



Children and Youth Planning Table Voting Member Meeting Minutes for October 7, 2020

THEME: Strategic Actions that Foster Belonging for Children and Youth

Virtual

9:30am to 11:30am

Summary of Minutes

The first two (2) pages are the high-level summary of the meeting minutes. The fulsome minutes follow the summary. To skip to the fulsome minutes, click [here](#).

Welcome

Barb Cardow and Goranka Vukelich, Co-Chairs of the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT), welcomed everyone and provided a territorial acknowledgement (the acknowledgement was created by the Wellbeing Waterloo Region [WWR] First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle).

Belonging Work To-Date

Alison Pearson summarized the belonging work completed to-date, under the umbrellas of equity, relationships and attachment, and children being valued, heard, and included.

Breakout Sessions

Within breakout rooms, attendees had focused discussion on strategic actions that foster belonging for children and youth, with each attendee participating in two of the following four topics:

1. Actions related to general belonging for children and youth
2. Equity-seeking actions
3. Secure attachment/relationship actions
4. Actions related to children and youth feeling valued, heard and included

Attendees emerged from each of the above break out sessions with actions and ideas, and their impacts.

Larger Group Reflection

Attendees discussed their reflections from the breakout sessions, and outlined what they are most excited about. This includes collaboration and the power of it, the opportunity to involve the diverse voices of young



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people, and CYPT keeping the voice of children and youth front and centre in the work, and exploring new and differently ways to bring their voices directly into the work.

Closing & Updates

The next CYPT meeting is an all-member meeting on November 18, 2020. The application for the Voting Member at Large role is open until October 26th. Today marks Shannon McIntyre's last meeting with CYPT, as she has transitioned to a new role and will shortly be starting her maternity leave. Four (4) more [data briefs from the Youth Impact Survey](#) were released yesterday. Family Compass [promotion and marketing supports](#) are available on the CYPT website. Barb also thanked all those in attendance for their time and commitment to ensuring all children and youth in the Region are happy and healthy.



Welcome

Goranka Vukelich, Co-Chair of the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT), welcomed everyone.

The following statement was provided to acknowledge the land:

“We acknowledge that the land on which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe and Neutral People. We acknowledge the enduring presence of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today, their achievements and their contributions to our community. We offer this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.”

Goranka provided the reasoning for why a territorial acknowledgement is done:

“It is a way of honouring the land on which our successes have been built, and the Indigenous people who have been living on and caring for this land for thousands of years. As well, it is a longstanding protocol among Indigenous peoples that honours their spiritual connection to the land. Today we offer it as an act towards reconciliation between non-Indigenous Canadians and the Indigenous peoples of Canada.”

The above acknowledgement was created by the created by the Wellbeing Waterloo Region Indigenous Working Group, and Goranka thanked them for granting permission to use at CYPT meetings.

Belonging Work To-Date

Alison Pearson, Manager of the CYPT, provided an overview of Belonging work completed to-date. In response to the start of the pandemic, other work was initially emphasized, but Belonging has continued to work along. This work includes data received from the Youth Impact Survey and program-level measurement via the Sandbox group

Under the **equity** umbrella, Belonging work to-date includes:

- [Statement on racial equity](#)
- Open space conversations and 1:1s
- [Compilation of actions](#)
- [Kike Ojo trainings](#) continuing to stay accessible
- Forthcoming disaggregated data from Youth Impact Survey

Under the **attachment and relationships** umbrella, Belonging work to-date includes:

- [Brain Story](#) series, including the Summer Series
- Formation of a group around mobilization actions in Waterloo region connected to Brain Story and Brain Science



Under the valued, heard, and included umbrella, Belonging work to-date includes:

- [Less Telling, More Asking](#) resources
- Youth Impact Survey, which a great example of co-design work with local youth
- New CYPT backbone position: Youth Engagement in Systems Lead (Joana Lincho)

Breakout Sessions

Within breakout rooms, attendees had focused discussion on strategic actions that foster belonging for children and youth, with each attendee participating in two of the following four topics:

1. Actions related to **general belonging** for children and youth
2. **Equity**-seeking actions
3. Secure **attachment/relationship** actions
4. Actions related to children and youth feeling **valued, heard and included**

The following actions and ideas, with their impacts emerged from each of the above break out sessions:

ROOM	ACTIONS/IDEAS + IMPACTS
General Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology and virtual formats have enabled more families to connect, with increased uptake in many programs, though it may not be the same depth of connection as in-person. Youth especially appreciate connecting online. - Pandemic has resulted in much innovation, new partnerships, and many learnings for individual organizations on better connections between service providers and having more coordinated approach for families. - For some organizations, the pandemic has forced them to speed up their plans for innovation and think outside the box to maintain relationships with children, youth, and families. Opportunity for partners to share learnings and resources re: innovative ideas. - Concern: Which families are not being reached via technology? How to identify who they are and what they need? As a community and collective, need to determine who is most vulnerable, and not connected to a service provider. - Also, need to support the adults who are supporting the kids. Parents are vital, as this is where attachment/belonging first happens.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerable often have a number of equity issues; need to work from a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach, and work to deepen understanding. Awareness campaign could be valuable. - Connect youth with other programs, as vulnerable youth are often furthest from opportunity. Awareness campaign for youth may also prove valuable, and allow opportunities to be more within reach.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On an organization-level, create an equity committee/task force to look at systemic barriers with an equity lens. Need to bring a variety of groups together and have difficult conversations to understand how systems contribute to racism, including internal organizational systems. (i.e. Does organization’s vision, mission, and values work with an equity lens?) Opportunity for partners to connect, learn from each other, and determine how to put learnings into practice. - Create policy level work that supports equity. Build strategic imperatives into strategic plan. - Organizations that are participating in trainings or that are gathering information on equity can spread the learnings across other partner organizations. Other leanings that can be shared include how to staff organizations with equity in mind (for organizations that are already ‘walking the talk’). - For organizations that are conducting internal and external reviews on their own policies with an equity lens, can create opportunities do complete policy reviews together with other partner organizations. - Public Health currently working to identify priority populations and those experiencing barriers, and will seek to support community effort to share data to inform the equity work. - Equity-seeking actions may mean evaluating what accessibility means. i.e. having a building and free services may not be enough, as not everyone enters through the doors. - Possible opportunity for partners to attend others’ leadership meetings to share learnings on why equity is vital to wellbeing, as a means of encouraging equity-seeking efforts. - Important to begin equity-seeking work, and let the work be the teacher.
Attachment/ Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belonging starts at home. Idea to utilize resource with belonging tips and check lists for students and parents. - Need to challenge any biases regarding technology. Timing is also important. Need to offer programs when it most suits parents (i.e. evenings) to achieve consistent attendance, high level of engagement. - Many organizations have utilized hybrid in-person and virtual programming. As well, conducting wellness checks over the phone has been incredibly valuable and the impact tremendous. - Some organizations have seen an increase in services due to the lack of travel needed to access online programming.
Valued, Heard, Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety and security is a top priority. Now that children, youth, and staff are more comfortable with safety precautions, need to look again at how to involve child and youth voice and create opportunities for them to feel valued, heard, and included. - Some youth (who were less engaged prior to the pandemic) are thriving in a virtual model. Challenge involves engaging youth who aren’t comfortable with virtual platforms while limited to mostly this model. Also, making children and youth feel seen and heard in a sea of Zoom faces, especially as some youth are willing to participate with video and audio,



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while others are not. As well, concern raised about spike in domestic family violence, especially with school starting again.

- Pandemic really bringing to light challenges around poverty, food insecurity, mental health, and physical activity. Need to determine how to better support families in accessing community resources around these concerns.
- Need to create strong hybrid models of service delivery that centers on children and youth, one that reduces barriers to participation (i.e. tech and internet access). This would require communication and collaboration with partners.
- Reframe what 'success' looks like: even ten minute connections have value. Reframing success can help to engage community in a different way. As well, focusing on creating a stronger sense of belonging and connection even virtually.
- One organization (YMCA) went directly to youth to determine their needs and co-create a solution. Co-created online services with youth. Also, created "curbside" programs for youth where virtual solutions would not work.
- Another organization (CJI) pivoted to an adult allyship approach. Focused on restorative justice circles and how those could be adapted to virtual settings. Connected with educators to determine what elements of circle they felt worked best and find ways to translate those elements into a virtual setting.
- Another idea: include children and youth in organizational changes (i.e. rebranding) so they feel part of the process vs. like it is happening to them. As well, can involve children and youth in other organizational processes like traditional review processes, facilitating orientation trainings, and more.
- To reduce barriers to virtual connections, can drop off/mail kits to children and youth participating in a program, so they have everything needed ahead of time
- Incorporating gratitude in programs has helped children and youth see the power of their actions on others.

Larger Group Reflection

Attendees expressed they were most excited about:

- Voice of children and youth. CYPT keeping it front and centre in the work, and exploring new and differently ways to bring their voices directly into the work.
- Collaboration and the power of it.
- Supports to parents. Parents do not know what to do or where to turn always through this pandemic. There is a lot of anxiety. If we can help parents feel more supported they will be better able to support their kids.
- Opportunity to involve the diverse voices of young people and the connection with school boards to do that within schools. Note specifically [recent article from Rohan Thompson](#) (former CYPT member) re:



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BIPOC teachers and the lack of support they have felt. Good content here in this article (and not just pertaining to teachers).

- Potential for CYPT to reach even more people (those that are not already being reached by services). Many families just need a bit of support and opportunity for connection. Family Compass has great potential to be in the hands of even more.
- Inspired by organizations who are already embedding belonging for children and youth into their strategy plans and policies. And with their staff teams

Closing & Updates

The next CYPT meeting will be all-member meeting on Wednesday, November 18. It will be a full-day event, and more details will follow with an official invite.

Recruiting ongoing right now for the Voting Member at Large seat on Steering Committee. The position is a 2-year term and it is a chance to be part of CYPT's strategic direction setting. The Steering Committee in particular hoping to broaden the diversity on the leadership team. The application closes October 26, 2020.

Four (4) more [data briefs from the Youth Impact Survey](#) were released yesterday: Physical Health, Learning, Participating and Free to Play.

Family Compass continues to be a valuable go-to resource for families through the pandemic. Thank you for all your promotion and please keep sharing! [Promotion and marketing supports](#) are available on the CYPT website.

This is Shannon McIntyre's last CYPT meeting, as she has transitioned to a new role and will shortly be starting her maternity leave. Barb thanked Shannon for all her efforts to the CYPT work over the past five years. Barb also thanked all those in attendance for their time and commitment to ensuring all children and youth in the Region are happy and healthy.