



Residential and Support Services for Children and Youth

Presentation to the Community Services Committee

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AGENDA

1. Residential gaps for children and youth
2. Proposed Shared-Care Hub
3. Youth Homelessness and Transitional Residence

Legislation

- On January 1, 2018, the Ontario, *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* came into effect;
- New legislation increased the “age of protection” to include all children under the age of 18 years;
- Under these amendments, 16 and 17-year-olds who are in need of protection are now eligible for a full range of child protection services;
- A key change is the availability of a “Voluntary Youth Services Agreement” or “VYSA” for 16 and 17-year-old youth who require an out-of-home placement.

PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNING

The measure of the wellness of a community must be determined by the experiences and reality of our most vulnerable.



Residential Resources and Pressures

- Housing is often understood from the experience of families seeking affordable and safe housing;
- Often the experience of children and youth are misunderstood or assumed services are available to address the need;
- Many families struggle meeting the needs of their child (mental illness or special needs) and there is no provider in our area funded to deliver residential services;
- Options available to families are often binary:
 - child living with them full-time or living somewhere else full-time.
- Sometimes parents are stuck “being a rock and a hard place” and parents and the system turn to child welfare.

Residential Resources and Pressures

- Children and youth who are deemed to be in need of protection come in the care of the Society;
- The Society is the parent;
- Focus is on maintaining children with their families, kin or alternative family;
- Considerable efforts are made to return children to their family or kin; or to develop meaningful and sustainable long-term connections;
- Sadly, some youth are placed in congregate care;
- Sadly, some children are sent to facilities far away from home;
- The Shared-Care Model provides an alternative.

Shared-Care Model

- Community partners exploring a local building as a potential site for a community hub hosting a variety of services:
 - the Shared-Care Model;
 - a step-up, step-down model;
 - Clinical services;
 - Youth Transition into Independent Living: transitional housing; supports;
 - Transitioning supports for youth entering the adult developmental services;
 - Training; peer support;
 - Newcomers' support;
 - Community space for peer to peer support; social connections;
 - Other*

Youth Services

- Children brought into care at a younger age and subject to an Extended Society Care Order at 18 are eligible for Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) until age 21;
- Youth, under new legislation, who are 16 or 17 and determined to be in need of protection can enter into a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA);
- Youth who were on a VYSA are eligible for CCSY when they turn 18;
- Youth who turn 18 but are still in school can be supported through the Stay at Home for School to maintain their current living arrangement.

Financial Supports Provided to CCSY and VYSA

FINANCIAL SUPPORT	CCSY	VYSA
Monthly Payment	\$875/MO	\$875/MO
Birthday Allowance	\$100/YR	\$100/YR
Christmas Allowance	\$170/YR	\$170/YR
Vacation Allowance	\$200/YR	\$200/YR
COVID Allowance	\$150/MO	\$150/MO
Other Financial Support: Groceries, prescriptions, dental, clothing, cell phone, education, furniture, Driver's Ed, rent, travel expense, Passport, bus pass, graduation gifts, gym memberships.	\$73,000/YR total for all CCSY youth	\$273,000/YR total for all VYSA youth

Youth Transitioning to Independent Living Program

ON THIS DATE	CHILDREN IN CARE	CCSY	VYSA
April 1, 2016	230	62	
April 1, 2017	238	57	
April 1, 2018	264	44	
April 1, 2019	231	42	21
April 1, 2020	239	56	15
August 31, 2020	240	60	15

In 97% of investigations done by CAS, the child or children remain in the home

Youth Transitioning to Independence During the Year



Experiences of Children and Youth

- 17 year old youth with developmental delays.
- Discharged from hospital following mental health admission to the existing shelter at the time.
- However, youth at significant risk.
- No capacity to consent to a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement.
- CASDSM went to court to get Extended Society Care order so that he would have services through to 18 years and be prioritized for developmental services residential supports.
- CASDSM worked with a private operator to develop a home for him that met his needs but also at a significant financial cost.

Experiences of Children and Youth

- Youth turned 18 and needed to move into independent living.
- He had difficulty finding a place to rent due to his age and still being in high school.
- Youth felt overwhelmed at times with balancing high school and working extra hours to pay rent.
- Youth is responsible and without any behavioural issues.
- His worker described this youth as follows: *“Despite leaving foster care and his family kicking him out, youth has strived to become a strong person, wanting to complete high school and look at college options.”*

Experiences of Children and Youth

- Youth who has struggled with addictions was living in an area with high incidence of crime and drugs. He was evicted and began living with random people and friends in the down town core.
- He receives \$875 monthly from CASDSM.
- CASDSM worker helped youth apply to Sudbury Housing but was advised it was more than a 2 year wait. The youth was unable to move back home.
- Worker helped him search for other places to rent.
- Worker's perception was that he was denied because he self-identified as being with the CAS. Worker described witnessing this youth losing all motivation and hope from this experience telling his worker that he would only find rental property "in the ghetto" and felt he "would be stuck in this lifestyle forever."
- *"This youth struggles to find housing and still is moving from place to place. He still has yet to receive a call for housing."*

Experiences of Children and Youth

- A youth supported through CCSY living independently.
- Landlord is unhappy with cleanliness of youth and as a result, youth is at risk of becoming homeless.
- Youth works with mentors on developing life skills.
- “She has no family. We are her family.”
- Youth is employed. Just finished high school and has now been accepted into college.
- *“This was a very positive happy time for youth. They are very quiet, they may lack cleanliness but they are trying to make positive changes. She is now feeling discouraged about attending college. She fears she will have to move. Youth feels stuck and has nowhere to go now if she’s kicked out.”*

Experiences of Children and Youth

Barriers to housing experienced by youth as described by one CASDSM worker.

“Housing barrier trends I have noticed with VYSA AND CCSY are low-income, hygiene and cleanliness, lack of family or friends, substance abuse, criminal records, mental illness, past evictions and involvement with the Agency.”

Experiences of Children and Youth

As described by a staff member of CASDSM who works with youth:

“I have several youth who struggle to find housing here in Sudbury. Many street-involved youth report feeling unsupported in their efforts to find housing, and feel judged. Many youth identified harsh shelter rules and a lack of privacy as outweighing the benefits of sleeping in a homeless shelter. One youth stated they were sleeping on top of school roof. The school would allow them to shower in the morning and provide food. They youth stated they felt more safe there. Downtown was scary for them. Youth was unable to apply for housing as they are only 17 years old!”