



CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRES OF ONTARIO NETWORK

TERMS OF REFERENCE

DATE APPROVED: November 30, 2012

LAST AMENDED: December 8, 2017

Name

Child & Youth Advocacy Centres of Ontario Network – **CYACO Network**

Scope

The Child & Youth Advocacy Centres of Ontario Network is made up of existing Child Advocacy Centres (CACs) and Child & Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs), emerging CACs or CYACs, or other organizations currently carrying out multidisciplinary child abuse investigations in Ontario.

Member agencies work together as a network of professionals committed to supporting children, youth, and families affected by child abuse¹ by providing a seamless, coordinated and collaborative approach to child abuse investigations and supportive services.

The Network functions as a forum for the sharing of best practices and sustainability requirements. The Network also prioritizes giving a voice to the issues that children, youth and families face when they are affected by child abuse.

Mission

To maintain a network of Child Advocacy Centres (CACs), Child & Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs) and similar organizations in Ontario.

To be recognized as a collective influence promoting recognition of the benefits of the seamless coordinated and comprehensive care for children, youth, and families affected by child maltreatment through the Child Advocacy Centre model within Ontario and across Canada and to provide support and leadership to communities on this model throughout Ontario.

To demonstrate support for our children and youth in Ontario by providing a multi-disciplinary response to child abuse that includes ongoing support.

¹ For the purposes of this document, child abuse is defined as: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, exposure to family violence, sexual exploitation over the Internet, and human trafficking.

Membership

Membership is open to all agencies and organizations throughout Ontario who have or are developing a Child Advocacy Centre model for the purpose of supporting children and youth who have been a victim or witness to child abuse.

Member agency is defined as the CAC/CYAC organization or group that represents the combined collaborative partnership for that CAC/CYAC location.

Member agencies:

- Participate in the CYACO Network meetings and online communication forums.
- Share knowledge and information.
- Collaboratively participate in establishing a set of recommended best practices.

Member agencies are dedicated to:

- Advancing the needs and rights of Ontario's children and youth who have experienced abuse.
- Seeking to minimize the system induced trauma of Ontario children, youth and families involved in child abuse investigations.
- Offering ongoing support to Ontario children, youth and families involved in child abuse investigations.
- Functioning as a forum where knowledge and best practices are shared.
- Developing a set of best practices and guidelines to support children, youth, families and communities in Ontario.
- Speaking as a unified voice in response to the need for provincial government support and sustainable funding.
- Education, outreach and advocacy.

Deliverables

For the Network to develop and share:

- A set of recommended best practices designed to support the safety, health and wellbeing of children, youth and caregivers in need of CYAC services.
- A business case that supports and advocates sustainable provincial government funding of agencies/organizations implementing a Child Advocacy Centre model for service.

Governance

Members will communicate primarily through email.

Meetings will be held quarterly, with the goal of each region hosting a meeting to share the travel and time expenses for members. Although attendance in person at each quarterly meeting may not be feasible and other technology options may be used to attend, it is recommended that members attend at least one quarterly meeting per calendar year.

Chair: Meetings will be chaired by the host site. The Chair will be responsible for: identifying agenda items and soliciting agenda items from the membership; distributing the agenda and relevant documents for the meeting; and for facilitating meetings according to the agenda. The Chair may participate in all discussions, and is a voting member for matters that come to a vote.

Record Keeping: A designated member, identified on an annual basis, will be responsible for maintaining all the CYACO Network documents, and ensuring that the Terms of Reference are reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

Minutes of Meeting: The host site will take minutes and forward them to the Record Keeper, who in-turn will distribute them to the CYACO Network no later than two (2) weeks after each meeting.

Decisions: Decisions will be made by consensus. If consensus is not clear, the matter will be put forward for a vote, requiring a person to move a Motion and someone to second the Motion. Quorum for any decision that requires voting will be based on 50% plus 1 of all member agencies. Each member agency has one vote. A process for ensuring group participation will be developed for occasions when a vote is required.

Working Groups: The Network may form time-limited working groups to carry out particular tasks or projects. These groups could include membership from the Network or the broader community as appropriate.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Before any meeting, an agenda will be circulated to each member, with agenda items specified with sufficient detail in order to permit the member to identify possible conflicts of interest.

Where a conflict of interest exists, the member shall declare the conflict to the Chair prior to the meeting, if possible. Otherwise, the conflict of interest shall be declared at the start of any substantive business at the meeting.

Confidentiality

Members of the CYACO Network have an ethical obligation to maintain the confidentiality of any and all information that is given in confidence. Members shall ensure that information is shared for the purpose of benefiting the group as a unit and it is understood and agreed that any information shared "*in camera*" remains confidential and will not be included in the minutes.

Expenses

Each member agency is responsible for covering costs incurred with its participation in the CYACO Network.

Timeframe

Ongoing