



Dear CYC Coordinators,

The OACYC recognizes the challenges that Child and Youth Care Diploma and Degree programs are facing, especially in relation to student placements for the summer, fall and potentially winter semesters. We understand that student placements are an integral part of Child and Youth Care programs and that the ability to learn and apply theory to practice is a pivotal component of their education. We also recognize that organizations, agencies and community programs both support and rely on student placements to meet the needs of the young people, families and communities we support.

COVID-19 has left us all with uncertainty about the immediate future. Globally, we are all scrambling to problem solve and ensure we can maintain routine in the face of all of this, where we are able. Given that academic institutions are currently discussing student placements for the upcoming academic year, the OACYC encourages faculty and administrations to consider the following recommendations:

1. It is important to follow the Government of Ontario's guidelines on COVID-19 in regards to essential workers and individuals working with high risk populations especially in any care-related facility or agency. Please check regularly with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities on their guidelines about student practicums as well as Public Health information .
2. Medical forms and Police Checks must be completed prior to placements. This protects both the young people, families and communities we support, as well as the student, themselves. We understand that obtaining a medical certificate and Vulnerable Sector Search may pose challenges in some geographical locations, however, we must continue to adhere to the Ministry of Colleges and University guidelines as well as the associated Ministry requirements of the specific placement setting (i.e., MCCSS and Group Care/Treatment) .
3. Institutions are required to acknowledge and address liability concerns, ensuring protection of all students and staff at all costs. The OACYC strongly recommends, alongside adherence to the provincial government and public health requirements for essential and nonessential workers, that any student scheduled for placement or practicum only begin their in-person learning experience after all medical screenings and files/paperwork have been completed. We believe that not doing so, even by a day, could pose an unnecessary risk to the students, the staff and vulnerable persons in the placement setting.
4. Consider providing education related to proper use of Personal Protective Equipment and methods of adhering to physical distancing practices, both personally and professionally among students and staff of all settings that the placement students may come into contact with.
5. In the event that placements are deemed in compliance with Public Health Guidelines and are able to facilitate in-person placement opportunities, institutions are advised to have a planned response in case of potential outbreak at a placement and share this plan with students and placement supervisors.
6. The OACYC recognizes the benefits of regular opportunities for supervision (both formal and informal). Programs are encouraged to follow their usual supervision requirements and consider how this may occur in virtual spaces.



7. Investigate and research alternative methods to carrying out practicums (i.e. community projects, presentations, online activities, virtual interventions, supports, etc.).
8. Recommend additional training in Telepractice, virtual engagement and intervention, perhaps citing CYC literature on online relational practice and therapeutic intervention, including individual and group modalities.
9. Students have a right to refuse unsafe work conditions. Ensure a process regarding how to identify, address and respond to any concerns that may arise during placements is clearly articulated to students, faculty and placement sites.

We are hopeful that students will be able to access valuable and safe opportunities soon and recognize that there have been losses for many due to the current pandemic. The OACYC is committed to the continued enhancement and advancement of Child and Youth Care in Ontario. The Association encourages all institutions, organizations, and practitioners to mindfully consider these recommendations. Student Placements are the nucleus of Child and Youth Care education. The Association is committed to protecting and advocating for the preservation of this high quality educational component.

You can access this letter on our website here, or download a pdf version here.

Thank you for your consideration,

Board of Directors,
Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care

c/o The School of Child and Youth Care
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
Tel: 416-621-4340
Web: www.oacyc.org