering this urgent matter that affects our community and its future generations.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jerry Acchione
City of Woodstock

Cc:

The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Oxford MPP - ernie.hardemanco@pc.ola.org

Safe and Well Oxford - safewelloxford@gmail.com

Children's Aid Society Oxford County - info@casoxford.on.ca