

Terms of Reference: The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative Steering Committee

The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI) is a collaborative of community organizations and agencies with a shared commitment to promote the healthy development of children and youth in Ottawa.

OCYI Vision: Ensuring all children and youth in Ottawa can reach their full potential and grow up great!

OCYI Mission: Recognizing the power of collective advocacy and collaborative community efforts and planning, OCYI provides a platform for organizations to work together to guide and influence practices, systems, and public policy, aimed at nourishing the positive, healthy growth of children and youth in our community.

Steering Committee Purpose

The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative Steering Committee's purpose is to provide leadership, vision, and strategic direction to the overall work of the collaborative.

Steering Committee Objective

The OCYI Steering Committee works as a collective for organizations supporting the infants, children, and youth in Ottawa. Building upon resources and capacities that exist in our community as well as identifying how gaps can be filled to best respond to the ever-changing and ever-growing needs are a primary objective of the Steering Committee.

OCYI Values

The Steering Committee members have a shared set of values that guide the work.

- Collaborative effort that represents diverse perspectives and maximize impact through programming, services, and resources
- Incorporating and advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in our messaging, membership, workplans, and initiatives to create a space of belonging
- Using the fundamental principles of equity, honesty, and transparency to guide our work, we will continue to partner with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis to achieve substantive equality and reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples
- The fundamental rights of all children and youth as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The voice and dignity of every individual is ensured so that each voice is present when making decisions, and developing actions that affect them
- Understanding the needs of and opportunities for children and youth in Ottawa

Responsibilities of the Steering Committee Members

Individual Steering Committee members have the following responsibilities:

- Act as champions for stretching beyond traditional organization practices and looking for meaningful opportunities to work differently together in the broader system of services and supports for infant, children, and youth.
- Vet the alignment of task groups, membership, and/or work with the OCYI Steering Committee
- Set the strategic direction, vision, and mission of OCYI

- Set advocacy, communication strategy, and direction for changes to policies and processes at a system level related to infant, children, and youth mental health and well-being
- Actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of minutes, papers, and other Steering Committee documents
- Support open discussion and debate and encourage fellow Steering Committee members to voice their insights
- Ensure that the decisions of the Steering Committee follow through into action, including reporting and measuring success
- Agree to carry out the responsibilities reflected in the terms of reference

Steering Committee Members

This section outlines the membership of the OCYI Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee is comprised of approximately 20 members representing different OCYI organizational partners, plus each task group has a seat (shared in the event of task group co-chairs)
- Members representing organizations should be senior leaders of who can speak on behalf of their organization
- Members bring the expertise and concerns of their organization to share with the committee at large to support the work and vision of OCYI
- The Steering Committee shall develop and use a “skills matrix” (*to be developed*) to guide the selection of Steering Committee members, ensuring that the members represent a diversity of voices, experience, and expertise that represents the diversity of Ottawa. The Steering Committee Co-chairs ensures the diversity of OCYI is reflected in the representation and voices on the Steering Committee.
- In the event of a vacancy, the Steering Committee shall make a new appointment from the broader OCYI organizational partner membership.
- Appointment to the committee is for a period of three years, which may be renewed by mutual agreement of the Steering Committee and the organization seated at the table. Membership recruitment and retirement are staggered to ensure continuity.
- Proxies: Members of the Steering Committee can send proxies/delegates to meetings. Proxies are entitled to participate in discussion and are allowed a role in decision-making, therefore, designated proxies should be able to speak on behalf of their organization.
- Steering Committee Co-chairs:
 - The process for the determination of Co-chairs will be by election from among the members.
 - The two Co-chairs shall be elected for a period of three years, which may be renewed. Appointments and retirement are staggered to ensure continuity.
- Youth voice is essential to the Steering Committee, and thus the committee will actively and continually seek to include youth participation in the manner which the youth (or younger) direct and choose, as and when appropriate, including but not limited:
 - Efforts to advance technical matters relating to child and youth contribution and involvement
 - Existing and new meaningful child and youth engagement initiatives by OCYI
 - Fostering innovation of new initiatives relating to child/youth and public
 - Engaging in OCYI’s governance processes
 - Recommending on the elaboration and implementation of an OCYI Youth Engagement Strategy
 - Providing recommendations on strengthening youth involvement in OCYI’s work

- Strengthening networking and knowledge sharing among different partners, including youth organizations, to facilitate and increase communication between the participants and other partners

Meetings

This section outlines the schedule and structure for Steering Committee meetings.

- Monthly meetings for 90 minutes, scheduled from September to June
- A meeting schedule will be released by September so that members can plan and arrange their regular attendance for the coming year
- The standing agenda items will be advocacy work and the work of the task groups.
- Steering Committee meetings are also a forum to bring reports or presentations from organizational partners for conversation that will guide the work of OCYI and our organizational partners.
- The Steering Committee Co-chairs will set meeting agendas, lead the meetings, and encourage all members to provide input throughout the meeting, and that all decisions or recommendations are resolved and agreed to by the members.
- Other advisors, organization staff, or task group members may be invited to attend meetings of the Steering Committee as necessary for the agenda. On a standing basis this will include OCYI staff and the CHEO (host organization) director that has OCYI as part of their portfolio.

Quorum and Decision-making

This section outlines how the Steering Committee will make decisions and the minimum number of members (or quorum) required for a decision to be valid.

Quorum

For the purposes of decision-making at Steering Committee meetings, a quorum shall be established. Quorum is defined as 60% of the total number members of Steering Committee members in attendance.

Decision-making Process

OCYI will utilize consensus decision-making and will be based on the goals, values, and the active participation of the membership. Consensus decision-making is a dynamic way of finding solutions and reaching agreement that everyone actively supports, or at least can live with. This method includes dialogue to clarify issues, open discussion, exploration of ideas, proposals and amendments of solutions or decisions, and checking for agreement.

Conflict Resolution

In the event of conflict, the following guidelines will apply:

- The individual(s) with the conflict/concern will speak to the individuals to try to resolve the issue.
- If resolution is not achieved through direct dialogue, the parties will approach Steering Committee Co-chairs to support as a neutral third-party mediator. If a Co-chair is one of the parties involved in the conflict, the parties shall seek another third-party mediator from within the Steering Committee.
- If resolution is not achieved through dialogue or support from the Co-chair, the issue shall be brought by the parties to the Steering Committee for resolution by the group as a whole.