



WELCOME!

**Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent Savings Program
Web Cast**

July 31, 2009

Child Welfare Secretariat

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Strategy to Improve Outcomes

- **In June 2008, Minister Matthews announced new funding equivalent to the Ontario Child Benefit as the first step of a broad strategy to improve outcomes for children and youth in and leaving care.**
- **Strategy to Improve Outcomes for Children and Youth In and Leaving Care focuses on the following three outcomes:**
 - **Higher educational achievement;**
 - **Higher degree of resiliency (including development of social skills and relationship building); and**
 - **Smoother transition to adulthood.**

Strategy to Improve Outcomes

- **Intent of the Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent (OCBE) funding is to:**
 - **Provide opportunities for children and youth in care or formal customary care to participate in recreational, educational, cultural and social activities (i.e., Activities Program) consistent with their plans of care; and**
 - **Establish a savings program for older youth in care or formal customary care.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **Intent of the OCBE Savings Program is to provide eligible youth who have been in care or formal customary care for an extended period of time with the opportunity to build:**
 - **Financial skills to help prepare them for independent living; and**
 - **Savings to assist with the costs of their basic needs upon leaving care.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **A youth is eligible to participate in the Savings Program when the youth:**
 - **Is age 15, 16 or 17; and**
 - **Has been in the care of a CAS or in formal customary care for 12 or more consecutive months.**
- **When a youth becomes eligible, the youth's worker will inform the youth about the Savings Program, including:**
 - **Specific requirements for the Savings Program; and**
 - **Methods of disbursement of savings.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **For each eligible youth, CASs will allocate the current monthly OCBE payment per youth to the Savings Program for each month that the youth is in care or in formal customary care.**
- **CASs may hold the savings for eligible youth:**
 - **Within their OCBE pooled fund with ledger accounting for individual youth; or**
 - **In a separate general ledger account with ledger accounting for individual youth.**
- **CASs will generate and provide savings statements quarterly to each eligible youth and to the worker assigned to the youth.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **For a youth who becomes eligible for the program when he or she turns 15 years old:**
 - **OCBE payment amounts will be saved on behalf of the youth beginning with the month that the youth turned 15 years old.**
- **For a youth who becomes eligible for the program *after* he or she turns 15 years old:**
 - **OCBE payment amounts will be saved on behalf of the youth starting with the month that he or she turned 15 years old or came into care or formal customary care, whichever occurred later.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CAS workers will work with each eligible youth to assist them to meet the following Savings Program Requirements:**
 - **acquire financial skills and demonstrate financial competency relevant for independent living;**
 - **establish a personal bank account, or an alternative savings mechanism to receive funds where banking is not feasible;**
 - **develop an appropriate plan for the use of the savings; and**
 - **secure stable housing.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CASs will make available to each eligible youth a Financial Literacy Program to acquire financial skills and demonstrate financial competency appropriate to the youth's cognitive and developmental skills.**
- **Financial Literacy Program can be delivered either directly by the CAS or another entity that has the expertise to effectively teach financial skills to youth.**
- **Financial Literacy Program will need to be consistent with the ministry's financial literacy program framework which will be provided to CASs in September 2009.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CASs will disburse savings to each eligible youth using one of three methods of disbursement:**
 - **Total amount directly to youth;**
 - **Total amount to third parties on behalf of youth; or**
 - **Partial amount directly to youth and partial amount to third parties on behalf of youth.**
- **Method of disbursement of savings to eligible youth is based on how well they meet the Savings Program Requirements.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **Where a youth has successfully met the Savings Program Requirements:**
 - **CASs will disburse the total savings, including any interest, to the youth directly into his or her bank account (or an alternative mechanism where banking is not feasible).**
- **Where a youth has *not* successfully met the Savings Program Requirements:**
 - **CASs will meet with the youth to establish a plan for the disbursement of all or part of the savings to third parties (e.g., rent payments to landlord) on behalf of the youth.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CASs will disburse the total savings, including all accumulated interest, to eligible youth within six months after CAS care or formal customary care has ended for that youth, with no prospect of resumption.**
- **In exceptional circumstances, CASs will have the discretion to extend the time period within which the savings must be disbursed to eligible youth.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **Where savings are not disbursed to an eligible youth who cannot be located by the CAS within one year after CAS care or formal customary care has ended, the CAS will re-allocate these funds to the Activities Program.**
- **Where an eligible youth dies prior to qualifying for the disbursement of the savings, the CAS will re-allocate these funds to the Activities Program.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CAS workers will record discussions with the youth regarding the Savings Program in the youth's file, including discussions about the:**
 - **Savings Program Requirements;**
 - **Methods of disbursement and when the funds will be disbursed;**
 - **Quarterly savings statements; and**
 - **Youth's progress in meeting the Savings Program Requirements.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **Information about the Savings Program will need to be provided to CAS staff, foster parents, residential care operators and probation officers/case managers (where appropriate).**
- **They should be encouraged to discuss this program and the youth's progress in meeting the Savings Program Requirements as opportunities arise.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **Written protocols that enable effective case coordination and planning to take place between CAS workers and probation officers/case managers will need to be developed and monitored (where appropriate) for eligible youth in the Savings Program who are serving a *Youth Criminal Justice Act* custodial sentence while in the care of a CAS.**
- **Each CAS's operating policies and procedures will be reviewed by its Ministry Regional Office for compliance with the addendum prior to the CAS implementing the Savings Program.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CASs will continue to provide any and all financial supports currently provided by the CAS to youth participating in the Savings Program.**
- **Provision of savings will not have a detrimental impact on a youth's overall eligibility to receive other funds or services provided by the CAS as he or she transitions from care.**

OCBE Savings Program

One-Time Exceptions:

- **Where a youth would have been eligible to participate in the Savings Program between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009 and is still in care or in formal customary care, CASs will:**
 - **Allocate the OCBE payments for each month that the youth would have qualified to receive savings during this period to the Savings Program for that youth.**

OCBE Savings Program

One-Time Exceptions (cont'd):

- **Where a youth has entered into an ECM agreement and would have been eligible to participate in the Savings Program between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009, CASs will:**
 - **Disburse the savings, including interest, for any qualifying months during this period to the youth.**
- **Method of disbursement to eligible youth on ECM will be based on the CAS's assessment of how well the youth has met the Savings Program Requirements and is able to manage his or her savings.**

OCBE Savings Program

One-Time Exceptions (cont'd):

- **If a youth who would have been eligible for the Savings Program from July 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009 returns to the CAS and enters into an ECM agreement, the youth will be eligible to receive savings for any qualifying months during this period.**

OCBE Savings Program

- **CASs will be required to report the:**
 - **Total amount of OCBE revenues being allocated to the Savings Program;**
 - **Total number of eligible youth for whom OCBE funds are being held in the Savings Program;**
 - **Total number of eligible youth, by age, who received OCBE funds from the Savings Program;**
 - **Total amount of OCBE funds paid out of the Savings Program to eligible youth, by age; and**
 - **Total number of eligible youth, by age, who received either a lump sum OCBE payment or on whose behalf the CAS made structured OCBE payments to the youth and/or third parties.**

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

Child Welfare Secretariat

Ministry of Children and Youth Services