

Ministry of Children and Youth
Services

Ministère des Services à
l'enfance et à la jeunesse

Assistant Deputy Minister's Office
Policy Development and Program
Design Division

Bureau du sous-ministre adjoint
Division de l'élaboration des
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June 11, 2015

Mary Lou Gignac
Registrar & Executive Director, College of Dietitians of Ontario
5775 Yonge Street
Suite 1810, Box 30
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Ms. Mary Lou Gignac,

On September 9, 2013, a Coroner's Inquest into the 2002 death of a young child who had involvement with the child protection system in Ontario began. In February 2014, the Inquest jury provided its verdict and recommendations to the Ontario government. Of the 103 recommendations, four focus on the duty to report child abuse and neglect as set out in the [Child and Family Services Act \(CFSA\)](#). The Inquest jury also recommended that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services further promote public and professional awareness to ensure suspected child abuse and neglect are consistently reported across the province.

In an effort to increase professional awareness and knowledge with respect to the "duty to report", I'd like to request that the College of Dietitians of Ontario share the following information with your respective college members.

The [Child and Family Services Act \(CFSA\)](#) recognizes that the public, including professionals who work with children, must promptly report any suspicions that a child is or may be in need of protection directly to a children's aid society. This is referred to as one's "duty to report".

The CFSA states that people working closely with children have a special awareness of the signs of child abuse or neglect, and a particular responsibility to report their suspicions. Under the Act, persons who perform professional or official duties with respect to children include:

- *Health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and psychologists;*
- *Teachers and school principals;*
- *Social workers and family counsellors;*

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- Religious leaders, including priests, rabbis and members of the clergy;
- Operators or employees of child care centres;
- Youth and recreation workers (not volunteers);
- Peace officers and coroners;
- Child and youth service providers and employees of these service providers; and
- Any other person who performs professional or official duties with respect to a child.

Professionals should never hesitate to report suspected child abuse or neglect. It is their legal duty to make a report to a children's aid society where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. Any professional or official who fails to report a suspicion of child abuse or neglect is liable upon conviction to a fine of up to \$1,000, if this information is obtained in the course of their professional or official duties. The CFSA specifies that a person who acts in accordance with the duty to report is protected from civil actions, unless the person acts maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the suspicion.

For contact and other information of all Ontario's children's aid societies, please visit the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies' website at: www.oacas.org. You can also locate a children's aid society in the local telephone listings or, where available, by dialing 411.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>.

The "Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Your Duty" brochure is a useful resource and can be located on the Ministry's website or through Publications Ontario free of charge. The brochure can be found at the following link: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/childrensaidthereportingchildabuseandneglect.pdf>.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jill Dubrick, Manager of the Prevention and Protection Services Unit, Child Welfare Secretariat, Ministry of Children and Youth Services at Jill.M.Dubrick@ontario.ca or 416-326-0273.

Sincerely,



Aryeh Gitterman
Assistant Deputy Minister

c. Marshall Moleschi, President, Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario

Denise Cole, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Human Resources Strategy Division,
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Jennifer Morris, Director, Child Welfare Secretariat, Ministry of Children and Youth
Services

Jill Dubrick, Manager, Child Welfare Secretariat, Ministry of Children and Youth
Services