

**POURQUOI PAS?
STRENGTHENING
FRENCH LANGUAGE
SERVICE DELIVERY IN
ONTARIO'S CHILD AND
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH
SECTOR**

Policy-ready paper developed by the Ontario Centre
of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health

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About the Centre

We bring people and knowledge together to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of mental health services for children, youth and their families and caregivers

SERVICE AREA SUPPORT

strengthen skills and knowledge in key areas that lead to **improved outcomes**

SYSTEM SUPPORT

provide consistent evidence-informed approaches that **enhance service planning and delivery**

IMPACT AND

inspire excellence and innovation through **continuous learning, evolution and innovation**



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Pourquoi pas: Rationale, objectives and methods



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Rationale

To support the goals of *Moving on Mental Health* by ensuring:

- all children and youth with mental health problems, their families and professionals know what services are available and how to access supports when and where they need them
- service equity for French-speaking children, youth and families

Objective

The goals of this policy-ready paper are to:

- understand the unique needs and strengths of Ontario's Francophone population within the transforming child and youth mental health system
- provide evidence-informed recommendations to guide French language service delivery for the province's Francophone children, youth and families

Methods

- policy-ready paper advisory committee
- consultations with youth, families, service providers and policymakers
 - surveys
 - focus groups and interviews
 - informal conversations
- scoping literature review



Pourquoi pas: Key themes from the literature



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Topics explored

- Demographic profile of Ontario's Francophone communities
- The relationship between language, health and quality of care

On the importance of speaking one's first language:

I didn't have to ask, it was obvious I wanted French language services because I spoke French at the reception.

It's easier to explain all the nuances of our problems.

The fluidity of the conversation was a relief.

- Youth and family members

Topics explored

- The history of French language rights
- Active offer: The backbone of French language services

Active offer

...the set of measures taken by government agencies to ensure that French-language services are clearly visible, readily available, easily accessible and publicized, and that the quality of these services is equivalent to that of services offered in English. This includes such measures as all communications, (i.e. signs, notices, social media and other information on services), as well as the initiation of communication with French-speaking clients (Ontario, 2012, p. 5).

Topics explored

- The state of French language services across sectors
- French language child and youth mental health services in Ontario

the services I wanted were not offered in French

[services were] not available in my region or not announced

- Youth respondents

Many youth and family had at one point or another, received services in English despite expressing their preference for French language services

Topics explored

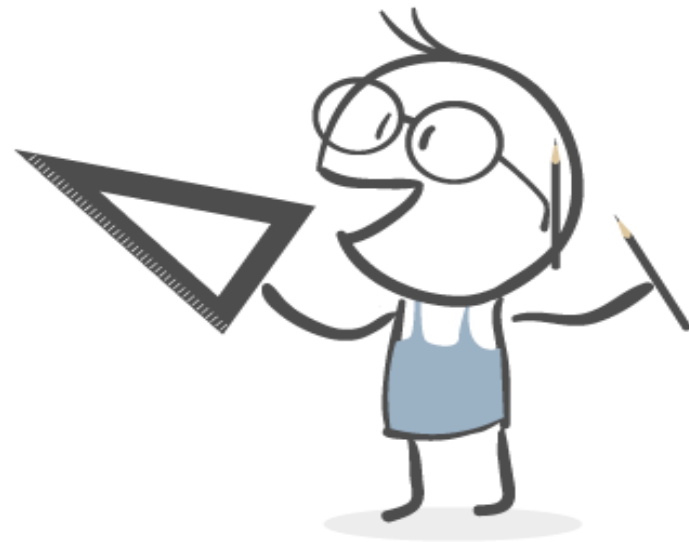
- Organizational capacity to support bilingual and French-speaking service providers
- Lack of French research, evidence-informed practices and trainings



- lack of French intervention materials identified as the greatest barrier to offering *effective* French language services
- recruitment of bilingual/ Francophone staff identified as the greatest barrier to ensuring *timely* access to French language services

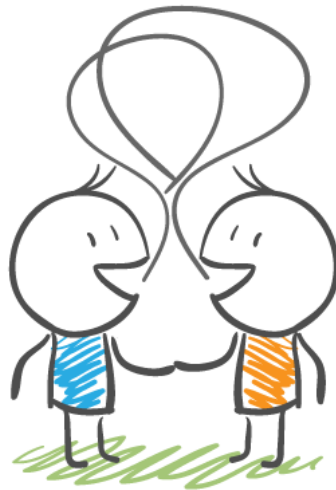
Considerations and limitations

- consultation sample size
- generalizability of findings
- policy-ready paper scope



Pour et par

- Francophones leading the implementation and change process
- Local contexts and diversity taken into account



Pourquoi pas: Recommandations



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1. Develop an operational definition of active offer to be consistently applied within child and youth mental health agencies across Ontario

- active offer of French language mental health services at every stage:
 - information seeking
 - first contact with agency
 - receiving service
 - documentation
- equity with English language services as the goal
- coherent strategy to plan for and support implementation

2. Standardize the measurement and reporting of French language services and active offer across child and youth mental health agencies

Ongoing service planning and delivery needs:

- a broad picture of the state of French child and youth mental health services (assessment of need, wait times, satisfaction with services, outcomes)
- guidelines to organize the collection of these data
- mechanisms to build capacity to collect and report of these data

3. Optimize French capacity in the system through a unilingual strategy

- help to embed French-speaking employees in work places and entities where the language of day-to-day interaction and service provision is French
- leverage existing structures to support such a strategy



4. Centralize institutional support and leadership for French language child and youth mental health services

Central entity responsible for:

- recruiting and hiring French-speaking professionals
- supporting the networking of French language service providers
- creating and maintaining a roster of French-speaking specialists
- developing service-related documentation

4. Centralize institutional support and leadership for French language child and youth mental health services (Cont.)

- providing training and continuing education
- developing and supporting a central French language child and youth mental health website and 1-800 information phone line
- conducting French research, program evaluation and quality improvement
- linking with French language university programs and researchers

5. Leverage relationships to strategically and collaboratively support capacity building and professional development

- pursue partnerships across other sectors within Ontario and across jurisdictions to support an infrastructure for a French language services research and development strategy
- endorse and financially support collaborative partnerships to share knowledge and translate, adapt and create evidence-informed practices

6. Ensure both new and sustained funding, and a solid plan for implementing recommendations

- significant and targeted investment of new funding is needed, and must be sustained
- comprehensive implementation plan should be developed and adequately resourced to ensure successful change in this area



Pourquoi pas: Next steps



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Moving forward

- Continued conversations with stakeholders about implementing recommendations
- Leveraging good practices already in place



Progress

Questions?

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