

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

## Recognizing our privilege

For many decades, we have been privileged to serve and help children, youth, and families in Brantford, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and Six Nations of the Grand River. We understand that with privilege comes the responsibility to treat every child, youth and family with respect, equity and cultural sensitivity. Regrettably, we have not always achieved these standards consistently, and have not sufficiently appreciated the distinctive and diverse stories, lived experiences, and cultural heritage of every child, youth, family, and community we support or every individual we work with.

## Examining our past

To move forward, we acknowledge a past and present that includes unearned privilege, colonialism, racism, classism, discrimination and other forms of systemic oppression. We recognize that some of our policies and practices are unjust and oppressive, and our actions did not always prioritize cultural safety or equity for the people we were supporting and helping. As a result, Indigenous and Black children and youth and marginalized minorities have been disproportionately overrepresented in the child welfare system for many years and have suffered harm and trauma due to our interventions in their lives. Additionally, we have not always created a welcoming environment for employees from diverse backgrounds and therefore, not every member of the CFSGE team has felt respected, heard or valued.

## Shaping our way forward

We commit to demonstrating that we value every child, youth, family and community we serve by working with them in inclusive ways that celebrate their diversity. We embrace anti-oppressive practice principles and will work from a strength-based perspective to ensure each child, youth and family is treated with dignity, compassion and respect. We are committed to hearing their stories, understanding their needs and aspirations, and working alongside them to realize a vision of ensuring that 'children and youth are safe and thriving in their families.' We recognize the importance of every CFSGE employee and will continuously strive to foster a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. We will work hard to cultivate a safe and welcoming environment where everyone feels they belong, are valued and are empowered to do their best work.

## We commit to:

- Fostering an inclusive organization where individuals who have been historically, persistently or systemically marginalized are treated with equity and respect.
- Proactively listening and responding to the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of children, youth, families, staff, caregivers, volunteers and community partners.
- Infusing equity, diversity and inclusion into the fabric of CFSGE, including our culture, workplace, processes, practices and policies.
- Cultivating a Board and staff composition that reflects the cultural diversity of our community and the diverse population we serve; and where equitable opportunities and outcomes exist for every employee.
- Recognizing and valuing the unique contributions of our staff, volunteers and caregivers.
- Addressing systemic inequities and dismantling all forms of oppression, discrimination and racism within CFSGE.
- Creating a culture of belonging where individuals who are curious, courageous, and committed will thrive and where everyone feels welcome and included.

**Each of us is unique and our differences make CFSGE a stronger organization.**