

Helping Kids Be Safe

# When Children are Removed by Child and Family Services

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**



## Helping Kids Be Safe

Keeping children safe is the main purpose of Child and Family Services (CFS) in Manitoba. The Metis CFS system supports the safety of children. When parents/guardians are not able to provide a safe and healthy home for their children, CFS may become involved. Removing children from their home is always a last resort, but is sometimes necessary to keep children safe.



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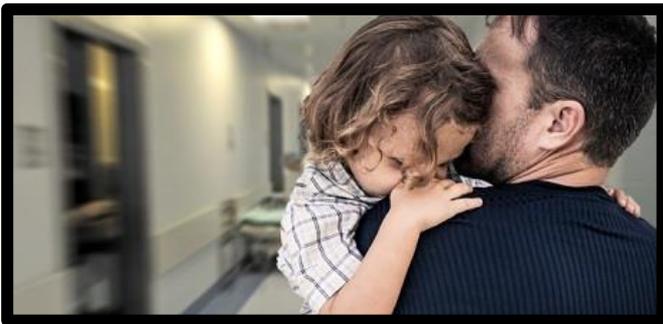
### **What does an “Apprehension by CFS” mean?**

When CFS removes a child(ren), it is called an apprehension. This means CFS takes custody of your child(ren) to protect them.

### **Why did CFS take my children?**

If your child(ren) have been removed, talk to your CFS worker about the reason. Children that need protection are removed for many reasons. Some may include:

- The child has been abused or neglected;
- There has been a death of a parent/caregiver;
- The parents are causing the child harm;
- The parents cannot care for or meet the needs of their child(ren.)



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### **What happens after my children have been apprehended?**

When CFS needs to find a safe place for your child, we will always explore placement in the following order:

- With a parent;
- With a relative;
- Culturally appropriate community care;
- In a foster home or emergency placement setting;
- In another safe place.

At times, the circumstances may require CFS to place the child in an emergency placement setting while they explore these stated options. Note: The agencies make every effort to keep siblings together wherever possible, but placement availability and size of sibling groups may impact this decision.

When your child(ren) are in care, CFS staff must:

- Make sure your children get proper care, protection and education;
- Tell you why your children were taken into care;



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- Give you court documents that tell you when your court hearing is;
- Arrange visits for you and your child(ren) (unless a court order prevents it);
- Go to the court to explain to the judge why your children are in need of protection and how the agency can help support you to address these concerns.

### **When will I be able to see my children?**

In most cases, you can ask your CFS worker to set up a visit right away. The visit may be supervised by CFS. CFS knows it is important for children to see their parents and for parents to see their children.

If CFS sets up a time for you to visit your children, you should do your best to attend, even if you are upset with CFS for apprehending your children. It's important to focus on what your children need during this time.

### **How long will my children be in care?**

The amount of time your children are in CFS care depends on the time that it takes to address the concerns that presented safety risks to your children.



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There are three types of orders issues by the court:

1. **Supervision Order (SO)** – Your child(ren) can reside with you while they are closely supported by CFS to follow a conditional safety plan that you and the agency present to the court.
2. **Temporary Order (TO)** – While your child(ren) are placed in CFS care, you can work with the agency toward creating a safe environment for your children to return home to. Temporary Orders can be granted for 6 months to one year at a time but can be renewed if more time is deemed necessary.
3. **Permanent Order (PO)** – According to the CFS legislation followed by the courts; after a period of time where temporary orders have been exhausted, the courts will expect agencies to develop permanent planning to ensure stability for your children.

When the courts order permanent guardianship to be granted to our agencies, we are responsible to provide a long-term caregiving home where your child can experience stability preferably with extended family or in a culturally relevant setting.

Our expectation would be that any permanent plans of guardianship would include continued contact with the birth family wherever possible and would receive support in the placement plan by the parent. Our agencies are committed to keeping families together through our Metis Connect Program even when it is

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determined that children cannot return to their parents' home.

And while Permanent Orders may be granted by the courts, our agencies are committed to continue contact with the birth family wherever possible and to support parent to continue on their healing journey.

### **What do I need to know about Court?**

CFS will attend to court to explain to the judge the reasons your children were removed from your care.

- You should get legal help (a lawyer) as soon as possible;
- If you cannot afford a lawyer, Legal Aid Manitoba may be able to help. Call 1-800-261-2960 or go to the website at: [www.legalaid.mb.ca](http://www.legalaid.mb.ca), or contact the University of Manitoba Law Centre at 204-985-5206 or the Legal Help Centre at 204-258-3096;
- This may be a very emotional time for you but it is necessary for you to attend to the courts so you are aware of any planning for your children and to hear the judge's decision. And while you may feel a sense of frustration and mistrust with your CFS worker, it is important to know that the safety of your children is their first commitment and working to support you in strengthening to care for your child is their next commitment.

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- If your children are 12 or older, they may be in the court room as the judge will want to hear what your child(ren) think of the plan being presented.
- Child protection hearings are part of Family Court. Only people directly involved are allowed in the courtroom to protect the confidentiality of your family matters.

## If I have more questions, who can I contact?

- Your CFS Worker
- Their Supervisor
- The Director of Service
- The Agency Executive Director



If you have spoken with all of the above people at the agency, and you still have concerns, you can contact the Metis Child and Family Services Authority.

### **Metis Child, Family & Community Services Agency**

2000 Portage Avenue – Winnipeg, MB  
204-927-6960 or 1-800-821-8793

### **Michif Child and Family Services Agency**

456 Fischer Avenue – The Pas, MB  
204-627-2060 or 1-855-627-2060

### **Metis Child and Family Services Authority**

204-150 Henry Avenue – Winnipeg, MB  
204-949-0220 or 1-855-779-1277

