



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG PARENT AGENCIES

serving infants, children and young parents - together

l'Association Ontarienne des Agences pour Jeunes Parents

servant les enfants et jeunes parents - ensemble

December Newsletter

10 min read



Welcome to the December OAYPA Newsletter

As we close out another year of collaboration, learning, and advocacy, we want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all OAYPA members for your ongoing commitment to young parents and their children across Ontario. December invites us to pause, reflect, and prepare for the year ahead — and this month's newsletter brings sector updates, new opportunities, and resources to support your continued work.

We also want to wish you a warm and restful holiday season. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the winter solstice, or simply enjoy time with loved ones, we hope this season brings light, connection, and renewal. Thank you for your dedication and leadership, and we look forward to continuing our shared efforts in the new year.

Significant Dates

Nov 25-Dec 10 [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence](#)

Dec 6, 2024 [The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#)

Dec 10, 2024 [Human Rights Day](#)

Dec 17, 2025 [Anti-Bullying Day; Bullying Canada](#)

Member Updates

Nov 27th Member meeting

Thank you to all who attended our November 27th member meeting. Please review the minutes for actions and updates: [Minutes OAYPA member meeting Nov 27 2025.docx](#)

*As a reminder, if you are unable to access the links to these materials on our recently launched [OAYPA Resource Hub](#), please contact Tamar Meyer (tmeyer@abionacentre.ca)

MCCSS – Young Parent Services Webpage

MCCSS has announced the launch of the new Young Parent Services webpage on ontario.ca! This is a significant milestone for our sector because young parents throughout Ontario now have a provincial site, they can access to find our PPY agencies and a full range of supports available across Ontario. This provincial recognition of young parent support services demonstrates continued commitment to our vulnerable young parents. Visit [Young Parent Services | ontario.ca](#) to explore the resources and information now available to families in our province. We encourage you to share this resource with colleagues, community partners, and families in your networks. Together, we're advancing support for young parents across Ontario!

Note: Currently, only MCCSS-funded agencies are listed on the webpage but have requested that they update to add OAYPA's website offering the full member list.

OAYPA Leadership Training

On Nov 13th, 17 OAYPA leaders came together in person for our recent OAYPA Leadership Training session. The energy in the room was exceptional, and the level of participation during our group exercises demonstrated the depth of commitment, insight, and compassion that leaders across our member agencies bring to their work every day.

Through our collaborative brainstorming and voting activities, several clear themes emerged. Leaders highlighted that their favourite parts of leading people include building meaningful connections, supporting staff to identify their strengths, and fostering community. At the same time, we acknowledged shared challenges such as navigating underfunded systems, supporting staff through negativity or burnout, and managing the exhausting realities of systemic barriers, competing priorities, and administrative pressures. Participants also named the many energizing aspects of their work—from moments of direct impact to creativity, collaboration, and the sense of purpose that keeps our teams moving forward.

Thank you to everyone who contributed your wisdom, honesty, and humour throughout the session. Your collective perspectives will help shape ongoing leadership supports across OAYPA. All materials developed by David Hartley, including the exercise results, are now available [here](#) on the [OAYPA Resource Hub](#) for continued reflection and use within your teams.

CMHO - OAYPA Dedicated Consultation to Advance Infant and Young Parent Mental Health

In partnership with CMHO, OAYPA will support a dedicated consultation on **Monday, December 8th, 3:00–5:00pm**, focused on the young parent and infant sector. The pre-reading materials have now been circulated, and the meeting hold has been sent to all intended participants. This session will provide a platform to align sector priorities, share insights from OAYPA's policy brief, and build stronger connections across agencies serving young parents and their children.

Given the importance of this consultation, strong participation from each agency is essential. If you are unable to attend, please ensure that another leader from your agency is designated to join on your behalf so that your organization's perspective and expertise are represented.

In the coming days, OAYPA will prepare and circulate a Key Messages resource to support your participation and help guide consistent, unified sector input.

Importantly, CMHO has expressed interest in including both member and non-member agencies, creating an inclusive opportunity to collaborate on improving outcomes for young families. We look forward to a meaningful and well-represented discussion.

Free Tuition and Virtual Part-Time Programs at George Brown College

Please Share with Clients:

George Brown Polytechnic's Centre for Preparatory and Liberal Studies (CPLS) is offering a range of tuition-free, part-time programs to help individuals explore their next steps in education and employment. These programs support clients who are re-entering school, upgrading academic skills, or preparing for college or work — with flexible online, in-person, and hybrid options.

New this year, the Academic Upgrading for Health Sciences stream helps learners earn the math, biology, and chemistry credits needed to apply for health-related diploma programs. Staff are encouraged to share this opportunity with clients who may benefit from academic upgrading, pre-apprenticeship training, newcomer supports, Indigenous learner programs, or personal and career exploration. Learn more at georgebrown.ca/cpls or check out flyer here: [CPL Tuition Free Brochure.pdf](#)

The federal [Build Homes Canada \(BCH\)](#) initiative represents a major opportunity to expand affordable, mixed-income, and supportive housing across the country—an investment that directly aligns with the needs of young families in Ontario. BCH is designed to finance and accelerate the development of new housing using modern construction methods, repurpose existing buildings, and partner with non-profit, Indigenous, municipal, and community organizations to deliver units that are truly affordable and built at scale. With its focus on supportive and transitional housing and on moving shovel-ready projects forward quickly, BCH offers an important pathway for community agencies serving equity-deserving populations, including pregnant and parenting youth.

This national effort is especially timely given OAYPA's research findings: housing remains the number one request and top unmet need for pregnant and parenting youth accessing Young Parent and Infant Agencies across the province. Secure, stable housing is foundational to mental health, positive child development, and stronger long-term outcomes, yet young families continue to face significant barriers to accessing family-friendly, affordable homes. Our policy brief calls for a coordinated provincial housing strategy that prioritizes young parents and pairs long-term housing with wraparound supports—an approach that closely mirrors the types of integrated housing solutions that BCH aims to fund.

As BCH begins to identify and invest in priority projects, this moment presents a valuable opportunity for Ontario to work in alignment with federal partners to advance OAYPA's recommendation to expand housing for young families. We encourage members to review the BCH framework and consider how it may support their local work—whether through future partnerships, advocacy, or the development of housing proposals that respond directly to the needs of pregnant and parenting youth in your communities.

For more information: [Build Canada Homes Investment Policy Framework - November 2025](#)

Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway Hosts Inaugural Symposium in Ottawa

On November 17–18, 2025, the Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway (OITP) held its first-ever provincial symposium in Ottawa—an important milestone in strengthening intensive mental health supports for children and youth. OAYPA was pleased to be represented by Bev, Co-Director of OAYPA, who attended on behalf of our network to ensure the voices and needs of young parents and their children remain centered in system transformation discussions.

The two-day symposium focused on deepening sector-wide understanding of the OITP model, supporting the development of regional intensive treatment networks, and building shared commitment toward a more coordinated and innovative system of care. Day one emphasized establishing a common foundation and vision for the OITP, while day two expanded participants' capacity to explore collaboration, partnership requirements, and opportunities for innovation.

OITP represents a significant shift for Ontario—introducing a provincially guided, regionally delivered model that will improve access to intensive mental health treatment for children and youth up to age 17 with the most complex needs, beginning with live-in treatment. Below are links to several key frameworks and resources referenced throughout the symposium. We encourage OAYPA members to review these materials and consider how they might support your work with young parents, infants, and young families across the province:

- ARC Framework – Attachment, Regulation and Competency model for children and adolescents who have experienced complex trauma: [Arcframework.org](https://arcframework.org)
- DBT Family Connections – 12-week evidence-based program for families supporting individuals experiencing chronic self-harm or emotion dysregulation
- The Resilience Centre – Global resource hub offering resilience research, tools and training: Resilienceresearch.org
- THRIVE Framework – Principles for building coherent, resource-efficient mental health and wellbeing supports: Implementingthrive.org
- SNAP (Stop Now and Plan) – Free program supporting children and parents to build skills in emotional regulation and positive decision-making: Snap.childdevelopment.ca

Get Involved: TMU Graduate Research Study

This study aims to understand how effective current training programs are for service providers and identify ways to improve them to better support their emotional and physical well-being. Participants in this study must be 18 years or older, currently working at a non-profit organization providing services to

vulnerable populations for at least 3 months, and able to speak and understand English at a high school level.

To gather this information, the [Evaluating the Effectiveness of Training for Non-Profit Service Providers Questionnaire](#) study, open until February 2026, uses two approaches; First, a 15–25-minute Google Form survey will collect service providers' perspectives on training, workplace challenges, and overall well-being. Participants may enter a draw to win a \$50 Amazon gift card. Second, those who are interested may join a 60-minute focus group, where they can share more in-depth experiences and discuss the impact of training on their well-being. Focus group participants will receive a \$25 Tim Hortons gift card in appreciation for their time. The focus group discussions will commence in early March 2026. The study is expected to be completed by summer 2026. If you have any questions, please contact Hemali Patel - hemali.patel@torontomu.ca. This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Toronto Metropolitan University Research Ethics Board [REB 2025-209].

Registration for World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH) 2026: Now open!

WAIMH Conference 2026, is taking place from October 2-6 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto, Canada. With the theme "Harmony in Diversity: Nurturing the Youngest Minds Around the World," this Congress promises to be an enriching and uplifting five-day event.

[Register today](#) and get ready to join a global community of colleagues dedicated to advancing the field of infant and early mental health. Secure your spot now and take advantage of our Early Bird (Launch Saver) rate. This deal is only available until the first 100 registrations have been completed, so act fast and register today!

The [Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience](#) launched the [Nonprofit AI Impact Hub](#), developed in collaboration with Microsoft Elevate Skills and shaped by Imagine Canada's research. The Hub features Canada's largest collection of AI tools and is a learning and discovery platform to help nonprofit professionals understand and use AI. The resources featured on the Hub include guides, events, courses, case studies, tools, videos, and more. The Hub also features articles, research, and trending AI topics for nonprofit professionals. Trending resources include:

- Free AI Learning Sessions for Nonprofit Professionals
- Microsoft AI credentials
- Microsoft AI Trainer Toolkit guide
- AI Literacy Training: RAISE
- Fundraising.ai

[Trauma & Healing for Youth-Supporting Professionals](#) developed by **Healthy Teen Network and Johns Hopkins Centre for Adolescent Health** is a resource designed to support professionals to sustain their well-being, amplify their impact, and ensure they can show up with clarity, compassion, and consistency for the communities they serve. Healing and sustainability for youth-supporting professionals require an intentional balance of personal, communal, and organizational wellness. These professionals often lead with empathy and purpose, making them both powerful agents of change and vulnerable to the weight of secondary trauma and burnout. By fostering environments where individual self-care is valued, peer support is cultivated, and organizational policies actively promote well-being, we create the conditions for

professionals to not just survive, but to thrive. When the people who care for youth are themselves cared for, the entire ecosystem of support becomes more resilient, responsive, and healing-centered.

Developed in partnership with the Diversity Institute, the [Introduction to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Nonprofits](#) course will help you build a strong, practical foundation in EDI. You'll explore why EDI matters for nonprofits, learn key concepts, consider the barriers faced by diverse groups, and identify steps to start moving EDI forward in your workplace.

Fully Funded ASQ/DSP Training

Through funding from the Ujima Project, we are pleased to offer free IEMHP Ages and Stages Questionnaire and Developmental Support Plans training for OAYPA member staff (\$600 value/staff). Please contact Bev (bmackillop@Abionacentre.ca) to be added to the registration list.

February 2026		
Orientation Session 1	Tuesday, February 3, 2026	11:30am - 12:00pm EST
Orientation Session 2	Thursday, February 5, 2026	1:00pm - 1:30pm EST
ASQ Session 1	Tuesday, February 10, 2026	1:00pm - 3:00pm EST
ASQ Session 2	Wednesday, February 11, 2026	10:00am - 12:00pm EST
ASQ Session 3	Thursday, February 12, 2026	1:00pm - 3:00pm EST
DSP Session 1	Tuesday, February 17, 2026	1:00pm - 3:00pm EST
DSP Session 2	Wednesday, February 18, 2026	10:00am - 12:00pm EST
DSP Session 3	Thursday, February 19, 2026	1:00pm - 3:00pm EST

February 2026		
Implementation Session 1	Tuesday, February 24, 2026	10:30am - 12:00pm EST
Implementation Session 2	Thursday, February 26, 2026	1:00pm - 2:30pm EST
Coaching Connect Session 1	Tuesday, May 26, 2026	1:00pm - 2:30pm EST
Coaching Connect Session 2	Tuesday, August 25, 2026	1:00pm - 2:30pm EST
Coaching Connect Session 3	Tuesday, November 24, 2026	1:00pm - 2:30pm EST

SafeGuards is a partnership of provincial associations dedicated to providing culturally informed training on trauma-informed practice, trauma assessment and treatment and related effects of trauma. OAYPA is an Association Member of SafeGuards. OAYPA agencies receive a member's rate, which is 12-23% off on SafeGuards training fees. Save an additional 20% off with group registration of 4 or more participants. Download the group registration form [here](#). For more information and to browse their list of courses, see below/click [here](#).

The following courses may be of interest to you.

- [Ambiguous Loss: A Framework to Understand and Respond](#) December 3, 2025, 1:00 – 4:00
- [Advanced Skills for Brief Therapy Practitioners: Managing Complex and High-Risk Issues](#) December 8, 9, 17 & 18, 2025, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Practical Integration of CBT and Attachment Theory in Psychotherapy](#) December 10 & 11, 2025, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Navigating the N-Word and Racial Slurs](#) January 21 & 22, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Treating Trauma and Concurrent Substance Use in Adolescents](#) January 29 & 30, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Follow us on social media!

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X: [@TheOntarioAsso1](#)

