

Supports for Success

Healthy Lives from Birth to Employment

RESEARCH PHASE BACKGROUNDER

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH THROUGH TRANSITIONS

Supports for Success aims to improve educational, economic, and social outcomes for children and youth. There is a wide range of programs and services across sectors that support youth throughout different stages of their lives – from infancy, to early and middle childhood, to adolescence and adulthood.

However, many youth, especially those from marginalized groups, can become lost in the transitions between support services as they age and move between life stages. *Supports for Success* aims to help strengthen the connections between these services.



UNDERSTANDING STRENGTHS AND NEEDS THROUGH RESEARCH

After an initial phase that involved learning about successful international initiatives that inspired this work (such as [Collective Impact](#), [Cradle to Career](#), [Connected Communities](#)), *Supports for Success* is now in its second phase, which involves a series of research and knowledge translation activities that will take place in 2018.

Much of the available research and data on children and youth offers snapshots for each life stage rather than a holistic picture. *Supports for Success* aims to fill this gap by building on existing knowledge to identify gaps, assets, and milestones at key transition points throughout the life course.

Our methods are focused on identifying, mapping, and assessing existing programs and services, and understanding how to strengthen this system to improve outcomes for children and youth. With our partners, we will undertake this research in four sites that represent a cross-section of youth in Ontario: Kingston, Brantford, Thunder Bay, and Scarborough. We are also working to ensure our approach is informed by Indigenous community practices, knowledge, and values.

OUR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Our four research activities are designed to collect information at different levels of analysis (listed below). We will be consulting with community partners at the planning stage to ensure that our research methods build-on, align, and support pre-existing initiatives in each community.

Community Level:

Community profiles will collate population-based data, including demographic information and important health and social indicators that have been shown to predict healthy development.

Network Level:

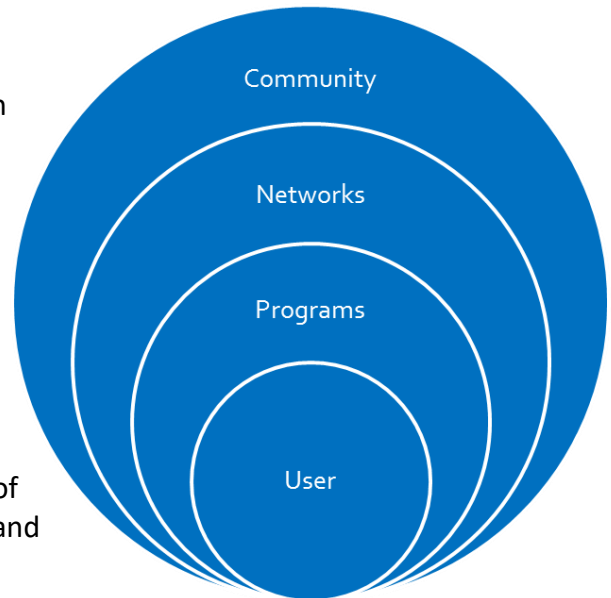
A social network analysis will focus on the connections between programs supporting children and youth.

Program Level:

An inventory of relevant community organizations, programs and services will help provide a broad picture of the menu of programs and services supporting children and youth.

User Level:

Interviews and sharing circles will be used to understand the experiences, success strategies, and challenges of families, children, and youth throughout development.



TOWARDS ACTION AND CHANGE

Our research and knowledge translation initiatives will inform a third phase, which involves co-developing interventions with stakeholders and community partners. We will leverage a collective impact approach to design interventions that draw on successful models and demonstrate measurable impacts on education, employment, social, and health outcomes for young people.

WHO WE ARE

Supports for Success is a project of Wellesley Institute, funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), and aligned with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Collective Impact for Disconnected Youth (CIDY) initiative.

Local teams will lead research and engagement at each community site, with management and coordination from a central team at Wellesley Institute in Toronto.

Wellesley Institute works in research and policy to improve health and health equity in the GTA through action on the social determinants of health.

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