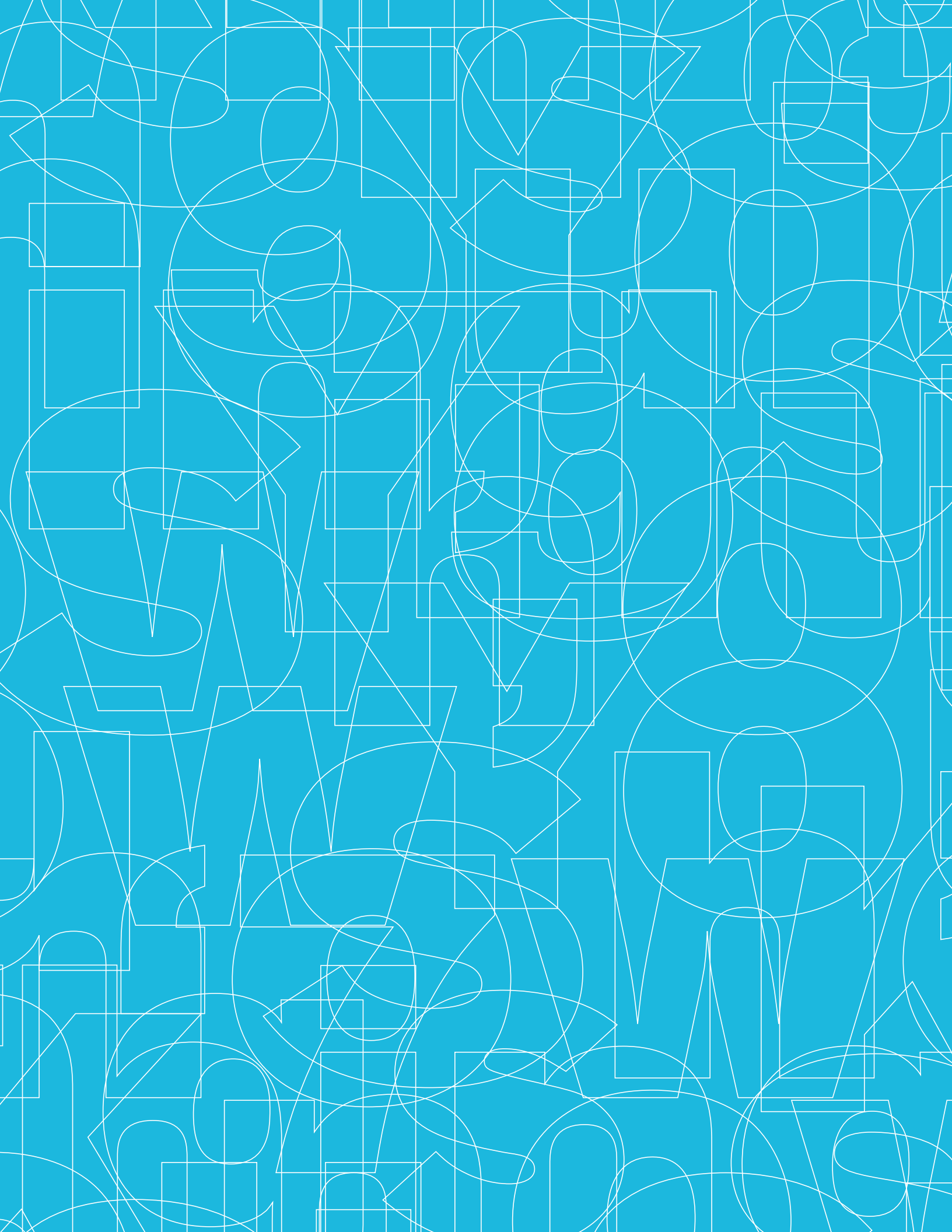

Do you know a child who is in the care of a Children's Aid Society?

Are you concerned about their financial and educational future?
Here are 7 things you should know.

May 2010

'7 Things You Should Know'



Overview

When a child goes into the care of a Children's Aid Society for a significant period of time, we naturally think about their future.

What will happen to them when they leave high school? Will they have enough to live on while they make the adjustment to adulthood? Will they be able to continue their education?

This fact sheet tells you about financial benefits from the government for children in Ontario, with special emphasis on programs that build savings for a child in care. It also explains some of the changes that happen to benefits when a child goes into care.

Child Benefits

1. Government of Canada

Canada's federal government gives benefits to most families with children through the **Canada Child Tax Benefit**. Lower income parents receive the **National Child Benefit Supplement**. These benefits are paid monthly, and can add up to \$3,400 a year to a family's income.

When a child goes into care, the family no longer receives federal child benefits. Instead, the money goes to the Children's Aid Society to help pay for the child's care.

Since 2006, the Government of Canada has also been paying Canadian families \$100 a month for each child under the age of six. This is called the **Universal Child Care Benefit**. When a child goes into care, the family no longer receives this benefit. The money goes to the Children's Aid Society.

Children's Aid Societies are required to set up a **Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)** for each child under age six who is in care longer than six months. The Universal Child Care Benefit must be deposited in the child's RESP.

Learn more about Registered Education Savings Plans in Point 4.

2. Government of Ontario

The provincial government also gives a benefit to lower-income families with children. It is called the **Ontario Child Benefit**. It is worth up to about \$90 a month for each child. The benefit will increase over the next 5 years as part of the Ontario government's poverty reduction strategy. Families receive this money together with their federal child benefit payments.

When a child goes into care, the family no longer receives the **Ontario Child Benefit**. The same amount of money goes to the Children's Aid Society. It is called the **Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent**. The society uses it to pay for two special programs.

The Activities Program provides recreation, education, and cultural and social events for children in care.

The Savings Program is for youth in care between 15 and 17, when they are thinking about their future and preparing to live on their own. The Children's Aid Society puts aside up to 3 years of the Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent payments as savings for each youth in care. That could amount to about \$3,300, plus interest, that the youth will receive at age 18. The society also gives the youth training in how to manage the money.

3. Disability benefits

If a child has a severe disability, the government of Canada pays a tax-free benefit of about \$200 a month to the family caring for the child. This is called the **Child Disability Benefit**. The child's disability must meet the same criteria as that for receiving the Disability Tax Credit. The benefit comes to the family as part of their monthly Canada Child Tax Benefit payment.

When a severely disabled child goes into care, the family no longer receives the Child Disability Benefit. Instead, the benefit is included in the Children's Special Allowance that goes to the Children's Aid Society caring for the child.

The government of Ontario's **Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities** program also helps parents with some of the extra costs of caring for their child. It includes a monthly payment, plus coverage for drugs, dental, hearing, and vision care, as well as assistive devices.

These payments stop when a child goes into care for a longer period of time.

All students who have permanent disabilities can qualify for Canada Study and Access grants if they apply to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Learn more in Point 5: Scholarships, Bursaries, and Grants.

Education Benefits

4. Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs)

Registered Education Savings Plans, or ‘RESPs’, help families put money aside to pay for a child’s education after high school. A child can have any number of plans, but they can only add up to \$50,000 in total. The plans can stay open for up to 36 years.

The Canadian government encourages families to save for their children’s education by matching some of the money they put aside. This is called the **Canada Education Savings Grant**.

The government will give a grant of 20% of whatever they save, up to \$2,500 a year. Low- and middle-income families receive a higher grant on the first \$500. The limit per child is \$7,200. That means a family might get up to \$7,200 in grants added to each child’s educational savings. To qualify for the full grant, the family must put their share of the money in the account before the child turns 18.

Children who are in care receive extra help getting started, with a larger grant of 40% on the first \$500 deposited in their RESP. The money goes into the RESP automatically.

In Ontario, Children’s Aid Societies are required to set up RESPs for children under six who are in care longer than six months. That’s because their Universal Child Care Benefit, which now goes to the society, must be deposited in an RESP. These children’s RESPs will receive \$1,200 a year from the Universal Child Care Benefit, plus \$340 from the Canada Education Savings Grant. The contributions stop when the child turns six.

The federal government does even more for lower income children whose families receive the National Child Benefit Supplement. Any child born in 2004 or later receives a \$500 grant in the first year and \$100 a year after that. This is called the **Canada Learning Bond**. The most they can receive is \$2000. Children who have RESPs can receive these grants up until the age of 15.

Did You Know?

Children who are in care can receive the Canada Learning Bond just like other children do, if their family is eligible for the National Child Benefit Supplement. All they need is an RESP account, even if there is no money deposited in it yet.

If you are concerned about a child who is in care, even just temporary care, find out if they have an RESP account. If they don’t, they may be missing out on government grants that will build their educational savings.

5. Scholarships, bursaries, and grants

Young people who are, or who have been, in the care of a Children's Aid Society, are eligible for special scholarships, bursaries, and grants. These awards might come from government or private foundations. They are meant to help with the cost of post-secondary studies.

Ken Dryden Scholarship

Who it's for: Current or former youth in care who show great achievement and promise.

What it's for: To pay tuition, either \$3,000 or 80% of the yearly cost, whichever is less.

How long it lasts: Until the youth gets an undergraduate degree or diploma, as long as they are making reasonable progress.

How to get it: Apply through Youth in Care Canada.

Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards

Who it's for: Current and former Crown wards who are eligible for a student loan under the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

What it's for: Tuition.

How long it lasts: For those in a one-year program, the grant covers tuition up to \$3,000.

For those in programs of 2 to 4 years, the grant covers 50% of tuition up to \$3,000.

How to get it: Apply for an OSAP student loan. Attach proof of Crown wardship. OSAP uses this information to decide if the student is eligible for the grant.

Crown Ward Post-Secondary Application Fee Reimbursement Program

Who it's for: Current or former Crown wards.

What it's for: The Ontario government pays back the student's application fee (a charge of \$296 to enrol in a college or university).

How long it lasts: The application fee is a one-time charge.

How to get it: Apply for an OSAP student loan. Attach proof of Crown Wardship. If the student qualifies for an Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards, the Ontario government will reimburse the application fee.

Clark Bursary Award

Who it's for: Current and former wards of Children's Aid Societies who are pursuing a college diploma or university degree.

What it's for: Student's discretion – there are no conditions.

How long it lasts: University students can get \$4,500 a year for up to 4 years. Community college students can get \$3,000 a year for up to 3 years.

How to get it: Apply through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. Applicants must:

- have the approval of their Children's Aid Society
- supply one personal reference in support of their application
- show financial need
- show potential for success.

Clark Graduation Award

Who it's for: Clark Bursary Award recipients who graduate from university or community colleges.

What it's for: This is a gift for successfully completing university or college.

How long it lasts: One-time gift.

How to get it: Is automatic on graduation.

Clark Grant Award

Who it's for: Current and former wards of Children's Aid Societies who are in employment and skills development programs.

What it's for: Tuition, equipment, tools, and other needs.

How long it lasts: One-time award of \$1,000.

How to get it: Apply through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. Applicants must:

- have the approval of their Children's Aid Society
- supply one personal reference in support of their application
- show financial need
- explain how the grant will help them reach their goals.

RONA Scholarship

Who it's for: Current and former youth in care who have not received a Clark Bursary.

What it's for: Student's discretion – there are no conditions.

How long it lasts: This is a one-time scholarship of \$3,000.

How to get it: Apply through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. Applicants must:

- have the approval of their Children's Aid Society
- supply one personal reference in support of their application
- show financial need
- show potential for success.

Canada Access Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities

Who it's for: Any student who meets the government of Canada's definition of "permanently disabled" and can show proof from a doctor. The student must also show financial need as assessed by the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

What it's for: Costs of accommodation, tuition, books, and other education expenses.

How long it lasts: Up to \$2,000 in each year of study, depending on financial need.

How to get it: Apply for an OSAP student loan. Attach proof of disability. OSAP also decides how much the student will receive, taking into account their other sources of income.

Canada Study Grant for the Accommodation of Students with Permanent Disabilities

Who it's for: Any student who meets the government of Canada's definition of "permanently disabled" and needs special supports for attending school.

What it's for: This grant pays for tutors, oral or sign interpreters, attendant care for studies, special transportation to and from school, part of the cost of testing for a learning disability, note takers, readers, and brailers.

How long it lasts: The maximum grant per school year is \$8,000.

How to get it: Apply for an OSAP student loan. Attach proof of disability. OSAP decides on the grant based on disability needs. It puts limits on some costs.

6. Loans and grants through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)

OSAP loans help post-secondary students pay for tuition, books, fees, living costs, and transportation. The loans are interest-free until the student graduates. OSAP also provides non-taxable grants, bursaries, scholarships, and fellowships.

OSAP is a needs-based program. It takes into account the student's educational costs, how much their parents or spouse can help, and the student's own income and assets.

To be eligible to apply for OSAP, all students must be:

- Canadian citizens or landed immigrants
- residents of Ontario
- enrolled in an approved post-secondary institution
- enrolled in an approved program
- taking 60% of a full course load (40% if disabled).

Students who are, or have been, in care may benefit from applying to OSAP in these ways:

- Crown wards may receive up to \$3,500 in scholarships and bursaries before OSAP reduces the amount of student loan they are eligible for.
- Savings from the Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent will not reduce the OSAP loans available to Crown wards.
- OSAP does not count withdrawals from RESPs set up by Children's Aid Societies on behalf of Crown wards when determining eligibility for OSAP loans.
- Some awards, such as the Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards, are only available to students who apply for OSAP.

Help for Youth Leaving Care

7. Extended Care and Maintenance

When a Crown ward or youth in customary care nears the age of 18, the Children's Aid Society can enter into a special agreement to keep helping them until they are 21. This is called Extended Care and Maintenance. Each Children's Aid Society pays the youth a monthly living allowance and/or provides support.

The types of support a CAS might give include:

- transportation allowances, including travel back and forth from university or college
- clothing allowances
- first and last month's rent
- one-time set-up costs
- health and dental coverage.

Both the youth and the society sign the Extended Care and Maintenance agreement, and renew it annually. The agreement outlines the youth's independence goals, including education and work goals.

Program and Contact Information

Program	General Information	Contact Information
Canada Child Tax Benefit / Children's Special Allowance	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/cctb/menu-eng.html	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/cntct-eng.html 1-800-387-1193
Universal Child Care Benefit	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/uccb-puge/menu-eng.html	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/uccb-puge/cntct-eng.html 1-800-387-1193
Ontario Child Benefit	http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/financialhelp/ocb/index.aspx	For your local Service Ontario Centre see: http://www.ontario.ca/en/services_for_residents/ONT04_020859 E-mail the Ministry: mcsinfo@mcys.gov.on.ca 1-866-821-7770
Canada Pension Plan Children's Benefits	http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/cpp/childrepension.shtml	For your local Service Canada Centre see: http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-search.cgi?app=hme&ln=eng 1-800-277-9914
Child Disability Benefit	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/dsblty-eng.html	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/cntct-eng.html 1-800-387-1193
Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities	http://www.cdrcp.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=108&Itemid=228&lang=en	For your local Service Ontario Centre see: http://www.ontario.ca/en/services_for_residents/ONT04_020859 By e-mail: https://www.ontario.ca/en/contacts/feedback/index.htm 1-800-267-8097
Registered Education Savings Plans	http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/saving/resp/index.shtml	For your local Service Canada Centre see: http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-search.cgi?app=hme&ln=eng E-mail HRSDC: cesp-pcee@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca 1-800-622-6232
Canada Education Savings Grant	http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/saving/cesg/index.shtml	For your local Service Canada Centre see: http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-search.cgi?app=hme&ln=eng E-mail HRSDC: cesp-pcee@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca 1-800-622-6232

Program and Contact Information cont'd.

Program	General Information	Contact Information
Canada Learning Bond	http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/saving/clb/index.shtml	Your Local Service Canada Centre see: http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-search.cgi?app=hme&ln=eng E-mail HRSDC: cesp-pcee@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca 1-800-622-6232
Ontario Access Grants for Crown Wards / Crown Ward Postsecondary Application Fee Reimbursement Program	http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/Plan_Grants_full_newapp_CW_12345.htm http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/students/ocwp.html	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at: 1-800-387-5514 E-mail: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/contact.asp OSAP: http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/contact_1.htm
Clark Bursary Award / Clark Graduation Award / The Clark Grant Award / RONA Scholarship	http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/awards.htm#MTO	OACAS, Toronto 416-987-7725 For your local CAS see: http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm
Ken Dryden Scholarship	http://www.youthincare.ca/work/	1-800-790-7074 (toll-free for youth in care) Telephone/Fax: 613-230-8945
Other CAS grants/awards	Individual Children's Aid Societies may offer their own grants/awards.	For your local CAS see: http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm
Canada Study Grant for the Accommodation of Students with Permanent Disabilities / Canada Access Grants for Students with Permanent Disabilities	http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/grant2.shtml#accom_perm_dis	http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/contact_fao_12.htm
Ontario Student Assistance Program	https://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/about.htm	http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/contact_fao_12.htm Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at: 1-800-387-5514

Program and Contact Information cont'd.

Program	General Information	Contact Information
Extended Care and Maintenance		Contact your local CAS. See: http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm
The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth	http://provincialadvocate.on.ca/main/en/about/aboutus.cfm Advocates for those receiving services under the Child and Family Services Act.	1-800-263-2841 E-mail: advocacy@provincialadvocate.on.ca

All website addresses were functional as of April 2010.

‘7
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