

Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI) Report

# Evaluation of Critical Hours Programs in the Ottawa Region: Availability, Distribution, and Impact

Ottawa, ON

This report presents an evaluation of critical hours programs within the Ottawa area, aimed at understanding their distribution, availability, and overall impact on the community. Critical hours programs, which offer structured activities for children and youth during non-school hours, play a pivotal role in promoting educational, recreational, and social engagement, thereby preventing risky behaviours and supporting mental health and well-being. Through a survey distributed to various program providers across the region, this study gathered extensive data on program offerings, operational schedules, and geographical coverage.

5-6-2024



## Introduction

A "critical hours program" refers to structured activities and services designed to engage children and youth during times when they are not in school and may be unsupervised. These programs typically operate after school, during weekends, on professional development (PD) days, throughout holidays, and over summer and other school breaks.

The primary aim of critical hours programs is to provide a safe and supportive environment where young people can participate in various educational, recreational, and social activities. These programs are crucial because they help prevent risky behaviors by keeping youth engaged in constructive activities. They can offer a range of services such as homework help, sports, arts, mentoring, and life skills training, often with a strong focus on fostering social connections and supporting the mental health and well-being of participants. Additionally, these programs can play a significant role in leveling the playing field for children from different socio-economic backgrounds by providing access to resources and opportunities that might not be available to them otherwise.

The survey conducted aimed to comprehensively map and evaluate the availability and distribution of these critical hours programs within the Ottawa area. By gathering detailed information on the program offerings, operational schedules, and geographical coverage, the survey seeks to identify gaps in service provision and areas where resources may be insufficient. This initiative supports strategic planning and development efforts to ensure that all children and youth have equitable access to quality after-hours care and enrichment opportunities. Through this survey, stakeholders, including program providers, funders, and policymakers, can better understand the landscape of critical hours programs and collaborate to enhance the scope and impact of these essential services.

## Methodology

### Identifying Programs

The identification of critical hours programs was conducted through a systematic search using multiple sources to compile a comprehensive list. The sources included:

- A list of contacts from the previous year.
- New contacts added by members of the Critical Hours Task Group (CHTG).
- The Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario/211 database.
- Extensive web searches.

Initial outreach consisted of an email followed by a follow-up email containing a list of specific programs identified from their websites. For programs that were identified and confirmed online but did not respond to the survey, they were added to the database as "unconfirmed" with the information available online.

## Developing the Survey

The survey was designed to be concise enough to encourage completion while comprehensive enough to gather all pertinent data in one outreach effort. This balance was crucial to maximize response rates and ensure the collection of relevant data for analysis. The survey questions were developed with the CHTG. Initial candidate questions were prioritized, and some were removed to reduce the length of time to respond to the survey. The survey was translated to French to allow respondents to respond in the official language of their choice.

The survey was composed of two main sections, each contained in a single survey page. Section A (page 1) contained an introduction to the survey with a definition of critical hours programs and instructions on how to answer the survey. Only three questions were asked as part of Section A: (1) Name of the lead agency, (2) Email address of the person responding to the survey, and (3) First and Last name of the person responding to the survey. Section B (page 2) included 19 questions and was to be filled for a single program of the identified lead agency. The final question of Section B asked whether the respondent had another program associated with the same lead agency that they would like to input answers for. Responding 'yes' to that questions brought respondents to a third page that was a duplicate of Section B and was for their second program. Up to 8 programs associated with the same agency could be entered in a single survey entry. If more than 8 programs existed for the agency, respondents had to submit a second survey entry and re-fill the information from Section A.

## Administering the Survey and Gathering Responses

Each contact was reached out to individually, rather than through mass emails, to personalize the communication effectively. In order to ensure a higher engagement rate, emails were addressed by first names where known, and specific agency names were mentioned to create a connection with the respondent. For certain respondents, video calls were organized to provide clarity on how to answer the survey questions adequately. The survey was open for approximately three months (middle of February 2024 to early May 2024). The survey was shared by CHTG members to their networks and many task group members helped by following up with representatives of programs from their agencies. Several follow-up emails were sent specifically to contacts of programs that were identified through the initial search but for which no survey responses had been received.

An example of the outreach email can be found in [Appendix A- Email Template](#).

## Data Processing and Analysis

### **Geocoding Addresses**

The reported addresses of the identified programs were first formatted to ensure consistency and accuracy for the geocoding process (e.g., removing unit numbers, correcting postal code typos, etc.). These formatted addresses were then geocoded using Google's Geocoding API within the R programming environment. This process converted

street addresses into geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude), facilitating spatial analysis. Once geocoded, the data points were spatially joined to predefined neighbourhood boundaries from the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS). This spatial join was executed in R, allowing for the mapping of each program to its respective neighbourhood based on its geographic coordinates.

### ***Automation and Data Formatting***

An automation script was developed in R to streamline the data formatting process. This script handled tasks such as parsing and standardizing address information, ensuring that data inputs were uniform and aligned with the requirements for geocoding and subsequent analyses, cleaning and reformatting data, and transforming the dataset from a wide format to a long format, making it easier to manage and analyze multiple variable responses associated with each program and multiple programs associated with each agency.

## Results

A total of **164 programs** from **58 lead agencies** were identified. Of those, responses were received for **113 programs** from **40 lead agencies**. The results provided in the following sections represent only the 113 programs for which survey responses were received (i.e., exclude the 51 identified programs for which there were no survey responses).

### Survey Overview

The survey collected information on 13 key program descriptors:

- 1- The language(s) primarily offered through the program.
- 2- The program components (e.g., homework help, sports, etc.).
- 3- Meals and snacks provided through the program.
- 4- Whether the program required registration or whether it was drop-in.
- 5- Whether there were costs for participants.
- 6- The days and times during which the programs were offered.
- 7- The minimum and maximum eligible age of participants.
- 8- Whether certain participant demographics were prioritized and/or required to be eligible for the program.
- 9- The approximate proportion of participants that met the criteria for certain participant demographics.
- 10- Whether there were geographical restrictions for participation (e.g., attending a certain school, living in a certain neighbourhood, etc.).
- 11- How often the program had to turn down participants due to reaching capacity.
- 12- How the program was funded.
- 13- Whether program staff used the Three Pillars Training.

Except for the question pertaining to funding, every question required a response.

## Interpretation and multiple response questions

Questions that allow respondents to select more than one response option for a question (i.e., “select all that apply”) result in the sum of responses being larger than the total number of respondents. The percentage of respondents selecting each response option should therefore not be summed (e.g., combining three response options to determine the total number of respondents that selected any of the three) as this would lead to misleading inflation of the percentages.

This flexibility of these types of responses, however, allowed for a more accurate representation of the diversity in responses. It's important to interpret such results with the understanding that the percentages represent the proportion of respondents selecting *each* option, rather than exclusive choices.

### 1- The language(s) **primarily** offered through the program.

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

Language of programming	Number of programs	Percent of programs
English	105	93%
French	46	41%
Inuktitut	3	3%
Arabic	3	3%
Somali	1	1%

### 2- The program components (e.g., homework help, sports, etc.).

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

Language of programming	Number of programs	Percent of programs
Group activities designed to build social connections	84	74%
Life skills development (e.g., cooking, social/emotional workshops, etc.)	74	65%
Recreational activities	71	63%
Arts activities (visual, dance, music, etc.)	66	58%
Mentoring	57	50%
Sports activities	57	50%
Homework help	54	48%
STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)	47	42%

<b>Connections to wrap-around supports (internal or external)</b>	46	41%
<b>Volunteer opportunities for participants</b>	44	39%
<b>Academic learning</b>	34	30%
<b>Mental health supports</b>	33	29%
<b>Post-secondary preparation</b>	27	24%
<b>Employment/workforce training</b>	23	20%
<b>Support for scholarship/bursary applications</b>	23	20%
<b>Language courses</b>	5	4%

In addition to the activities listed above, a few "other" responses included activities such as reading, activities relating to integrating with Canadian culture, cultural ceremonies and activities, fitness, special events such as guest speakers, and simply having a safe space to be in.

### 3- Meals and snacks provided through the program.

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

Most common among programs was the provision of snacks (65% of programs). A substantial number of programs (31, 27%) offered dinner. A few programs offered lunch and breakfast (9% and 3%, respectively). Almost one quarter (23%) of programs did not provide food or snacks to participants.

The results showcase a broad spectrum of how critical hours programs address nutritional needs, ranging from substantial meal provisions to no food offerings, potentially reflecting diverse program foci, resources, or the specific needs of their participants.

<b>Food offered</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>Snacks</b>	73	65%
<b>Dinner</b>	31	27%
<b>None of the above (program does not provide food/snacks)</b>	26	23%
<b>Lunch</b>	10	9%
<b>Breakfast</b>	3	3%

### 4- Whether the program required registration or whether it was drop-in.

Half of critical hours programs required prior registration, a third indicated that participants could register ahead or drop in as needed, and only 11% programs operated on a drop-in only basis. An additional 6.7% of programs indicated "other" registration models, such as

an annual registration with drop-ins to specific programming, registration through schools, first-time attendance ‘tryouts’, and combinations of registration and drop-in options.

Registration requirements	Number of programs	Percent of programs
Drop-in only	12	11%
Registration only	57	50%
Participants may register ahead or drop in as needed	37	33%
Other (please specify)	7	6%

### 5- Whether there were costs for participants.

The vast majority of programs (93%), were free for all participants, highlighting a strong emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity. Only 8 programs (7%) required some or all participants to bear some cost, but many of these offered subsidies for families in need or only required a minimal cost (e.g., 1\$) to secure a place (e.g., for a March break camp).

Cost structure	Number of programs	Percent of programs
Cost for some, but not all, participants	3	3%
Cost for all participants	5	4%
Free for all participants	105	93%

### 6- The days and times during which the programs were offered.

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

**Days of the Week:** 17 programs (15%) operated on all weekdays, with an additional 37 programs (33%) available on selected weekdays. 14 programs (12%) were available during weekends.

**Times of the Day:** 73 programs (65%) were available after school, making this the most common time for program activities. 54 programs (48%) ran during evening hours. Only 2 programs (2%) offered activities before school.

**Summer/School Break:** 22 programs (19%) operated during school breaks, such as professional development days and March Break, ensuring continuous engagement and support when regular school sessions are not in session. 37 programs (33%) were active over the summer break.

When elaborating on responses, some other programming schedules were identified, such as offering lunch-hour activities, virtual activities, irregular schedules (depending on availability of program staff), and special outings on weekends.

<b>Program schedule</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>Before school</b>	2	2%
<b>After school</b>	73	65%
<b>Evenings</b>	54	48%
<b>Some weekday(s)</b>	37	33%
<b>All weekdays</b>	17	15%
<b>Weekends</b>	14	12%
<b>During school breaks (e.g., PD days, March Break)</b>	22	19%
<b>Over the summer</b>	37	33%

### 7- The minimum and maximum eligible age of participants.

The table below shows the number and percentage of programs for which children of each of the indicated ages are eligible. Most programs were offered for children and youth between the ages of 6 and 17 years (grades 1-12). Children aged 4 and 5 years (KTG) were only eligible for 11% and 14% of all programs, respectively. Highest program eligibility was found for those aged 12 years (grade 7).

<b>Eligibility by age</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>4 years / KTG</b>	12	11%
<b>5 years / KTG</b>	16	14%
<b>6 years / grade 1</b>	58	51%
<b>7 years / grade 2</b>	60	53%
<b>8 years / grade 3</b>	61	54%
<b>9 years / grade 4</b>	63	56%
<b>10 years / grade 5</b>	63	56%
<b>11 years / grade 6</b>	68	60%
<b>12 years / grade 7</b>	73	65%
<b>13 years / grade 8</b>	69	61%
<b>14 years / grade 9</b>	69	61%
<b>15 years / grade 10</b>	71	63%
<b>16 years / grade 11</b>	65	58%
<b>17 years / grade 12</b>	65	58%
<b>18 years or older</b>	47	42%



8- Whether certain participant demographics were prioritized and/or required to be eligible for the program.

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

Eight demographic groups were listed in the survey, and respondents were asked to indicate whether each was a demographic eligibility criteria, whether it was prioritized but not required, or whether it was not specifically prioritized.

The largest demographic group for required eligibility was low-income families, with 17% of programs offering programming specifically to this demographic. Following this demographic category was specific cultural, ethnic, or religious groups (7%); Francophone (7%); Indigenous (4%); Learners with special needs (4%); and Newcomers, immigrants, and refugees (1%).

<b>Required to be eligible</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>Low-income families</b>	19	17%
<b>Specific cultural, ethnic, or religious groups</b>	8	7%
<b>Francophone</b>	8	7%
<b>Indigenous</b>	5	4%
<b>Learners with special needs</b>	4	4%
<b>Newcomers, immigrants, refugees</b>	1	1%

The largest demographic group for demographics that were prioritized but not required was also low-income families (45%), followed by Newcomers, immigrants, and refugees (22%); Indigenous (13%); Participants struggling with mental health, addiction, and/or homelessness (12%); Specific cultural, ethnic, or religious groups (10%); Francophone (9%); 2SLGBTQIA+ (8%); and Learners with special needs (5%).

<b>Prioritized but not required</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>Low-income families</b>	51	45%
<b>Newcomers, immigrants, refugees</b>	25	22%
<b>Indigenous</b>	15	13%
<b>Participants struggling with mental health, addiction, and/or homelessness</b>	14	12%
<b>Specific cultural, ethnic, or religious groups</b>	11	10%
<b>Francophone</b>	10	9%
<b>2SLGBTQIA+</b>	9	8%
<b>Learners with special needs</b>	6	5%

Many respondents indicated “other” demographic groups that were prioritized, such as children in care, children living in single-parent households, marginalized and/or racialized children living in poverty, female-identified youth, trans and non-binary youth, and at-risk youth.

### 9- The approximate proportion of participants that met the criteria for certain participant demographics.

Following the previous question, respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of their program participants representing each demographic group. The results are displayed below.

Demographic Group	All/most	More than half	About half	Less than half	None/almost none
<b>2SLGBTQIA+</b>	4%	0%	1%	37%	58%
<b>Francophone</b>	12%	4%	21%	42%	20%
<b>Learners with special needs</b>	7%	0%	1%	35%	57%
<b>Indigenous</b>	4%	0%	4%	50%	42%
<b>Low-income families</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>28%</b>	20%	2%	1%
<b>Newcomers, immigrants and refugees</b>	12%	7%	20%	43%	17%
<b>Participants struggling with mental health, addiction, and/or homelessness</b>	4%	4%	7%	25%	60%
<b>Specific cultural, ethnic, or religious groups</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>	12%	35%	12%

### 10- Whether there were geographical restrictions for participation (e.g., attending a certain school, living in a certain neighbourhood, etc.).

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

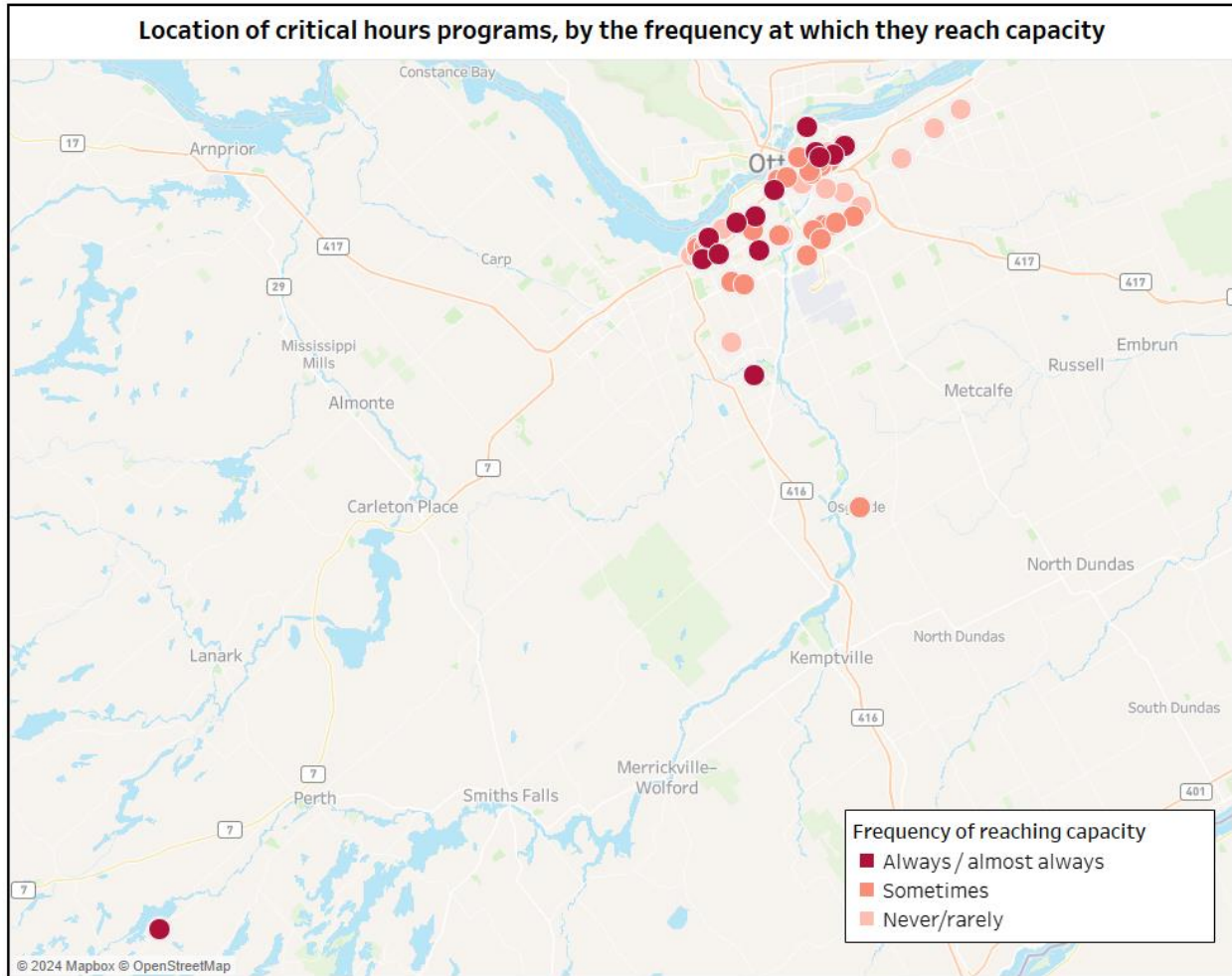
The majority of programs (52%) restricted participation to residents of specific neighbourhoods, emphasizing targeted community support. A significant portion (28%) operated without any geographical restrictions. Some programs (16%) required participants to reside in Ottawa and 9% limited eligibility to attendees of specific schools within Ottawa. Another 12% of programs had unique geographical restrictions not covered by the standard categories (such as Community Health Centre catchment areas, tenants of specific community housing communities, and food bank clients).

<b>Geographic eligibility</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>Only participants living in (a) specific neighbourhood(s) can attend</b>	59	52%
<b>There are no geographical restrictions on eligibility</b>	32	28%
<b>Participants must live in Ottawa</b>	18	16%
<b>Other geographic eligibility</b>	14	12%
<b>Only participants attending (a) specific school(s) in Ottawa can attend</b>	10	9%

11- How often the program had to turn down participants due to reaching capacity.

One fifth of programs always or almost always had to turn down participants due to reaching capacity. Only 40% never or rarely had to turn down participants.

<b>Frequency of reaching capacity</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>Always / almost always</b>	21	19%
<b>Sometimes</b>	47	42%
<b>Never/rarely</b>	45	40%



The elaborations on reaching capacity for critical hours programs revealed several adaptive and management strategies employed to handle enrollment limits and demand fluctuations.

**Waitlists:** Commonly mentioned was the use of waitlists. Programs initiate waitlists once they reach their predetermined participant-to-staff ratios or physical space capacities.

**Space Limitations:** Many programs cited limited physical space as a primary constraint, affecting their ability to accept more participants.

**Staff Limitations:** Similarly, staff capacity was frequently mentioned as a limiting factor.

**Priority Systems:** Some programs implement priority systems for enrollment. For example, tenants of specific neighborhoods were given enrollment priority, with limited opportunities for those outside these areas. Programs also prioritized re-registering current students to maintain continuity for those already benefiting from the services.

**Financial Resources:** Funding constraints were frequently cited as a major barrier to expanding program capacity.

**Adaptive Programming:** Some respondents described attempting to adapt to capacity challenges by rearranging or expanding their offerings when approaching maximum capacity, ensuring that as many participants as possible could be accommodated.

**Drop-in Options:** Some programs operated on a drop-in basis, which allowed for greater flexibility and maximized the number of children and youth who could participate, especially when not all registered participants attended.

**Pandemic Impact and Recovery:** The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to fluctuations in program capacity, with some programs previously operating at full capacity and currently filling about three-quarters. There was an expressed hope and expectation that participation rates will return to pre-pandemic levels in the near future.

**12- How the program was funded.**

*This question allowed for multiple responses.*

Critical hours programs in Ottawa were funded through a diverse mix of sources, reflecting a broad community and governmental support. The City of Ottawa was the most significant contributor, funding 59% of the programs. Charitable donations to lead agencies also played a crucial role, supporting 43% of the programs. Provincial funding from the Province of Ontario supported 35% of programs. Additionally, 32% of programs received support from United Way East Ontario. Private foundations were also a significant funding source, contributing to 28% of the programs. Other sources included grants from fundraising efforts, participation fees from attendees, and other miscellaneous sources such as Ottawa Community Housing, Ottawa Food Bank, Right to Play, Child First Initiative Kickstart Food, Canada Summer Jobs, School Boards, federal funds and Telus.

Sources of program funding	Number of programs	Percent of programs
City of Ottawa	67	59%
Charitable donations to our lead agency	49	43%
Province of Ontario	39	35%
United Way East Ontario	36	32%
Private Foundations	32	28%
Other	<b>32</b>	<b>28%</b>
Grants-Fundraising	10	9%
Participation fees	9	8%



13- Whether program staff used the Three Pillars Training.

The majority of respondents indicated that program staff (73%) did not use the Three Pillars Training or that they were not sure. Five percent of respondents indicated that program staff use the Three Pillars Training regularly, and 22% reported that 'some have used it'.

<b>Use of Three Pillars Training by program staff</b>	<b>Number of programs</b>	<b>Percent of programs</b>
<b>We use it regularly</b>	6	5%
<b>Some have used it</b>	25	22%
<b>I'm not sure</b>	38	34%
<b>No</b>	44	39%



## Limitations and Lessons Learned

### ***Dynamic Nature of Programs***

One challenge encountered was the dynamic nature of the programs, especially with the timing of the survey in spring when many were transitioning to summer schedules. Programs often change their days, times, and even the scope of offerings based on seasonal adjustments and funding fluctuations. This resulted in hesitancy among some respondents to provide details that were soon to change. In future surveys, it will be important to consider the timing of administration, particularly if the aim is to regularly collect information on critical hours programs that will be used to refer children/families based on immediate program availability.

### ***Clarity on Respondent Roles and Program Differentiation***

The survey process highlighted a lack of clarity on who should fill out the information. For larger agencies, a manager or coordinator for each site was sometimes more suitable to provide accurate responses, whereas, in other cases, an agency-wide representative was more effective for maintaining consistency across entries. This discrepancy sometimes led to confusion. Difficulties arose when differentiating between programs that were essentially the same but catered to different age groups or were held at different locations. Initially, such instances were sometimes grouped as a single program entry. It became clear that distinct registrations or age-specific sessions should be treated as separate programs to avoid data amalgamation errors. This, however, caused inefficiencies, particularly for representatives handling many programs, where the survey's limit of eight entries per agency required them to create more than one entry.

### ***Definition and Understanding of Critical Hours Programs***

The definition of "critical hours program" was not universally understood, complicating the data collection process. For example, many respondents did not consider their summer camps or other seasonal activities as part of such programming. Others did not initially consider their non-academic programming (e.g., basketball drop-in). To mitigate this, we more clearly defined examples of critical hours programs in follow-up emails to participants. Future surveys should include a clear, inclusive definition of what constitutes a critical hours program, with various examples, to ensure comprehensive data collection.

### ***Tracking and Communication Challenges***

Managing communications with numerous contacts presented significant challenges, from tracking who had responded or completed the survey to navigating automatic responses for those who were out of office and determining appropriate follow-up actions. The creation of a specialized email address for the survey ([criticalhours@growingupgreat.ca](mailto:criticalhours@growingupgreat.ca)) inadvertently led to issues with some responses being directed to spam folders or blocked outright.

### **Question 16- Proportion of program participants meeting certain demographic criteria**

The survey asked for demographic percentages (e.g., asking what proportion of a program's participants are Francophone) without providing an "I don't know" option. This oversight may have led to inaccuracies or assumptions in data provision. Responses to that question should therefore be interpreted with caution.

## **Appendix A – Email Template**

### **Example email:**

“Hi [Recipient’s First Name],

As you know, CHEO’s Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI) Critical Hours Task Group is developing a list of all critical hours programming in Ottawa. This list will be used to:

1. Refer children and youth in Ottawa to local programs; and
2. Analyse the distribution of these programs in Ottawa and their program offerings to assess gaps in the community.

We **haven’t received responses for the xx programs yet**. From your website, it looks like the following programs would be applicable:

- Program A
- Program B
- Program C
- Program D

Could you to kindly **respond to the survey** ([in English](#) ou [en français](#)) by **Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>**?

Please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have. I’d be happy to schedule a call with you to go over the survey together if that would be helpful.

Thank you very much!

Kady Carr  
(they/them)  
On behalf of Ottawa Child & Youth Initiative”



## Appendix B - List of lead agencies that participated in the survey

<b>Lead Agency</b>
<b>Banff Avenue Community House</b>
<b>BBBSO</b>
<b>BGC Ottawa</b>
<b>BGC Ottawa-Ron Kolbus</b>
<b>BGCO- Taggart Parkes</b>
<b>BGCO-Don McGahan</b>
<b>BGCO-Tomlinson Family Foundation</b>
<b>Blair Court Community House</b>
<b>Britannia Woods Community House</b>
<b>Carlington Community Health Centre</b>
<b>Centre des services communautaires Vanier</b>
<b>CHEO</b>
<b>Christie Lake Kids</b>
<b>City of Ottawa</b>
<b>Confederation Court Community House</b>
<b>Debra Dynes Family House</b>
<b>Emily Murphy Non-Profit Housing Corporation</b>
<b>Foster Farm Family House</b>
<b>Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth, and Families</b>
<b>Lowertown CRC</b>
<b>Maison de la francophonie d'Ottawa</b>
<b>Michele Heights Community House</b>
<b>Minwaashin Lodge</b>
<b>Morrison Gardens Community House</b>
<b>Nepean Rideau and Osgoode Community Resource Centre</b>
<b>OCH Foundation</b>
<b>OCISO</b>
<b>OrKidstra</b>
<b>Osgoode Youth Association</b>
<b>Overbrook Community centre (City of Ottawa)</b>
<b>Pinecrest Terrace Community House</b>
<b>PQCHC</b>
<b>Rideau Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre</b>
<b>Rochester Heights Community House</b>
<b>Russell Heights Community House</b>
<b>Sandy Hill Community Health Centre</b>
<b>SEOCHC</b>
<b>Ten Oaks Project</b>

<b>The Door Youth Centre</b>
<b>United for Literacy</b>
<b>Winthrop Court Community House</b>

## Appendix C – Key Findings

A total of 164 programs from 58 lead agencies were identified, with responses received for 113 programs. Key findings (from the 113 surveyed programs) include:

- **Programme Language:** 93% of programs offered activities primarily in English, with 41% in French. Other languages included Inuktitut, Arabic, and Somali.
- **Program Components:** The majority offered group activities (74%) and life skills development (65%). Other components included recreational activities (63%), arts (58%), mentoring (50%), and sports (50%).
- **Meals and Snacks:** 65% provided snacks, 27% offered dinner, and smaller numbers provided lunch and breakfast. 23% did not offer food.
- **Registration Requirements:** 50% required registration, 33% allowed registration or drop-in, 11% were drop-in only, and 6.7% had other models.
- **Costs:** 93% of programs were free, with the remainder having some form of participant cost, often subsidized.
- **Scheduling:** Programs were most commonly available after school (65%) and during evenings (48%). Significant numbers operated over the summer (33%) and during school breaks (19%).
- **Age Eligibility:** Programs were most available for children aged 6-17, with fewer options for younger children aged 4-5.
- **Demographic Prioritization:** The largest groups prioritized were low-income families (45%) and newcomers, immigrants, and refugees (22%). Required demographics included low-income families (17%) and specific cultural, ethnic, or religious groups (7%).
- **Geographic Eligibility:** 52% restricted participation to specific neighbourhoods, while 28% had no geographical restrictions. Others required Ottawa residency or attendance at specific schools.
- **Capacity Issues:** 19% of programs always or almost always had to turn away participants due to reaching capacity, with various strategies like waitlists used to manage overflows.

- **Funding:** Programs were mainly funded by the City of Ottawa (59%), charitable donations (43%), and the Province of Ontario (35%). Other sources included United Way East Ontario and private foundations.
- **Three Pillars Training:** Only 5% of programs regularly used the Three Pillars Training, with 22% having some staff who had used it.