

## TIP SHEET

# Engage with Children's Services

Children's Services is the Government of Alberta office responsible for keeping children safe. They get involved when they believe children are not safe with or are being neglected by their parents or guardians.

Cases where Children's Services are involved are known as **child welfare** or **child protection** cases. Children's Services must follow Alberta's *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, also known as CYFEA.

## If Children's Services contacts you

Children's Services will contact you if someone has raised a concern about a child in your home or care. Anyone who reasonably believes a child is in danger has a legal duty to report their concerns to the police or Children's Services.

After receiving a report about a child, Children's Services can investigate your family by:

- sending a worker to visit your home, your child's school or your workplace
- interviewing you, your child, your co-workers, your employer, your child's teachers, family members and more

Children's Services can decide the child needs intervention if there are reasons to believe they are not safe where they are.

**Stay calm and get legal help immediately to make sure you know your rights.**

## If Children's Services intervenes

Children's Services can take several actions if they believe a child needs protection, such as:

- talking to you about creating a family safety plan
- talking to you about making a family enhancement agreement
- getting a supervision order for the child
- placing the child in another home, such as a foster home or with a kinship caregiver. This is known as **apprehending the child**.
- making a custody agreement with the child's guardians for Children's Services to care for the child
- seeking an initial custody order when applying for a TGO or PGO
- seeking a temporary guardianship order (TGO) for the child
- seeking a permanent guardianship order (PGO) for the child
- responding to a private guardianship order for someone else to become the child's guardian

## If you disagree with a decision of Children's Services

There are three steps you should take first:

1. **Talk to your caseworker.** Ask them why Children's Services made the decision and share why you disagree with it. Try to reach an agreement.
2. If you and your caseworker cannot come to an agreement, **talk to their supervisor.** Try to reach an agreement with the supervisor.
3. If you and your caseworker's supervisor cannot come to an agreement, **talk to the supervisor's manager.** Try to reach an agreement with the manager.

## IF YOU CANNOT REACH AN AGREEMENT

If you cannot reach an agreement with the manager, explore other formal options to resolve the issue. These include:

- family group conferencing
- mediation
- administrative review of the decision, which you must request in writing within 30 days of the decision being made
- an appeal to an appeal panel, which is a panel of community members who don't work for Children's Services
- judicial dispute resolution
- talking to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate if you believe Children's Services is not considering your child's rights and interests

## More resources

Figure out how to navigate Children's Services with Native Counselling Services **Navigating Children's Services maps**: [bit.ly/3zIMUYk](https://bit.ly/3zIMUYk)

Visit the **Government of Alberta's website**: [alberta.ca/child-intervention](https://alberta.ca/child-intervention)

Contact **Legal Aid Alberta** for legal help if your child is involved with Children's Services: [www.legalaid.ab.ca/services/family-law/](https://www.legalaid.ab.ca/services/family-law/)



### Visit CPLEA's website about family law in Alberta!

Find more information about if Children's Services is involved, where to get legal support and much more.

Get started at [family.cplea.ca](https://family.cplea.ca)



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