



Submission regarding Bill 89, Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016.

by the undersigned members of the Children in Limbo Task Force:

In the 2015 Review of the Ontario *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), the Ministry of Children and Youth Services stated that, “the 2015 Review focused on two areas: improving outcomes for children and youth, and **modernizing and clarifying the language of the Act.**” (pg.5)

We are happy to see that the terms “society ward” and “Crown ward” are no longer used. “Instead, the new Act refers to children who are in “interim society care” or “extended society care.” The new Act also does not refer to children “being abandoned” or to “runaways.” (Part V)

As an extension of this work, we would like to see that the terms **“apprehension,” “apprehend,” “commitment,” “committed” and “custody”** also be removed from the new *Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016.*

Every organization has a culture, and the language used within its services reflects that culture. The words used portray the attitudes of the organization’s administration and staff, attitudes that permeate services. Words greatly affect how the community regards the organization, and how clients regard themselves. The self images, development and achievements of children and youth in the care of this province are very much influenced by the language and attitudes of the system in which they find themselves, through no fault of their own. It is time to modernize and humanize the language by eliminating demeaning terms such as “apprehend” and “custody,” thus effecting a positive change to the Act and to the culture in which we all live.

This Task Force recommends that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services:

1. Completes its review of the language of the new ACT in order to ensure that terms associated with criminality are replaced with non-discriminatory terms.
2. Ensures that any decision, regulation, directive or service based upon the ACT be exercised in a manner consistent with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, on *Katellynn’s Principle*, on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and on the *Human Rights Code*.
3. Applies the “Child Rights Impact Assessment” developed by UNICEF to future 5-year reviews of this legislation and to re-writes of any other legislation, regulation or directive.

Please see the three appendices:

- A list of the discriminating terms as found in the new Act.
- Our Submission “Modernizing the Language of the CFSA,” December 10th, 2014.
- Our Recommendations to the Ministry regarding the Third Review of the CFSA, 2015.



Respectfully Submitted March 6th, 2017.

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