

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

DATA & DECISION SUPPORT GUIDE

An accompanied resource to support Hamilton's Child and Youth Network's Data Dashboard.



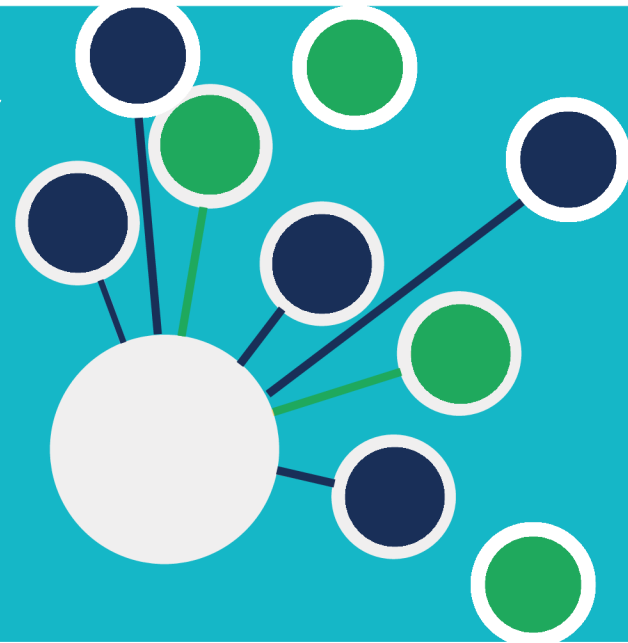
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Acknowledgements

Hamilton's Child and Youth Network *Data Dashboard* and the *Data & Decision Support Guide* were created with the support of the Network's **Data and Decision-Making Work Group**.

This work would also not be possible without the support of the **data partners** and **Network Members** who graciously aided in contributing to and reviewing the data.

We appreciate your continued commitment to improving local outcomes for children, youth, and their families.



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For a complete list of members to Hamilton's Child and Youth Network, visit hamilton.ca/CYN.

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Hamilton's Child and Youth Network

Hamilton's Child and Youth Network ("CYN" or "the Network") is a collaborative that brings together community organizations and networks committed to improving local outcomes for children, youth, and their families. Established in November 2023, it includes Senior Leaders from a range of local organizations committed to realizing the Network's vision and purpose. The Network aims to fulfil its vision and purpose through **system-wide collaboration, upstream approaches¹, collective impact², and data-informed decision-making.**

Vision: to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

Purpose: to ensure Hamilton's children and youth feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and can meet their health and well-being needs.

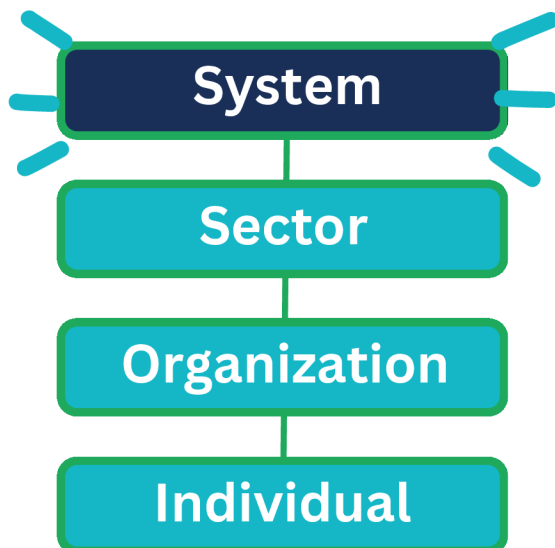
¹ By taking an upstream approach, CYN partners are committed to addressing the root causes (e.g., the structural, social, economic, and environmental conditions) of a health problem or benefit through the prevention of risk factors, promotion of protective factors, and early intervention, whenever feasible (National Collaborating Centre for the Determinants of Health, 2014).

² To achieve the conditions for collective impact (Tamarack Institute, 2017), the CYN partners are committed to developing a shared agenda, aligning measurement systems, coordinating reinforcing activities, and maintaining continuous, ongoing communication across the network.

Guide Purpose

The Data Dashboard and this accompanied resource were designed to support collaborative, **system-level data-informed decision-making** and planning towards improving local outcomes for children, youth, and their families and caregivers. This accompanied resource aims to:

- Highlight the importance and benefits of using data for collective decision-making and planning,
- Enhance understanding of how the dashboard can support decision-making,
- Inform readers of other data resources and how these can be used to support evidence-based decision-making.



What is data-informed decision-making?

Data-informed decision-making is the process of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting relevant and valid data to inform actions and insights, instead of relying on intuition, assumptions, or personal judgment (Stobierski, 2021). This approach to decision-making enables groups to utilize data to understand the current landscape, identify gaps, areas of need, identify common priorities, and provide insights on how to best address local issues of concern. Data-informed decision-making considers not just the data but also the context and experience (Puddy & Wilkins, 2011), as available, of the group or community itself.

Why use data-informed decision-making?

Using data for decision-making can improve planning (Perera, 2023) and responsiveness, resource allocation, and priority identification by highlighting areas that require attention or where focus could have significant impact. It also increases accountability and transparency in the decision-making process, enabling more inclusive and equitable decisions, while fostering innovation and strategies to address challenges (Citizen First Research Committee, 2023).

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Types of Data for Community Decision-Making

In data-informed decision-making, it is important to identify the types of data available, their benefits for enhancing understanding, and how they may be evaluated or prioritized differently during the decision-making process.



QUANTITATIVE DATA

This refers to information that can be counted, measured, or expressed in a numerical value. Common sources for collecting this data include surveys, population censuses, usage statistics, as well as administrative reports and polls (Cyr-Conner, 2024).



QUALITATIVE DATA

This type of information is used to make descriptive statements about a subject or group based on observation, interviews, or evaluations, aiming to gain a better understanding of an issue through meaning, context and lived experiences. Common sources for collection include focus groups and interviews (Cyr-Conner, 2024).



EXPERIENTIAL DATA

This type of evidence is based on professional insight, understanding, skill, and expertise accumulated over time, often referred to as intuitive or tacit knowledge (Puddy & Wilkins, 2011).



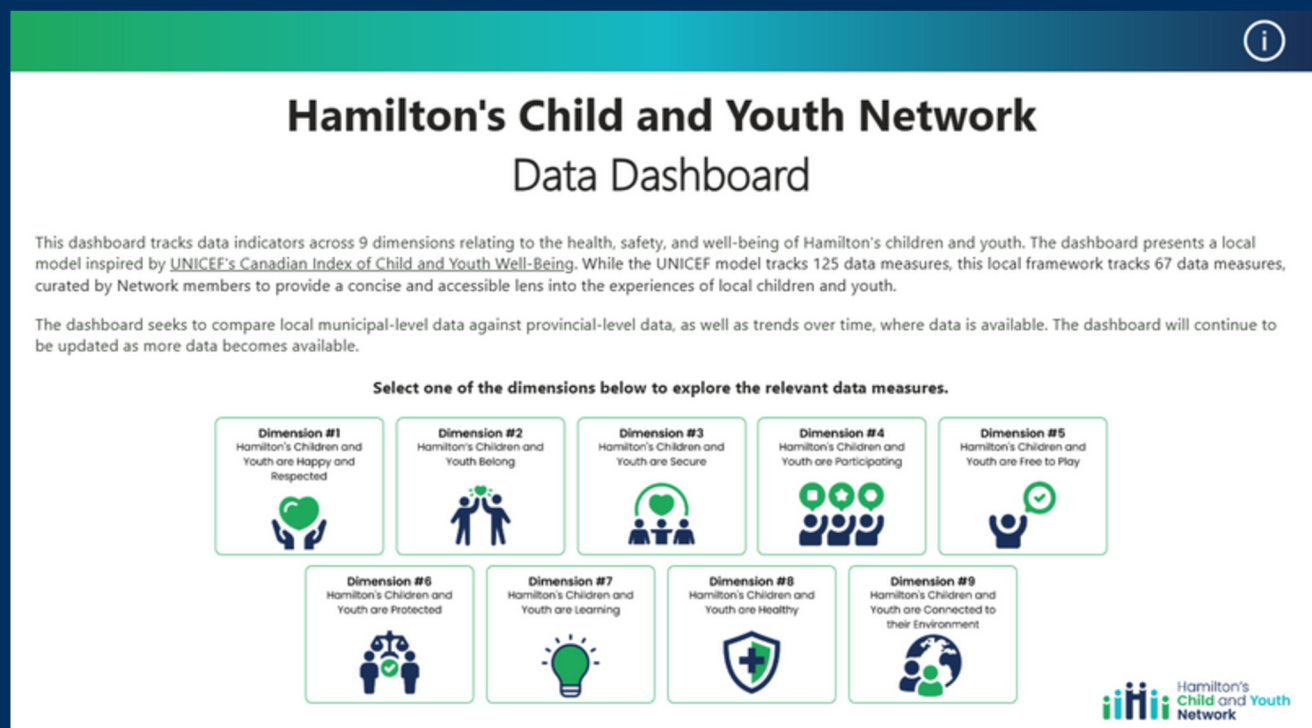
CONTEXTUAL DATA

This type of information is based on factors that determine whether a strategy is useful, feasible to implement, and accepted by a specific group or community (Puddy & Wilkins, 2011).

The Data Dashboard

The CYN's Data Dashboard serves as a tool for monitoring key indicators and measures relevant to the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth in Hamilton. Overall, the dashboard provides a snapshot of the behaviours and experiences of local children, youth, and their families.

In addition to serving the CYN and its members, the dashboard is available to the public, allowing community agencies, groups, and individuals to review and utilize the data for their own purposes, such as planning community services and activities, or advocating for additional or specific services.



The CYN's data dashboard is organized using UNICEF Canada's (n.d) Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-Being (CICYWB) and its 9 domains to categorize data. While the UNICEF model tracks 125 data measures, this local framework tracks 67 data measures, curated by Network members on the following data conditions:

- **Quality** (i.e., completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of the data),
- **Validity** (i.e., correctness and conforms to the original purpose of the data),
- **Appropriateness** (i.e., suitability, relevance for the intended purposes and/or use), and
- **Equity** (i.e., considers such factors as race, culture, gender expression, income, etc.).

Navigating the Dashboard

To aid in knowledge mobilization and decision-making, the dashboard not only presents the **dimensions**, **measures**, and **indicators** with its data but also includes a brief analysis of the data, comparisons to provincial and local trends when available, and data notes that include limitations, cautions, or extra information for consideration, understanding, and effective use.

As the Network progresses, there is a commitment to the ongoing review and continuous improvement of its data dashboard. As resources allow, this will involve exploring opportunities to incorporate new data from its partners and other sources and collecting and analyzing data for use by the Network.

Dimensions

Represent broad, conceptual aspects of children's lives (i.e., Hamilton's Children and Youth are Healthy).

Measures

Describe distinct aspects of child and youth well-being in each dimension. (i.e., having poor dental health).

Indicators

Are statistical definitions of the measures (i.e., % of grade 2 students needing urgent dental care).

Why mirror UNICEF Canada's model?

Over the span of a year, the Network's Data and Decision-Making Work Group convened to choose and design a suitable framework.

Members of the Work Group, using their diverse experiences and specialized skill sets, recommended this approach due to the feasibility and alignment with the CYN's collective impact and strategic planning considerations.

Importantly, using UNICEF Canada's index provided the Network with a clear framework to build upon, with infinite possibilities for growth and refinement.

Consider Additional Data Sources

In addition to the Data Dashboard, users should consider comparing and incorporating a variety of data sources to strengthen the existing analysis, enhance decision-making, and create more effective strategies and outcomes (Mayo-Wilson et al, 2017).

References to "statistical significance"

Use of this terminology throughout the dashboard refers to a determination that, when noted, the data has been analyzed and tested for statistical significance (Institute for Work & Health, 2005).



Using the Dashboard

This section explains how CYN will use the Data Dashboard to assist in decision-making. By using a stepped process, the Network will consider, analyze and gain insights from the data towards planning, prioritizing, and allocating resources. **All decisions and directions made by the Network should be based on consensus, following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) and processes outlined in the CYN's Terms of Reference, and supported by the data-informed decision-making criteria below.**

Criteria	Considerations
Step 1: SCOPE	What decision needs to be made? Is there alignment with the vision and purpose of the Network?
Step 2: EVIDENCE	What data is available to support the decision? What data is available in the CYN dashboard and what does it tell us? What can we validate or understand, based on other data and/or lived experience?
Step 3: FEASIBILITY	Can a decision be made? Does the Network have the ability to act given the Network's current capacity, resources and political will?
Step 4: UPSTREAMING	Will the decision result in a system-level change? Will the decision address the root causes rather than symptoms of the issue?
Step 5: INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY	Who might the decision impact? Does the decision consider the experiences, needs, and outcomes of children, youth, families and caregivers from impacted, underrepresented, historically-marginalized, and/or equity-deserving groups?
Step 6: RETURN ON INVESTMENT & ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	Will the decision be significant? Does the proposed action provide significant benefits when compared to the use or redirection of resources?

THANK YOU

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If you have any questions related to this resource, Hamilton's Child and Youth Network, or the Data Dashboard, please contact:

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When using the Data Dashboard for reports, grant applications, publications, etc., we ask that you cite the dashboard as a reference, using the structure below.

Citation Structure

- **General Reference:** Data cited in this report were obtained through Hamilton's Child and Youth Network's Data Dashboard (November 21, 2025), accessed on/between [insert date/insert start date and and insert end date] at [insert CYN Data Dashboard link (URL)]
- **Annotated Bibliography:** Hamilton's Child and Youth Network. 2025. Hamilton's Child and Youth Network's Data Dashboard. Last updated, November 21, 2025. [insert CYN Data Dashboard link (URL)]. Accessed on [insert date].
- **Reference:** Data from Statistics Canada (2021), Census Profile, accessed via [insert CYN Data Dashboard link (URL)] on [insert date].

Additional Resources

- City of Hamilton's [Child and Youth Atlas](#)
- City of Hamilton's [Open Data](#)
- City of Hamilton's [Housing and Homelessness Dashboard](#)
- City of Hamilton's [Invest in Hamilton Insights Data](#)
- City of Hamilton's [Ward Profiles](#)
- Education, Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), Ministry of Education Results
 - [English](#) and [French](#)
- Hamilton Community Foundation's [Vital Signs \(2023\)](#) and [Research reports, various](#)
- Social Planning Research Council of Hamilton's [Community data](#) and [Publications, various](#)
- Statistics Canada's [Canadian Community Health Survey – Annual Component](#)
- Statistics Canada's [Census Profile, 2021, Census Population, Hamilton, ON](#)
- YouthRex's [Data Hub](#)

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