

The Child & Youth Advocacy Program



BOOSTTM
CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

The Child & Youth Advocacy Program

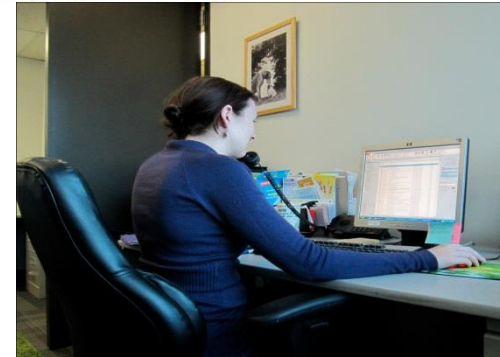
- The Child & Youth Advocacy Program (CYAP) is a voluntary program; services are provided with consent from children/youth and/or non-offending family members/caregivers.
- The Advocate's role: provide consistent support, advocacy and referral services to child/youth victims/witnesses of abuse and their families from the time of the initial investigation to completion of the criminal justice process (or when no further services are needed).
- Criminal charges and/or verification by a child protection agency (or an open file) are not required to receive services.
- One Advocate is assigned to each family.



The Child & Youth Advocate

The Advocate:

- orients the family to the centre
- reviews confidentiality/obtains consents for service and sharing of information
- provides support to family members until all interviews are completed
- shares questions/concerns raised by the family, and [potential] crisis/mental health concerns; if immediate crisis support is identified, facilitates introductions between a clinician and family
- liaises between the family and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) members
- provides ongoing referrals as required
- participates in: debriefs and case reviews, providing information and relevant updates; and weekly Advocate-clinician meetings to assign cases
- with consent, same advocate provides court preparation and court support to child, youth or family



The Youth Advocate: Human Trafficking Program

- Boost CYAC partners with the Toronto Police Service Human Trafficking Enforcement Teams..
- The Youth Advocate is dedicated to Human Trafficking cases and offers immediate/ongoing support for youth victims who have been trafficked and are under the age of 18, and their families until services are no longer required.

The Youth Advocate Provides:

- A needs assessment upon meeting the youth – housing, food, safety
- Crisis support for youth and caregivers
- Psycho-education around stages of exploitation and grooming, healthy relationships, consent and boundaries

The Youth Advocate: HT Program

The Youth Advocate Provides (cont'd):

- Referrals to supports and services (e.g., medical, counselling, detox/addictions, Child Victim Witness Support Program, Victim Services)
- Regular/consistent contact with the youth
- Accompanying to appointments if necessary
- Acting as the liaison for the youth with team members – police, child protection, Victim Witness Assistance Program, school support
- Safety planning – physical and emotional safety
- Support for caregivers
- Support throughout the court process and post court support

How is the Advocate Beneficial to the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?

- Immediate improvement in the allocation of the time spent by investigators.
- The Advocate can maintain regular contact with the family and field questions and concerns previously directed toward the Investigative Team.
- The Advocate is able to share relevant updates and information to MDT members with respect to the family.
- The Advocate maintains an up-to-date list of community services and can expedite the referral process (e.g., Child Victim Witness Support Program, Victim Witness Assistance Program, Victim Quick Response Program, medical, community mental health agencies, legal and housing assistance, immigration services).
- In non-CYAC cases, intake case workers and police officers often do not have the time to provide this level of service to victims and families.

Role Differentiation – Advocate/Child Protection

	Advocate	CYAC Child Protection Worker	Family or Child Service Worker
Part of the Investigative Team	No	Yes	Yes – in certain circumstances
Case Management Role	Yes, if child protection file is closed	Yes	Yes
Facilitate referrals	Yes	Yes – can delegate to Advocate	Yes – can delegate to Advocate
Maintain ongoing contact with family	Yes	Yes – until file is closed or assigned to an ongoing worker	Yes
Home visits	No	Yes	Yes

Role Differentiation – Services for Victims

	Advocate	CVWSP (Boost CYAC)	VWAP	Victim Services
Support/Advocacy at time of Investigation	Yes	No	No	Yes, but not for victims under the age of 16
Criminal charges required to provide services	No	Yes	Yes	No
Court preparation	Yes (for their clients)	Yes	Yes	No
Facilitation and assistance at Crown Meeting	No	Yes (in extenuating circumstances)	Yes	No
Court accompaniment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (in extenuating circumstances)
Follow-up services (e.g., Victim Impact Statements)	No	Yes	Yes	No

The Advocate

“Now we can all go home confident that the victim is getting the best care, beyond what our abilities are – a lot of officers are not aware of services, but specialized people know, and we can move on to the next case knowing this one is being taken care of – it’s a big relief.”

(Police officer/Boost CYAC)

“Before, we assumed that people were getting services once we referred them on – some people didn’t, and they slipped through the cracks. Now it would be very tough to slip through the cracks.”

(Police officer/Boost CYAC)

“The advocate was with me consistently and she made me feel safe and comfortable and her support continued for months afterwards. Without her “filling in the gaps” for me, I wouldn't have known where to turn or what my next steps should be.”

(Parent)