

## Ottawa Children's Coordinated Access and Referral to Services (OCCARS) Client - Parent/Guardian Information Guide

### **Ottawa Children's Coordinated Access and Referral to Services Committees:**

Ottawa Children's Coordinated Access and Referral to Services (OCCARS) also referred to as Coordinated Access is a case resolution mechanism designed to provide recommendations and referrals for families, children and youth who have complex needs and are experiencing difficulties gaining access to support and services in the community. The mechanism is also the single point of access for intensive services, day treatment classrooms, flex funds and residential treatment in Ottawa. The role of Coordinated Access is to offer assistance in the form of recommendations and/or referrals (not direct services) in an attempt to resolve difficult situations. Case resolution and referrals are offered through the Coordinated Access committees comprised of various professionals whose agencies provide services in the Ottawa region. Coordinated Access has Francophone and Anglophone committees to provide assistance to clients in their language of choice.

### **Coordinated Access Principles and Values:**

Coordinated Access uses the *System of Care* principles which include the following:

- Ensure availability and access to a broad, flexible array of effective, community-based services and supports for children and their families that address their emotional, social, educational, and physical needs, including traditional and nontraditional services as well as natural and informal supports.
- Provide individualized services in accordance with the unique potentials and needs of each child and family, guided by a strengths-based, wraparound service planning process and an individualized service plan developed in true partnership with the child and family.
- Ensure that services and supports include evidence-informed and promising practices, as well as interventions supported by practice-based evidence, to ensure the effectiveness of services and improve outcomes for children and their families.
- Deliver services and supports within the least restrictive, most normative environments that are clinically appropriate.
- Ensure that families, other caregivers, and youth are full partners in all aspects of the planning and delivery of their own services and in the policies and procedures that govern care for all children and youth in their community, state, territory, tribe, and nation.
- Ensure that services are integrated at the system level, with linkages between child-serving agencies and programs across administrative and funding boundaries and mechanisms for system-level management, coordination, and integrated care management.
- Provide care management or similar mechanisms at the practice level to ensure that multiple services are delivered in a coordinated and therapeutic manner and that children and their families can move through the system of services in accordance with their changing needs.
- Provide developmentally appropriate mental health services and supports that promote optimal social-emotional outcomes for young children and their families in their homes and community settings.
- Provide developmentally appropriate services and supports to facilitate the transition of youth to adulthood and to the adult service system as needed.

- Incorporate or link with mental health promotion, prevention, and early identification and intervention in order to improve long-term outcomes, including mechanisms to identify problems at an earlier stage and mental health promotion and prevention activities directed at all children and adolescents.
- Incorporate continuous accountability and quality improvement mechanisms to track, monitor, and manage the achievement of system of care goals; fidelity to the system of care philosophy; and quality, effectiveness, and outcomes at the system level, practice level, and child and family level.
- Protect the rights of children and families and promote effective advocacy efforts.
- Provide services and supports without regard to race, religion, national origin, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical disability, socio-economic status, geography, language, immigration status, or other characteristics, and ensure that services are sensitive and responsive to these differences.

The values guiding Coordinated Access are the *System of Care* values which include the following:

- Family driven and youth guided with the strengths and needs of the child and family determining the types and mix of services and supports provided.
- Community based with the focus of services as well as system management resting within a supportive, adaptive infrastructure of structures, processes, and relationships at the community level.
- Culturally and linguistically competent with agencies, programs, and services that reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences of the populations they serve to facilitate access to and utilization of appropriate services and supports and to eliminate disparities in care.

### **Who can make a referral to Coordinated Access?**

Professionals from community agencies, schools, mental health services or developmental service agencies make referrals to Coordinated Access. It is the professional's responsibility to gather all the documentation needed and to help families fill out the Coordinated Access application form. The individual submitting the application will also prepare the presentation to the committee. However, it is strongly recommended that the parent/guardian be actively involved in the application process and participate in the presentation. The submitting individual is also responsible to forward the recommendations of the committee to the family and assist with their implementation.

### **Who is eligible to be presented to the Coordinated Access committee?**

Coordinated Access is designed to assist children/youth (17 & 364 days) and families who have complex needs. These children and/or youth and/or families must be able to demonstrate that they have attempted to use various community services, but have been unsuccessful in their attempts to resolve their current difficulties. In other words, Coordinated Access is designed to assist only those people whose needs have not been met by existing community services.

### **How does Coordinated Access work?**

Coordinated Access committee meetings take place on a predetermined schedule developed every year and rotate between Francophone and Anglophone meetings. These meetings occur throughout the year, however, not during the month of July and August for Day Treatment and August for Mental Health and Developmental Sector.

Once the submitting professional(s) and the family have gathered all the necessary documentation, the application is forwarded to Coordinated Access or to the School Board Navigators (day treatment only). When it has been determined that a file is complete, the submitting individual will be provided recommendations or contacted to arrange a presentation date and time if required. Parent/guardian is strongly encouraged to participate in the presentation in order to share their concerns and needs.

### **Coordinated Access presentations:**

Presentations should last approximately 15-20 minutes and provide the committee with a brief service and family history, the primary presenting problems and the services requested. Committee members will have a few minutes to ask the presenters, the youth and the family questions should it be needed to help them make the most appropriate recommendations and or referrals. After the presentation, the committee will deliberate and develop recommendations and/or referrals in an attempt to resolve the situation. Within approximately five working days, the committee's recommendations will be forwarded to the submitting professional who must then forward the recommendation to the family and assist them with their implementation. When different service providers are involved with the family, a joint presentation is strongly recommended. The presenting worker must be in attendance for the presentation.

### **Who participates on the Coordinated Access Committees?**

The Coordinated Access committees are made up of many children and youth service providers. These agencies are:

- Association pour l'intégration sociale d'Ottawa
- Centre Psychosocial
- Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- CHEO
- Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est
- Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
- Crossroads Children's Mental Health Centre
- Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre
- Maison Fraternité
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
- Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
- Ottawa Catholic School Board
- Ottawa Carleton District School Board
- Ottawa Inuit Centre
- Ottawa Rotary Home
- Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services
- Roberts/Smart Centre
- Roger's House
- Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre
- Service Coordination des services
- Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health

- Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
- Youturn Youth Support Services

**As a Client - Parent/Guardian you have the right to:**

1. Expect that the committee will keep the information gathered and presented confidential. You should know that if the committee recommends a referral to an agency that is a member of the Coordinated Access Committee and/or provides services for the committee, they would be provided with a copy of the documentation gathered for the presentation unless you have specifically indicated that you object to this practice.
2. Be present during discussions related to you and your family.
3. Appeal the refusal of services by the committee.
4. Refuse any or all of the services recommended.
5. To see your file and decide who else may see it (we are required to keep the client file for ten years after the last contact with Coordinated Access).
6. To receive assistance from Coordinated Access in French or in English.
7. To be fully informed about how your personal information will be used, shared and stored (see consent forms). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your personal information, please contact:

**Administrative Assistant**  
**2675 Queensview Drive**  
**Ottawa, Ontario**  
**K2B 8K2**  
**613-729-0577 ext. 1251**  
[info@coordinatedaccess.ca](mailto:info@coordinatedaccess.ca)

If you have any objection to our privacy practices, you may make this objection in writing to the Manager at the Coordinated Access and we will ensure that it is investigated promptly and that you are provided with a formal written decision with reasons.

**What you can expect from the committee:**

The Coordinated Access committee is committed to:

- Assisting children/youth and their families by making recommendations and or referrals in an attempt to resolve complex situations that have not been helped through existing services.
- To recommend the least intrusive measure possible. As a result, a unique access to the Child and Family Intervention (CFI) Mental Health bed offered through the Roberts/Smart Centre as well as access to the Child & Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) in London are considered the last resorts.
- Providing feedback to the parent/guardian and presenters.
- Forward referrals to the appropriate agency.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all cases presented to Coordinated Access.

**Limits to confidentiality:**

There are three circumstances that would require the Coordinated Access Committee to report information without your consent.

1. If we were told that someone is planning to seriously harm someone.
2. Under the law, if we were to believe that a child under the age of 18 is at risk of harm we must report this to the Children's Aid Society.
3. If there is a court case and the judge demands it, we must release the file to the judge who will decide if any of the information is relevant to the trial.

**Appeal Process:**

The desired outcome of a referral to Coordinated Access is to offer recommendations to resolve unmet needs of children or youth. It is important to note that the implementation of Coordinated Access recommendations remain at the discretion of the client (where appropriate), parent/guardian or service provider. An appeal can only be initiated as a result of being denied services not outlined in an exclusionary criteria. As such, a parent/guardian or service provider may not appeal based on their "preference" of service or request. Appeals must be made to the Manager of Coordinated Access in writing within 5 days of the recommendation date and must include any additional information supporting the request for an appeal. If the manager determines that new or additional information warrants a review, the manager will reconvene the committee to review the recommendations and new information provided by the family or service provider. However, upon review, the clinical decision of the committee will be final. If the family/service provider remains unsatisfied following the review, they must notify the Manager of Coordinated Access in writing within 5 days of the final decision to request a Steering Committee review. The Manager will then convene the Steering Committee within 14 days to review the committee's process in reaching their decision. It should be noted that the Steering Committee will not review or overturn the case resolution committee's clinical recommendations. The Steering Committee's review will solely focus on ensuring the process (as outlined in the parent/guardian guide and Coordinated Access' values and principles) were adhered to. If the Steering Committee determines the case resolution process was adhered to, the committee's recommendations will be supported. However, should the Steering Committee deem that the process was not followed, they will reconvene the case resolution committee to proceed with a new presentation.

The manager of Coordinated Access can be reached by mail at: 2675 Queensview Dr. Ottawa, ON K2B 8K2 or by email at: [info@coordinatedaccess.ca](mailto:info@coordinatedaccess.ca)