

Hamilton Best Start Network Terms of Reference 2013

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Hamilton Best Start Network

Terms of Reference

2013

Hamilton Best Start Vision

Best Start is about Children

- Best Start is about providing the supports to bring out the best in children.

Best Start is about Families

- Best Start is about supporting parents and families, and collaborating with them to enable them to provide children with the best possible opportunities early in their lives.

Best Start is about Community and Connections

- Best start is about strengthening partnerships and enhancing the integration of all community supports for children and families.

Best Start is about Our Future

- Best Start is about doing what is best for our children and our future.

Mandate

The Best Start Network promotes the well being of families and children prenatal to twelve years by supporting them to reach their full potential. This will be accomplished through collaborative planning, implementation, monitoring and influencing policy.

Principles

Children and families are our first priority.

1. Parent and community involvement is essential in all child development and care initiatives.
2. We promote and foster collaboration, co-operation and integration of children's services by building on community capacity to support children and families.
3. It is essential to demonstrate that we value all children and wherever possible work together to level the playing field.
4. We embrace and value Hamilton's aboriginal, francophone and other diverse communities.
5. All child development supports will be equitable, accessible, inclusive, responsive, flexible and based on research and best practices.
6. We promote maximizing effective use of resources.

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Meilleur départ: Faire de Hamilton la Meilleure place pour élever un enfant!*

Membership

Roles and responsibility of members are to:

1. Support the vision of Best Start.
2. Work for the well-being of all children.
3. Not use their membership for personal advantage or the advantage of other individuals.
4. Be prepared and able to make decisions on behalf of their organization or sector they represent.
5. Agree to work with other Best Start Network members in a spirit of respect, openness, co-operation and proper decorum in spite of differences that may arise during discussion.
6. Agree to not divulge confidential information which they may obtain in their capacity as a Best Start Network member (from code of conduct).
7. Attend 75% of the meetings to be considered a member in good standing.
8. Notify the secretary if they are unable to attend meetings Alternates are not required.

Membership will reflect the unique composition of each community (e.g. francophone, aboriginal, rural) and a broad range of community perspectives as suggested in the list below.

Representation will include:

- CMSMs / DSSABs
- English-language and French-language District School Boards
- Public Health Units, Health Baby Healthy Child (HBHC)
- Early Years Centres (OEYCs/CPEOs/PFLCs)
- Early learning programs
- Preschool programs
- Child care services
- Aboriginal services
- Francophone services
- Diverse community
- Libraries
- Family counseling centres
- Children's treatment services
- Children's mental health services
- Police/justice
- Primary care/child health networks
- Child protection services
- College of Early Childhood Education programs
- Preschool Speech and Language Services / Infant Hearing Program / Blind Low Vision
- Recreation programs
- Chairs of Best Start Standing Committees
- Past Chairs of Network / Standing Committees
- Ministry of Education Regional Office (ex officio)
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services Regional Office (ex officio)
- Community advocates
- Parents

In addition appropriate resource staff will attend meetings as required.

Network Meetings

- Meetings will be convened at least monthly or at the call of the chair.
- In addition, on occasion email and conference calls may be conducted to facilitate the sharing of information and the need for direction. Decisions would be then confirmed at the next scheduled meeting.
- To facilitate the involvement of some members, attendance at meetings via conference call would be approved by the chair.
- Agendas, minutes and written reports will be circulated via e-mail prior to each meeting.

Decision Making

1. A consensus building approach will be used whenever possible however, a vote will be called for clarity and where matters before the network are of great significance.
2. Quorum: Fifty percent plus one of voting membership constitutes a quorum.
3. Decisions are decided by simple majority, indicated by show of hands.
4. When a decision relates to change in terms of reference, mission or vision, and rules and regulations, there must be two-thirds of the voting membership in favour of the change. Proxy voting is not permitted.
5. All members in good standing will be eligible to vote.
6. Representatives from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Education and other resource support to the Network including the secretary are considered ex-officio and do not vote.

Code of Conduct / Conflict of Interest

Members of the Best Start Network have a duty to make decisions solely in terms of the best interest of the community.

- Members will not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit personally or for their agency/organization.
- There may be times when members will be required to treat discussions, documents or other information relating to the work of Network in a confidential manner.
- Failure to comply with code of conduct guidelines or the conflict of interest guidelines may result in sanctions.

Role of Chair / Vice Chair

The Chair of Best Start Network (BSN):

1. Facilitates meetings.
2. Is the designated spokesperson for the BSN (Note: depending on the subject matter, the Chair may delegate to a BSN member).
3. Facilitates effective and open decision-making.
4. Promotes the best interest of children for the entire city.
5. Facilitates integration and collaboration.

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6. Brings forward matters relevant to BSN mission, vision and activities.
7. Provides timely communication to members.
8. Ensures compliance with code of conduct and conflict of interest guidelines.

The Vice Chair of BSN assumes the duties of the chair in his / her absence or as needed, and supports the Chair in the fulfillment of his/her duties.

Term of Office of the Chair/Vice Chair:

- Two years, renewable.

Election

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected at the same meeting at the June meeting with the term commencing in the following September.

Election procedure:

1. Notice of the end of the term of chair and vice chair will be given at the May meeting.
2. Members will be asked to declare their interest in a position in writing to the Secretary prior to the June meeting.
3. When there are two or more candidates for a position, those present, with the exception of resource staff will vote at the full June BSN meeting.
4. There will be no votes by proxy.
5. If there are two or more candidates for a position there will be voting by ballot.
6. If there are more than 2 candidates, there will be no successful candidate until one candidate receives 50% plus one of votes from all those present and voting. The individual receiving the least votes is eliminated from the next round of voting.
7. The successful candidate will be the one who gains at least 50% plus one votes of all those present and voting.
8. If there is vacancy of Chair or Vice Chair before completion of their term an election will be held at the next regular meeting.

Structure of Committee

Coordinating Committee

Membership can include:

- Chair, past chair, representatives from MCYS, ASCY, City of Hamilton and BSN members who volunteer.

Mandate

The Coordinating Committee is to:

- Oversee operational processes for the Best Start Network
- Set agendas
- Review/develop membership and partnerships
- Vet information and bringing forward information, advice etc. to the larger group.

Meeting times

Committee meetings are the second and fourth Thursday of each month and are open to all members of the Network. They are held at 4 Hughson 2nd Floor 8:00 a.m. Those interested in attending need to notify the City Of Hamilton, Program Manager prior to the meeting.

Definitions of Committees

For the purposes of these rules and regulations the following definitions for committees applies:

Administrative Committee includes the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee consists of the Chair, past chair, members from MCYS, ASCY and City of Hamilton, as well as Best Start Network members who volunteer. The task of this committee is to arrange meetings and agendas for the Best Start Network

Standing Committees are usually appointed each September, for a two year period, by the Best Start Network and each have a particular mandate, and report to the Best Start Network. These include Early Years Research and Evaluation, Parent and Family Engagement, Primary Care Strategy, Personalized Child Supports. They are resourced by City Staff.

Ad Hoc Committees / Work Groups are established by the Best Start Network and/or the Standing Committees to respond to specific issues or recommendations. They have a defined task and timeline for completion and report to a Standing committee or the full Best Start Network.

Provincially mandated Committees are required by the Province and include the Aboriginal Network and the Regional French Language Network

Sub Committees include the OEYC's Director's Table, Early Literacy Hamilton (ELH) and Hamilton Interprofessional Education (HIPE).

Standing Committees Rules

Chairs

- Chairs of committees and ad hoc committees shall be elected by their respective memberships.
- Chairs will serve for a term of two years with elections in June and term commencing September.
- The chair's duty is to start meetings at the hour and day appointed, to conduct meetings in a collaborative fashion, and to adhere to the terms of reference of the committee.

Vacancies

- If any vacancy shall occur in a committee or ad hoc committee, members may fill the vacancy at their next regular meeting.

Quorum

- In a meeting of a standing committee or ad hoc committee, fifty percent plus one of the membership shall constitute a quorum. A quorum must be maintained to record an official meeting.

Ex-Officio Members

- The Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Best Start Network shall be considered ex-officio members of all committees of the network. The Chair and Vice-Chair, when in attendance at such meetings may speak, and shall have all privileges of a committee member to speak and vote when they are counted as members when determining the status of a quorum. The absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair shall not be counted in establishing a quorum at that meeting.
- Ministry staff will also be considered ex officio members with the same terms as above.

Membership

- Any member of the Best Start Network may attend meetings of the standing committees with notice to the chair.
- Additional members from outside the Best Start Network may be added as required as determined by the standing Committee.
- Membership will be reviewed annually by the committee in September.

Terms of Reference:

Committees shall:

1. Consider matters referred to them by the BSN.
2. Develop a work plan.
3. Report, in writing, annually to the BSN regarding their work plan and outcomes.
4. Review their terms of reference annually and present revisions to the BSN for approval.

Ad Hoc Committees – prescribed time and mandate

1. The terms of reference of an ad hoc committee shall be properly and clearly delineated.
2. The time when the report is to be submitted shall be prescribed.
3. The number of members shall be stated, and the method of their appointment or election.
4. The ad hoc committee shall be terminated on its final report to the BSN or originating committee.