



Ontario Association of  
**CHILD AND YOUTH CARE**  
Association Ontarienne des Techniques  
**D'ÉDUCATION SPÉCIALISÉE**

# Scope of Practice

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## Preamble

Although the origins of Child and Youth Care Practice can be traced back to the 18th century, it has developed in Ontario as a profession since the mid 1900s. Generally, Child and Youth Care Practice involves work with targeted, oppressed and marginalized children and youth. Child and Youth Care Practitioners provide support through caring therapeutic relationships in the context of a planned therapeutic milieu, using lifespan intervention strategies. Child and Youth Care Practice involves advocacy efforts in an

attempt to reduce oppressive circumstances and increase personal agency. Recognition of the ecological influences in the child's and/or youth's immediate environment, upon their developmental trajectory, is central to the care and intervention being provided.

Child and Youth Care practice evolved to include the use of relational practice in lifespace domains beyond residential settings, and became inclusive of the family and community system contexts of practice. As the scope of practice evolved, so too did the legislation that governed the care of children and youth. Today, the United Nations has an established proclamation on the International Rights of the Child which now influences all provincial legislation governing the provision of care to this group of children and youth. Child and Youth Care Practitioners are specifically trained to recognize the rights and needs of targeted children and to use a rights-based and strength-based approach to practice.

In early 2017, the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care's Board of Directors began developing an updated scope of practice, based on theoretical frameworks and contemporary industry standards for Child and Youth Care in Ontario. The Association conducted a review of the current

scope of practice, with sector leadership, academics, and frontline workers from various Child and Youth Care practice milieus to explore recommendations for change. The discussions focused on frontline practice, Child and Youth Care areas of expertise, safety, theoretical frameworks, and the Core Competencies of Child and Youth Care practice, as developed and revised by the Child and Youth Care Certification Board and The Association for Child and Youth Care.

The process included component analysis and comparisons of already existing Scopes of Practice from related disciplines, as well as the existing Scopes of Practice for Child and Youth Care in other Canadian associations. The competencies, as developed, assessed and identified by Curry, Eckles, Stuart and Qaqish (2010) of Child and Youth Care were included in the development of this scope of practice. Curry et al, (2010) described professionalism, cultural and human diversity, applied human development, relationship and communication, and developmental practice methods as the core competencies of Child and Youth Care. The outcomes of the discussions are represented in the newly proposed scope of practice below, specifically the recommended pre-qualification standards to practice, the specific activities, the children, youth and families we serve and the practice

settings. The Scope of Practice was developed intentionally to act as supportive documentation for Child and Youth Care Practitioners and bolster the Association's legislative advocacy efforts. It is intended to envision how Child and Youth Care can align and co-exist with related regulated disciplines and offer language for the practice, and its placement in the framework of regulation.

### **Child and Youth Care Scope of Practice**

Child and Youth Care Practice focuses on children and youth, within the context of families, the community and their lifespace. Acknowledging their evolving capacity, the perspective emphasizes the interactions between persons and their physical, spiritual, emotional, and social environments, including cultural and political settings.

Child and Youth Care practice is grounded in the basis of a trauma-informed, relational, anti-oppressive, participatory and strength-based approach. Child and Youth Care practice includes assessing individual and

program needs, designing and implementing programs and planned environments. With young people, Child and Youth Care Practitioners integrate developmental, preventive and therapeutic processes into the lifespace, where possible. Child and Youth Care contributes to the development of knowledge and practice while participating in systems interventions through; direct care, supervision, administration, teaching, research, consultation and advocacy. Anti-oppressive practices are implemented to address the history and legacy of colonization, anti-Indigenous racism, Anti-Black racism, ableism and all other forms of oppression often surrounding the needs of the children, youth and families served by the Practitioner.

Child and Youth Care includes the following:

CYC1 – Provide assessment, care, and intervention within a therapeutic relationship between the young person and the Child and Youth Care Practitioner;

CYC2 – Provide services to promote and support the individualized development of children, youth, and their families through the integration of developmental, preventive and therapeutic processes;

CYC3 – Through Relational practice, provide lifespace intervention informed by an anti-oppressive ethic of care, Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and Child and Youth Care theories and approaches such as trauma-informed, strength-based, systems, developmental and ecological approach;

CYC4 – Provide services across sectors and Ministries (i.e. Attorney General; Health; Education; Children, Community and Social Services), agencies, and through private practice;

CYC5 - Provide supervision, mentoring and professional development opportunities to Child and Youth Care Practitioners to enhance and support continued professional development;

CYC6 - The development, promotion, management, administration, delivery and evaluation of human service programs and services, including those done in collaboration with other professionals;

CYC7 – Provide education, mentorship, and supervision to Child and Youth Care students;

CYC8 – Development and consultation with government, organizations, institutions and communities on policy, programs, and the delivery of services to young people;

CYC9 – Using anti oppressive practices, advocate for and with young people to ensure best practices and outcomes, access services and, enhance personal agency;

CYC10 – Conduct research that will support the growth of and further inform Child and Youth Care practice across sectors.

### **Child and Youth Care Practice Domains**

Child and Youth Care practice occurs in a variety of settings that support children, youth and families including: early intervention programs, community-based mental health and social service programs, parent education and support programs including in home intervention programs, school-based programs and day treatment centres, outpatient community mental health programs, child welfare group homes and foster care programs, substance use, mental health and psychiatric residential treatment centres, hospitals, paediatric health care, and residential and community based youth justice programs and private practices.

## **Child and Youth Care Practice Preparation**

Child and Youth Care post secondary curriculum includes foundational knowledge in; understanding of Self as it relates to practice, Child and Youth Care relational practice principles, child and youth development including attachment and trauma theoretical perspectives, advocacy, anti-oppression and other social justice frameworks, family based and lifespace intervention, crisis intervention and milieu theory, strength-based and resiliency perspectives, assessment and intervention methods that include evidence informed and evidence-based practice paradigms as well as ethical practice frameworks.

In Ontario, there are twenty-three community colleges that offer a College of Applied Arts and Technology Advanced Diploma in Child and Youth Care. In Ontario, Child and Youth Care programs are 6 semesters or 3 years long, although a number of colleges offer “fast-track” options and/or advanced credits for those with related post-secondary education. All programs feature a combination of academic instruction and field practicum placement (on-the-job training with up to 1500 hours of supervised practice in a wide range of practice settings).



In addition to the educational opportunities provided by community colleges, Child and Youth Care Practitioners can earn an Honors Degree (4 year B.A) in Child and Youth Care. In Ontario, this degree is offered both at Ryerson University and Humber College. Across the country, there are 10 University level B.A programs in Child and Youth Care. Child and Youth Care Practitioners can also pursue graduate and doctoral degrees in Child and Youth Care from several recognized Canadian Universities such as; the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia, or Ryerson University in Ontario.

Post Secondary academic programs in Child and Youth Care are now seeking to become accredited through the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board. The accreditation process aims to ensure quality education for Child and Youth Care Practitioners through the assessment and review of post secondary educational programs and the development of standards. The intent of the accreditation process is to ensure consistency among graduate program outcomes and ultimately ensure the quality of life and care received by young people who are served by Child and Youth Care Practitioners.

## Practice Methods

Child and Youth Care Practice includes assessing individual and program needs, designing and implementing programs and therapeutic milieus. With young people, using Child and Youth Care relational practice principles, Practitioners integrate developmental perspectives, culturally safe and evidence informed practices and therapeutic processes, into the lifespace to promote optimal development. Child and Youth Care contributes to the development of knowledge and practice by participating in systems interventions through; direct care, supervision, administration, teaching, research, consultation and advocacy.

Practice Methods May Include:

- Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racist Practices
- Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing
- Lifespace Intervention
- Counselling
- De-escalation and Crisis Intervention
- Youth Engagement

- Advocacy
  - Social Emotional Learning Supports
  - Facilitation of Life Skills Programming
  - Facilitation of Social Skills Programming
  - Group Work
  - Family Support and Intervention
  - Behaviour Guidance
  - Community Resource Networking
  - Restorative Practices
  - Strength-Based Assessments
  - Relational Practices
  - Trauma-Informed Practices
  - Educational support
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References: Curry, D. Eckles, F., Stuart, C., & Qaqish, B. (2010). National child and youth care practitioner professional certification: Promoting competent care for children and youth. *Child Welfare*, 89, 57-77.