

For Immediate Release
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FOSTER KIDS JUST WON SOME PRIVACY RIGHTS IN ONTARIO

Toronto, Ontario – On January 01, 2020, the privacy section of the Ontario *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, Part X*, officially went into effect. Among several key changes, those who have interacted with the foster care system will now be able to request access to their child welfare files and have the requests respected.

How does Part X affect you if you were in care?

- Right to request access to file and make corrections
- Control over how file is shared among service providers
- Right to complain with independent review
- Greater transparency including breach notifications

For more information:

1. Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services *Part X (Personal Information)* - <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/part-x.aspx>
2. Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario *CFSA FAQs* - <https://www.ipc.on.ca/cyfsa-faq/>
3. Child Welfare PAC *Privacy Backgrounder* - https://42bf8e9c-2414-4457-bac7-f47eccf53bff.filesusr.com/ugd/6548f4_9a21cfcaa0f945e0ac0f2b9ddeb4bf40.pdf

“If you were in foster care, you now have the right to your own history,” said Jane Kovarikova, Founder of the Child Welfare PAC and former youth-in-care. **“This is a positive step in the right direction, however, much more remains to be done if we are serious about privacy rights.”**

Currently, Part X does not define an access period to child welfare files. This means files remain searchable and accessible to child welfare staff indefinitely.

“Even with Part X, our private data remains vulnerable for life,” said Kovarikova. **“For example, we can never feel safe from phishing, hacking, and ransomware attacks, divorce court proceedings, adoption applications, employment and board positions in child welfare, and any malicious access to files long after aging-out.”**

The rights of youth involved with the criminal justice system are protected by sealing records after a defined access period (age 18), scrubbing names from central database searches, and only allowing third party access to files via the courts after the access period.

“Part X went part of the way by giving us access to our own stories; now it needs to protect our stories, especially after agencies cease providing services”.

What is the Child Welfare PAC:

The Child Welfare PAC is a federal not-for-profit that represents the interests of children raised by the government. The advisory board consists of professionals from academia, law, business, advocacy & public service who have lived experience in child protection systems. The complete advocacy agenda may be reviewed here: www.childwelfarepac.com

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