



Simcoe County Special Needs Strategy Communication

Simcoe County has been hard at work over the last month, coming together to establish a strong foundation to develop the two identified proposals needed to address the Provincial Special Needs Strategy. The core planning members have been working as one table to develop a basis for both the Coordinated Service Planning and Integrated Rehab proposals. The Simcoe County planning table remains committed to keeping the Special Needs Strategy vision at the core of their work:

“An Ontario where children and youth with special needs get the timely and effective services they need to participate fully at home, at school, in the community, and as they prepare to achieve their goals for adulthood”.

Accomplishments to date

- A terms of reference has been established with agreement on a consensus model of decision making as well as a voting structure and quorum. This document is available to table members in both French and English.
- A facilitator has been selected to support the planning table in the use of a quality process for proposal development. We welcomed Lough Barnes Consulting Group to the planning table at the December 5th meeting.
- Ministry funding to support planning has been submitted and we await approval

Current Directions

- Family and youth engagement has been front and center in table discussion. The planning table has reached out and has a number of parents interested in planning participation.
- With the support and guidance of our facilitator the table has agreed that the immediate focus will be on parent, youth and front line engagement respecting diversity within each of these groups. An engagement strategy with multiple opportunities for input is being planned for implementation in early January. This will allow the voice of parents, youth and front line providers to form the foundation of the plan.
- A focused visioning retreat will follow for core and consulting planning table members this activity will build on the insight and input provided through community engagement opportunities. Core and consulting planning table members should watch for an invitation for dates in late January.

We look forward to the upcoming broader engagement with our community and the important information that will provide!

Checkpoints

- Table co-chairs participated in teleconference provided by the Ministries, connecting over 100 co-chairs working across the province on this important strategy. This was an opportunity to ask questions and share information. Sharing occurred regarding family engagement and integrated rehab co-chair and CTN Director Mary Riggin Springstead was invited to share the Simcoe experience. Key principles of quality family engagement that include; early engagement, meaningful support to participating families and building a variety of opportunities for engagement were reinforced. Another co-chair teleconference will be held in late January.
- The planning table is gathering high level system barriers to reaching the established vision for submission to the Ministries. This information will inform the Ministries in the work they will need to do to ensure foundational system change and support the development of quality proposals.

In the works

- The planning table is gathering information that will form an environmental scan of current children’s rehab and service coordination resources that exist within the current system. Representatives at the table are completing templates to describe services and resources that are relevant to the plan.
- Two task groups have been established with planning table volunteers to work on developing a family and youth engagement strategy and to plan for the visioning retreat. Parents will be included in the membership of the task group to plan family and youth engagement and will help to inform the ongoing involvement of families in the planning process.

Please feel free to contact your planning table co-chairs at for more information.

Coordinated Service Planning: Leanne Weeks, lweeks@ctnsy.ca and Gisele Forest (Francophone), gforrest@catulpa.on.ca.

Integrated Rehabilitation: Mary Riggin Springstead, mrigin@ctnsy.ca and Rhea Taplin, taplinr@rvh.on.ca

Continue checking the Special Needs Strategy Ministry portal...
Frequently Asked Questions have been posted as well as a
Family Engagement Toolkit ☺

*“Growth is never by mere chance;
it is the result of forces working together.”*

James Cash Penny