

Briefing Note: Child & Youth Advocacy Centres of Canada (CYACC)

Every child deserves to grow up safe, supported, and able to thrive. Yet in Canada, too many children and youth experience abuse, with lasting effects on their health, education, and wellbeing. Child and Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs) are a collaborative, integrated approach that reduces trauma and helps children begin to heal.

What is a Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC?)

When a child or youth experiences abuse, multiple agencies are involved including municipal police services, RCMP, mental health services, medical services, child protection services, crown prosecutors and victim services. Navigating these systems is challenging and can worsen trauma.

The difference between a family navigating disconnected systems alone vs. supported by a CYAC is profound.

CYAC plays a coordinating role, including multidisciplinary care teams, cultural sensitivity, forensic interviews, advocacy and support services, medical and mental evaluation and treatment, case review, case tracking.

The CYAC model helps reduce trauma, improves outcomes, and supports long-term healing for children and youth. It is scalable and adaptable and has demonstrated effectiveness in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

There are 51 CYACs operational, in development or undergoing feasibility assessment in Canada today. Not every child in need has access to the coordinated care offered by a CYAC.

What is CYACC?

Child & Youth Advocacy Centres of Canada (CYACC) was established in 2024 to ensure that all children and youth impacted by abuse in Canada have access to high-quality and evidence-informed services and supports provided through a Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) model.

CYACC's mission is to be a relentless champion for children and youth by supporting Canadian CYACs by raising awareness, increasing capacity, and advancing sustainability nationally.

What is the national association doing?

- Providing training, shared tools and communities of practice
- Developing a national accreditation program
- Advocating for the expansion of CYACs from coast to coast to coast
- Serving as a national resource for evidence, policy and government collaboration.
- Collaborating with Kindex – Research and Knowledge Centre of Canadian CYACs to mobilize evidence that will guide the development of effective interventions, policies and programs for CYACs.

Need and Case for Support

Abuse and experiences of violence have long term trauma effects that, when not treated, can lead to layers of trauma and long-term pervasive individual, social and system costs. Prevention and healing are critical to Canada's long-term prosperity.

A country is only as strong as the children it raises. If we want a strong Canada tomorrow, we must show up for children today.

Investments in children and youth are one of the most effective nation-building strategies available.

CYACs are both intervention and prevention: when abuse is addressed early, the risks of future issues like homelessness, addiction, or justice involvement are significantly reduced.



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