

What is child abuse?

There are different kinds of child abuse:

1. *Physical abuse*

The intentional use of force on any part of a child's body that results in injury.

2. *Emotional abuse*

Anything that causes serious mental or emotional harm to a child, which the parent does not attempt to prevent or address.

3. *Sexual abuse*

The improper exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour.

4. *Neglect*

Any lack of care that may cause significant harm to a child's development or endangers the child in any way.

Reports of alleged child abuse should be made directly to the child welfare agency in the area where the child lives. There are 20 child welfare agencies throughout the province:

Annapolis County

Family and Children's Services of
Annapolis County
(902) 532-2337

Antigonish County

Antigonish District Office of
Community Services
(902) 863-3213

Cape Breton-Victoria County

Children's Aid Society of Cape Breton-Victoria
Glace Bay Office (902) 842-4010
North Sydney (902) 794-5100
Sydney Office (902) 563-3400

Colchester County

Children's Aid Society and Family Services of
Colchester County
(902) 893-5950

Cumberland County

Family and Children's Services of
Cumberland County
(902) 667-3336

Digby County

Digby District Office of Community Services
(902) 245-5811

Guysborough County

Guysborough District Office of Community
Services
(902) 533-4007

Halifax Regional Municipality

Children's Aid Society of Halifax
(902) 425-5420

Cole Harbour District Office of
Community Services
(902) 435-7472

Dartmouth District Office of
Community Services
(902) 424-3298

Sackville District Office of
Community Services
(902) 869-3600

Hants County

Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
(902) 798-2289

Inverness-Richmond County

Children's Aid Society Inverness-Richmond
(902) 625-0660

Kings County

Family and Children's Services
of Kings County
(902) 678-6176

Lunenburg County

Family and Children's Services of
Lunenburg County
(902) 543-4554

Native Families Living on Reserves

Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services
of Nova Scotia - Indian Brook Office
(902) 758-3553 or 1-800-263-8686

Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services
of Nova Scotia - Eskasoni Office
(902) 379-2433 or 1-800-263-8300

Pictou County

Children's Aid Society of Pictou County
(902) 755-5950

Queens County

Family and Children's Services of
Queens County
(902) 354-3525

Shelburne County

Children's Aid Society of Shelburne County
(902) 637-2337

Yarmouth County

Family and Children's Services of
Yarmouth County
(902) 742-0700


NOVA SCOTIA
Community Services

NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION OF
Social Workers

Building strong, healthy communities together

Child Welfare Services

Protecting Children by Supporting Families

What is child welfare?

Child welfare services are about protecting children from harm from abuse or neglect, while making every effort to keep families together. Child welfare services include child protection and supports for children in care, including foster care and adoption.

What kinds of services are provided?

In 2004, there were approximately 11,500 child welfare cases in Nova Scotia. About 840 of those involved court proceedings, and less than one per cent of all cases involved apprehending a child from the home.

Social workers make every effort to keep children at home, while working with parents to provide skills and supports.

Families often enter into voluntary arrangements to receive support. Through these voluntary agreements, families may participate in mediation, parenting skills, anger management, addictions treatment, or other kinds of counselling programs as needed.

The vast majority of court cases involve asking the court to order mandatory supervision and support while the child remains at home.

Who provides child welfare services?

In Nova Scotia, child welfare services are provided through both provincial government offices and community agencies. All child welfare services are provided under the legislation and regulations of the provincial *Children and Family Services Act*.

People providing child welfare services are registered social workers with specialized training and a bachelor or masters degree in social work. These may include child protection workers, adoption workers and others in the community. They are accountable to their professional association and must follow standards of practice and the social work code of ethics.

Why are some children removed from the home?

Taking a child from the home, either temporarily or permanently, is unusual and only done when a child is in imminent danger of abuse or neglect.

In all cases, the decision to remove a child from the home on an extended or permanent basis is made by a family court judge. A hearing must be held within five days if the child is removed by a social worker in an emergency situation.

What rights do families have?

Child protection services are very open to families. Parents have access to case files and notes, under the standards of freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation. Families that can not afford a lawyer are provided with one through legal aid services.

Why are child welfare matters confidential?

The *Children and Family Services Act* makes it illegal to publish any information that would identify a child involved in a child welfare matter. Information about specific child welfare investigations is only available to the family, social work officials and the court.

Confidentiality attempts to protect the child and family from stigma that might be harmful to their ability to improve their situation and overcome the problems that led to their involvement in child welfare.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect:

Everyone has the duty to immediately report even a suspicion that a child may be in need of protective services. Under the *Children and Family Services Act*, designated social workers in child welfare agencies are required to assess reports of alleged child abuse and neglect.