



**Ontario Association of Young Parent Agencies**

*serving infants, children and young parents - together*

**l'Association Ontarienne des Agences pour Jeunes Parents**

*servir nourrissons, enfants et jeunes parents - ensemble*

## FEBRUARY 2024

### AT A GLANCE

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- Book: *Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting: Reducing Stigma and Improving Outcomes*
- Policy Paper Update
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## What's New



### CMHO Pre-Budget Consultation – Young Parent and Infant Sector Advocacy

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of OAYPA, CMHO's CEO Tatum Wilson explicitly articulated the critical importance of our sector during his presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on January 10, 2024:

*“Critical programs like **infant and young parent programs, which support our youngest children and often their young parents, have not received funding increases in almost two decades, yet we know that important opportunities to prevent mental health issues from starting and intervening early occur in the infant and early years.**”*

CMHO's submission requested that government invest \$140 million over four years to stabilize, sustain and system-build, so that every infant, child, youth and family has timely and equitable access to high-quality mental health services. CMHO requested an additional \$35 million investment into community-based child and youth mental health care, to stabilize the system and address critical service gaps, and ensure that this funding is applied consistently, both across the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, **to include infant and young parent** and youth justice partner organizations.

Read more about CMHO's statement [here](#).

## **New Book: Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting: Reducing Stigma and Improving Outcomes**

OAYPA recently hosted a virtual book launch for [Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting: Reducing Stigma and Improving Outcomes](#). This book provides an up to date understanding of the risk factors, advanced understanding of developmental issues, and the key evidence-based approaches to achieving positive outcomes for adolescent parents and their families. This book is very timely for our sector and can support dialogue and conversation with service providers, funders, and policymakers about the needs of this very vulnerable group.

Presenting at the Book Launch were editors Dr. Jean Wittenberg, Infant Psychiatrist at SickKids, Dr. Daniel Becker, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the University of California, Dr. Lois Flaherty, lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard University and Natasha Vianna, founder of [noteenshame.com](#).

Natasha, who was a mother at 17 years old, was central to helping the committee members understand the challenges and stigma young parents endure and she is also a wonderful model of success. Natasha started <https://www.noteenshame.com/> as a movement to bring young moms together to talk about the positives of their lives and experiences.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Jewer (Regina's Place)** who was the lucky winner of a copy of the book!

You can view the recording of the virtual book launch [here](#) and purchase your copy [here](#).

## **Strategic Plan Update**

Thank you to Management Advisory Service, OAYPA members and the young parents who participated in focus groups for work on our 3-year Strategic Plan. We have finalized the draft of the Strategic Plan and will be circulated in advance of our upcoming Feb 29th member meeting for approval.

## **Ontario Nonprofit Network – Sector Data**

We attended the recent webinar “How to use ONN’s New Sector Data for Provincial Advocacy”. For your reference, we have included a [recording](#) of the webinar here and other relevant resources below.

ONN's [presentation slides](#)

2023 State of the Sector [survey page](#)

Data dashboard: [English](#) and [French](#)

Data sets: [2021-2023](#)

## **Ujima Project**

Year 2 of Ujima Project is now complete and the team is working diligently sharing the results through an Impact Report, Infographic and Impact webinar! Stay tuned for more details once finalized!

2023 project successes include:

- Providing immediate and direct support for over 1,700 at-risk, vulnerable, youth-led families. This included (cumulative totals since project start):

- 1,874 ASQs (Ages and Stages Questionnaire – ASQ – SE (Social and Emotional) and ASQ-3) and 471 DSPs conducted with 813 unique families;
- Family navigation support to 1,702 young families through 8,404 interactions (~5 interactions per client, testifying to the intensity of client needs and supports offered)
- 57 Baby Love groups with 96 parents and their children (2- 15 months)
- 1,916 referrals to Early Literacy Specialist for support through:
- 251 8-week early literacy groups
- 2,873 1:1 early literacy sessions with 1,191 unique families

The retrospective pre/post survey results demonstrate large effect sizes demonstrating the impactful nature of Ujima Project services in supporting vulnerable young parents resulting in:

- increased access to appropriate referrals
- enhanced access to parenting and social support
- strengthened parent’s confidence in addressing their children's needs
- increased advocacy skills among parents
- increased parents’ confidence in navigating systems
- helped parents build healthy bonds with their children
- helped parents feel more connected to important parenting services

The 2023 evaluation findings also highlight several benefits of the Ujima Project services for parents, including increased access and confidence in navigating systems, increased awareness and advocacy of needs, and some improvements in positive parenting techniques. The evaluation also points to the effectiveness of the Ujima Project in serving vulnerable communities.

# Get Involved!



## Policy Paper Update

OAYPA’s policy paper working group (Jane Kenny, Leslie Barraball, Suzanne Flier, Bev MacKillop, Tamar Meyer) have been working closely with the Wilfred Laurier University research team to put the final touches on the data collection tools for Research Ethics Board Submission.

We secured the support of two of our MCCSS colleagues to ensure the policy paper aligns with provincial priorities. There are 3 distinct components to our project.

1. Rapid review
2. Environmental scan, including annual reports and accessing publicly available data (i.e. databases): have proposed data variables for which we want to generate descriptive statistics
3. Primary study involving surveys, interviews, and focus groups with parenting and pregnant transition-aged youth and staff at live-in and intensive day treatment services across Ontario.

This policy paper will be a critical tool that OAYPA will use to advocate to government and other provincial partners for increased investments and other supports to our sector to achieve a comprehensive system of services for young parents and their children across the province.

## Policy Paper Next steps:

1. **Member Agency contact:** We are asking each member to identify **one key agency lead** (if not themselves) for involvement in the policy paper. EDs will continue to be included in member and agency specific communications regarding this project. This agency lead would be responsible for collaborating with the WLU researchers to recruit providers and clients to complete the survey, participate in a key informant interview and take the lead on supporting the collection of agency data (e.g.: annual reports, demographic data, programs and service descriptions).
2. **Agency contributions:** To support the costs of this policy paper (\$25K), we are requesting that members contribute to this sector advocacy tool (suggested: \$1,000/agency). We have created an [online form](#) to help determine the funding commitment each agency can offer. A member of the Executive will be reaching out individually to discuss agency commitment and answer any questions you may have. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Jane Kenny/Tamar Meyer.

# Resources



## Black History Month Resources

- [National Film Board](#) - Black History Month resources.
- [Organizations and educational resources](#) - Devoted to the promotion and awareness of the history of Black communities in Canada.
- [Black women in Canada](#) - Learn of the advances made by Black pioneers who paved the way for women of today and gain insight into the realities of their communities.
- [Kayak Magazine](#) - Black History in Canada including Black Women's organizations with long histories.

## New Webinar Recording: Understanding Racism's Impact on Child Development

Watch the recording of our recent webinar to hear from a panel of experts on the impact of racism on child development and lifelong health. **Stephanie Curenton, PhD, Mavis Sanders, PhD**, and affiliated faculty members, **Nathaniel Harnett, PhD**, and **Natalie Slopen, ScD**, discussed their latest research, exploring how racism gets “under the skin” to impact children’s development and how it contributes to unequal access to opportunity in the places where children live, grow, play, and learn. Together, they explored ways to dismantle systemic barriers and work toward solutions that promote healthy child development. [Watch here.](#)

## Hanen Centre Resources for Sharing

- [Getting Hooked on Books](#) – tips to use or share with parents to uncover the kind of book that will spark and maintain their attention
- [Building Phonological Awareness](#) with *Alien Tea* – tools for promoting sound awareness
- [Sharing Books with Toddlers, The Hanen Way!](#) - develops the child’s interest in books, promotes back and forth interactions, and helps them learn new words.

# Significant Dates



- Feb - [Black History Month](#)
- Feb 19 - Family Day
- Feb 28 - [Pink Shirt Day](#)

## Professional Development

### SickKids Provincial Education Sessions

#### Upcoming Sessions

- Feb 13 - Nutrition and Mental Health - Register [here](#)
- Feb 27 - Grief/Bereavement - Register [here](#)
- Mar 12 - Pornography/Sexual Curiosity - Register [here](#)
- Mar 26 - Supporting Newcomers in Mental Health - Register [here](#)

### Achieva Learning and Development Platform

[Achieva](#) is designed to bolster team success while aligning skills directly with the organization's goals. Achieva was created by Fair Chance Learning, a learning and development services company that specializes in designing elevated learning experiences since 2010. Besides being fully funded, Achieva's library of 400+ micro courses is designed to give staff the skills they need to excel in their work. The beauty of 'micro' is that staff won't need to invest hours to see the benefits. Employees can dive into actionable learning in just 15 minutes.

Thanks to the Skills and Development Fund of Ontario, OAYPA agencies can access customized learning pathways and micro-courses at absolutely no cost to your organization. Staff will gain the essential skills and knowledge they need to excel, fostering a more skilled, motivated, and engaged team. Please note that funding for this **ends March 31st, 2024**, but if agencies sign up before the deadline, they will have access to the courses for a **full year**. You can access the Platform Tour video [here](#).

Suzanne Flier, ED of Fresh Start Support Services, recently onboarded to Achieva as has Rose of Sharon. If you have any questions, please [Contact Achieva](#) to schedule a demo and discover how Achieva can support your agency's success.