

Dufferin Child and Family Services Orientation to Service



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child and youth mental health • child protection • developmental support

655 Riddell Road, Orangeville, ON L9W 4Z5 tel: 519-941-1530 fax: 519-941-1525 www.dcafs.on.ca

TTY: 519-941-3078

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Crisis Response Services for Children & Youth

In the event of an emergency call: 9-1-1

These agencies provide crisis service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year:

Dufferin Child & Family Services:

After Hours Child Protection Response: 519-941-1530
(follow prompts to be connected with an after hours worker)

Children’s Mental Health Crisis Response: 519-941-1530
(follow prompts to be connected with a crisis worker)

Weeknights 5:00pm - 10:00pm
Saturday & Sunday 12:00pm - 10:00pm

Community Torchlight Wellington/Dufferin:

Crisis Line: 1-877-822-0140

Family Transition Place: 519-941-4357

Choices Youth Shelter: 519-942-5970

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
www.kidshelpphone.ca





About Us

Dufferin Child & Family Services (DCAFS) is funded through various Ministries and the Government of Ontario and therefore our services are **free of charge**.

How to Contact us or Get More Information:

Phone: **519-941-1530** and ask for Central Intake between 8:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday.
After Hours (evenings and weekends): Listen to our greeting, press 1 and follow the prompts. An After Hours Worker will be paged and return your call. **TTY: 519-941-3078 Fax: 519-941-1525 Web: www.dcafs.on.ca**

Central Intake:

When you call DCAFS, you will speak with a Central Intake Worker who is knowledgeable about the services in our Agency and our community. Our Central Intake Workers are responsible for determining which services at DCAFS are most appropriate for individuals and families. They can also provide links to other community resources. Referrals to DCAFS are accepted from individuals who would like to receive services for themselves or for someone else or from community partners.

Accessibility:

Dufferin Child and Family Services adheres to all federal, provincial and local laws and regulations towards creating a fully accessible environment for everyone. DCAFS is committed to providing quality service that is accessible to all members of the public. It is our goal to ensure that everyone is able to experience our services with in an equitable manner.

We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our services to people with disabilities. You can use one of the following methods to provide feedback:

Via mail: 655 Riddell Road, Orangeville, ON L9W 4Z5

Via telephone: 1-519-941-1530 TTY: 519-941-3078

Diversity:

DCAFS recognizes and welcomes the diversity of our clients and their families.

We are committed to providing services that respect differences and meet various needs. By letting us know about cultural considerations, language barriers, beliefs or religious involvement, you will help us meet your unique needs. Your race, nationality, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual preferences, mental and physical abilities, age, marital status, family status, language, or money situation will not affect the kind of service you receive.

Complaint Process

- Do you have a complaint? If you do, it is important to us. Please refer to "When we disagree... A Guide to DCAFS Complaint Process". This is available on our website and at our office
- Complaints about the agency's personal information practices (including requests for access and changes to information) can be put in writing to the Privacy Commissioner

Questions:

If you need more information, or have concerns about confidentiality, please call and ask to speak to our Privacy Officer.

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Client Rights - You have the Right to:

Confidentiality & Privacy

All staff, students, volunteers and consultants of Dufferin Child & Family Services are required to protect the confidentiality & privacy of our clients throughout and following their association with the Agency. In order to ensure that your rights and the rights of others are respected, we ask you not to talk about what happens in group sessions or share the names of other clients participating in any programs.

We work hard to protect your privacy. Information about you or your work with us cannot be released without your consent except in the following circumstances:

1. When a client shares information which leads a staff member to suspect a child is or may be in need of protection, the staff member must report this information to Child Protection, as required by the Child and Family Services Act.
 2. When a staff member believes that a client is at risk of, or in imminent danger of hurting themselves or others.
 3. When a staff member or the Agency receives a subpoena and a court requires a client's record or testimony.
- Your personal information will be protected from loss, theft, and/or unauthorized access
 - Your personal information will only be disclosed to third parties with consent, except in the exceptional situations identified above.
 - You will be notified if unauthorized access, disclosure, theft or loss occurs

Access to Information

- You have the right to request access to your file
- You have the right to request corrections to information in your file
- Requests for access and/or changes to information should be made in writing to the agency
- Requests will be responded to within 30 days
- Access can be denied if the file is subject to a legal proceeding or court order, and/or in the judgement of the agency's Executive Director, access could result in risk of serious harm to self/your family, or would violate the privacy of another person
- Requests for changes can be denied if the request pertains to a document not originally created by the agency and/or if the change pertains to a professional opinion or observation made about you or your family that was made in good faith
- Clients can prepare a 'statement of disagreement' if requests for changes are denied, that must be included in the file
- Requests for access or changes to personal information that are denied can be registered as complaints with the Ontario government's Privacy Commissioner

Respect and Integrity

- be heard and to be taken seriously about matters that involve you and your children
- receive support in a timely and professional manner
- be provided culturally sensitive support in a safe environment
- be treated with respect, honesty and integrity

Client Responsibilities: You have the responsibility to participate in or have involvement with:

- developing service plans
- confirming priority needs for service
- identifying goals for intervention
- reviewing progress towards goals
- using recommended strategies
- developing discharge plans

Provide Current/Accurate Information:

- participate in interviews to identify strengths and needs
- provide workers with information to help with service provision
- advise your worker of changes to personal information

Keep Everyone Informed:

- communicate with staff and other service providers, as appropriate
- keep your appointments, as scheduled, and notify your worker if you are unable to do so

Offer Feedback/Suggestions:

- provide feedback regarding the services and information received
- provide input on outcomes from services
- provide feedback on experience of the service system
- provide suggestions for improvement
- a client will not be denied service if he/she chooses not to participate in research or feedback initiatives

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Client Records & Information

You have the right to request access to your file. The request for access can be made verbally, or in writing. You also have the right to correction of your own personal or health information. If there is something that you disagree with, tell your worker. Any correction to your record will be done in the form of a subsequent note to the file.

A child who is twelve or older has the right to access his/her file without parental consent. The parent/legal guardian is not entitled to access the record without the child's consent, in cases where self-initiated counseling of a child twelve years of age or older took place.

You have the right to tell us not to use or give out your personal information to other people who are providing you with service. Information from a child or family file will only be shared with informed written consent from the parent(s) or legal guardian, when information would be helpful to providing service. Consent of the youth is required when they are 12 years of age or older.

No copies of third party reports/assessments will be released to other individuals or agencies unless appropriate consents have been signed authorizing the release of information.

If you decide to limit how much we can share with others, it is our duty to tell them that information about you is being withheld. This may affect the quality of service you receive.

What is Collected from/about the client:

- Information about the child/youth including: name, age, gender, presenting problems, strengths, needs, developmental history, medical history, previous assessment results, previous professional involvement, current settings/placements, parent observations/perceptions of the child, teacher/childcare/other professional observations/perceptions of the child
- Information about the parent(s) including: name, address, telephone number, marital status, custody/guardianship arrangements, country of birth, stressors/risk factors, social support, perceptions of service needs/desires
- Information about the family including: number of siblings, others living in the home, languages spoken in the home, emergency contact information

Why Personal Information is Collected:

- To create files for clients who are 'registered' to receive services from the agency
- To assist in understanding the needs presented by you and/or your family
- To inform development of service plans and make referrals to appropriate services
- To coordinate plans and services with other service providers with consent
- To help identify the need for further, specialized assessment
- To identify strengths on which to build
- To ensure parents or guardians can be contacted or communicated with when required
- To allow for analyses of trends in service provision over time
- To facilitate the service delivery process from intake to closing
- To assist in quality assurance and program evaluation activities

How Personal Information is Protected/Safeguarded:

- Client files containing personal information are locked and access is restricted
- Files are audited to ensure they are current and complete
- Computerized information is protected with passwords and access is restricted
- Computerized information is backed up to protect against loss
- Client reports are marked 'confidential' and are not sent via electronic mail
- All staff, students, and volunteers sign statements indicating information obtained in the course of their work will be held Confidential

When is Personal Information Disclosed:

- Information is not disclosed to third parties without written informed consent by the parent/guardian
- Exceptions to obtaining parent/guardian consent to disclose information include legal responsibilities to report (abuse or neglect to child protection; death to coroner; communicable disease to public health)
- Information may also be disclosed to individuals engaged in reviews of the agency's practices for Accreditation, Audit, or Quality Assurance purposes (e.g., Ministry of Children & Youth Services, Accreditation Site Review Team, Quality Assurance, Committees from various regulating Colleges.)

When is Personal Information Destroyed:

The utmost care is taken in ensuring that records are stored in a safe, secure and locked location. After service is complete:

- Child and Youth Mental Health files are retained for 10 years following the client's 18th birthday. Files are destroyed after 20 years, including all personal information
- Developmental Support Service files are retained for 25 years
- Child Protection Service files are stored indefinitely

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Just a Reminder...

We would like to kindly remind you that it is best to keep children home from appointments when they are sick. This not only benefits your child but other children, volunteers and staff at the Agency.

We realize that it can be a difficult decision to keep your child home from a counselling session; however we will make every effort to arrange another time to make up your appointment.

Generally, if your child is not well enough to attend school, then they will not benefit from participating in the program, as it will be difficult for them to concentrate and complete activities.

Some important signs, symptoms or conditions that are cause for cancelling appointments include:

- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Having a temperature of 37.4°C/ 100°F
- Rashes or skin infections
- Red or pink eyes from an undetermined cause
- Head lice or scabies
- Other contagious conditions such as strep throat, impetigo, chickenpox, measles, mumps, rubella, fifth disease (slap cheek syndrome), shingles etc.

Dufferin Child & Family Services

Child and Youth Mental Health

Since 1988, we have been helping kids and families deal with a variety of concerns and challenges. We offer a number of excellent, creative services that:

- Build on strengths
- Increase self esteem and healthy coping skills
- Help resolve issues
- Provide opportunities to learn and practice new behaviours
- Provide information, support and guidance for parents



We can help when a child or youth:

- Could hurt himself/herself or others
- Is involved with fire play
- Has had a significant loss or serious traumatic event
- Is aggressive, violent or bullying
- Has concerns that interfere with learning
- Is involved in at-risk behaviours (drugs/alcohol, unsafe sex, illegal activity)
- Has serious challenges with relationships, feelings or behaviours
- Is experiencing significant emotional distress

We have two main GATEWAYS to SERVICES here at Child and Youth Mental Health:

The Main GATEWAY is through our Talk-in Clinic every Wednesday. Individuals and families 'just walk in' and meet with trained Counsellors. For many, a single session will be sufficient; and the Clinic may be used more than once, if needed. For those who need more sessions right away, the Talk-In Clinic helps us to determine what services should come next.

Our other main GATEWAY is through our 7-days-a-week Crisis Response Service when a child or youth is experiencing significant emotional distress and may be at risk of harm to self and others. This is a mobile service. We meet with individuals and family members at our office, at school or at the hospital.

Some Things to Think About:

- Sometimes change is difficult
- Discussing hard-to-talk-about issues can feel emotionally overwhelming
- Information may be shared by a family member that another family member isn't aware of
- Sometimes children/youth act out more as difficult issues get addressed
- Involvement with medical personnel and/or child protection services may be required if the child/youth is at risk

How To Contact Us or Get More Info:

Phone: **519-941-1530** and ask for Centralized Intake Services, 8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday. After Hours (evenings & weekends): Listen to our greeting, press 1 and follow the prompts. An After Hours Worker will be paged and will get back to you right away. A Child and Youth Mental Health Clinician will then call you the next business day.

Walk-In Clinic: Tuesdays 1:00pm - 8:00pm Tel: 519-941-1530

Web: www.dcafs.on.ca

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What We Offer To Children & Youth (under age 18) and Their Families and/or Caregivers:

Talk-In Clinic (every Wednesday)

Gives quick access to a single-session counselling service and provides opportunities for immediate problem-solving and helpful conversations. This is our main gateway to other Child and Youth Mental Health services.

Crisis Intervention and Support

Helps right away - daytime, evenings and on weekends when a child/youth is experiencing acute distress or a serious mental health problem.

TAPP-C (The Arson Prevention Program for Children)

Helps when a child/youth has been setting fires. The program teaches about fire safety for the individual, family and community.

Individual Child and Family Counselling

Helps individuals and families deal with difficult times in life - personal struggles and relationship conflicts, grief and losses, problems at school, getting along with peers and others outside the family.

0-6 Child and Family Services (under 7 years)

Helps with serious and/or more complex concerns (multiple stressors, behavioural challenges, significant medical needs, withdrawal, delayed social skill development) and works along with the family in the home, at school or in the community.

Intensive Child and Family Services (7-17 years)

Helps with more serious behavioural, emotional, mental health and/or addiction problems specific to child/youth and family needs and works with individuals and families in the home, at school or in the community.

Sexual Abuse Treatment Program

Helps individuals and families to heal after sexual abuse or sexual assault.

Brief Service Program

Helps individuals and families deal with difficult times in life - personal struggles and relationship conflicts, grief and losses, problems at school, getting along with peers and others outside the family

Education and Support Groups

Offer opportunities for understanding issues and learning new skills.

Headwaters Family Visit Centre

A safe and supportive setting, supervises visits between children and their non-custodial parents and facilitates exchanges of children between custodial and non-custodial parents.

**Thank you for your interest in our programs.
We want to help you to the services you need.**



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Developmental Support

Ontario Autism Program (OAP)

This program is available to children 0-9 who have a confirmed diagnosis of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Using an ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis Approach) or IBI (Intensive Behaviour Analysis Approach) services and supports will focus on addressing the needs that children with ASD have in the following key developmental areas:

- cognition
- language
- social
- self-care skills
- communication
- social/interpersonal
- daily living
- behaviour management/emotional regulation

It is designed to help and instruct parents/caregivers on how to apply ABA&IBI - based strategies used to teach their children new skills. This program is co-located at Orangeville District Secondary School in Orangeville. Parents are an integral part of the Autism team. Teaching occurs at our school-based setting in both one-to-one and small group formats for approximately 21 hours per week.

How to Refer for OAP Program:

Call ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Developmental Intake Line: 1-877-374-6625

Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs Program (iCAN)

iCAN supports the inclusion of children with additional needs in licensed child care settings, including home child care. Under the Ontario Regulation 138/15, a “child with additional needs” means a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child.

Service Coordination Program - Adults (18 Years of Age and Over)

Service Coordination is available for adults with a documented developmental disability.

Service Coordinators:

- are respectful of the cultural diversity of individuals and families.
- are flexible, promote social inclusion, encourage individual choice, independence and rights.
- assist with future planning, help navigate through the adult service system and are responsive with active participation by the adult.
- provide linkages to services and offer a solution focused service and support with the adult/family.

How to Refer for Service Coordination - Adults

To be eligible for Ministry funded adult services, individuals must apply to Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

DSO Intake - www.dsontario/agencies or call: 519-821-5716

for assistance to access DSO Intake please call DCAFS Central Intake at 519-941-1530

Special Services at Home Program (SSAH)

Families who are caring for their child or adult with a developmental disability are able to purchase the supports they need through Special Services at Home funding.

- In Dufferin County, workers are hired directly by families. DCAFS administers the SSAH contract dollars authorized by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.
- Special Services at Home Workers are not considered employees of Dufferin Child and Family Services, but rather work directly for the families who hire them.

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Developmental Support

How to Refer?

Individuals may self-refer, parents may refer on behalf of their child or agencies may refer with parental/individual consent to do so. Referrals may be prioritized according to the level of need and staffing resources. To make a referral call: **(519) 941-1530** and ask for Central Intake. Program participation is voluntary for all Developmental Support Services. (see reverse for referral instructions for Service Coordination - Adult Program, OAP Programs).

Infant & Child Development Program

This service offers family centred intervention to families of infants and young children up to the age of 6 who have disabilities, developmental delays or at risk of delays.

Services include: in-home visits; office visits; consultation; assessment and screening and developmental monitoring. Some community and centre-based group intervention & education is provided. Care pathways are used for children born prematurely based on risk factors at birth and in the family. For children under 3 years of age, the service is more comprehensive. It is more short-term in nature for children 3-6.

Service Coordination Program - Children (Under 18 Years of Age)

This program provides service coordination and support to any family or individual where the individual has been identified as having diagnosis of a developmental disability and/or autism.

For a developmental disability this specifically means a sub-average general intellectual functioning with an IQ at or below 70 (2nd percentile or lower) or a diagnosis of autism.

It is a family centered service which assesses, plans, coordinates and identifies the needs of the individual and the community programs, resources and supports they may be eligible to access.

Service is tailored to the individual and family circumstance. It is outcome focused with active participation by the family through service delivery.

Complex Special Needs Program - Children and Youth under 18 Years of Age

This program is family centred and available to children, youth and their family under the age of 18 with a diagnosis of a developmental disability and/or autism.

It is an intensive level of service where there are serious complex concerns (ie: multiple stressors, behaviour challenges, significant medical and/or developmental needs, conflicts at home, school or in the community). The service provided is intensive, goal oriented, flexible, creative, responsive and individualized. The program utilizes CANS (Child & Adolescent Needs & Strengths). This is a multi-purpose tool is used to support decision making including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes of services.

Medically Fragile Technologically Dependent (MFTD)

This Day Respite Program operates for children up to age 18 who are deemed Medically Fragile Technologically Dependent by the Community Care Access Centre (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care).

- This program operates bi-weekly on Saturdays out of our Agency's spacious and brightly lit multi-purpose room.
- It has a rich staffing ratio to meet the needs of this client group and specialized equipment.
- The children enjoy a multi-sensory fun filled day with a meaningful program designed just for them.

Respiteservices.com

Respiteservices.com is a Provincial website that helps families easily access respite workers and services within their local community across Ontario. Families of individuals with developmental disabilities can now register online and gain information about respite services offered in their community. It coordinates a network of agencies and organizations providing respite service to individuals. The website provides information and links to all respite services available. For more information visit www.respiteservices.com

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Child Protection

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Intake & Investigation

The primary function of this service is to investigate, gather information and make an assessment in order to determine whether a child, under the age of 16, may be in need of protection. The goal is to ensure the safety of children and youth while supporting the natural family and whenever possible, keeping children/youth and families together.

Ongoing Family Service

Ongoing Service is provided to families requiring intervention beyond the investigative phase and where children are found to be in need of protection. Family Service Workers provide a broad spectrum of services to families including: ongoing assessment, advocacy, family conferencing and collaborative work with families and community.

Family Service Workers work together with families to develop a Service Plan which outlines the strengths and challenges within the family unit and the required services to assist the family. This service plan is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that all parties involved are working towards similar goals.

Resources

The Resource team is responsible for the recruitment, screening, training, placement, monitoring and support to foster and kinship care homes. Foster and kinship care families are approved by the Agency following a thorough homestudy process completed by trained staff. Prospective foster and kinship care families must complete nine weeks of mandatory training before being approved to foster. DCAFS and its staff believe that every child deserves a safe and supportive home. Please open your heart and home to our children. If interested in information please call our Recruitment Worker at 519-941-1530.

Children's Services

This service is responsible for serving the needs of children and youth who reside in Agency approved foster homes, kinship care homes or residential placements. Children and youth in care are assigned workers to advocate for and assist them in meeting their needs, in accordance with Ministry Regulations.

Individualized plans are developed for each child/youth in care. Services while in the care of DCAFS include: support, counseling, referral services, preparation for independence, access with family, appropriate medical, dental and optical care and so much more.

Adoption

The Adoption team is responsible for recruitment, screening, training, placement, monitoring and support services to adoptive families. Children and youth who are legally free for adoption are supported by adoption workers to prepare for placement into their forever family. Various support services are also provided to those whose lives have been touched by adoption.

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Child Protection

Family Support/Supervised Access

Family Support workers provide in-home support for families and children/youth under the age of 16 years or one-to-one support for Children in Care who are currently receiving child protection service and are facing challenges or are in crisis. Family Support is a voluntary program which strives towards: enhancing family functioning, reducing risk to children in their home environment, reducing risk of placement, assisting in the re-integration of a child back into the family home and enhancing parenting skills through an approach that is positive and strengths based.

Child Protection and Family Support Workers are responsible for developing and managing plans for regular access between children/youth and their parents whenever they are unable to reside in the care of their parent/guardian.

Kinship Service

It is common in many communities for children to either live temporarily or to be raised in kinship living arrangements where the child is being cared for by members of the child's extended family or community. These arrangements do not require the involvement and screening of a Children's Aid Society unless they are initiated as a result of a protection concern. The assessment and intervention will focus on the ability of the kinship caregiver to maintain the child in a safe home until there is a permanent option developed for the child. The goal of DCAFS is to continually work with the child's family and extended family or community towards establishing a stable and permanent home for the child. (Ontario Kinship Standards, Nov 2006, p.3)

Emergency After-Hours Service

Emergency After-Hours Services are provided to the community to ensure that child protection services are available 24 hours each day. Emergency services are utilized after the regular office hours.

Duty to Report

We all share a responsibility to protect children from harm. Section 72 of Ontario's Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) states that anyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly and directly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a Children's Aid Society. You may not rely on another person to make the report on your behalf. You do not have to be certain that the child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to Child Protection. ("Reasonable grounds" refers to the information that an average person, exercising normal and honest judgment, would need in order to make a decision to report). [CFSA s.72(1)(3)]

Once a report is made to the Agency, a determination will be made as to whether a protection investigation will be commenced.

The person making the initial report should bear in mind that the duty to report is an ongoing obligation. As such, if you have made a previous report and have additional reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, there continues to be responsibility to make a further report. [CFSA s.72(2)]



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Answers to Your Questions About Getting Help For Children with Mental Health Concerns

What are mental health concerns?

Mental health concerns can include both emotional problems and behavioural problems. Emotional problems may include concerns about mood (usually sadness) or concerns about anxiety. Behavioural problems can include concerns with anger and violence, as well as difficulties paying attention.

All children and youth may experience brief problems with some or all of these, but when the problem starts to interfere with school, family, or everyday living, it may be time to seek help.



Where do I start if I think my child or youth is having difficulties?

A good place to begin is with your child or youth's doctor. Many physical illnesses can mimic the symptoms of mental illness. A physical exam can help to rule out certain illnesses. A diagnosis may come from your child's doctor or from an expert in child mental health problems, such as a child psychiatrist or child psychologist. Children's mental health disorders can be very difficult to diagnose. The symptoms of a disorder in children are often different from the symptoms experienced by adults. It is important that your child receive an accurate diagnosis, especially before considering medication.

You can help your child's or youth's doctor or specialist make the right diagnosis by writing down:

- Things your child or youth has difficulty with
- The times of the day that your child or youth is most affected
- Settings that are the most difficult
- Events or circumstances that led up to your child or youth experiencing difficulty
- Things you have done when your child or youth is having difficulty

Where should parents look when searching for a mental health professional?

Mental health services are available in Ontario by contacting Children's Mental Health Ontario (www.kidsmentalhealth.ca) for a list of your local accredited¹ mental health service provider(s), or the local area office of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (www.gov.on.ca/mcys). Telephone numbers are in the blue pages of the phonebook.

Your first contact call to a child and youth mental health centre will usually be answered by an intake worker. In some regions, your call will be answered by a central intake service. They will collect information about you and your child or youth's problem. They will then provide you with information and/or connect you with an appropriate service close to home. Anyone can make this call – young people themselves, parents, guardians or others directly involved in the child's life.

If your child or youth's situation becomes worse, you should share this information with your family doctor and any other places you are seeking help. Demand for help is often greater than the services available, and you may be placed on a waiting list. Changes in your situation may change how long you have to wait for services.

In addition to government-funded services, private psychologists can provide mental health services. Private services are paid out of your own pocket, but may be covered by your extended health plan. You can find a private psychologist through your provincial psychological association. The Ontario Psychological Association is at <http://www.psych.on.ca/> or (416) 961-5552. Other provincial associations are listed at: <http://www.cpa.ca/public/> or (613) 237-2144.

1. Accreditation is a process that requires agencies to meet challenging standards that define high-quality services. It involves an extensive internal and external review at set intervals. For more information on Children's Mental Health Ontario accreditation see: http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/become_member/accreditation_faqs.php

This information provided by

What can I do while I'm waiting to see a specialist?

Educate yourself. Search the library or Internet for information on child and youth mental health. You can find good information at <http://knowledge.offordcentre.com/> and extensive lists of relevant books at www.communityed.ca/booklists.cfm.

Some mental health service providers have brief programs such as parent education groups or drop-in clinics. Ask about what is available to support you while you wait, and how to get immediate help if there is a crisis or emergency.

What are some things my child's school can do to help while I am sorting out testing, services, etc. for my child?

Connecting with your child or youth's school is a good idea if he/she is struggling with mental health, behaviour, or learning problems. You should discuss your concerns, as well as his or her teachers' concerns. You need to learn more about what is happening with your child or youth in the school environment.

Sometimes, certain changes can be made to expectations for the child or youth at school while you sort out other supports. These may include reduced homework or altered start and finish times for school. There may need to be arrangements made for an alternate person or place the child can go to if they experience problems. Ask your school about testing to rule out a learning disability. There are also private agencies that provide this testing. Check the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario web site at <http://www.ldao.ca/> for more information.

Contact your school's principal or your child or youth's teacher and ask to meet with them and the school counsellor or social worker. Not all schools have counsellors or social workers available to them. Ask if your school district has a mental health worker. Call the student services office in your school district to ask about these workers.

What if my child requires more intensive help, residential treatment or needs to be hospitalized?

Home-based services for families as well as day-treatment programs, where children and young people attend services part or most of the day, are available in many communities. For children and youth that require it, community-based residential treatment programs are available. Regional hospitals offer various youth psychiatric services, and each province in Canada has at least one facility that offers provincial in-patient psychiatric care for children under 16 years. Your local child and youth mental health service provider can tell you more about the programs available in your community.

What can I do if I don't seem to be getting anywhere?

Most importantly, talk to your mental health service provider about your concerns and available options. Often it helps to bring together key people who can help develop a care plan and ensure all the concerns are addressed. Many communities have a formal or informal process to bring these people together to meet with you and help you find solutions. Your child and youth mental health centre or school should be able to arrange such a meeting. Here are some of the people who can help.

- Social worker – can assist in coordinating other services like in-home support
- Mental health clinician/therapist
- Community team leader for mental health
- Child/youth care worker
- Student support services
- Community services manager
- Teachers
- Advocate

Make a list or have someone help you to identify what your needs are before requesting a meeting. You may also want to bring a friend or support person to that meeting.



www.CYMHIN.ca

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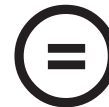
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What to Expect From Community Child & Youth Mental Health Services

The Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (www.gov.on.ca/mcys) funds a range of mental health services for children, youth and their families. These programs are delivered through independent agencies and can include assessment, treatment, and education services.

There is great demand for these services so there could be a waiting period before you get an appointment. Most agencies that deliver these services are members of Children's Mental Health Ontario, and are accredited by them. You can find a list of accredited¹ member agencies at www.kidsmentalhealth.ca. In some communities, all referrals to children's mental health services are made through a central intake service.

When you contact a child and youth mental health service:

You will speak with an intake worker who will talk to you about your concerns. They will ask you questions that help them to assess the number and severity of your child's problems. You will most likely be asked to participate in a brief child and family phone interview. This takes 15-20 minutes, and is a basic screening tool used to help determine what is needed.

The highest priority is given to those who are suicidal or whose functioning is badly affected due to acute mental illness. Accredited agencies must provide or help you to find immediate services if you are in a crisis or emergency situation. You may be advised to go to your local hospital if your child is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or others.

The intake worker may direct you to other community resources if they feel your child's problem may be better helped through those resources. They may also give you information about walk-in clinics, groups, supports or resources (films, books) that could help you during the wait. If they don't, you can ask for this information. Accredited agencies must inform everyone who calls how to get help in a crisis or emergency situation.

While on the wait list, you should update the agency whenever your child or youth's situation changes. You may also call for an update on when you may be seen.

Provided to you by:

What happens when you go to the children's mental health centre?

Your first few appointments will determine what you would like help with. To assess the situation, the clinician or team will use conversations with you and your child, observation, play and/or testing. The assessment process should recognize and accommodate your unique circumstances such as your culture, religion, language and ethnicity. The agency will then tell you how they view your situation and how they propose to help you and your child. You will have the chance to ask questions and get clarification, and you must be told about the risks and benefits of the treatment options under consideration.

The process should try to identify both your child's difficulties and strengths. There should be a discussion of what your goals and responsibilities are. Then you can use the goals to see if there is any progress over time as your child is treated.

Child and youth mental health professionals may ask for your permission to see school or medical records. They might also want to talk with your child's school or family doctor. This is important. Along with your reports and what your child says, they need to hear about your child's behaviour in different settings. Then, with this information, they have a complete assessment and can propose the best plan of action for your child and family.

You should receive information on the assessment and recommended individualized treatment plan. Accredited agencies are expected to negotiate and share decision-making with you about the treatment plan, including the goals, time-frames and methods to be used. If your child is over the age of 12 years, they can receive services without your involvement.

What you can expect from your child or youth's therapy or treatment

Treatment may involve the use of therapy, a combination of medication and therapy or just medications. Your child may be involved in family, individual or group sessions at an agency or office setting, or services may be provided in your home, your child's school or another community setting. Medications may be prescribed and monitored by your family doctor or a psychiatrist. A social worker, child and youth counsellor, child and youth worker or psychologist usually provides therapies, and in many situations a team of different professionals will work together with you and your child. If you are unsure who someone is, or what their role is in your child's treatment, ask them to explain.

The clinician will likely need to work with others involved in your child's care. These people may include your child's teacher, school counsellor or others in student support services in your school board. When everyone is on the same page, it is easier for them to work together to accomplish the goals.

Therapies or interventions can help your child learn skills that can help them throughout life. Some therapies are backed by research that shows they work, and some are not. You can ask your clinical team what the evidence is for the treatment they are recommending for your child.

In therapy, your child may learn about why they are having problems and how they can deal with them. The solutions may involve learning to:

- Identify situations that can make their symptoms worse
- Change negative thinking patterns
- Use healthy problem-solving and coping skills
- Distinguish between different emotions
- Use more appropriate ways of expressing their feelings
- Use other new skills that can either prevent symptoms or help your child cope with them.

You will probably be asked to:

- Support and encourage your child or youth to participate in treatment
- Participate in treatment sessions, particularly if your child is young. Older adolescents and teens generally come for their sessions alone
- Stay at the office if your child is receiving therapy there
- Help with homework assignments to practice newly learned skills at home

You may also be referred by child and youth mental health services to:

- A day-treatment program that combines therapy, school and life-skill building
- A residential treatment program in a community setting that provides therapy and skill building
- A hospital in-patient unit where extensive assessment and observation can take place
- Other community programs that offer specialized mental health support and education to children, youth and their families

You do not have to:

- Accept the recommended treatment – child and youth mental health services will still see your child
- Give permission for any reports to be shared with other professionals. You should expect that reports will only be shared with other professionals once you have read, understand, and agreed to share them.

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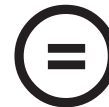
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Fascination
with fire
occurs at
all ages.



Fire-play or firesetting can be devastating.
If you have concerns about your child or youth, call
TAPP-C. **We're Here to Help.**

TAPPC





The facts about fire-play

If your child or teenager is involved in fire play or firesetting, you are not alone. Many children and teenagers have a fascination with fire. It is important to understand that while curiosity about fire is natural, fire-play can be dangerous. Unfortunately, many children die or are injured in fires they start themselves.

What is fire-play?

Fire-play can be many things:

- Playing with matches or lighters
- Playing with accelerants, like body sprays or aerosols
- Playing with the toaster, stove or furnace
- Burning items such as toys, paper or garbage
- Setting a fire to destroy something or hurt someone

Things to watch for:

If you notice any of the following, your child may be involved in fire-play:

- Matches or lighters go missing
- Matches or lighters are found among your child's belongings
- There are burn marks on household items or your child's clothing or possessions
- Your child is extremely interested in fire

Help is available

Firesetting presents an enormous risk to children, teenagers, their families and the community.

Fire involvement can be a sign of other problems in a child's life. It can start at any age. Fire-play can start out small and

progress to larger and more serious fires that threaten the safety of the child and the family. It's important that you deal with any fire involvement immediately. **That's where TAPP-C comes in.**

The TAPP-C program

TAPP-C is a program that brings together fire service and counseling professionals to help families deal effectively with children and teens involved in fire-play. The fire service professionals educate children and their families about fire and how to develop good fire safety practices. Counselling professionals assess the risk of continued fire involvement and help children and their families deal with issues that may contribute to the firesetting. TAPP-C is free-of-charge and is available to children from 2 to 17 years of age.

Keep your child safe from fire

You can help protect your child and family from fire by following these fire safety tips:

- Make sure that young children are supervised at all times.
- Keep matches and lighters locked away where children cannot get them.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas. Test them regularly.
- Develop and practise a home fire escape plan.
- Never allow your child to spend time with someone who uses fire in reckless or inappropriate ways.

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