

THE CHILD WELFARE WRAPAROUND DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE PROJECT FOR THE HAMILTON/NIAGARA REGION

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SECTION A – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Child Welfare Wraparound Differential Response Project will develop a Differential Response model at point of Intake and/or referral to Protection units within the five Child Welfare Agencies across the Hamilton/Niagara Region. This model will utilize the Wraparound Process plus the mobilization of Community Mobilization Teams to support families with children with special/complex needs. This model of Differential Response will divert families with children with special/complex needs at moderate to high risk of maltreatment either during the intake process and/or at point of transfer to a protection unit within the five child welfare agencies. The demonstration project will be comprised of three core components:

- The development of the capacity to use the Wraparound Process within the Intake/Protection Departments of the five Child Welfare agencies
- The mobilization of localized Community Mobilization Teams across the Hamilton/Niagara region that will support families with children with special/complex needs involved in this project
- The development and implementation of a three to five year research project that would evaluate in a randomized trial the comparative effects and expense of the proposed Differential Response model across the five Child Welfare agencies located in the Hamilton/Niagara region.

Each of the five child welfare agencies will designate staff in their Intake or Protection Departments as Wraparound Differential Response Facilitators. These people will utilize the Wraparound Process with identified families with children with special/complex needs identified through the use of the eligibility spectrum as at moderate to high risk of further maltreatment.

The Facilitator will work through the first three phases of the Wraparound Process (Engagement, Team Based Planning and Implementation). They will arrange for the use of other child welfare services and supports (e.g. financial or in-kind resources or parent support workers for example) as necessary to meet the needs of the family and to address any current or expected safety concerns for the children. If necessary, the Facilitator can arrange for temporary foster care to ensure safety and/or provide the child and family with a temporary break. The emphasis is on ensuring that the use of foster care is temporary and is part of a broader plan for the child to stay with the family.

The Facilitator will also connect the family to informal supports available through the local Community Mobilization Team in the area that the family lives. They will arrange for or broker necessary referrals to formal services in the community

(Family services, health services, services for domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse services, housing, employment supports and services, etc.) as well as advocating for priority connection to children's services through the local Contact agency. In addition, they will assist the parents in applying for and receiving any available financial assistance through municipal, provincial, or federal income assistance programs.

Duration of Service – Up to 3 – 6 months

The planned duration of the Wraparound Differential Response Facilitator's work in these first three phases of the Wraparound with a child and family will vary anywhere from 1 to 6 months. Some children and families will have their safety issues and needs met and no further service may be required within one to three months. Other children and families may need up to six months to adequately address their safety issues and needs and then no further service will be required. In both of these cases, the Wraparound Differential Response Facilitator will then complete the Transition Phase of Wraparound.

However, we are projecting that probably about a half of the families with children with more specialized or complex needs may need Wraparound for up to another year. In these cases, we will ask the Community Mobilization Team for the area in which the family resides to provide a volunteer Wraparound Community Facilitator for the child and family. They will continue the Wraparound planning with the family and their Child and Family Team for another year or until the child and family are able to successfully transition out of the Wraparound Process.

Families Served By Each Facilitator – 25 per year

The Wraparound Differential Response Facilitator will be the primary case worker for no more than 10 families at any one time. We expect that 5 families will either be discharged from service or transferred to a volunteer Community Wraparound Facilitator every three months, allowing for the intake of 5 new families in each of the second, third, and fourth quarters of the year. As such, the yearly capacity for each of the Facilitators for each of the five child welfare agencies during this demonstration project will probably average about 25 families per Facilitator.

Children Served By Each Facilitator – At least 50 per year

We know that most of the families that have been served to date in Wraparound initiatives across Ontario have anywhere from 1 – 9 children, although on average it is usually 2-3 children in need per family. If we assume that the average number of children served in each of the families involved in this project is 2, then each Facilitator will provide service to at least 50 children per year.

Total # of Families & Children Served Across the Region for Two Years

In total, we expect to serve approximately 250 families and a minimum of 500 children over the first two years of this demonstration project.