

# Information Package for Hamilton Special Needs Strategy:

## Youth Advisory Council

*and*

## Hamilton Family Advisory Council

***March 2017***

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We need your help!

We are looking for youth and their families who use or need **children's rehabilitation services** and / or **service coordination for children and youth with complex special needs**.

As part of Ontario's Special Needs Strategy, Hamilton service providers<sup>1</sup> are taking steps to support children and youth with complex special needs get the timely and effective services they need at home, at school, in the community and as they transition to adulthood. We're working together with service providers and educators across our community to do this. But we can't do it alone. **We need to hear directly from youth and families about what is important. That is why we are creating a Youth Advisory Council and a Family Advisory Council.**

We all want a system that is more accessible, coordinated and centred on the needs of children, youth and their families.

We have created this information to help you better understand what we want to do.

If you have any questions about the Youth and Family Advisory Councils, please feel free to contact Lea Pollard c/o [lea.pollard@contacthamilton.ca](mailto:lea.pollard@contacthamilton.ca) or by phone at 905-522-3304 x235.

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Service Providers include: McMaster Children's Hospital, Affiliated Services for Children and Youth, Community Care Access Centre, Lynwood Charlton Centre, Rygiel Supports for Community Living, Community Living Hamilton, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Wesley Urban Ministries, HWDSB, HWCSDB, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, Conseil Scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud, Centre de santé communautaire, Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services, City of Hamilton, Contact Hamilton

### *What are core children's rehabilitation services?*

They include: speech and language services, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

In Hamilton, children's rehabilitation services are provided by a number of different service agencies, they include: McMaster Children's Hospital (Ron Joyce Centre), Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (Early Words), St. Joseph's Hospital (Early Words) and the CCAC.

### *What is service coordination for children and youth with complex, special needs?*

Children and youth with complex special needs require multiple specialized services due to the intensity and variety of their needs. They may experience challenges related to multiple areas of development including their physical, communication, intellectual, emotional, social and/or behavioural development and require services from multiple sectors and/or professionals. They are likely to have ongoing service needs.

Children, youth and families with complex special needs are at the heart of Service Coordination. Service coordination helps families with coordinating services in way that is most helpful to them.

The primary goals of service coordination are to:

- Help families understand all of the services that are involved with their family i.e. what they do, who they are, how to reach their workers when they need to
- Coordinate services in a way that makes the most sense to the family and is in the best interests of the child/youth
- Help children, youth and families identify their goals and help them in achieving these goals
- Having a written plan that summarizes all of this and giving this to the family and service providers so that everyone is working on the same plan
- Updating the written plan as needed to make sure it is up to date and accurate

### *What does an Advisory Council do?*

Advisory Council members have lived experience. They are the best people to **give advice about what they feel is needed so that youth and families have the best possible service experience**. Advice and feedback are given to Hamilton Service Providers.

### *Who can be an Advisory Council member?*

For each Council we are looking for approximately 12-15 people who have experience with rehabilitation services and/or service coordination and want to give their best advice about how to make the system better:

- For the Youth Advisory Council: we are looking for youth with complex special needs between the ages of 12 and 21
- For the Family Advisory Council: we are looking for family members like siblings and parents of children and youth with complex special needs

We welcome youth and family members from diverse backgrounds, abilities and experiences for example: Indigenous, Newcomer, LGTBQ youth, Francophone.

As much as possible, we want to make sure that Youth and Family Advisory Council members reflect the diversity of our City.

### *What is the commitment?*

- 2 to 3 meetings per year plus in-between work / meetings via email and phone as required
- Membership is reviewed yearly.

### *What do I do if I'm interested?*

Please complete the application form by **Friday May 12** and send it to Contact Hamilton (sponsor for the Advisory Committees). The application form can be found on Contact Hamilton's website, News Tab at [www.contacthamilton.ca](http://www.contacthamilton.ca) or if you would like a copy mailed to you, please email [lea.pollard@contacthamilton.ca](mailto:lea.pollard@contacthamilton.ca).

### *How will we select the Advisory members?*

In May (and maybe June), a group of children's service providers will review all the application forms and will select members.

As much as possible we want to make sure that Advisory Council members reflect the diversity of our City and so we will do our best to consider this in our selection process.

We may have more interest than spaces allow. We thank everyone for their interest and the time they have taken to complete an application form.

If you have any questions, please send us an email at [lea.pollard@contacthamilton.ca](mailto:lea.pollard@contacthamilton.ca)