

Policy Name and Number:	1.6 Client Rights and Responsibilities
Source:	Best practice
Date Last Reviewed:	November 17, 2021
Approval or Last Revision:	October 29, 2025
Approved By:	Board of Directors

POLICY

Individuals receiving service at Family Service Toronto (FST) have both rights and responsibilities. FST protects the legal and ethical rights of clients and participants by informing and educating them about their rights and responsibilities in a variety of ways (e.g., posters in service locations, in written form, by personnel through the intake and assessment process, posting of this policy on FST's website). Clients and participants have the right to receive equitable treatments and to access services that are inclusive and responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity. All individuals are provided with the information necessary to make informed choices about using the service and programs of FST.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all personnel (employees, students, volunteers).

LIMITATIONS

Clients have the right to ask for a change of worker, however a limit of one request will be granted, when it is reasonable and an alternative exists. Requests that are discriminatory in nature will not be granted. (See policy on *Discriminatory Requests for Service*.)

PROCEDURES

1. Personnel will explain to clients their rights and responsibilities as a regular part of the intake and assessment process and will answer questions posed by clients.
2. Program Managers will ensure the client rights and responsibilities and privacy statements (below) are available in written form in English and French and the other major languages served by the program. A plain language version of each document will also be made available to effectively communicate with people who could benefit from it and translated, as appropriate.
3. Personnel will ensure they are familiar with FST's privacy and confidentiality policies and procedures so they can answer client's questions and assist clients in exercising their rights in regard to their record.
4. Personnel will ensure that each client signs a form to acknowledge they have received and understand the information provided. If a client is unable to read the information provided due to literacy, vision, language or other issues, staff will ensure that they have verbally reviewed the information and will document this and the client's acknowledgement in the client record.

5. In situations where service is provided by web-based technologies, this information will be sent to the client in advance of the first session, and staff will review it prior to the start of the first session and document this in the client record.



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO

For People. For Change.

CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Welcome to Family Service Toronto (FST) where we provide high quality service in an encouraging and supportive environment. Our staff will work with you to explore and understand the issues of concern to you and develop solutions. We consider you to be the expert in your own life experience. Together, you and your FST staff person will develop a plan to guide your work and an estimate of how much time it will take to accomplish your goals.

Service may be provided to you by a staff member employed by FST, a student or a volunteer who is supervised by an FST staff person. FST virtual and office business hours are typically Monday to Friday 9-5 pm. Your FST staff person can advise of services provided outside those hours.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You have rights. When you receive services from FST we will:

- Give you high-quality service
- Provide service free of harassment, discrimination or coercion
- Provide you with the information you need to make informed choices about your services and supports
- Treat you fairly, honestly and respectfully
- Discuss the risks, benefits and alternatives related to engaging in service
- Provide inclusive services that are responsive to and respectful of your cultural beliefs and practices
- Provide services and supports that meet your individual needs in the least restrictive or intrusive manner possible.
- Inform you of the limits of confidentiality related to service provision outlined in the Service Agreement
- Inform you of our procedure related to missed appointments outlined in the Service Agreement
- Give you information and support to help you make decisions
- If we can't help you, we will give you information about other organizations that may be able to help you
- Keep your information private and confidential, except in specific circumstances as described in FST's Privacy Statement
- Apply program rules and expectations consistently
- Provide service in offices that are safe, clean and accessible
- Discuss the progress of your service with you, including addressing frequent missed appointments
- When permitted by law, we will involve your family or legal guardians in making

- decisions about the services provided
- Hear your concerns or complaints about FST services and decisions without interference or reprisal
 - Respond to your concerns or complaints in writing and in a timely manner as outlined in the FST Complaint Policy

This is what we ask from you:

- Treat the staff and others at FST with courtesy and respect
- Maintain the privacy of other clients accessing FST services
- Actively participate in all aspects of your service, by providing information and documentation to FST staff as requested
- Inform staff of any accessibility needs or accommodations you require when providing service
- Let FST know 24 hours before if you can't keep an appointment
- Pay the agreed upon fee for programs that charge for service

HOW TO PROVIDE COMPLIMENTS OR MAKE A COMPLAINT

If you would like to provide us with a compliment or want to make a complaint about your service, please speak with the personnel member you are working with. If this is uncomfortable for you, you can speak to the person's supervisor. Please call our Service Access Unit at 416-595-9618 to be directed to the supervisor. Complaints regarding Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) guidelines and directives are outside of the scope of the FST Complaint policy.

You should know that FST does not tolerate discriminatory, threatening, harassing, or aggressive behaviours or actions in person, phone, email, online, by video conference or any other means. If these occur, they may be grounds for FST to terminate our relationship with you. The recording of interactions, by video or audio, with any personnel or another client, without the express knowledge and permission of all parties, is not permitted. If these occur, they may be grounds for FST to terminate our relationship with you.



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CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Your Rights and Responsibilities at Family Service Toronto (referred to as FST)

Your Rights – What You Can Expect

When you get help from Family Service Toronto (FST), you have rights.

FST will:

- Treat you with kindness, fairness, and respect
- Provide with you safe, good quality service
- Make sure you are not treated unfairly or bullied
- Tell you what your choices are and help you make decisions
- Give you information to understand your service
- Respect your beliefs and culture
- Give you the support you need in the best way possible
- Tell you what is private and what might need to be shared (like in emergencies)
- Let you know what happens if you miss appointments
- Talk with you about how things are going with your service
- Invite your family or legal guardian to help, if the law says it's okay
- Keep your information private, except in special cases, as explained in our privacy statement
- If we can't help you, we will tell you about other places that might be able to help.
- Give services in a clean and safe place that you can get into with a wheelchair or cane of other mobility devices
- Hear your worries and handle complaints fairly and in a timely way
- Write back to you if you make a complaint

Your Responsibilities – What We Ask from You

Here's what we ask you to do:

- Be kind and respectful to staff and others
- Keep other clients' information private
- Take part in your service and give staff the information they need to support you
- Tell us if you need any help or accommodations
- Call us 24 hours ahead if you can't come to an appointment
- Pay if your program has a cost

How to Give a Compliment or Make a Complaint

If you want to say something nice or make a complaint, you can:

1. Talk to the worker who helps you
2. If that's hard, talk to their supervisor
→ Call: 416-595-9618

Note: Complaints about government rules (like from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services or MCCSS) are not handled by FST.

FST does not allow any rude, mean, or hurtful behavior. This includes things said in person, on the phone, in email, video calls, or online. You are not allowed to video or audio record any employees, students, volunteers, or other clients unless everyone knows about it and says it's okay. You are not allowed to record employees, students, volunteers, or another client. If any of these things happen, FST might stop giving you service.



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO

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PRIVACY STATEMENT

You have the right to know how Family Service Toronto (FST) may share and use the information you give us and how you can have access to it. This Privacy Statement outlines FST's privacy policy.

FST collects, uses and shares the personal information you give us to:

- Provide quality programs and services
- Contact clients to evaluate FST's service
- Conduct research
- Contact individuals about our fundraising and membership activities
- Recognize donor contributions
- Report to funders and others, as required
- Review client records to ensure high quality of service and documentation
- Share personal information with your consent (for example, making a referral for service) or as required by law or contract

CLIENT PRIVACY

The personal information you give us is kept private and secure in electronic client files. We have security, passwords and policies in place to make sure your information stays private. We record information you provide including:

- How to contact you (for example, your name, address, phone number)
- A description of who you are (for example, your age, income, languages you speak)
- Information about the issues you are facing
- Notes on our contacts with you, including any emails that you send us and our response

Anything you discuss with FST staff, students, or volunteers is kept private and confidential within FST. The person you are working with may talk to their service team, supervisor, director, or others within FST to help ensure the highest quality of service.

There are times when FST is required by law to release information about you without your consent. We release information if:

- We believe someone is in danger of immediate harm, and information we have might prevent it
- A child under the age of 16 is at risk of or has been abused or neglected
- We have been subpoenaed by a court of law
- We have to obey a summons, warrant or similar order

- Permitted or required by law

You have rights regarding your confidential record. You can:

- See your record
- Ask for a copy of your record
- Ask us to help you understand what is written in your record
- Ask us to make corrections to inaccurate or incomplete information
- Refuse to give FST consent to share or use your information
- Change your mind if you have already given us permission to use or share your information

If you want to discuss or see your record, talk to an FST employee, supervisor, or FST's Privacy Officer.

HOW TO REACH US TO ASK QUESTIONS OR MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR PRIVACY POLICIES

If you have questions or concerns or want more information about how your personal information has been collected or used, or if you want to make a complaint, you can contact FST's Privacy Officer at 416-595-9230 ext. 316 or by email at privacyofficer@familyservicetoronto.org. You can also make a complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario by calling 416-326-3333 or visit their website at www.ipc.on.ca



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Your Privacy at Family Service Toronto (FST)

You have the right to know how Family Service Toronto (FST) uses and shares your information. This statement explains what we do with your personal information and how you can see it.

Why We Collect Your Information

We collect and use your personal information to:

- Give you good programs and services
- Ask you what you think about our services
- Help with research
- Tell you about fundraising or becoming a member
- Thank people who donate
- Report to people or groups who support us
- Check that our records are good and our services are high quality
- Share your information only when you say it's okay or if the law says we must

Your Information is Private

We keep your personal information safe on our computers. We use passwords and rules to keep it private. We keep things like:

- Your name, phone number, and address
- Your age, income, and languages you speak
- What kind of help you need
- Notes about our talks with you and emails you have sent

FST staff, students, or volunteers will only share your information with others at FST if it helps provide you with better service.

When We Have to Share Information Without Asking You

Sometimes the law says we must share your information, even if you don't say it's okay. We will do this only if:

- Someone is in danger, and we might be able to help
- A child under 16 is being hurt or not cared for
- A judge or court orders us to share it
- The law tells us to

Your Rights


You can:

- Look at your file
- Ask for a copy
- Ask questions about what is written
- Ask us to fix mistakes
- Say no to sharing your information
- Change your mind if you already said yes

Talk to your worker, a supervisor, or the FST Privacy Officer if you want to see your file or ask questions.


Have Questions or Want to Make a Complaint?

If you want to ask about your privacy or make a complaint, contact the FST Privacy Officer:

 Call: 416 595 9230 ext. 316

 Email: privacyofficer@familyservicetoronto.org

You can also contact the **Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario:**

 Call: 416-326-3333

 Website: www.ipc.on.ca