



The Children's Aid Society  
OF HAMILTON

La Société d'aide à l'enfance  
DE HAMILTON

## **Stigma and Human Rights during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Hamilton Children's Aid Society's commitment to equitable service**

Hamilton Children's Aid Society continues our work to centre equity in our service to families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past few weeks, the agency has had an opportunity to broaden the conversation and deepen our commitment towards achieving equitable service for the children, youth and families we work with. As our community works hard to 'flatten the curve,' we know that we must consider families and communities that are disproportionately impacted by COVID 19.

We acknowledge that the Social Determinants of Health impact disadvantaged populations resulting in risk factors to their overall health. As we provide support to children, youth and families, we do so in partnership with essential service providers in our community to reduce these impacts.

Throughout the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, there has been a range of discriminatory, biased and stigmatizing incidents experienced by people of Asian descent, particularly Chinese Canadians. The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) published a statement on this issue and shared that other marginalized peoples and communities, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis, those who are impoverished, those with varying disabilities, racialized communities, Jewish people and those who belong to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-Spirit and Queer communities may experience heightened vulnerability and discrimination during this crisis.

Being aware of this informs the work we do, our ongoing understanding of equity and inclusion, and highlights the importance of protecting the human rights of the entire community. The staff at Hamilton Children's Aid Society renew our commitment to servicing families through cultural humility with core values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The impacts of stigma and discrimination are far-reaching. Not only are they experienced by the people who are directly impacted but also the broader community working and caring for those affected by COVID-19. We centre the human rights of families receiving service by our agency in decisions made throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Social Determinants of Health:** The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and their age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels. (World Health Organization) Social determinants don't just inform the conditions that people live in, but also affect people's quality of life and life expectancy.