

 Children's Treatment Network		CHILDREN'S TREATMENT NETWORK OF SIMCOE YORK Organizational Policy and Procedure Manual	
Section:	Governance	Review Period	2026-05-20
Policy Title:	Family Engagement Policy	Approval Date:	2025-05-20
		Revision Date:	2025-03-27
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PURPOSE	Children's Treatment Network (CTN) is committed to the engagement of families in all aspects of the Network, including governance, operations, and the planning and delivery of services and supports for children, youth and families.
APPLICATION	This policy applies to CTN clients and alumni (18 years and older), their families, and to family engagement in operations, planning and delivery of services and supports. Family engagement in governance activities, including membership on the Board of Directors, is outlined in CTN's by-laws and Governance Policies. The term family will be used throughout this policy and represents CTN clients, families and alumni.
DEFINITIONS	<p>Family</p> <p>While there are many definitions of family, CTN supports the following definition. Family consists of two or more people, living together or apart, related by blood, marriage, adoption, or a commitment to support one another. (https://inclusioncanada.ca).</p> <p>Family Engagement</p> <p>Recognizing that families are essential to the successful outcome of their child/youth's service plan, family members are welcome partners in the planning and delivery of CTN services, including the development of future initiatives and directions of the Network. This concept encompasses those whose lived experiences provide unique insights and perspectives that shape their daily lives, interactions, and understanding.</p> <p>Family-Centered Care/Service</p> <p>Focuses on meeting the needs of both clients and families, where the family is seen as the unit of attention. It recognizes that families are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts in their child's needs; • Partners in their child and family team; and • The primary decision-makers for their child. <p>The Institute for Patient and Family-Centred Care describes family-centered care as working with clients and families rather than just doing to or for them. (www.ipfcc.org/about/pfcc.html). Core concepts of family-centered care include respect, information-sharing, participation and collaboration.</p>

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POLICY	<p>Children's Treatment Network (CTN) is committed to engaging parents and families through various activities and roles within the Network to deepen and sustain a culture of family-centeredness. CTN will reach out to family members and provide them with meaningful opportunities to share their experiences and influence CTN's day-to-day operations and strategic directions for the purpose of improving the service experience.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of this policy is to support the empowerment of families in the care of their children and youth with disabilities and developmental needs by ensuring that families are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome, respect and value parents and families as partners in their child's care and treatment. • Create opportunities for parents and families to be involved at all levels of the Network, with various choices about how, when and where to be involved. • Engage parents and families through ongoing communication and dialogue. • Provide parents and families with the information and tools they need to make informed choices and be engaged in their child's care.

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	<div data-bbox="758 531 1214 1064" data-label="Diagram"> </div> <p>CTN's Family Engagement Framework focuses on creating connections, nurturing inclusion, and sustaining engagement. By facilitating opportunities for families to meet, care for themselves, and share their experiences, CTN bridges distances between families, leverages employees who are also caregivers, and establishes foundational engagement structures with intentional communication. Nurturing inclusion ensures long-term involvement by responding to the connections made and inviting all families to engage. Sustaining engagement captures and retains families' attention and participation over time, creating a culture that influences CTN's vision and practices. Developing infrastructure is essential to maintain principles of family engagement across the organization.</p> <p>Six Keys to Family Engagement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent Education CTN believes in providing families with ways to access the information they need to make informed choices about their child and family. 2. Communication CTN believes in facilitating effective communication between parents and the network - across all partners and settings, as well as between parents.
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	<p>Multiple ways may be used to communicate with families, including in-person conversations, focus groups, social media, email and electronic newsletters.</p> <p>3. Volunteering CTN believes in recruiting and organizing client and family volunteers to support family engagement activities and goals.</p> <p>4. Participation CTN believes in providing opportunities for families to be involved and engaged as equal partners in their child and family team and the development of their service plan. In addition, CTN supports the participation of families in events and forums, committees, and support groups according to their needs and preferences.</p> <p>5. Decision-making CTN believes that families are the primary decision-makers in their child's life and their service plan, with the information they need from their child and family team and as appropriate to the age and competence of the child or youth as they mature. CTN believes in developing family leaders by providing various opportunities to be involved, such as planning activities and providing feedback on projects and initiatives.</p> <p>6. Collaborating with the broader community CTN believes in coordinating resources and services from the community for families and participating with the broader community to expand knowledge, awareness and capacity for children with disabilities and developmental needs.</p>
PROCEDURES	<p>CTN Family Engagement includes:</p> <p>1. Families Participating in Service Families will be engaged at the level of service as members of their child/youth team. To ensure families experience family-centered service, a client's family is encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their</p>

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	<p>child/youth's care (with appropriate consent), including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of strengths and how the team can help to support and build on the child's and family's strengths • Sharing of information about their child and family as the expert on this information • Identification of unmet needs • Sharing of past successes and discussion of possible solutions from their perspective and next steps • Setting visions and goals and participating in all team meetings and case conferences • Identification and carrying out of specific activities as outlined in the plan • Decision-making on behalf of the client (as appropriate) with respect to all aspects of the service, including intervention, referral, transfer, consent and discharge • Access to information about their child's service plan and progress • Access to information that will assist them in their decision-making and understanding of future opportunities and challenges • Setting appointments and intervention schedules that align with other family activities • Participating in CTN client and family activities that promote connections and the sharing of experiences <p>2. Communication to Families CTN will maintain communication vehicles, such as newsletters, email communication, the website, and social media, that effectively provide information for families and facilitate the sharing of information between families. Specifically, the Family Resources, Education and Support Hub (FRESH) Facebook group is a private space for CTN families to share and learn about CTN opportunities.</p> <p>3. Family Engagement Forum (FEF) The Family Engagement Forum (FEF) is a collaborative platform designed to empower families to engage with CTN actively. It provides opportunities for</p>
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	<p>families/caregivers and CTN alumni to contribute meaningful feedback, shape CTN initiatives, and improve services while fostering a sense of community. The FEF offers flexible engagement through quarterly online forums open to all CTN family members. These forums focus on inclusive participation, addressing themes like service improvement, family wellness, and emerging projects, ensuring that family voices remain central to CTN's work. The FEF is described in the Family Engagement Forum Terms of Reference.</p> <p>4. Family Engagement Process</p> <p>The Family Engagement Process applies to all CTN portfolios that seek to involve CTN families, alumni or employees with lived experience in family engagement activities such as planning, decision-making, or program development. The process provides practical tools and strategies for implementing family engagement initiatives, ensuring alignment with network goals and values.</p> <p>5. Employee with Lived Experience Policy</p> <p>The Employees with Lived Experience Policy aims to recognize and value the unique perspectives that CTN employees with lived experiences bring to the workplace. By leveraging their insights, CTN seeks to foster a culture of diversity and inclusivity, enriching decision-making processes and enhancing organizational effectiveness. This policy ensures that employees with personal experiences are recognized and appreciated within the broader context of lived experiences.</p> <p>6. Honorarium Policy</p> <p>The Honorarium Policy applies to community members, including families, caregivers with lived experience, and CTN Alumni, who volunteer time, resources, and energy without monetary compensation. The honorarium consideration should ensure that it has a positive impact on fostering a culture of volunteering and engagement across CTN teams.</p> <p>7. Volunteers</p> <p>CTN maintains a volunteer program that facilitates clients' and families' engagement in all aspects of CTN, including peer-related programs. The</p>
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	volunteer program is managed in accordance with the Volunteer Program Policy .
References / related documents (LINKS) <i>(internal and external links)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Guide to CTN Services (See website, ctnsy.ca) • Client and Family Feedback and Complaints Policy • Volunteer Program Policy • Family Engagement CTN Background Document • Family Engagement Forum Terms of Reference • Employees with Lived Experience Policy • Honourarium Policy