Peel is one of the most diverse regions in Ontario. All of Peel Children’s Aid’s work is guided by a commitment to diversity and anti-oppression and being respectful of others. Our job is to listen, respect and work with families to create strong and safe environments for children and youth.

We value the experience of parents and caregivers and provide services that are culturally sensitive. Peel CAS is committed to supporting marginalized and ethno-cultural communities. In order to do this we are committed to building knowledge of our diverse community which includes collecting and analyzing data.

Why is Race Data Important to Child Welfare Practice

- Peel CAS has a strong commitment to collecting data in order to inform service delivery
- Peel CAS serves a very diverse community
- There is increased an increased need for accountability and transparency in the child welfare sector
- New Ministry standards and eligibility emphasizes the need for good practice with racialized and Indigenous communities

Key terms

- **Race** is a socially constructed way of judging, classifying and creating difference among people on the basis of physical features such as skin colour (Ontario Human Rights Commission).

- **Racialized groups** can be understood as non-dominant ethno-racial communities who, through the process of racialization, experience race as a key factor in their identity and experience of inequality.

- **Culture** is the collective experiences, knowledge, traditions, values and beliefs that a group of individuals share. It can be understood as being fluid and ever-evolving, changing as the people and environment change. It can be shaped and evolved in many ways including, by language, religion, ethnicity, geography, gender, sexual orientation, family, politics, etc.

- **Religion** is a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

- **Ethnicity** is a category of people who identify with each other based on common language, ancestral, social, cultural, or national experiences.

- **Citizenship** is the fact or status of being to a particular place; the qualities that a person is expected to have as a responsible member of a community.
**Becoming an Ally**

Staff at Peel CAS receive Anti-Oppression training. Front-line staff and managers also have the opportunity to discuss diversity and anti-oppressive practice among peers in order to increase their ability to provide relevant services to Peel's diverse community through a series of Becoming an Ally sessions. The following practice recommendations were provided by participants at a session on the collection of race data in child welfare.

**How to Engage Families on Identity**
- ✓ Build rapport with the client, be authentic and genuine, create safety and allow the client to tell their story by asking open ended questions
- ✓ Observe items around the home: pictures, religious pictures, cultural artifacts
- ✓ Capture as much information as possible at the referral / investigation stage
- ✓ Provide context by letting the family know ‘why’ this information is important to Peel CAS such as ensuring appropriate service and supports.
- ✓ Understand the difference between race, culture, ethnicity

**How to Navigate Challenges Regarding Identity**
- ✓ Remind the client of confidentiality
- ✓ Respect the clients reactions, hesitations feelings of vulnerability and concerns
- ✓ Use emotional intelligence and refrain from being defensive.
- ✓ Be mindful of your position, power and social location in conversation about identity
- ✓ Acknowledge the clients past experiences that have led to challenges and discomfort

**Best Practice in Collecting Race Based Data**
- ✓ ALWAYS record data in People Profile and verify this information when cases are transferred
- ✓ View Data as being integral to informing our organizational service delivery
- ✓ Team leaders should ask about the identity of clients and encourage the completion of People Profile
- ✓ Use the identity information gathered for people profile to make culturally appropriate case decisions and referrals

**Questions for Reflection**
1. What supports do you need to better engage clients and record identity data?
2. How do you use your client’s information on identity to provide better service?
3. What challenges do you experience when you ask about identity? What will be helpful to navigate such conversations?