



Protecting the vulnerable children of York Region

Presentation to
Council of the Town of Markham

November 22, 2010



York Region
Children's Aid Society

Why we're here

- To update you on the status of the funding crisis that threatens to put children at risk in York Region
- To ask for your support to ensure that an equitable solution to the current child welfare funding crisis is forthcoming.

York Region Children's Aid Society

- Mandated by the Child and Family Services Act to protect the children of York Region by providing services to at risk families and, when necessary, provide for the care of children.

How do we fulfill this mandate?

- We protect the most vulnerable children, build stronger families and, when all else has failed, act as parent
- We partner with teachers and others to ensure they respond when they see signs of neglect or abuse.

Serving the community

- Last year, York CAS received more than 11,000 calls from professionals and community members regarding suspected abuse or neglect of a child
- Over 4,000 were severe enough to merit investigation
- More than 5,000 children received child protection services and over 10,000 families received support; approximately 500 children were in the care of the Society.

The current situation

- Approximately eight CASs – including York CAS - are facing funding shortfalls (5.5%-18%) and struggling to continue to operate
- Agencies fear they will be unable to effectively protect children and prevent abuse
- One CAS recently took the unprecedented step to wind down operations – the agency is now operating under direct supervision of the Ministry.

The current situation (cont.)

- CASs have reviewed services, reduced costs, services and staffing but cannot continue to do so without placing children at risk or compromising services that help children remain with their families
- The situation this year is more acute
 - Funding has been flat-lined for 4 years, while historical debt has continued to accumulate
 - There is no mechanism to pay down historical debt

The first priority is the safety and protection of children

- The system is working and achieving the results intended by the 2000 and 2006 reforms; however the funding model is out of step
- The full funding model was not implemented and therefore does not adequately support desired outcomes and results in uneven distribution of funds across the province.

The disparity in funding

- York Region has the lowest per case funding in the GTA
- Third lowest level of funding per child population in Ontario
- Receives 40 cents on the dollar compared with Toronto.

What is the impact on children?

- Waitlist for service
- Inability to meet legislative requirements
- Increased apprehensions to ensure safety of children
- Increased number of children left in limbo situations
- Fewer adoptions and kinship placements

Working with government

- CASs are working with government to create a more sustainable child welfare system, but this takes time and a transition plan is essential
- Although the government has appointed a Commission, the work of the Commission is not yet complete and the recommendations have not yet been implemented.

Critical safety net

- CASs understand that Ontario's economy continues to face difficult times; however, child protection is a critical safety net and must be preserved.

What can you do?

- Contact our local MPP's and insist that funding for social services in York Region be equivalent to that enjoyed by other Regions
- Ask your colleagues to join us in advocating for equitable social service funding for our Region's most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you.

Questions?