

Terms of Reference

September 15, 2025

Hamilton's Child and Youth Network ("CYN" or "the Network") is a collaborative that brings together community organizations and networks committed to enhancing local outcomes for children, youth, and their families.

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 wellbeing needs.¹

1. MEMBERSHIP

A. Selection and Term

Members of the Network are Senior Leaders from local organizations committed to enhancing local outcomes for children, youth, and their families.²

During CYN's inception, an initial call was distributed to prospective members for consideration. Following that initial call, additional members may be invited, approved and/or replaced at the discretion of CYN's Co-Chairs.

As a condition of membership, members are required to sign the Network's Terms of Reference. This Terms of Reference and the corresponding membership group³ is active August 9, 2024, and due for review August 1, 2026.

B. Roles

Participants in formal activities carried out by Hamilton's Child and Youth Network are categorized as follows:

- **Members** are all individuals described in Section 1.A. and listed in Appendix Item 2.
- **Co-Chairs** are active members of the Network selected to serve in a steering and leadership capacity. Co-Chairs terms will be reviewed in the same cycle as the Terms of Reference. Co-Chairs will be selected in accordance with the Terms of Reference decision-making process.

¹ Please refer to "Appendix 2: Guiding Principles and Values" for an expanded description of the norms endorsed by the Network.

² Please refer to "Appendix 1: Glossary/Definitions" for key term definitions.

³ Please refer to "Appendix 3: CYN Member Roster" for a detailed list of active Network members and roles.

- **Delegates** are individuals attending CYN meetings representing the organization of an active member.
- **Workgroup Participants** are individuals from organizations and networks providing supports to specific priorities identified by Network membership. Workgroup Participants are not required to be Members. Members are not required to be Workgroup Participants.
- **Backbone Support Staff** are individuals assigned to support the coordination, administration, and communication of Network activities and meetings. Backbone Support Staff report to the Co-Chairs for strategic leadership and direction.

Individuals serving in any of the identified roles must declare conflicts of interest in which either they, or their organization, may have a direct financial, vested interest, or defined benefit not inferred from their professional capacity in serving the Network. Conflicts of interest must be declared to Network Co-Chairs in any circumstance where a conflict is reasonably perceived.

C. Responsibilities

Individual responsibilities: All Network members must commit to achieve the CYN's Vision and Purpose. Individual members are required to possess the following:

- Ability to think system-wide and strategically.
- Familiarity with the Hamilton's early years and youth sectors.
- Commitment to serve a broad range of needs experienced by local children and youth.
- Commitment to champion the priorities of the Network within their own organization and in the broader community.
- Willingness to identify and implement mutually reinforcing activities that align with the CYN's Vision and Purpose.
- Capacity to attend regular meetings and fulfill identified member roles.

Organizational responsibilities: In addition to individual member criteria, the respective organizations and networks of participating members are required to:

- Commit and contribute to the Vision, Purpose, and shared measurement system to progress collective efforts of the Network.
- Enable a designate to represent the organization or network when the member representative is not available.
- Actively contribute to the work of the Network (e.g., support staff time to participate in the Network, its workgroups, and activities).
- Align the work of their organization or network to support the CYN's Vision and Purpose, where appropriate.

To ensure effective collaboration and representation of the varying networks, collaboratives, and committees operating to support children and youth across Hamilton, Network members are required to represent the interest of any networks, collaboratives, and committees led by themselves or their staff persons. It is the responsibility of every Network member to communicate and collaborate with staff members in their organization.

Community responsibilities: CYN members belong to a community of professionals contributing to the broader Community Safety & Well-being Planning Framework, as mandated under the [Province's Safer Ontario Act, 2018](#). The City of Hamilton and community partners have developed a [Community Safety and Well-Being \(CSWB\) Plan for Hamilton](#). A Community Safety and Well-Being Plan aims to create the community conditions where:

- Everyone is safe and has a sense of belonging.
- Everyone has access to services.
- Individuals and families can meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

2. MEETINGS

A. Schedule & Format

Network meetings will initially be held three to six time per year. Workgroup meeting regularity will be determined based on the availability of workgroup participants and the urgency of the workgroup priority. Meeting format (i.e., in-person, virtual, etc.) will be determined at the discretion and interest of membership.

Meeting dates will be scheduled based on the greatest availability member representatives. All administrative logistics relating to scheduling meetings (i.e., agendas, facility bookings, etc.) will be completed by backbone support staff with approval from the Network's Co-Chairs.

All meeting dates, decision-making processes, and requests for action will be shared with at least 72-hours notice. Backbone Support Staff report to the Co-Chairs for strategic leadership and direction in meeting preparation (i.e., agendas, guest speakers, etc.) and facilitation.

B. Attendance & Participation

Members or their delegates are expected to regularly attend CYN meetings to ensure continuity and progress of the network. Members are required to inform backbone support staff if they are unable to attend a meeting or if their delegate will be attending in their place.

Members may appoint a delegate to attend in their absence. A delegate is an individual who can be entrusted to participate in CYN decision-making processes on their behalf. It is the responsibility of individual members to prepare their delegates with the information and context required to fully participate in Network meetings.

Member attendance will be reviewed annually by backbone support staff. Members with low attendance will be engaged to review their capacity and interest to continue serving the Network in a member role.

3. DECISION-MAKING

A. Conditions

Network members must make informed decisions in accordance with the Vision and Purpose of the CYN. The Network agrees to use a consensus decision-making process in which members will collectively decide on priority activities with support or acceptance by all.

As part of the consensus-building process, members will be provided with accurate, up-to-date information with opportunity for active participation and facilitated discussion. Discussion will be safe and transparent with members able to speak openly about the concerns to enable discussion and resolution.

Use of the decision-making process is required for all formal decisions. Formal decisions are those which directly impact the strategic direction of the Network and/or a significant impact on backbone support staff. Any member can request that a vote be called for a decision, where necessary. Members with a conflict of interest in a formal decision are not permitted to cast a vote.

B. Voting

Quorum of at least 51% of active members will be required for all formal decision-making. Quorum will be assessed by Co-Chairs prior to opening any decision-making process. When quorum is not achievable, Co-Chairs must defer decisions to either the next scheduled meeting or to be cast online for member vote. In cases of any online vote, at least 72-hours available for member response.

Co-Chairs may employ formal and informal methods to collect votes and achieve consensus. In any voting method, each member will have one (1) vote.

C. Resolving Conflicts and Complaints

In circumstances where Network members are unable to reconcile their differing informed opinions in accordance with the Vision and Purpose of the CYN, members agree to take the following steps:

- Attempt to resolve these issues within the meeting. If this is not possible in a reasonable manner, a date will be set to enable a facilitated mediation.
- Members will engage in a facilitated mediation delivered by an independent mediator, if appropriate.
- If facilitated mediation does not resolve the conflict, Co-Chairs may elect to address the conflict with the Network for additional voting.

Any conflict among members identified, through the formal decision-making process or otherwise, will be resolved at the direction of the Co-Chairs.

4. NETWORK ADMINISTRATION

A. Co-Chairs

The Network will be Co-Chaired by 2-3 members, per term, committed to realizing and promoting the CYN's Vision and Purpose. Co-Chairs must possess the time and ability to build connections and actively engage with other local networks, as well as having experience or interest in collective impact and systems coordination.

Co-Chairs terms will be reviewed in the same cycle as the Terms of Reference. Co-Chairs will be selected in accordance with the decision-making process defined in Section 3.

Co-Chairs are expected to fulfill the following activities:

- Set meetings and approve agenda plans.
- Lead and facilitate meetings, engagement activities, and discussion.
- Support consensus-building and resolve conflicts and complaints.
- Ensure effective workplan development, monitoring, and communications.
- Represent and provide updates on the Child and Youth Network at other committees and/or networks.
- Shares and promotes the network and its priorities with others in the community.

B. Backbone Support Staff

The City of Hamilton will assign staff members to support the coordination, administration, and communication of Network activities and meetings. Backbone Support Staff will work closely with the Co-Chairs seeking strategic leadership and guidance.

Backbone Support Staff are expected to fulfill the following activities:

- Communicate meeting schedules.
- Receive guidance and support the Co-Chairs.
- Ensure ongoing updates to Network processes.
- Coordinate communication and distribution of meeting materials.
- Create and maintain a digital resource to for members to access relevant resources.

C. Workgroups

New initiatives or projects that require dedicated resourcing from Network members must be approved by the Network. Where necessary, new initiatives or projects may require the formation of a Network workgroup. Workgroup participation is comprised of individuals from organizations and networks providing supports to specific priorities identified by Network membership. Workgroup Participants are not required to be Members. Members are not required to be Workgroup Participants.

In circumstances where a workgroup is approved by the Network, backbone support staff will provide an open call to members identifying the capacity, expertise, and interest, as outlined via an Expression of Interest.⁴ The Expression of Interest will provide clear details outlining the workgroup commitments and needs (i.e., participant qualifications, requirements, timelines, and time commitment, etc.)

Workgroup participants are expected to fulfill the following activities:

- Ensure regular attendance at workgroup meetings.
- Assist with the development, planning, and implementation of workgroup plans and related activities.
- Provide input and recommendations to backbone support staff.

⁴ Please refer to "Appendix 4: Expression of Interest" for a sample of how information on new projects or workgroups will be disseminated to members.



Workgroups will be supported by backbone support staff consistent with the duties described in Section 4.B. Workgroups are expected to provide updates to the Network at least once annually.

D. Network Evaluation

The Network will assess the performance, progress, and effectiveness through regular evaluation. Evaluation results will be shared with representatives for discussion and interpretation. Evaluations will occur in the same cycle as the Terms of Reference.

5. Member Endorsement

Members of the Network are asked to endorse this Terms of Reference. An endorsement is a form of public support or approval. Member endorsement indicates the Member's individual commitment and interest to strengthen the Network's Vision and Purpose, as defined by the Terms enclosed.

The act of signing a Terms of Reference has been shown to increase compliance and accountability for those in its scope.

I am pleased to support Hamilton's Child & Youth Network in its Vision and Purpose, as defined by the Terms enclosed. I will exercise my responsibilities as a Member to the best of my ability.

Appendix 1

Glossary/Definitions

Belonging: is when each individual is supported, respected, and valued for their identity and unique traits that make them different from each other. ([University of Saskatchewan, 2020](#)) Similarly, a sense of community belonging represents the social attachment of individuals and reflects social engagement and participation within communities. ([Statistics Canada, 2016](#))

Collective impact: is a disciplined cross-sector approach to solving complex issues on a large scale. ([Tamarack, 2022](#)) Successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations. ([Kania and Kremer, SSIR, 2011](#))

Consensus: is reached when most group members develop, and agree to support, a decision in the best interest of the community. Consensus decision making is based on the premise that everyone's voice is worth hearing and that all concerns that come from a place of integrity are valid. The consensus-building process is based on thoughtful, respectful, fulsome deliberation and an intention to find the best possible decision that suits the group. ([Tamarack, 2017](#))

Health: a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. ([World Health Organization, 2021](#))

Senior leader: is an individual who holds a position of leadership and influence within their organization. Senior leaders have the authority to make decisions on behalf of their organization to support the work and function of the Network.

Wellbeing: is a positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Like health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic, and environmental conditions. ([World Health Organization, 2021](#))

Appendix 2

Guiding Principles & Values

The following guiding principles and values will direct how Hamilton's Child and Youth Network and its members will work together to achieve its Vision and Purpose:

- **Collective Impact Approach:** Members are committed to a collective impact approach. This involves developing common goals, creating a shared measurement system, coordinating complementary activities, and maintaining ongoing communication.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Members are dedicated to making decisions on the strongest available evidence and are encouraged to share evidence through the Network to support.
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging:** Members are encouraged to share diverse perspectives and draw on the experiences of their participants, community, and staff. This helps ensure that principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB) are promoted and reflected in the network's plans, guidance, and decisions. Workgroups and members will use an EDIB lens during decision making and when developing initiatives.
- **Consultation and Collaboration:** Partners will collaborate with each other and other committees and agencies to support planning and strategy development. In addition, partners are committed to consulting with children, youth and families and sharing these insights with the network to support planning and decision-making.
- **Targeting Upstream:** By taking an "upstream" approach, members are committed to maximizing impact for children, youth, and families in Hamilton. This proactive strategy will prioritize preventing risk factors, promoting protective factors, and intervening early whenever feasible. Upstream approaches aim to address the root causes of a population health problem or benefit e.g., the structural, social, economic, and environmental conditions ([PHAC \(Public Health Agency of Canada\) Best Practices Portal](#), 2016).
- **Adopting Accountability Measures:** Members are involved in identifying, approving, and utilizing clear accountability measures that assess collective progress of the Network. These measures include performance data focused on both population and system-level factors.
- **Community Ownership and Collective Strengths:** The Network values its partners for their strengths and assets, encouraging and supporting them to contribute to the collective agenda while also benefiting from the collaboration. Partners commit to taking ownership and working together, as well as with other committees and agencies, to build capacity and strength in priority areas, influencing the Network's outcomes.
- **Mutual Respect and Shared Leadership:** Partners actively engage in the Network, embracing any conflicts or tensions as opportunities for open, transparent, and honest dialogue. They are prepared to voice their perspectives, address emerging issues directly, and manage expectations or potential conflicts of interest. Empowered to provide leadership, partners work to reach consensus on decisions and solutions that prioritize the best interests and outcomes of local children, youth, and families.

Appendix 3

CYN Member Roster, a/o September 19, 2025

Co-Chairs	Organization
Rachelle Ihekwoaba	City of Hamilton, Community Strategies
Michelle Hayes	Lynwood Charlton Centre
Nicki Glowacki	YMCA Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford
Member Name	Organization
Ruth Doherty	Affiliated Services for Children and Youth
Stephanie Taylor	Alternatives for Youth
Victoria Long	Arts for All
Kim Ciavarella	Banyan Community Services
Duane Dahl	BGC Hamilton-Halton
Donna Zan	Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
Lise Couriveau	Centre de Sante Communautaire Hamilton-Niagara
Rachelle Ihekwoaba	City of Hamilton, Community Strategies
Julie Prieto	City of Hamilton, Healthy Families
Colin McMullan	City of Hamilton, Performance, Planning and Evaluation
Jen Vickers-Manzin	City of Hamilton, Public Health Services
Michelle Baird	City of Hamilton, Housing Services
Laura Kerr	City of Hamilton, Recreation
Stuart Beumer	City of Hamilton, Ontario Works
Sylvia D'Intino	Community Living Hamilton
Brent Esau	Compass Community Health Centre
Regine Brammer	Conseil Scholaire Mon Avenir
Ann Lambert	Conseil Scholaire Viamonde School Board
Paul Seney	Contact Hamilton
Tracy Styles	De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre
Brad Evoy	Disability Justice Network of Ontario
Ann-Marie Anie	Empowerment Squared
Norma Joaquim	Good Shepard Centres Hamilton
Ryan Janssen	Greater Hamilton Health Network
Caitlin Craven	Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion
Robyn Ocean	Hamilton Community Foundation
Bryan Shone	Hamilton Child and Family Supports
Lindsey George	Hamilton Family Health Team
Holly Augerman	McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences, Child and Youth Mental Health and Autism Services
Karen Margallo	McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences, Child and Youth Ambulatory Services

Martina Rozsa	McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences, Child and Family Community Integrated Care
Frank Miscone	Hamilton Police Services
Cindy Poggiaroni	Hamilton Public Library
Carrie Horn	Hamilton Wentworth Catholic Child Care Centres
Jenny Athansou-Malisa	Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Michelle Lemaire	Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Kim Gibson-Chalmers	John Howard Society Hamilton Burlington
Frederick Drydan	Liberty For Youth
Michelle Hayes	Lynwood Charlton Centre
Ameil Joseph	McMaster Centre for Community Engagement
Barb Flaherty	McMaster Family Health Team
Julie Scheffel	Mohawk College
Barrington Hector	Neighbour to Neighbour Centre
Monique Lavallee	NIWASA
Kathy Georgiades	Offord Centre, McMaster University
Terri Bedminster	Refuge: Newcomer Health Centre
Ted Hildebrandt	Social Planning Council of Hamilton
Taylor Hatchard	St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Sidney Stacey	Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton
Maggie John	The Baby Depot
Brenda Ferguson	Today's Family
Rashed Afif	Wesley
Justine Agada	Workforce Planning Hamilton
Nicki Glowacki	YMCA Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford
Cayleigh Sexton	Young Caregivers Association
Sandra Parker	YWCA Hamilton

Backbone Support Staff

Daniel Ridsdale
Jesse Williamson
Shawna Scale

Role

Senior Project Manager, Community Strategies
Project Manager, Strategic Youth Initiatives
Early Years Strategy Specialist

Appendix 4

Expression of Interest (Sample) Data and Decision-Making Workgroup

Purpose: Hamilton's Child and Youth Network is seeking participants to sit on its Data and Decision-Making (DDM) Workgroup. Participants will bring experience and expertise in evaluation and performance measurement and awareness of available population-level data sources. Workgroup members will collaborate to review, identify, and develop an early shared measurement framework with mapped data sources for the CYN.

Expectations: Hamilton's Child and Youth Network is asking prospective DDM workgroup participants to commit availability, as follows:

- Three (3), two-hour meetings during an initial engagement period, from August to October 2024. Meetings will be scheduled based on best availability during the following weeks:
 - August 12-16, 2024
 - September 16-20, 2024
 - October 15-18, 2024
- Participants may be asked to allocate additional time (up to 4 hours per month) during this initial engagement period to support workgroup tasks.
- Following the initial engagement period, participants may be asked to continue to meet on a quarterly basis, or as needed, to support additional workgroup activities beyond October 2024.

Workgroup Member Assets: Hamilton's Child and Youth Network is asking its membership to support the recruitment of workgroup participants who display the following assets:

- Previous or current experience in data management, evaluation, epidemiology, knowledge translation, and related areas.
- Knowledge/experience in developing or using shared measurement or data and decision frameworks, and population or key performance indicator dashboards.

Workgroup Participants are not required to be Members. Members are not required to be Workgroup Participants.

Referral process: Members are asked to share the name and e-mail of the referred individual to shawna.scale@hamilton.ca on or before 4:00 p.m., August 2, 2024.