

In our November newsletter: National Child Day, French Language Services Commissioner's Annual Report to be released on Dec. 7, new job opportunities, and more

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National Child Day 2021: Appreciating young people and committing to uphold their rights

French Language Services Commissioner's Annual Report coming December 7

Modernization of the French Language Services Act

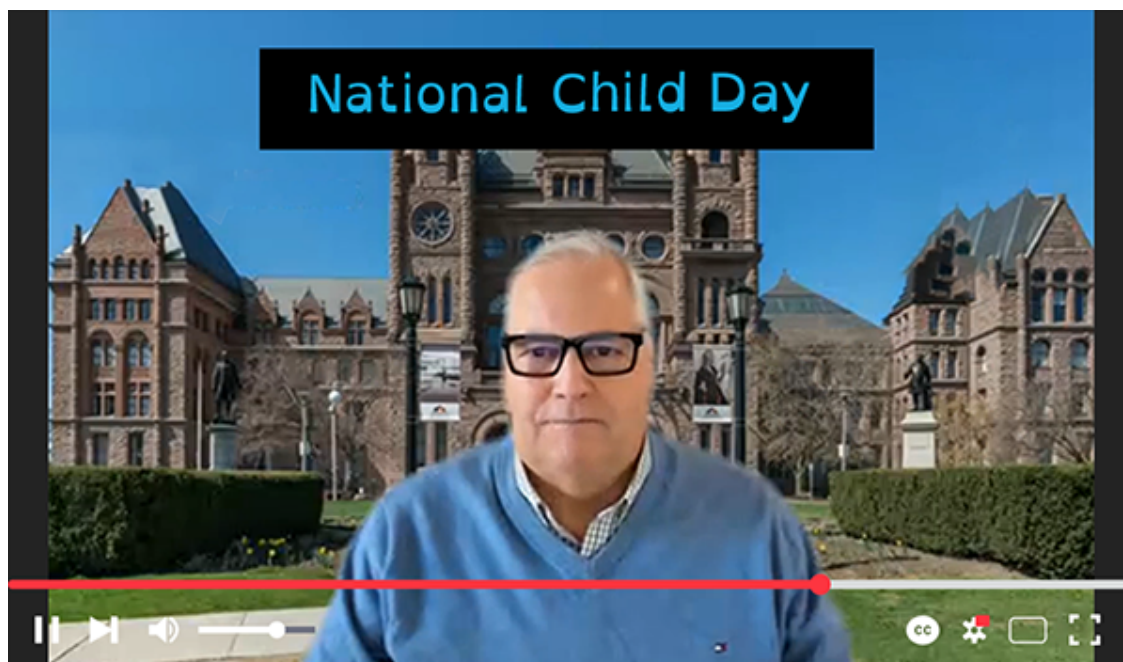
Fairness in the public sector: How we help

Here, there and (virtually) everywhere

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Work with us! Openings for Early Resolutions Officers and more

NATIONAL CHILD DAY 2021: APPRECIATING YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMITTING TO UPHOLD THEIR RIGHTS



November 20 is National Child Day, which celebrates Canada's commitment to upholding the dignity and rights of all children and youth, as set out by the 54 articles of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#).

Ombudsman Paul Dubé joined others in sending his message of thanks and appreciation to children and youth in Ontario and across the country for the resilience they've shown over the course of the pandemic.

"The huge changes that you've had to make to the way you live, from the way you've had to learn, to your ability to see and hang out with your friends, have not gone

unnoticed,” he said. “I want you to know that everything you did, big or small, to help us all through this pandemic has made a contribution to keeping us safe and healthy.

I know you’re looking forward to getting back to doing the things you love. My wish is for you to be able to do all of these things safely and enjoyably, with a renewed hope for the bright potential your future holds. My commitment to you is to continue listening to you, upholding your rights, and making sure that you are treated fairly.”

[Click here to watch the Ombudsman’s message.](#)

Also to mark National Child Day, as well as the 30th anniversary of Canada’s ratification of the UNCRC, the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA), of which our Office is a member, issued a statement urging Canadians to call on their governments to safeguard the rights of children and youth.

In particular, CCCYA president Lisa Broda, Saskatchewan’s Advocate for Children and Youth, said that Section 43 of Canada’s Criminal Code, which legally permits corporal punishment of children, should be repealed.

FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES **COMMISSIONER’S ANNUAL REPORT** **COMING DECEMBER 7**



French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke will table her second Annual Report, covering the period from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021, on December 7 at Queen’s Park. The report highlights the work of our French Language Services Unit and includes the Commissioner’s recommendations to improve

services in French across Ontario.

Watch for our announcements on social media to find out how you can access the report and watch the Commissioner's press conference on our website.

Do you have a complaint about government services in French? Contact us via [phone](#), [email](#) or on [our website](#).

MODERNIZATION OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT

Government of Ontario  Gouvernement de l'Ontario	
French Language Services Act, 1986 Statutes of Ontario, 1986 Chapter 45 November 1986	Loi de 1986 sur les services en français Lois de l'Ontario de 1986 Chapitre 45 novembre 1986

On November 5, the Ontario government proposed amendments to modernize the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)*. In a [press release](#), the province stated: “The proposed modernized Act is part of a broader strategy to build capacity for French-language services in the province, including a cross-government approach to address shortages of French-speaking professionals in key sectors.”

French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke, who continues to emphasize the importance of planning across all provincial ministries for the effective delivery of French language services, tweeted that she welcomed “the news of the announced

reform of the *French Language Services Act* and will be reviewing all the proposed changes in detail and with great interest.”

The proposed amendments to the FLSA are listed under [Schedule 13 of Bill 43](#).

FAIRNESS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: HOW WE HELP



Since 1975, our Office has worked to help Ontarians resolve their issues with their government.

To do this, we focus on our core values: **F**air treatment, **A**ccountable administration, **I**ndependence and impartiality, and **R**esults. These values guide our work every day as we help Ontarians tackle problems with government and public sector bodies. Our vision is a government that treats its citizens fairly, transparently and respectfully – and we have excellent co-operation from the bodies we oversee as we work to resolve complaints efficiently and effectively.

Do you have questions about how our Office works, what an Ombudsman is, or what happens when you submit a complaint? The [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on our website answers the most common inquiries we receive.

You can find much more information about our Office [on our FAQ page](#) – or [contact us](#) if you have a question or concern.

HERE, THERE AND (VIRTUALLY) EVERYWHERE!



Sharing our investigation expertise with other Canadian ombuds

On November 30, our Children and Youth Unit hosted a webinar for members of the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman (CCPO) – Canada's provincial and territorial ombudsmen – to discuss how we help vulnerable young people living in residential care. Senior staff emphasized the importance of ensuring a young person's voice is heard, and explained how the Ombudsman can suggest improvements to safeguard the rights of children and youth.

To learn more about the work of the Children and Youth Unit, [visit our Children and Youth page](#) or see our "[Selected Cases](#)" page to read more about how we have helped young people experiencing issues with the child welfare system.

Presentation to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care adjudicators

On November 22, French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke gave a virtual presentation to adjudicators from several of the province's health tribunals – such as the Health Services Appeal and Review Board. She provided information about her role and the work of our French Language Services Unit, and emphasized the importance of effective planning for services in French and recruiting bilingual staff.



Inauguration of the Université de l'Ontario français

French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke appeared in a [short video](#) (in French only) as part of the inauguration of the Université de l'Ontario français on November 12. "The Université de l'Ontario français has been a longstanding goal for Francophones in Ontario," she said. "I wish the university great success in its crucial role of training the bilingual workforce of tomorrow. Services in French depend on it."



Annual general meeting of the Association des Ombudsmans et des Médiateurs de la Francophonie

Ombudsman Paul Dubé and French Language Services Commissioner Kelly Burke attended the annual general meeting of the Association des Ombudsmans et des

Médiateurs de la Francophonie (AOMF) virtually on November 25.

During the meeting, Commissioner Burke was elected as a member of the Board of Directors. She stated on social media: "I'm proud to represent the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman internationally on the AOMF board. I will work with this important organization to promote its objectives and Ontario's role in the French-speaking oversight world."

HOW WE HELPED – CASE SUMMARIES



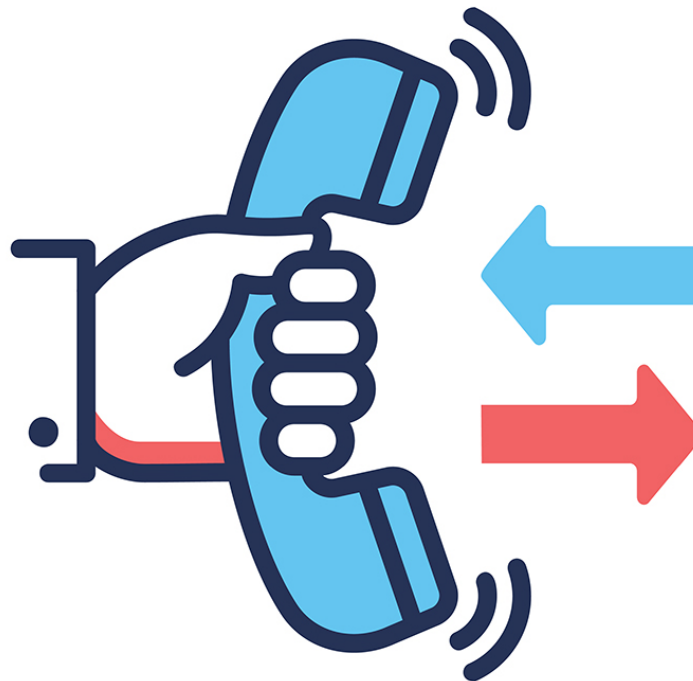
Duty to report

A mother complained to our Office that her son's school didn't notify the local children's aid society (CAS) about allegations he made to his teacher that his grandmother had hurt him.

In response, we contacted the CAS, which agreed to connect with the school and arrange a presentation to school staff about their duty to report* under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*.

**In Ontario, it is the law to [report suspected child abuse](#). If you have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is or may be in need of protection, it is your duty to contact your local children's aid society.*

Click [here](#) to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth



[Your call is important to us](#)

A Francophone woman contacted our Office to report that she had to be transferred twice on the phone before she could speak to a bilingual staff member on a call to her local Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) agency. She was seeking physiotherapy treatment for her father.

After we raised the issue with the regional Ontario Health agency, it confirmed that corrective action had been taken by the HCCSS agency. This included improved training for staff on handling calls in French, and the addition of questions about French services to its satisfaction survey. We communicated these actions to the woman, who was pleased with the outcome.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning French language services](#)



[Kept in suspense](#)

A driver whose licence was suspended as a result of a criminal charge successfully appealed the charge and had it removed from his record. He was told by ServiceOntario staff that the licence would be reinstated within 2-3 days. He complained to us when, several weeks later, he was charged with driving with a suspended licence and his car was impounded.

Our inquiries with the Ministry revealed that the timeframe for processing licence reinstatements in these situations is actually 15 business days. However, this timeframe was not communicated to the public or even ServiceOntario and court staff who deal with public inquiries. After we raised this with the Ministry, it added information about the processing timeframe to its website and advised ServiceOntario and court staff.

We also suggested that the Ministry's notices to drivers include information about its free online service for checking the status of their licence. The Ministry agreed to reimburse the man for half of the costs he incurred when his car was impounded.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems](#)

[WORK WITH US: JOB OPENINGS](#)



Our Office is on the lookout for talented individuals to join our team of Early Resolution Officers ... but what does “**Early Resolution Officer**” mean? Members of the public who contact the Ombudsman with a question or complaint will most likely interact with an “ERO.” As the first point of contact, a large part of their work is to help Ontarians by resolving their complaints or answering their questions as efficiently as possible, often through referral or helping them connect with the right people.

EROs are quick thinkers, resourceful and very good listeners. They help people who contact us define their problems by asking questions, reviewing documents and researching relevant policies and programs. EROs can help with complaints about nearly all provincial government and public sector services, including ministries, municipalities, universities, school boards, services for children and youth in care, and services provided in French.

Not a complaint? No problem! EROs can also answer general questions about government and public sector services and point people in the right direction. EROs help thousands of Ontarians each year. It makes for busy days and full caseloads, but they are experts at navigating bureaucracy and cutting through red tape to find the right answers.

Like the sound of this work? [Click here or below to take a look at our latest ERO job postings.](#)

- [Early Resolutions Officer](#)
- [Early Resolutions Officer \(French Language Services Unit\)](#)
- [Early Resolutions Officer \(Children and Youth Unit\)](#)

- [Investigator \(Children and Youth Unit\)](#)

File a complaint or contact us here



The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards, as well as child protection services and French language services. Ombudsman Paul Dubé was reappointed for a second five-year term, beginning on April 1, 2021.

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