

Family Engagement

Overview



What does Family Engagement mean?

Family engagement recognizes that families are essential to the successful outcome of their children's plan of care and ensures that parents and family members are welcome partners in the planning and delivery of Children's Treatment Network services, including the development of future plans and directions of the Network.

Children's Treatment Network is committed to creating more opportunities for families to partner with Network professionals and each other, to contribute their perspective, advice, passion and talent, and share the knowledge that comes from their lived experience. We need to enhance programs already in place and establish a broad range of family supports to help inspire and empower families meet the day-to-day challenges they face.



What is the plan for moving forward?

A team of parents and Network providers created a Family Engagement policy that gives families a strong voice and role in all aspects of the Network's operations and ongoing development.

They also identified 6 areas of focus for expanding family involvement and engagement, based on the work of renowned expert Dr. Joyce Epstein of John Hopkins University. A new Family Engagement Council, made up of parents, Network partners and Children's Treatment Network staff, begins work in January 2013. They will look at how to move forward on each area of focus.



What are the 6 areas of focus for Family Engagement?

- Parent Education** More forums that assist families with specialized parenting skills, home conditions and access to the information they need to make informed choices, eg: information fairs, seminars and workshops focused on clinical topics.
- Communication** More effective communication between parents, professionals, and the Network, including parent-to-parent information sharing vehicles like the new Family Forum on Facebook.
- Volunteering** More opportunities for parents to share their experience and expertise, eg: lead local family support and networking groups, provide family-to-family mentoring, coordinate special family and education events, participate on various working groups and committees.
- Participation** Ensure there is a range of opportunities for families to be involved and engaged, according to their needs and preferred level of participation, eg: equal partner in their Child and Family Team and Single Plan of Care; attend support groups, education forums and family events; and/or help with special projects.
- Decision Making** The Network needs family leaders and will continue to ensure there are opportunities to participate in decisions that will help shape Network services and operations, eg: parent satisfaction surveys, input for strategic planning, the new Family Engagement Council.
- Collaborating with the broader community** Create opportunities for families to raise awareness for Network services and represent the needs of kids with multiple special needs at community events, conferences, workshops and information fairs.



Why is Family Engagement essential?

Families are vital partners on their Child & Family Team and are essential to the successful outcome of their child's plan of care. Research shows that outcomes for children improve, satisfaction increases, there is improved safety and increased access to service when families are involved, engaged and equipped with the information they need to make informed choices.

Parents and families are also essential partners in the planning and delivery of Children's Treatment Network services and supports. When we spoke to parents and professionals about priorities to be included in the Network's 2012-2016 strategic plan, involving families to improve access to services, information and family supports was at the top of the list.

The Network's Family Engagement initiative is a direct response to your feedback.



Families are:

- Welcomed, respected and valued as partners in their children's service plan
- Provided with a broad range of opportunities to be involved
- Engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue
- Supported with the information and tools they need to participate, at the level of involvement they choose

[Click here](#) for full information about the Network's Family Engagement policy

How can you get involved?

There are a variety of activities already taking place across the Network – with more to come when further Family Engagement programs are developed. Here's what you can do to tap into all the family education, supports and opportunities that are available:

- Join [Family Forum on Facebook](#) and visit the [Children's Treatment Network website](#) regularly for updates on new family events, parent support group meetings, educational sessions, seminars, information fairs, volunteer opportunities and news about services and supports. Family Forum is also a great way to get tips and advice and share your experience with other families.
- Sign up for the Network's eBulletin and receive the latest news and updates via email. You can sign up on [Family Forum](#) or email info@ctnsy.ca.



- Visit your [Local Site](#) and meet your Local Team Facilitator. They can tell you about all the supports available in your community. They can also put you on their email distribution list so you'll get notices about local events, educational sessions, parent groups, coffee chats and family activities. Volunteering to help out at local events is also a great way to connect with other families!
- If you would like to be involved, email us at info@ctnsy.ca.