

What are my rights?

- To be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- To decide what to tell your DCAS worker and family counselor.
- To know your worker's and counselor's qualifications.
- To ask questions and to receive answers.
- To understand and be involved in decisions that affects you and your children.
- To receive services that are sensitive to your culture, class, religious beliefs, language preference, ability, sexual orientation and gender.
- To lodge a complaint if you consider decisions concerning you and your children, or the services provided to you, are not satisfactory.



Partner Agencies:



Catholic Family Services of Durham
Services à la famille catholiques de Durham

707 Simcoe Street South
Oshawa, Ontario
L1H 4K5
905.725.3513
1.877.282.8932
info@cfsdurham.com
www.cfsdurham.com



1320 Airport Blvd.
Oshawa, Ontario
L1H 7K4
905.433.1551
durhamcas@durhamcas.ca
www.durhamcas.ca

Safer



Families

What is the Safer Families Program?

The Safer Families Program is a partnership between:

- Catholic Family Services of Durham
- AND
- Durham Children's Aid Society

Workers from both agencies are involved with the Safer Families Program. Our goal is to help children in families where there is conflict between parents/partners.

We are child and family centered. We want to work together with you to make sure everyone in your family is safe and well.

How does the Safer Families Program work?

When the Durham Children's Aid Society (DCAS) learns that a child might be in need of protection because of conflict in your home, the DCAS requests assistance from Catholic Family Services of Durham. A DCAS worker and a family counselor will arrange to meet with you and your family.

The DCAS staff and family counselors are professionals who can help you make the changes you want to make.

What happens next?

At the first meeting, the DCAS worker will need to ask you and your children questions. The role of the family counselor is to support you and to be a resource for you.

The DCAS worker and the family counselor will work together with you to find ways to keep everyone safe.

Even if the DCAS does not continue to be involved, you can continue to see the family counselor on your own.

The Safer Families Program is voluntary. You can end your involvement at any time. If the DCAS still has concerns about the safety of your children, they will stay involved, without the family counselor.

Confidentiality

Everything you talk about with the DCAS worker and the family counselor is kept private and confidential, with the following exceptions:

- If you are clearly at risk to yourself or someone else. For instance, if your worker or counselor thinks you might harm yourself or harm someone else, then the team needs to call others to ensure everyone is safe.
- If a child under the age of 16 has been abused in the past, or is in need of protection now from physical or sexual abuse, serious emotional abuse, or neglect. This includes times when a child is being exposed to violence or abuse in their home. It also includes times when an adult tells us they were abused as a child, and the person who abused them might still be dangerous to children now.
- If a judge orders information from your sessions to be released during legal proceedings. Files can be subpoenaed and family counselors and DCAS workers may be required to testify in court.
- If you tell your family counselor or DCAS worker you were abused by a professional who is a member of a profession that is regulated by the Health Professionals Act (such as a medical doctor or psychologist).
- If you give us permission in writing.



The Safer Families Program has been serving the Durham Region since 2007. Durham Regional Police report an average of 13 incidents of domestic violence per day.¹

We believe that addressing the domestic conflict in the home through counseling provided by the Safer Families Program may reduce the likelihood of families becoming involved with DCAS again for domestic violence.

Early intervention can make a difference!

¹ Statistics from the 2011 Durham Regional Police Annual report