



The Foster Care Council of Canada

503-1218 Meadowlands Drive East, Ottawa, ON, K2E 6K1
John Dunn (613) 228-2178 afterfostercare@hotmail.com
www.afterfostercare.tk

Open Letter to Ontario's Minister of Children and Youth Services, Marie Bountrogianni

Wednesday, April 27, 2005

Dear Marie Bountrogianni,

Since the Ontario Ombudsman, Andre Marin has launched an investigation of Children's Aid Societies (CAS) for requiring parents to relinquish custody of their children to CAS's in order to receive services they urgently require, the National Post (April 27, 2005) has paraphrased you as saying that you have your regional ministry offices checking with CAS's to see how often this is actually happening.

I strongly urge you to request from the staff within your regional offices who will be conducting this survey to also consult with the families and children affected by these decisions since, as you are already aware, the CAS's have a vested interest in the outcome of Andre Marin's investigation. This is verified by the fact that the Ministry has recently offered incentives to the various CAS's to increase the number of adoptions by fifteen percent, hence the urgency of this request.

I hope to hear from you regarding this matter.

Quotes of reference:

**(Marie Bountrogianni, Minister of Children and Youth Services,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES - Wednesday 27 October 2004 - 16:30pm
http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/estimates/E013.htm)**

If that society is representative of all of the societies, or of most of the societies, then we do have a problem in how we are running our children's aid societies. This is not a secret; the children's aid societies themselves have talked to me about this and have said that the funding formula is conducive to increased deficits because it's funded on the number of children you take away. Therefore, you know that if you want to hire more staff or do different things, you've got to take away more kids. It's not as blatant as that; no one has actually admitted or said, "We're taking kids away to increase our budgets," but they have said that the funding formula is not conducive to other results. We are definitely looking at that. That's why we have a child welfare secretariat. Again, Bruce from the Children's Aid Society of Toronto is seconded to give me recommendations. My understanding is that I will receive his report at the end of December, and the intent is to present the report in the new year to the people of Ontario and to act on it immediately.

(Peter Dudding, Executive Director of Child Welfare League of Canada - 2003)

Current funding does not encourage reunification with adequate supports, or permanency with adequate supports, or prevention of child welfare placement in the first place. In fact, current funding frameworks create an incentive to bring children into care. In an era of reduced community social supports, often services are inaccessible to children and families until they come into care.

(Sandra Scarth, President – Adoption Council of Canada, 2003).

Currently, funding frameworks reflect a reduced emphasis on family preservation, and a clear devaluation of one of the traditional roles of child welfare agencies; that of providing services that focus on reduction of risk indicators, through community-based prevention and support services to families.

Sincerely,

John Dunn
Phone: (613) 228-2178
Web Site: www.afterfostercare.tk
Email: afterfostercare@hotmail.com

Cc: Andre Marin - Ontario Ombudsman
Cc: Shelly Martel – Child Welfare Critic
Cc: Judy Finlay – Chief Child Advocate
Cc: Various Media