What is Psychological/Psychiatric Consultation Service (PPCS)?

The focus of the Psychiatric/Psychological consultation service is to build the capacity of the Special Needs Resource staff (SNR), as well as child care staff and home child care providers. The service will provide staff and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) with an increased understanding of the programming needs of the child care program. This will assist the staff to better support children with significant behavioural needs. It is one of the many supports offered through the Every Child Belongs Model. **Please Note: This is not a diagnostic service.**

This consultation service is provided by a Psychologist or Psychiatrist associated with the Children's Mental Health Agencies listed below:

- South District: Child Development Institute
- East District: Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre
- North District: Adventure Place
- West District: The George Hull Centre for Children and Families or The Etobicoke Children's Centre

**Referral for PPCS service**

- The SNR staff is responsible for the referrals to the Psychologist/Psychiatrist consultation service, which is available to licensed child care programs and home providers supporting children with significant behavioural needs.
- The SNR staff consults with their agency manager/supervisor to review the appropriateness of the referral. If deemed appropriate, the SNR staff will contact the Children's Mental Health Manager to discuss whether the referral meets criteria without disclosing the name of the child.
- The SNR discusses the referral and reviews the guidelines with the child care program staff and parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

Once the decision is made to proceed with the referral the SNR staff will:

- Complete the Specialized Consultation Referral Form with the child care staff
- Have the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) review the Specialized Consultation Referral Form and sign the consent portion.
- Note: The child care program/home provider is responsible for obtaining their consent to share information with the Children's Mental Health Agency.
- Review the “What Clients Need to Know” Fact Sheet and the Service Information Sheet, which outlines the risks and benefits, will be reviewed at this time.
- Submit the Specialized Consultation Referral Form along with a Common Referral Intake Form to the applicable Children's Mental Health service provider agency (as above). Please send the referral package directly to the agency Manager (or designate) and notify them that the referral has been sent.
- Note: Current best practice for secure submission of documents is; hand delivery, Canada Post, or fax.
- If you have faxed the forms you will be required to give the original forms to the Psychologist/Psychiatrist at the time of the consultation.
- Originals need to be forwarded to the participating agency as specified by them.
Structure of the Consultation

The Psychological/Psychiatric Consultation may be take place as follows:

- **Format A**
  A visit to the child care centre is arranged where the Psychologist/Psychiatrist first observes the child in the program for a period of time this is then followed by a meeting where further information is gathered from all of the team members (child care staff, SNR staff, IRS staff and the parent(s)/ legal guardian(s)). At this meeting, all team members are able to share their observations and perspectives on the child’s strengths and needs. The Psychologist/Psychiatrist also shares their observations and offers some thoughts and recommendations, based on the information discussed.

- **Format B**
  A consultation may be structured in a way that the team members involved with a particular child attends a consultation meeting with the Psychologist/Psychiatrist at the office of the agency who is providing the consultation service. All team members are able to share their observations and perspectives on the child’s needs and identify what they would like to achieve through the consultation. The Psychologist/Psychiatrist asks questions and offers their thoughts and recommendations, based on the information presented.

Roles and expectations of the Psychologist/Psychiatrist and Consulting Agency

- The agency providing the PPCS services will prioritize service requests based on a number of factors such as: referral date, child/program needs, and staff availability.
- The Children's Mental Health Agency Manager (or designate) will become the contact with the SNR staff and will be the liaison for the consultation appointment.
- This consultation is to assist in expanding the understanding of the child’s strengths and needs in order to better support the child in that environment.
- This service builds on the expertise of the team members. This includes the child care staff, SNR staff, and the parent(s)/ legal guardian(s).
- The role of the consultation is to assist the Special Needs Resource staff (SNR) and the child care center in addressing the problems, concerns and/or challenges they experience in responding to the needs of the children in their care. In this role the child care and SNR staff are understood to be the “client”.
- This service will increase the child care centre staff and SNR staff knowledge, skills, confidence and ability to problem solve with the intention of promoting inclusive practices and improving the quality of the child’s placement.
- While recommendations may be made by the Psychologist/Psychiatrist, these are simply recommendations and the team members will decide whether and/or how these may be implemented.
- A brief summary of the recommendations will be completed by the Psychologist/Psychiatrist and shared with parent(s)/legal guardian(s). *Please note this only applies to format A*
- A copy of the report may be shared by the consulting agency with the SNR once the report has been reviewed by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and consent to share information has been confirmed by the agency providing the consultation service.
- This consultation is not a diagnostic service; however the Psychologist/Psychiatrist may make recommendations for further assessments. The Psychologist/Psychiatrist does not provide assessments nor is he/she responsible for the implementation of program recommendations.
- It is best practice for the consultation to take place within the child’s classroom, however in rare occasions the psychologist/psychiatrist may ask to meet with the child individually, apart from the other children. This would mean a semi private space where childcare staff would be present.
Role of the SNR staff

The Children’s Mental Health Agency provides the date, time and location of the consultation to the SNR staff who informs the team.

- The SNR staff model techniques and coach the child care staff/provider to develop skills based on the recommendations from the Psychologist/Psychiatrist.
- The SNR gives the Specialized Consultation Service Feedback Survey or letter with the link to the survey at the end of the visit.
- A copy of the report may be obtained by the SNR from the parent or the consulting agency.

Note: To receive the report from the consulting agency the SNR must obtain signed consent to release information from the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) expressly for this purpose. A copy of that consent will be given to the consulting agency before release of the report to the SNR.

Role of the child care program staff/home provider

- Participate in ongoing and open communication
- Work collaboratively as a team to develop plans; discuss progress, review techniques and share observations and ideas.
- Work with the SNR to implement the recommendations from the Psychologist/Psychiatrist.
- Arrange a time for the room staff and center supervisor to meet with the SNR, Psychologist/Psychiatrist and parent(s)/legal guardian(s). It is necessary for the Centre Supervisor or Home Visitor or their designate to attend all meetings with the team. Child Care Support Funds can not be used for this purpose
- Complete feedback evaluation forms at the end of service.

Role of parent(s)/legal guardian(s)

- Be invited to the consultation meeting(s) with the Psychologist/Psychiatrist, It is strongly recommended that the parent attend the meeting(s).
- Communicate with the child care provider/staff, SNR staff and share information that would be helpful to the process.
- Inform the supervisor/provider as soon as possible if the child is going to be absent.

Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse

Ontario’s Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) recognize that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. The Act states clearly those members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to report promptly to a Child Protection Agency if they suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. It includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and risk of harm. People working with children are responsible for reporting suspicions of child abuse, not to determine whether or not child abuse has occurred. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Agency to investigate with police where necessary, and decide on the best plan for the child.

Referrals are to be submitted to:
North District – Leora Macdonald - Tel. No. 416-744-7650 ext 243, Fax No. 416-744-8055
South District – Cynthia Alutis - Tel. No. 416-603-6328 ext 4242, Fax No. 416-603-0628
West District – Denise Palermo – Tel. No. 240-1111 ext 2240, Fax No. 416-240-7999

For more information on any of these supports, contact City of Toronto, Special Services Unit, Program Manager, Nancy Hendy at 416-392-3593.