

Best Start Network- Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

1.0 Role

The Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to AAC programming and for promoting community collaboration as they pertain to the Best Start initiative.

Mission Statement: The AAC, through coordination, collaboration and cooperation will ensure an array of support for all urban aboriginal children (prenatal to the transition to school), and their families to ensure that urban aboriginal children have the best possible start in life.

Vision Statement: The AAC will guide and oversee the development of cultural program supports for urban aboriginal children and their families.

Guiding Principles: The AAC will abide by the guiding principals of the Terms of Reference for the Best Start Network. "Members must keep a global perspective when making decisions on what is best for the community."

2.0 Goals

In support of its vision, the AAC, reporting to the Best Start Network, will achieve its vision through:

- Review and recommend Aboriginal specific programming
- Recommendations of how to organize and integrate services to best meet the needs of urban aboriginal children and their families throughout Brantford/Brant County.
- Recommend a system of services that supports urban aboriginal children/parents/families, for a best start from pre-natal stages to their transition into the school system.
- Make reports and recommendations to the Best Start Network with respect to the consideration and needs of the Brantford/Brant County urban aboriginal community and identify any gaps in programs/services.
- Monitor the funding allocated for services and make recommendations for its expenditures to the larger Best Start Network.

- Encouraging the development of coalitions, partnerships and alliances across all sectors within the community, Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres and Child Care
- Representation of the operating agency for the Aboriginal Coordinator at the Best Start Service Integration Committee for sharing, integration and planning of services.
- Design and develop an Urban Aboriginal Best Start Work Plan in conjunction with the Best Start Network broader plan.
- Recruit parent volunteer as representative of Brant Best Start Aboriginal Advisory Subcommittee
- Responsible for all urban aboriginal content in communications (ie: website, magazine etc)
- Provide feedback on the development of programming modules to share with child care and early learning & parenting centres, schools and other interested groups.

3.0 Membership

Membership may include but is not limited to:

- De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre
- Children's Aid Society of Brant-Native Services Branch
- Brant County Health Unit
- Data Analysis Coordinator for Early Years
- School Boards
- Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant
- Brantford Native Housing
- Six Nations Early Years Centre
- Recreation Programs
- Parents
- Community Members
- City of Brantford, Child Care Services (Ex-Officio)
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ex-Officio)

A representative from the lead agency for the Urban Aboriginal services funded through Best Start must be an active member on the Best Start Network.

4.0 Chair/Co-Chair and Minute Taking Responsibilities

The Chair/Co-Chair of the AAC will be determined by the AAC for a two-year term with the option to serve an additional term not exceeding a total of three consecutive years. The Chair will:

- Chair AAC meetings
- Prepare meeting agendas
- Ensure the Terms of Reference of the AAC are reviewed annually and submitted to the Chair of the Best Start Network
- Oversee the orientation of new members as required
- Contact members who have missed meetings as necessary
- Act as the formal link to the Best Start Network by attending monthly Network meetings
- Circulate meeting minutes
- Forward approved minutes and any other correspondence to the City of Brantford, Child Care Services

In the event that the Chair/Co-Chair is not available, a designate will be chosen by Members present to lead the meeting.

The minute taker of the AAC will be a responsibility of one of the participating agencies every six months.

- Record minutes of the AAC
- Minutes are forwarded to the Chair to review and circulate
- Final approved minutes are adjusted and sent to the Chair and to the City of Brantford, Child Care Services

5.0 Meetings

The AAC will determine the schedule of dates, times and locations of meetings. The AAC will meet no less than four (4) times per year and it may meet more frequently as called by the Chair. Generally speaking, the duration of each meeting will not exceed two (2) hours. The Chair will establish all meeting dates once per year.

6.0 Decision Making

Members will work toward a consensus model for decision making. If this is not possible, a simple majority vote will be held. A motion will be considered carried' based on the majority of quorum present; at a minimum of three (3) voting members of those in attendance are in favour of the motion. Voting is based on one vote per agency.

7.0 Media Spokesperson

All media contact is made by the Best Start Network designate; see Communications Protocol of the Best Start Network Terms of Reference.

8.0 Conflict of Interest

All members of the AAC will be encouraged to participate fully in the business of the AAC. Conflict of interest refers to a situation where a member of the AAC speaks in favour of or recommends a course of action which may financially benefit them personally or the organization/agency with which they are associated. Where the advice of the AAC is sought on funding or financial matters, the onus of responsibility rests with each individual member as to whether or not they are in a conflict of interest.

9.0 Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the AAC will be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as necessary, then forwarded to the Best Start Network for approval.

10.0 Remuneration

AAC members will serve without remuneration.

11.0 Task Forces and/or Working Groups

The AAC will establish task forces and/or working groups as deemed necessary. Such groups will be chaired by a member of the AAC and will consist of AAC members and/or other community members as is relevant to the task. Each task force or working group will be accountable to the AAC, and the Best Start Network, through their work plans.