

OFFICES PROFILES – FAMILY JUSTICE SERVICES DIVISION

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S LAWYER

Contacts:

Elizabeth Seo

Counsel and Co-Chair of the Articling Student
Committee

Office of the Children's Lawyer
393 University Avenue, 14th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1W9

Direct Tel: (416) 314-6644

General No: (416) 314-8000

Fax: (416) 314-8056

Email: Elizabeth.Seo@jus.gov.on.ca

Positions available: 2

Website:

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/ocl

Application Deadline: July 14, 2006 with interviews beginning August 14, 2006

Additional Application Requirements: No additional requirements.

If you would like to speak to a current Articling Student about their experience please contact:

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BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Office of the Children's Lawyer investigates, advocates, protects and represents, in proceedings before the courts and tribunals of Ontario, the personal and property rights and obligations of children.

The origin of the Office of the Children's Lawyer can be traced back as early as 1826 to a time when the Lieutenant Governor and the Lord Chancellor of Upper Canada exercised jurisdiction over the estates of minors or those unable to manage their own affairs. In 1991, the first Judicature Act formally recognized the Office of the Children's Lawyer, then known as the Office of the Official Guardian, which operates today as an independent law office within the Family Justice Services Division of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The current Children's Lawyer for Ontario is Clare E. Burns.

In-house counsel and panel lawyers across the province represent children in certain civil proceedings including child protection, custody and access, estates, and civil litigation matters. The Children's Lawyer can also represent an unborn or unascertained person in estates cases.

DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLING PROGRAM

The articling program at The Office of the Children's Lawyer provides students with a unique opportunity to represent a special clientele and offers excellent hands-on experience in litigation.

Students rotate through two legal areas - property rights (civil litigation and estates) and personal rights (child protection and custody and access).

During the property rights rotation, articling students will be exposed to personal injury proceedings such as medical malpractice cases, motor vehicle accident claims, and minor settlements requiring court approval. Students will also have the opportunity to assist with dependant relief claims, will interpretation cases, insurance disputes, trustee removals, and applications to pass estate or trust accounts. Responsibilities during this rotation usually include drafting pleadings, affidavits, and other court documents, attending at motions before Masters, appearing on cases before the Small Claims Court, and conducting legal research.

In the personal rights rotation, students will represent children in child protection and custody and access cases before the Ontario Court of Justice under the supervision of counsel. Students will have full carriage of files and be responsible for meeting and obtaining information from children, parents, teachers, Children's Aid Societies, mental health professionals, police, and lawyers for other parties. Students will utilize alternative dispute resolution skills in order to negotiate settlements in custody and access disputes and work with clinical investigators who prepare reports for the court.

The Office of the Children's Lawyer offers and promotes a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Throughout the articling term, in-house counsel and clinical investigators will conduct training for students in areas such as substantive law and techniques for interviewing children. In addition, students will have the opportunity to attend educational programs organized by the Ministry of the Attorney General's Articling and Summer Law Student Committee, the Ontario Bar Association, the Law Society of Upper Canada, and the Advocates' Society.