

**Q1: What is a Prior Contact Check?**

A Prior Contact Check or PCC is a review of all previous records collected under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* and/or the *Adoption Act* involving the individual who is the subject of the prior contact check. These files include all current and/or closed assessment only files, intake files, child protection files, family service files, resource files, child in care files and adoption files that are either in hard copy and/or electronic format.

**Q2: Who may need to have a Prior Contact Check and for what purpose?**

- Prospective foster, adoptive and out of care care-providers, including alternative relief caregivers, providing residential services to children and youth under the *CFCSA* and/or the *Adoption Act*. This does not apply to persons who are employed by contracted agencies of Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies.
- Adult individuals who will live in the home where a child may be placed in the above circumstances or will spend a significant amount of unsupervised time with the child.

**Q3: What type of previous involvement is included in a PCC?**

Previous involvement included in a Prior Contact Check may relate to the individual as a child who was in need of protective services, the individual as an adult caregiver of a child who was or is in need of protective services, or the individual as an adult who may have placed a child in need of protective services. Previous involvement may also include individuals who have applied to and/or have provided residential services to children through MCFD or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies in the past.

**Q4: What is the purpose of doing a Prior Contact Check?**

The purpose of doing a Prior Contact Check is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children involved with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and/or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies as much as is possible.

**Q5: Will I know if I am the subject of a Prior Contact Check?**

Yes. Conducting Prior Contact Checks are based upon the overriding principles of fairness, respect, accountability and collaboration. A PCC is conducted with your knowledge and written consent about the type of records and information that will be reviewed. Where written consent is not possible verbal consent may be deemed sufficient – this is in very limited circumstances.

**Q6: Who performs and assesses the Prior Contact Check?**

Prior Contact Checks are performed in a timely manner by a delegated worker from MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency who is knowledgeable of and compliant with the privacy sections of relevant legislation, and the ministry's standards of conduct.

**Q7: What if a Prior Contact Check indicates that I have had previous contact?**

You will be advised of the existence of a concern and the information contained in the record. You will also be advised of a correction or annotation process under Section 29 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)* if you disagree with information included in a record. However, it is important to note that only facts can be corrected, other information can be annotated.

**Q8: What type of Prior Contact Check information is considered in determining whether an individual is an appropriate alternate caregiver, foster caregiver, or adoptive caregiver?**

Relevant information includes information relating to the individual's ability to provide a nurturing, safe environment and/or not pose harm to a child. This includes current and past information about the adult individuals living in the home relating to:

- current or past child protection concerns relating to individual's children;
- substance misuse;
- mental health and other health issues;
- anger management issues;
- attitude towards authority figures;
- violent behaviour towards other adults, children or animals;
- current or past victim of abuse;
- deficient parenting skills;
- counselling or treatment relating to issues from abuse or other issues;
- repeated, unfounded child protection complaints.

**Note that this can result in a review of an individual's file including a Child in Care, Family Service, Resource, and Adoption files.**

**Q9: Does the existence of a record of prior contact under the *CFCSA* and/or the *Adoption Act* mean that my application or intention to become an alternate caregiver, foster caregiver, or adoptive caregiver is automatically disregarded?**

No. Information obtained through a prior contact check would not be the only reason for refusing an individual's application. Any problematic information arising from a PCC in regard to an applicant or any adult individual living in the home, will be examined by a delegated worker of MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency in the context of when the issue(s) occurred, the severity of the issue(s) identified, if and how the issue(s) were resolved, and what has happened since the issue(s) were resolved.

**Q10: If relevant information is found, will it be disclosed to anyone?**

If information is found through the prior contact check, it will not be disclosed to any person, organization, or agency outside of the Ministry of Children and Family Development or Delegated Aboriginal Agency without your knowledge and further consent. The form 'Consent to Disclosure of Information' (CF0609) must be signed by you before such a disclosure can be made.