

HISTORY

THE STANDARDS INITIATIVE

Over the course of convening the National and International Child and Youth Care conferences in 2000 through 2006, the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations (CCCYCA) hosted a series of pre-conference meetings on professional regulation and the setting of standards for practice in child and youth care. These meetings in St. John's, Victoria, Calgary, and Montreal included people from government, education, front-line practice, and the agencies employing the workers and there were discussions on a variety of options including certification and educational accreditation. A research grant, funded through the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and hosted by Ryerson University, School of Child and Youth Care, was supported by the CCCYCA in the proposal phase to develop and test a process for assessing curriculum against standards of competence¹.

At the 8th International Child and Youth Care Conference in Montreal held in October 2006, participants in a discussion group on accreditation were supportive of exploring Child and Youth Care (CYC) educational program accreditation. They suggested starting the process by surveying CYC educators across the country to see what they thought about the idea. The leadership of this initiative was delegated to Roy Ferguson at the University of Victoria and Carol Stuart at Ryerson University and the initiative was fully supported by the CCCYCA through a motion of support from the board. Subsequently, a brief questionnaire was developed and e-mailed to 119 educators located in CYC programs in post-secondary institutions across Canada. The survey was designed to assess the views of educators in regard to developing an accreditation model for CYC and whether the respondent would be interested in being involved in the process. General comments, thoughts, and suggestions about a CYC accreditation process were also invited.

Forty-nine replies to the survey were received. This represents a 42% response rate, which is reasonably good for an e-mail survey of this type, especially one occurring at the end of an academic year when educators are particularly busy. The support for exploring the development of a CYC accreditation model was unequivocal with 96% of the respondents indicating that work should begin immediately. Further, 65% of respondents indicated a personal interest in being involved in exploring accreditation options for the CYC field and virtually all indicated that their own program would be interested in participating in an accreditation process.

Based on the feedback from respondents to the survey, it was determined that the CYC accreditation model should reflect the following characteristics:

- represent a transparent and inclusive process;
- be efficient and cost effective;
- be designed as a graduated process starting with program self-evaluation;
- build upon existing program review structures within academic institutions;

- represent an accreditation process that is facilitative and that supports capacity building within the academic programs; and
- involve a close and reciprocal connection between academic and practice sectors within the CYC field.

The survey response indicated strong support for proceeding in the establishment of a small task group to explore options for CYC educational program accreditation.

CHILD AND YOUTH CARE (CYC) EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE

In follow up to the survey results, the Child and Youth Care (CYC) Educational Program Accreditation Task Force was created in 2006. The Task Force was a time limited and focused group acting within a defined mandate on behalf of a large (and informally constituted) body of stakeholders from education, practice, and policy arenas. The mandate of the task force was to develop a flexible model of accreditation for post-secondary Child and Youth Care programs in Canada.

The objectives established for the task force were:

1. To secure funding to support the project.
2. To review existing models of educational accreditation.
3. To develop an accreditation model that best suits the CYC field.
4. To widely circulate the draft model for review, comment, and revision.
5. To organize a pilot implementation of the new model.
6. To adjust the new model on the basis of what was learned from the pilot implementation.
7. To facilitate a broader implementation of the accreditation model within the CYC field across the country.
8. To coordinate and evaluate the accreditation process across Canada.
9. To provide updates on the project to educational institutions and professional associations across Canada.
10. To develop links between the accreditation project and the national certification project, the post-secondary program review processes, and the agency accreditation process.

The development of a substantive proposal and accreditation model occurred in 2008, with the intent to finalize and approve the model and create a plan for implementation in May 2009 at the International CYC Conference. At that time, it was determined that additional consultation was needed and the National CYC Conference in May 2010 was set for the final report of the task force.

The final report and a final version of the Accreditation Model which included characteristics and objectives was presented at the pre-conference Educators Day in Winnipeg on May 25, 2010. During the pre-conference day, the task force's ad hoc role came to an end as the members of the founding board were chosen to formalize the work of the task force and continue with task force objectives five to ten.

FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
CHILD AND YOUTH CARE (CYC) EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The founding board represented colleges and universities from across Canada as well as two representatives from the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations. Individual board members were Carol Stuart (Ryerson University), Anne Black (George Brown College), Dawne MacKay-Chiddenton (Red River College), Doug Magnuson (University of Victoria), Heather Modlin (Child and Youth Care Association of Newfoundland and Labrador/Memorial University), Kelly Shaw (Nova Scotia Community College), Margaret Sullivan (New Brunswick Community College), Varda Mann-Feder (Concordia University), Wendy Weninger (Lethbridge College), Rob Bates (Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations), and David Connolly (Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations).

On November 18, 2010, the founding board met via teleconference and began the process of formalizing the efforts of the Child and Youth Care (CYC) Educational Program Accreditation Task Force. The founding board voted on the following pieces of business in their inaugural teleconference: the board's name, presidency, and secretary. The founding board voted unanimously to use The Child and Youth Care Educational Accreditation Board of Canada (CYCEAB of Canada) as its official name. The CYCEAB of Canada elected Carol Stuart as President and Dawne MacKay-Chiddenton as Secretary and decided to leave the Vice-President role vacant at that time.

The mandate given to the board was to create the organization and develop a model of accreditation that was unique to Child and Youth Care. From 2010 to 2012, the board met monthly by teleconference and held a three-day retreat in Victoria. The accreditation standards were piloted with Cambrian College in June 2011 as they completed a program review.

The founding board created by-laws and registered the organization. A critical path was developed toward full implementation of an educational accreditation program to support programs to produce quality graduates. The founding board also debated issues related to:

- Nomenclature
- Regional variation in both program reviews and regional competencies and scope of practice
- Curriculum flexibility
- The materials and resources that will support programs to become accredited
- Public/private program membership

The founding board discussed and worked on issues related to:

- Assessment of inputs, processes, and outcomes
- Essential and required standards for two-, three-, and four-year programs and graduate and post-graduate programs
- French language translation for our name as well as French nomenclature
- Essential elements of the accreditation process

The founding board of directors registered and incorporated the CYCEAB in August 2012, and they created a temporary category of founding members (as accreditation was not yet fully developed) and recruited 22 members. The CYCEAB held its first annual general meeting in October 2012 to elect a board of directors to continue the work. It was the hope of the Board of Directors that the Child and Youth Care

Educational Program Accreditation Board would be able to fully accredit programs by the end of a three-year development period (2015).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CYCEAB of Canada

In 2015, the Board of Directors for the Child and Youth Care Educational Accreditation Board of Canada transitioned from a Founding Board to a Governing Board. The first education programs were accredited in 2016.

[1] Stuart, Carol A. Dr. and Carty, William, “The Role of Competence in Outcomes for Children and Youth: An Approach for Mental Health” (2006). *Child and Youth Care Research and Publications*. Paper 2. <http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/cyc/2>