



Together for Our Kids

**Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville**  
**Statement of Equity**  
**October 2020**

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FCSLLG recognizes that, historically, many individuals and groups in our society have been oppressed, excluded, or marginalized, due to their backgrounds and personal characteristics. We acknowledge that the child welfare sector in Ontario has at times engaged in practices that did nothing to help such disadvantaged individuals and groups. This has contributed to an overrepresentation of Indigenous and other racialized children and youth, children from impoverished families, as well as youth with complex needs in a number of areas (mental health, disability, addictions, etc.) entering the care of Children's Aid Societies.

One of the child welfare sector's most significant challenges in the past has been its lack of understanding and awareness with respect to the heightened vulnerability and discrimination experienced by marginalized peoples and communities, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis, those who are impoverished, those with varying disabilities, racialized communities, and those who belong to the 2S+LGBTQ communities. Simply put, the system as a whole did not appreciate or recognize the unique cultural needs and identity characteristics of those it is supposed to serve.

Acknowledging these challenges, FCSLLG is devoted to doing better, starting with a commitment to better understand and address the journey of children, youth and families we care for, assist and empower. Being aware of this now informs the work we do and our ongoing understanding of equity and inclusivity. Accordingly, we intend to gather important identity-based data from our service recipients so that we can work with children, youth, and families and their communities to ensure the provision of culturally relevant services and supports, taking into account the unique strengths and needs of every family.

Our leadership declares its obligation to pursue the practices and behaviours required to achieve greater equity, diversity and inclusivity in its workplace and create an environment where our employees feel valued and where their backgrounds and personal characteristics are respected and encouraged to be brought to the forefront. We will strive to promote a workforce where all employees engage in critically reflective practices that help them identify how their life experiences, privilege, biases and worldview can impact their relationships and assessments of families.

We are committed to working with our communities to learn and be informed of the culturally relevant services and supports available for our recipients, and to advocate within our communities for such services when they are lacking. We further declare our commitment to our Signs of Safety practice framework as a mechanism to engage families as the experts of their realities, and to promote inclusivity of all voices in their families and community networks in creating and ensuring safety, wellbeing and a sense of belonging within their family and community for all children and youth in Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville.

We know that FCSLLG is a better place – and of better service to the children, youth and families we work with – as we strive for equity, diversity and inclusivity in our workplace and our practices.