



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

April 2026 Newsletter

13 min read



As we welcome April and the arrival of spring, we're reminded of the quiet but powerful ways growth and renewal show up in our work and in the lives of the young families we support. This month also brings a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the role of stories and connection through World Book Day—highlighting how early literacy, shared reading, and everyday moments of bonding can shape a child's development and sense of belonging.

At the heart of April is Black Maternal Health Week, a critical time to recognize the systemic inequities that continue to impact Black mothers and families. Across our network, many of the young parents we serve are Black, and this week calls us to deepen our commitment to culturally responsive, relationship-based care that uplifts their voices, experiences, and strengths.

April is a time to also acknowledge the broader community that supports this work—our volunteers, administrative professionals, and the collective responsibility we share in caring for each other and the environments we live in. As always, we move forward together, grounded in care, equity, and the shared goal of supporting young families to thrive.



Significant Dates

April 2 **International Children' Book Day**

April 11-17 **Black Maternal Health Week**

April 19-25 **National Volunteer Week**

April 22 **Admin Professionals Day**

April 22 **Earth Day**

April 23 **World Book Day**

Member Updates

OAYPA Needs Assessment

We know that the strength of our sector comes from the leadership, experience, and insight across our member agencies. That's why we're asking for your input through our [Sector Needs Assessment](#), an important opportunity to reflect on how we are supporting young parents and their children, and how we can continue to grow together. Your perspective will help ensure our work remains aligned, responsive, and grounded in what matters most. This work is directly connected to Strategic Direction #1 and will shape how we strengthen capacity across our network.

The survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and is open until May 1, 2026. All responses are confidential and shared in aggregate. Your input will directly influence OAYPA's priorities and the future direction of our sector.

[OAYPA Sector Needs Assessment Survey](#)

NEW! OAYPA Exchange

We are pleased to introduce a new section in our newsletter designed to highlight news and opportunities from our member agencies that may be of interest across the network. The **OAYPA Exchange** will provide a space to share valuable information such as training opportunities, new research initiatives, innovative program developments, fundraising ideas, and collaborative projects. It may also include announcements about events, resources, or success stories that could inspire and benefit each other. By sharing these updates, we hope to strengthen connections among members, promote knowledge exchange, and showcase the important work taking place across our community.

The success of this new sharing opportunity will be driven by the contributions of our members. We encourage you to take part by submitting updates, opportunities, and resources to bmackillop@Abionacentre.ca by the 25th of each month.

Project Update: Anti-Oppressive Toolkit

On behalf of the working group (Lesley Barraball, Sandra Ra we are excited to share that the *Serving Young Par Communities: An Anti-Oppressive Toolkit for Providers W with Pregnant and Parenting Young People* is now in the stages of development, with reviewers from across various s providing valuable input to strengthen its relevance and i This work continues to build strong cross-sector collaborati momentum in addressing stigma experienced by young pare

We're also proud that the toolkit has been accepted as a presentation at CMHO, as well as at the **Toronto Black Ma Health Week Research Day** at Mount Sinai Hospital on April

Membership Dues

As we look ahead to an exciting year of advocacy collaboration, we wanted to kindly remind you that 2026 membership fees will be due in March. We are so grate your continued support and for being a vital part c Association. Your membership helps drive our mission forward together, we'll continue to work passionately with gover bodies and funders to make a lasting impact on behalf of members.

Please complete the Membership Renewal Form [here](#).



**Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth
Mental Health and Addictions**

**Institut du savoir sur la santé mentale
dépendances chez les enfants et les**

Get Involved!

Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health Addictions has drafted a quality standard on live-in treatment is seeking public feedback on this draft. This standard wi community-based child and youth mental health and add agencies in Ontario deliver high quality live-in treatment

programs that support positive outcomes for children and people. While it is not part of accreditation, the quality standards will support organizations in improving treatment and in or quality improvement.

They are seeking feedback from people in Ontario who experience accessing, working in, developing, or implementing programs, as well as those who have found it difficult to live-in treatment programs. Please review [the draft standard](#) and share your feedback through the [English or French survey](#). Feedback is welcomed until Friday, April 10, at 11:59 p



Food Allergy Webinar: Free Resources, Recording and Recap

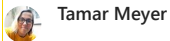
In partnership with [Food Allergy Canada](#), OAYPA recently hosted a webinar on preventing food allergies by bringing forward the latest evidence on early allergen introduction and practical strategies for support.

The session highlighted the shift toward “eat early, eat often” as a key approach to reducing allergies by addressing common challenges such as misinformation, feeding anxiety, and barriers to access. This reflects a shared commitment to strengthening knowledge translation across sectors and ensuring consistent, evidence-based guidance. Aligned with OAYPA’s Strategic Direction 1, the webinar focuses on building capacity among frontline, non-clinical staff—equipping them with tools and resources to educate and support young parents and promote healthy early childhood development.

Recording, slides and resources: [Food Allergy Prevention Presentation \(March 26, 2026\)](#).

Order free Food Allergy Canada resources (shipping incl!): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SB2YPI>

Resources



Tamar Meyer

Black Mental Health Canada

The mission of Black Mental Health Canada is to improve the mental health and well-being of Black individuals and communities in Canada by advocating for culturally competent mental health services and promoting community education and empowerment. They aim to address the disparities in mental health care faced by Black individuals and communities and promote culturally responsive mental health services. They support mental health and emotional wellbeing, healing and recovery, justice, advocacy and system navigation, community care and wellbeing. For more information, visit <https://blackmentalhealth.ca/>

[Navigating Perinatal Grief and Loss with Clie](#)

This resource by Public Health Nurse Practice Research Education Program (PHN-PREP) is intended to strengthen professional knowledge and confidence in our abilities to provide trauma-informed, culturally sensitive and family-centered care to families who are navigating this deeply personal experience. Although it is written for nurses, the knowledge is transferable to our work with young parents.



Healthy Smiles Ontario

Healthy Smiles Ontario is a government-funded dental program that provides free preventive, routine, and emergency services for children and youth 17 years old and under from low-income households. The program includes regular visits with a licensed dental provider and covers the costs of treatment including:

- check-ups
- cleaning
- fillings (for a cavity)



Our Kids Health: Culturally Responsive Parenting Support

[Our Kids' Health](#) is a growing, community-informed initiative that provides free, culturally relevant, and evidence-based parenting information through social media. Designed to address gaps in traditional resources, the platform supports Black, Indigenous, and diverse newcomer communities by sharing trusted health and parenting guidance in multiple languages and through culturally aligned perspectives.

Co-designed with communities, Our Kids' Health helps strengthen parenting confidence, reduce stress, and foster connection by meeting families where they are—online. With channels tailored to specific communities, including Black, Punjabi, Tamil, Arabic, and more, the initiative creates accessible spaces for parents to engage with information that reflects their lived experiences.

This model highlights the importance of representation and trust in improving health outcomes and offers an innovative approach to supporting the wellbeing of young families across diverse communities.



- x-rays
- scaling
- tooth extraction
- urgent or emergency dental care

Parents can enroll in the program [online](#) or by [mail](#). Once a child's enrolment is confirmed, parents will get a Healthy Ontario dental card in the mail. Click [here](#) for more information.



Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation

Dedicated to ensuring every child in Canada has the literacy needed to reach their full potential, [Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation](#) is building a future of literacy and equity for all children. They are focused on closing the literacy gap, particularly for children in low socio-economic communities and facing additional challenges such as cultural identity, geographic isolation, family dynamics, and physical and mental health conditions. Access [Early Words for Healthcare Professionals](#) and [Early Words for Early Years Educators](#), as well as [Research and Advocacy](#).

Thanking Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of so many small nonprofits. Next Volunteer Week is coming up April 19-25, there's no better time to show them some real appreciation. Thanking volunteers for what they do is crucial to keeping your volunteers coming back. In this [article](#), Sandy Rees from Get Fully Funded shares:

- Why volunteers actually want to volunteer in the first place so you can honor what matters most to them
- 5 things that can happen for your nonprofit when you thank volunteers well
- 18 creative, meaningful, and practical ways to thank volunteers how much they mean to you
- Thanking volunteers works the same way as thanking donors. Do it often, do it sincerely, and keep finding new ways to make them feel seen.

Art-Based Approaches with Young Parents

When: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/FWCj6bnD7G>

OAYPA is pleased to partner with Dr. Amelia Eppel will share insights from her doctoral research with young mothers who used artmaking as a way to reflect on their journeys into parenthood, their past experiences, and hopes for their children's future. children's future.


Drawing on doctoral research, Dr. Amelia Eppel will share insights from young mothers who used creative practices to reflect on their journeys into parenthood, past experiences, and hope for their children's futures. She will also explore practical, art-based strategies to support engagement and reflection.

A follow-up session (Part 2) will offer a deeper exploration of art-based approaches and how they can be integrated into practice with young parents.

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PRESENTER:
Dr. Amelia Eppel
Lillian Meighan
Postdoctoral Fellow
Maternal-Child Health
York University

WEBINAR OVERVIEW

In this session, Dr. Eppel will share insights from her doctoral research with young mothers who used art-making as a way to reflect on their journeys into parenthood, their past experiences, and their hopes for their children's futures.

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PRESENTER

Dr. Amelia Eppel

Dr. Eppel completed her PhD in the Department of Integrated Studies Education at McGill University, focusing on the experiences of young mothers and their histories in the child welfare system.

She is also a birth and postpartum support worker with over 16 years of experience supporting children and families at the intersection of research, creative practice, and frontline experience supporting young parents in meaning.

ASQ/DSP Training

Our next free ASQ/DSP training cohort for OAYPA staff is starting in May. Please send staff name, role, email and session selections to B MacKillop/Tamar Meyer.

Orientation Session 1	Tuesday, May 5, 2026	11:30am - 12:00pm EST	Orientation Session 1
Orientation Session 2	Thursday, May 7, 2026	1:00pm - 1:30pm EST	Orientation Session 2
ASQ Session 1	Tuesday, May 12, 2026	1:00pm - 3:00pm EST	ASQ Session 1
ASQ Session 2	Thursday, May 14, 2026	10:00am - 12:00pm EST	ASQ Session 2
DSP Session 1	Tuesday, May 19, 2026	10:00am - 12:00pm EST	DSP Session 1
DSP Session 2	Thursday, May 21, 2026	1:00pm - 3:00pm EST	DSP Session 2
Implementation Session 1	Tuesday, May 26, 2026	1:00pm - 2:30pm EST	Implementation Session 1
Implementation Session 2	Thursday, May 28, 2026	10:30am - 12:00pm EST	Implementation Session 2



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)

Mapping DEIA Metrics in the Workplace: Stories, Data and Benchmarks that Matter (April 7, 2026, 1:2:00 PM)

This [webinar](#) will focus on how research and data continue to demonstrate that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) create more innovative and stronger performing teams and organizations. Join Rochele Padiachy as she explores how mapping DEIA metrics can provide a strong foundation for sustainability and ethical growth.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Practices in Action (June 11, 2026, 1:00–2:00 PM)

It can be challenging to take theories or frameworks and apply them to our everyday actions and practices. This [webinar](#) will focus on skills and real-life workplace examples of anti-racism and anti-oppression in action. From hiring and retention practices to psychological safety and employee cultures of belonging, we will explore how anti-racism and anti-oppression values shape healthy and equitable workplaces. Join Michelle Hawks as she explores anti-racism and anti-oppression practices in action.



PHN-PREP
Public Health Nursing Practice,
Research & Education Program

PHN-PREP webinar on April 15, 2026, 9:30-11:00 AM (EST)

Join Dr. Nadine Wathen, Western University, for a focused session exploring what “nurse well-being” truly means today, along with practical trauma- and violence-informed strategies to strengthen safety, resilience, and support for both staff and clients. This [webinar](#) is ideal for health care professionals and professionals who work with pregnant individuals/women. Participants will:

- Better understand how different factors in the workplace may affect nurse well-being.
- Consider trauma- and violence-informed strategies to prevent and respond to potential harms, and build on protective factors, to strengthen well-being.

The banner features a circular logo on the left with a stylized bridge and the text "LONDON & REGION FASD CONFERENCE". The main text reads "6TH ANNUAL LONDON & REGION FASD VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2026" and "BRIDGING RESEARCH, CLINICAL, AND LIVING EXPERIENCE". Below this, a yellow bar contains the text "SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS IN FASD: BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN". The bottom of the banner shows a photograph of a stone bridge over a stream in a wooded area, with the text "OCTOBER 20 & 21, 2026 | VIRTUAL MEETING" at the bottom.

Save the Date: Child & Parent Resource Institute 6th Annual London & Region FASD Virtual Conference October 20-21, 2026

This [virtual fetal alcohol spectrum disorder-focused education event](#) brings together researchers, clinicians, academics, medical and allied health professionals, educators, students, families and adults and children/youth living with FASD in Ontario and beyond. Participants will be offered:

- Current multi-disciplinary findings from pre-clinical, translational, and clinical research investigating neurodiversity, including FASD.

- Strategies for evidence-based treatment.
- Information about regional resources, support, and services for individuals living with FASD and their families/caregivers.
- Compelling living experience accounts by individuals living with FASD and their families/caregivers.
- Customizable selection of breakout educational workshops.
- Opportunities to network with people passionate about understanding and advocating for individuals living with neurodiverse diagnoses, including FASD.



World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH) 2026 Registration Reminder

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 conference promises to be an enriching five-day event. The conference is your chance to meet colleagues from around the world, gain fresh perspectives, expand your network, and be part of a community committed to advancing the wellbeing of infants, young children and their families.

[Conference Register](#)

[Hotel Reservation at the Sheraton Centre](#)

Interwoven

Co-Creating the **Future** of Child and Youth Mental Health

#CMHO2026

April 20–21, 2026

Children's Mental Health Ontario Conference

The CMHO Conference will bring together over 700 leaders, practitioners, caregivers, researchers, youth advocates, and policymakers from across Ontario and beyond at the Sheraton Hotel Toronto Centre on April 21-22, 2026. This year's theme, *Interwoven: Co-Creating the Future of Child and Youth Mental Health*, invites all connected sectors, roles, and communities to step boldly into the unknown, together. Whether through equity-driven practice, creative models of collaboration, or the centering of lived and living experience, the path forward calls for imagination, integration, and courage.

If you are attending, please stop by and visit OAYPA's poster! [Register here!](#)

Substance Use Disorders in Youth

This free course from Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario provides an overview of the spectrum of substance use and the diagnostic criteria for substance use disorder in youth. Designed for child and youth mental health and addictions professionals, each lesson will explore screening and assessment considerations, common substances that youth in Ontario are using, and treatment pathway recommendations.

Course Highlights:

- Open-access, self-directed
- Available in both French and English
- Approximately 3-6 hours of content
- Includes animated scenarios to apply learning
- Certificate available upon completion

Registration: <https://www.youthhubs.ca/resource/substance-use-disorders-youth>



Coaching for Change Cathy Turalinski Partnership with Child Care Solutions

This 3-month coaching program is for staff, supervisors, and executive directors designed to support professional growth and enhance practice in your childcare program. Participants begin with a virtual assessment to identify goals, followed by a series of one-on-one coaching sessions. Two options are available: a 9-session package with an in-person classroom observation (GST only) \$1,800 (HST included) or a 6-session virtual-only package \$1,500 (HST included). Both packages include personalized resources, a clear action plan, ongoing support, and a final progress report.

Coaching topics include behaviour management, curriculum planning, stress and burnout, conflict resolution, self-regulation, and parent communication. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Cathy directly to book your coaching package: cathyt@childcaresolutions.ca or 416-575-9158.



Charity Village

AI, Finance and the Future of Impact (April 9, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 PM)

For nonprofit finance professionals, AI introduces new questions about trust, ethics, stewardship, and the future role of human judgment in mission-driven organizations. While automation promises efficiency and insight, it also requires thoughtful leadership to ensure technology strengthens rather than distracts from organizational purpose.

In this [webinar](#), nonprofit finance and industry leaders join Sage Intacct for an open and practical discussion about how AI is already influencing nonprofit finance. The conversation will explore real-world applications, emerging challenges, and how organizations can move from uncertainty toward informed, strategic adoption. Participants will gain perspective on how finance leaders can help shape responsible innovation while maintaining transparency, values, and long-term impact.



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.

- [Embrace Trauma-Informed Care with Children and Youth](#) April 7, 8, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Trauma-Informed Approach to Communication](#) April 14, 15, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Confronting Suicidal Ideation and High-Risk Behaviour](#) April 29, 30, 2026, 1:00 – 3:00PM
- [Practical Integration of CBT and Attachment Theory in Psychotherapy](#) May 4 & 5, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Trauma-Informed Practice](#) May 6 & 7, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- [Introduction to Motivational Interviewing](#) May 13 & 14 / 20 & 21, 2026, 12:30 – 4:00 PM
- [Peer Mentor Training: The Impact of Lived Experience](#) May 27 & 28, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Free Expert-Led Webinars

To support your ongoing learning, SafeGuards is pleased to offer free, expert-led webinars designed to enhance trauma-informed practice through accessible online training. These sessions offer valuable insights you can immediately apply to your work. [Explore Online Webinars](#)

No-Cost Resource Library

As part of SafeGuard's commitment to supporting your learning journey, they are excited to share a collection of free resources designed to help you stay informed and confident in your role. This library is available anytime you need it. [Access resources here](#).

In the News

Employment Law Updates and Legislative Changes - Reminder Summary of The Working for Workers Seven Act – Bill :

1. Job Seeking Leave – November 27, 2025

Employers who give notice of their plan to terminate 50 or more employees (group terminations) must now allow eligible employees to take an unpaid job seeking leave up to three days to search, interview or train for a new job. Employees where possible must provide at least three days advance notice of taking the leave.

2. Extended Temporary Layoffs – November 27, 2025

Under the ESA, temporary layoffs for non-unionized employees may last longer than 35 weeks but cannot exceed 52 weeks in any week period. Extended layoffs require a mutual agreement between the employer and the employee and must be approved by the Director of Employment Standards.

3. Job Posting Platform Websites – January 1, 2026

Persons that operate public job posting platforms must post information for platform users on their procedures for reporting and handling fraudulent job postings. This does not extend to employers who only advertise job posting for their own corporation.

4. Rules Regarding “Publicly Advertised” Job Postings – January 1, 2026

The new hiring standards regarding external job posting obligations apply to employers with 25 or more employees. Effective January 1, 2026, external or “publicly advertised” job postings must now include the following:

- pay transparency (salary range or specific compensation)
- no requirements for Canadian experience
- disclose if using artificial intelligence in the hiring process (ex. screening applications)
- disclose if the job posting is for an existing vacancy
- notify interviewees of the hiring decisions within 45 days of their last interview
- retain hiring records for three years (job postings, applicant documentation)

5. Long-Term Illness ESA – June 19, 2025

As of June 19, 2025, employees if eligible, can take a long-term illness job protected leave if the employee will not be able to work to a serious medical condition. Eligibility requirements include:

- Employees must be employed for at least 13 weeks to be entitled to up to 27 weeks of leave without pay in a 52-week period if the employee will not be able to work due to a serious medical condition.
- Employees must advise the employer in writing and provide medical documentation from a qualified health practitioner.
- Medical documentation must state that the employee has a serious medical condition and how long the employee will be unable to work to support entitlement to the leave.
- The leave does not have to be taken over consecutive weeks.
- Employers will be required to retain records for 3 years after the day the leave expires.

6. Employment Information – July 1, 2025

Employers with 25 or more employees are required to provide the following written information to new hires before their first day of work.

- The legal name of the organization/agency, business, or operating name
- Contact information including one contact name
- Where the employee will first work
- Expected hours of work
- Compensation, pay period and pay day.

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X: [@TheOntarioAsso1](#)
