

Anti–Oppression Policy Statement

The Children’s Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay

Mission, Vision, Values

The *Mission* of the Children’s Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay is to protect and enhance the lives of children through strengthening families in partnership with our community.

Our *Vision* is to develop through collaboration, a community where all children grow up with a sense of belonging in a safe and nurturing environment.

Children and families are our priorities.

We *Value* integrity, diversity and dignity

What is Anti-Oppressive Practice?

All employees, volunteers and resource families of this agency have a responsibility to treat others with dignity, respect and equity, which involves challenging discriminative actions, behaviours, language, policies and procedures. We must make sure that our actions do not directly or indirectly impede a person or family’s inherent right to their culture, ethnicity and language and to practice their values and beliefs, while ensuring that we fulfill our mandate.

Dumbrill (2003) describes anti-oppressive practice as being “*concerned with eradicating social injustice perpetuated by societal structural inequalities, particularly along the lines of race, gender, sexual orientation and identity, ability, age, class, occupation and social service usage*”.

In this regard, we must understand and examine the use and abuse of power and control within relationships on personal, family, community, organizational, political, and structural levels. These levels are interconnected, shaping one’s reality and experiences; albeit positive or negative.

Challenging such inequities is the motivating factor of Anti-Oppressive Practice. Challenging one’s thoughts, ideas, language, and actions towards marginalized groups is necessary so that every person’s values, beliefs and practices are being honoured and respected accordingly.

Our Commitment to Anti-Oppressive Practice:

The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay values the advancement of equality, equity, diversity, and human rights for the families of our community, staff, care providers and volunteers. It recognizes and upholds the inherent dignity, worth and rights of each individual and is committed to the pursuit of equity, freedom from adverse discrimination and harassment, and the removal of all barriers to equal opportunity.

We recognize and uphold the principle of equity of access to appropriate services which are sensitive to the needs of service users whatever their race, religion, colour, national origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, place of origin, marital status, or ability¹.

In addition, the Society believes that each individual should be free from discrimination, harassment and barriers to equal opportunity related to their social location, including their economic status. We strive for critical consciousness and awareness of our power and privilege. We realize this is essential to becoming allies.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay believes that it is the right of all children, youth, families, communities, staff, care providers, volunteers, and persons affiliated with the Society to be free from all forms of oppression.

We are committed to best practice through providing respectful and collaborative services to families using an anti-oppressive, strengths-based approach. In order to do so, it is recognized that the Society needs to acknowledge and challenge the systems of power that are inherent in child welfare.

The Society services a disproportionate number of disenfranchised families and it is our responsibility to advocate for social justice. We believe that each child deserves to live and grow in families and communities where everyone has the right to dignity and equity.

The Society will strive to, with diligence, take the steps required to review existing agency policies and practices, develop new ones, and create a work environment and service delivery model free from all forms of oppression.

¹ The Ontario Human Rights Act Section identifying prohibited grounds of discrimination

Thunder Bay CAS Strives to Ensure that:

- Staff, programs, and services are sensitive and responsive to the needs and identities of diverse groups in the community, district and within the organization;
- Policies, procedures, service delivery and internal practices are anti-oppressive;
- An environment and culture in which people are treated with dignity;
- An environment where people are free to share their thoughts and ideas is created;
- Volunteers, board, all levels of staff and resource families reflect the identities and needs of the community served;
- Our agency develops effective and inclusive community partnerships/relationships with groups and organizations working to eliminate oppression;
- Service user feedback is obtained and helps to inform and guide our practice; and
- We have an AOP Resource Package to orientate new staff, students, committee members, resource families, volunteers, and Board of Directors.