



Fact Sheet: Legislating The Other 23 Hours

Child and Youth Care Practice in Ontario

- There are an estimated 10,000 Child and Youth Care Practitioners (CYCPs) working in Ontario
- The first formal training program in Child and Youth Care began in 1957 at Thistletown Regional Centre
- CYCPs engage with children and youth in their live events, in attempts to stabilize crisis and promote optional development and functioning
- CYCPs apply a developmental-ecological approach when working with children, youth and their families
- CYCPs provide services in many settings including Child Welfare, Youth Criminal Justice, Child and Family Mental Health, Paediatric/Adolescent Health and, Mental Health Care, Specialized Education, Youth Shelters, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Residential Treatment

Education and Training in CYC

- Levels of CYC education across Ontario and Canada include advanced diploma, bachelor's degree, graduate degree and PhD options
- All programs feature a combination of academic instruction and field placement (up to 1500 hours of supervised practice in a wide range of practice settings)
- Annually, Ontario community colleges graduate approximately 1,000 CYC students
- CYCPs are specifically trained to focus on building therapeutic relationships with high risk vulnerable children, youth and families
- A CYC-Ps specialized training includes:
 - assessing risk and developmental needs of vulnerable children and families
 - designing and implementing therapeutic interventions
 - implementing crisis intervention and safety planning with children, youth and their families
 - employing system level intervention through direct care, supervision, consultation, training and advocacy
 - developing therapeutic relations in challenging contexts
 - applying group and system theories in milieu work
 - fostering resilience and applying a strength based approach to assessment and intervention

The population served by CYCPs

- Children, youth and families whose complex needs place them at extremely high risk within communities and within institutional settings
- CYCPs have been hired within organizations that are funded by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in Ontario

The need for Legislation of CYC-Ps in Ontario

- Since 1995 there have been twenty-six inquests into the deaths of high risk vulnerable young people who were connected to a governmental care system
- Residential environments funded by the government are not required to employ qualified care providers (trained and formally educated). Without minimal qualifications, children will remain at risk of child maltreatment from unqualified caregivers providing inadequate care
- The employment of untrained individuals in Child and Youth Care roles have lead to at least two inquests into the deaths of young people in care due to misuse of physical restraints since 1995

- Many other helping professionals working with children and youth are regulated and legislated in the province of Ontario including Early Childhood Educators and Social Workers/ Social Service Workers
- Those without the specialized skill set and formal training of a CYCP can be employed as a CYCP because this profession is not yet regulated in Ontario

Benefits of Legislation

- To establish professional standards, some of which include:
 - The title/name of the profession (who can call themselves a CYCP)
 - Admission to the profession (what education/training is required)
 - Standards of professional practice (what constitutes good CYC work, and what does not)
 - Determination of appropriate ongoing education and training for members of the profession
 - Assurance of adherence to the Code of Ethics and standards of practice
 - Accountability and Investigation of complaints of misconduct which includes disciplinary action, in the best interest of the public

We believe legislation will support our efforts to:

- Ensure public safety and safe care of high risk and vulnerable youth from a strength base perspective
- Establish Professional recognition by health care providers and other professionals in the social service industry
- Increase levels of accountability for CYC Practitioners in the Province of Ontario
- Promote ethical Child and Youth Care practices (best practices)
- Establish public confidence in Child and Youth Care services
- Ensure commitment and leadership to move the profession forward

Risks of Unlegislated CYC Practice

- Ongoing vulnerability of children and youth in care
- Insufficient accountability processes for employers to hire skilled staff
- Continued employment of unqualified staff
- Inadequate education and skill sets of those employed to serve high risk and vulnerable youth
- Continued high rates of turnover and burnout in high risk settings
- Continued harm to high risk youth in care requiring intrusive intervention
- Continued inquests into the death(s) of children in care
- Escalating risk to communities given the risk some high risk youth pose to others

The OACYC's Action Plan

- The Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care (OACYC) is the representative association that speaks on behalf of CYCPs who provide services to children, youth and families and who have education and/or experience in Child and Youth Care
- The OACYC's movement to becoming a legislated profession is based on a desire to align child and youth care practices with existing and evolving requirements of employers and Ministries to ensure that CYCPs are accountable to a regulated college and implementing best practices
- The goal of legislation is to serve and protect the public interest and to ensure that children are receiving care from qualified professionals who are trained and screened to care and protect them
- Demonstration of being a self-regulated profession is seen as a prerequisite to becoming a legislated profession
- The OACYC aims to demonstrate the existence of a code of ethics, standards of practice and membership and investigating complaints of misconduct