



# 2020-2021 Business Plan

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## Introduction

This document represents the 2020-21 Business Plan for Chatham-Kent Children's Services (CKCS). It highlights the mandate, strategic priorities, key activities and child welfare performance indicators of the organization. As an integrated child welfare, youth & children's mental health and developmental services agency, the plan also demonstrates how Chatham-Kent Children's Services continues to improve our child well-being services in Chatham-Kent.

The Ontario government declared a state of emergency on March 17, 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This resulted in the closure of schools, childcare centres, many public service facilities and businesses. Months of quarantine and physical distancing restrictions have led to a series of cascading social and economic impacts.

## Mandate

Children's Aid Societies are independently governed agencies responsible for providing mandatory and critical services. Children's Aid Societies have been providing these services to communities in Ontario for over 100 years.

They are legislated to perform certain functions under the provisions of Section 35 (1) of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA). The mandate of CASs, as described in this section of the CFSA, includes the following functions:

- investigate allegations or evidence that children may be in need of protection;
- protect children where necessary;
- provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children;
- provide care for children assigned or committed to its care under this Act;
- supervise children assigned to its supervision under this Act;
- place children for adoption under Part VIII (Adoption and Adoption Licensing); and,
- perform any other duties given to it by this or any other Act.

This legislation and the supporting regulations, directives and standards prescribe specific and detailed requirements for what services CASs must provide, how they must provide these services, including services to FNIM children and families and French language services, as well as the timelines in which these mandatory services must be provided.

Children's Aid Societies provide critical and essential services to the most vulnerable members of our society – infants, children and youth who are at risk of or are experiencing physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect or abandonment. CASs are mandated to intervene if a caregiver cannot adequately care for or provide for a child.

Children's Aid Societies protect and safeguard most children while they remain with their families in the community. This family-based support takes the form of intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers, as well as ongoing supervision of the child while he/she remains in the family home.

These are complex cases in which child protection concerns have been verified and there are risks of, or actual, abuse and neglect. As such, the work must be performed by skilled, qualified child welfare staff. Serving these children in the context of the home – when it is safe to do so – is consistent with the legislative and regulatory mandate and with the policy direction of government.

\*\* Although not a mandated service, many of these criteria also apply to the delivery of our youth & children's mental health, development and prevention services.

## **Mission, Aspiration and Values Statement**

### **MISSION**

Strengthening Children and Families for a Better Future.  
Des familles et des enfants plus forts, pour un avenir meilleur.

### **ASPIRATION STATEMENT**

CKCS is an accredited multi-service agency that responds to the unique dynamics of our families. We support the well being and safety of our children and their families through evidence based practices and collaboration with community partners. Together, CKCS employees strive to foster an environment that encourages positive growth, professional development and progressive change.

### **VALUE STATEMENT**

**Together with our community, CKCS CREATES:**

**Collaboration**

**Respect**

**Equality**

**Accountability**

**Trust**

**Empowerment of families**

**Support**

# Our Strategic Direction



**Chatham-Kent  
Children's Services**

**Strategic Plan  
2019 - 2020**

## Strengthening Children and Families for a Better Future



Strategic Direction #1

### Supportive, collaborative workforce

- Staff survey
- Decrease in grievances
- Succession plan will be in place for management and senior management positions
- Wellness initiatives will be informed by identified staff needs



Strategic Direction #2

### Child, Youth & Family Engagement

- Youth Advisor position will be established
- Child's voice is engaged
- Service User survey



Strategic Direction #3

### Signs of Safety

- 95% of staff, volunteers, foster parents and Board members will be trained
- Increased kin/family-based care
- Decreased # of children in care
- Decreased court involvement



Strategic Direction #4

### Governance

- Development of a menu of Board training opportunities that align to the skills matrix
- Evaluation of new Board structure
- Development of a recruitment strategy
- Development of a community engagement plan



Strategic Direction #5

### Equity

- Identity-based information is collected by HR
- Facilities support cultural practices
- Increased collaborative community partnerships with equity-seeking groups

**Always ask how our actions will make things better for children, youth and their families.**

## Service Statistics

	2019-20	2018-19
<b>Intake/Family Services</b>		
Total Reports Received	2086	2372
Total New Investigations	929	1105
Investigations Not Required	283	435
Cases Opened	145	218
Cases Open At End of Year	219	307
<b>Children in Care</b>		
Children Admitted to Care	67	79
Children Discharged From Care	92	108
Children in Care At End of Year	126	148
Total # of Children Served in Care	218	262
Total Days Care Provided	50302	59747
Total Adoptions Completed	10	12
Total New Foster Homes Opened	4	8
Total Foster Homes at End of Year	47	56
New Kinship Service Homes Opened	64	57
# of Kinship Service Homes at End of Year	51	48
Adoption Disclosures Completed	28	26
<b>Children's Mental Health</b>		
Intake Referrals	744	702
Brief Services and Walk In	281	218
Counselling and Therapy Services	470	638
Psychological Assessment	74	94
Youth Engaged with the Criminal Justice System Served	18	12
<b>Child Development</b>		
Childcares and Early Learning Programs	46	35
Infant Development	149	204

## Performance Measurement

**Chatham-Kent Children's Services understands the importance of measuring performance and outcomes for children, youth and their families.**

### Provincial Key Performance Indicators

The Provincial Key Performance Indicators (PIs) that will be measured this year are:

- Recurrence of Child Protection Concerns in a Family after an Investigation
- Recurrence of Child Protection Concerns in a Family after Ongoing Services were Provided
- Days of care by placement type
- Time to permanency
- Quality of the caregiver-youth relationship

The most recent available results are available here:

<https://www.ckcs.on.ca/sites/default/files/Accountability/Chatham%20Kent%20Children's%20Services%20P%20Is%20Summary.pdf>

### Brief-in-3 Mental Health Treatment

In 2018, Chatham-Kent Children's Services introduced a new Brief Mental Health service offering to the community known as the Brief-in-3 program. Brief-in-3 is appropriate for children and youth who present with few mild-moderate problem/symptoms (especially, for example, mild anxiety). Aligning with current Canadian mental youth literature that supports the importance of early intervention and quick access to more efficient treatment models, the Brief-in-3 program offers client/families three treatment sessions within six weeks.

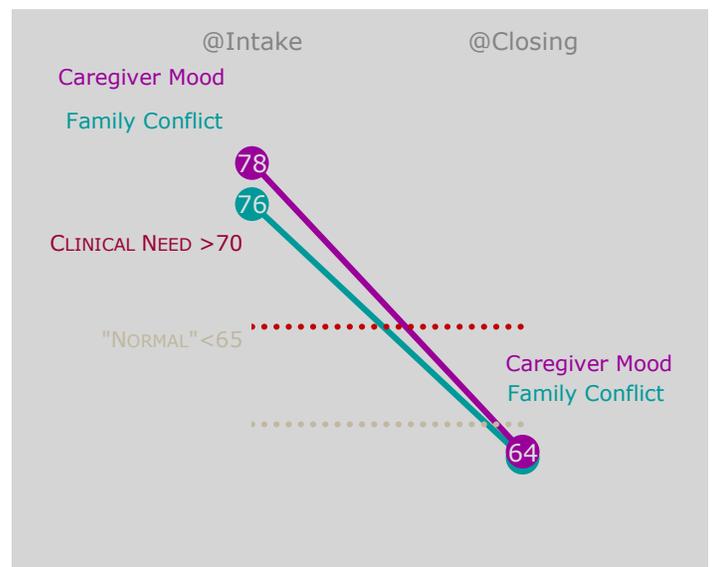
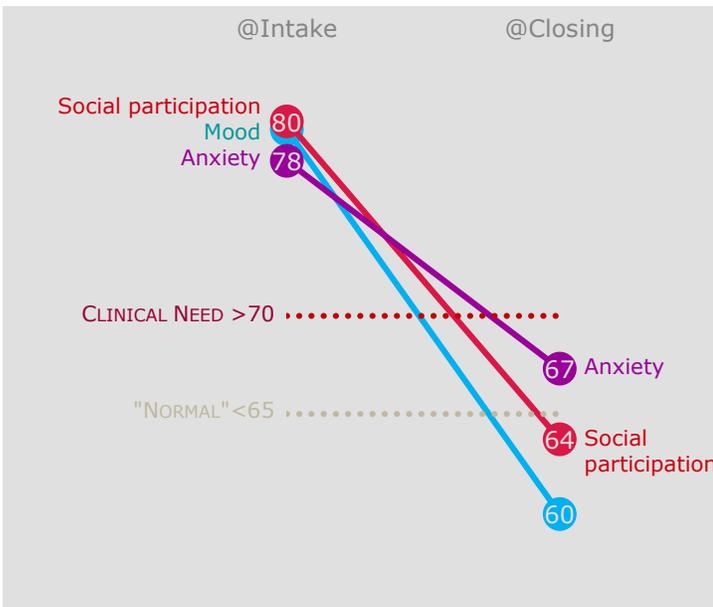
Like so many others, the Brief-in-3 program is strengths-based, solutions-focused, which depends on client and family participation to identify needs, set goals, and define progress. CKCS Mental Health Clinician assists the family with problem-solving, emotional literacy, coping skills development, parenting strategies, and recommendations for additional resources or further community service.

In 2019, 145 children/youth were served in the Brief-in-3 program. Most (80%) were assigned a Clinician in about 3 weeks (23 days) or less, from the day their families reached out for help. Based on needs assessment at the time of referral, the most frequently reported problem/symptoms for clients referred to the Brief-in-3 program were 1) Anxiety; 2) Mood (depression); 3) Family conflict; and 4) Difficulties at school. More than one-third (37%) clients reported experiencing anxiety as well as symptoms of depression.

## Measuring Success

After just three sessions within six weeks, average client outcomes as measured by the BCFPI standardized assessment tool, show significant improvement of individual and family-based problem/symptoms, including client's social participation, mood, anxiety, and family conflict, with no further need for clinical treatment/intervention for most problems reported at Intake!

Additionally, client needs assessments completed at Closing show significant mood improvement for parent/caregivers who previously reported symptoms of depression as part of the client needs assessment. The following charts show decreased average Brief-in-3 client BCFPI scores at Intake and Closing.



## **AGENCY DESIGNATIONS/INITIATIVES/PROJECTS**

### **EQUITY**

As an organization, we have started down the path to learn more about the systemic inequities that lead to groups of people being disproportionately involved in all of our services; in the hope to challenge those inequities and interrogate the bias, racism, colonialism and classism, inherent and built into our services since they began. We have recommitted to continue along this path, with our communities, to undertake the difficult work of unpacking systemic racism, to reduce the inequities of our system in the aim of a more equitable future.

### **SHARED SERVICES**

The agency has embarked on a shared service partnership with Sarnia Lambton CAS and Windsor-Essex CAS. Financial operations for both Sarnia and Chatham have been centralized out of the Chatham location. By capitalizing on opportunities as they present, we can leverage our talent and resources to drive innovation and efficiency. Collaboration such as this is our commitment to a sustainable service model that is responsive to the needs of children, youth and families.

### **LEAD AGENCY**

Moving on Mental Health is a province-wide action plan which was initiated by Ministry of Children and Youth Service in 2014. The purpose is to fix a Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) System that is fragmented and difficult for both families and professionals to access and navigate. The goal is to increase the degree of coordination, responsiveness, and ease of access for all children and families that need mental health services. In 2019, responsibility for funding CYMH services was transferred to the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.

Chatham-Kent Children's Services serves as Lead Agency for the Chatham-Kent service area. As Lead Agency, CKCS is responsible to work to improve the functioning of the system collaboratively with other agencies in our area that receive funding to deliver at least one of a set of seven specific children and youth mental health services, including brief services, crisis services, counselling and therapy, family caregiver support, residential/intensive Services, targeted prevention, and specialized consultation and assessment.

To read more about the changes occurring across Ontario visit:

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/specialneeds/momh/moving-on-mental-health.aspx>

## ROADMAP TO WELLNESS

Over the last six years, Chatham-Kent Children's Services has worked diligently alongside our core service providers to address the identified local gaps in children's mental health services. The introduction of the **Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System** provides a clear strategy towards further improvement.

The plan will enable a system that will effectively respond to the needs of every child or youth with mental health needs. The four pillars outlined in this roadmap are designed to support service delivery, *improve quality, expand existing services, implement innovative solutions and improve access.*

As the primary provider of all seven core mental health services with strong partnerships and alliances with key service providers, Chatham-Kent Children's Services is in a unique position to leverage investment to maximize service delivery of the various partner agencies. Designed in response to Making Services Work for People, Chatham-Kent Children's Services exemplifies integration of sector partners that improves access to services. This foundation for improvement outlined in the Roadmap to Wellness is augmented by the Ontario's Plan to **Redesign the Child Welfare System** as well as the guiding documents for infant development and special needs resourcing.

In addition, Chatham-Kent Children's Services is an integral member on the various long-standing planning tables including CK Child and Youth Planning Network, Special Needs Service Coordination, ACCESS Open Minds Chatham-Kent, Youth Justice Services, Homelessness, Kids Team, CTAP, Suicide Prevention and the recently convened United Way COVID-19 Situation Tables. Meetings with our core service providers, community partners in education, and health along with our municipal and provincial representatives have also occurred during the last couple of months to assess service area needs and establish key priorities.

These committees, tables and mapping meetings have provided valuable information for ensuring our community continues to expand and improve mental health and addiction services for children and youth. Locally, our partners in education as providers of children's mental health services, will be focusing on mental health promotion and early intervention with the recent substantial investments over the last quarter.

The Chatham-Kent Ontario Health Team plans to continue to concentrate their efforts on chronic illness and elderly populations to end hallway care. Key priorities identified during our meetings have focused on the impact of COVID-19 on children, youth and their families.

To read more about Ontario's Child Welfare Redesign Strategy:

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/childwelfare/redesign-strategy.aspx>

## QUEST PROJECT

Chatham-Kent Children's Services was selected to be part of The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health Quest project entitled **Youth Justice Care Pathway**. Quest is a quality improvement (QI) initiative based on Lean Six Sigma. Quest teams are provided quality improvement coaching with a focus on care pathways.

CKCS's project was chosen based on their potential for system-level impact for children and youth involved in the youth justice system in the Chatham-Kent area. This project will review and improve access mechanisms, referral practices and scope of practice (avoid duplication of services, identify gaps in service continuum) so this community can ensure youth are getting the right service at the right time.

## SIGNS OF SAFETY

In 2016, Chatham-Kent Children's Services adopted a Signs of Safety philosophy and practice with our child protection families. In 2019, we decided to reboot our Signs of Safety journey to include all services of the organization. This has included ongoing educational sessions for all CKCS staff, foster parents, Board of Directors and community partners.

Signs of Safety is a strengths-based and safety focused approach to working with the children and families we serve. It is grounded in the philosophy that families are their own experts and know best what needs to change. Signs of Safety is a solution focused approach. This means focusing solutions around the family's vision. It is based on the belief that problems are best solved by focusing on what is already working and how a family would like their life to be. It is imperative that children and families are an integral part of process and planning. This approach encompasses' strengths and Signs of Safety that can be built to stabilize and strengthen a child's and family's situation.

Implicit in this approach is to bring the family's network together to help facilitate a plan that addresses safety and the overall well-being of the family. Families that come up with their own solutions and plans are believed to be more committed to the change necessary to move forward.

Traditionally, service providers have taken a paternalistic approach. An approach that the professional knows what is wrong in the lives of the families served and what the solutions are to those problems.

The Signs of Safety approach seeks to create a more constructive culture which include working relationships between professionals and family members; thinking critically; and fostering a stance of inquiry. This in contrast to a conclusive all-knowing driven approach.

Building healthy relationships is the bedrock of human change. We at CKCS are committed to building better relationships with the children and families we serve; and our community partners. We strive to facilitate and not dictate change with each child and family we serve. This is an inclusive

and ongoing process of listening; engagement and facilitation. Children and families are at the center and the drivers of our solution focused approach.

Signs of Safety is not a destination but a journey that requires ongoing reflection and change that we at CKCS embrace.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH STRENGTHENING FAMILIES INSTITUTE**

Young people and their families in Chatham-Kent will have timely access to Strongest Families Institute's (SFI) skill-based distance mental health intervention services thanks to \$300,000 in funding support from Medavie.

The two-year partnership between Chatham-Kent Children's Services and SFI will help to reduce wait times for families with children or youth impacted by concerns, including behaviour challenges (ages three-12), anxiety (ages six-17) and nighttime bedwetting (ages five-12).

SFI's bilingual programs are designed to remove barriers to care, providing help to families in the comfort and privacy of their own homes at convenient times, when and where they need it.

Chatham-Kent Children's Services integrated service model will enable families from any of our service streams to be connected to the programs and resources available through Strongest Families. The donation from Medavie is a great example of how we can work with a range of partners to strengthen families for a better future.

SFI's evidenced-based programs are highly effective with a better than 85 per cent outcome success rate in overcoming presenting issues, and a less than 10 per cent attrition rate. In addition to helping children and youth effectively control their anxiety, impacts reported include improved school attendance/academic achievements, resolved bullying, improved family relationships, and reduced parental stress.