



## SCOPE OF PRACTICE – CHILD AND YOUTH CARE ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

The Child and Youth Care professional provides psycho-social interventions as the main method of creating change with most work occurring in the life-space of the child, youth and family. Often the life space of the child or youth is within a group care setting (group home) and/or intervention within the family home will occur depending on the established care plan. Since Child and Youth Care professionals work with children, youth and families who may fall under the Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act, if a plan to support the family in their home is established, the Child and Youth Care professional is generally the service provider and is educated to provide the services needed.

The practice of Child and Youth Care begins with the development of a therapeutic relationship within any environment. The purpose of the services provided by Child and Youth Counsellors, are to encourage and foster the development of healthy children, youth and families within our community. Child and Youth Counsellors provide services in a variety of environments therefore, most of the services provided relate to the daily living and healthy development of the children, youth and families for whom the services are provided.

Given the specific settings that Child and Youth Care professionals practice, our profession is identifiable and distinct. While Child and Youth Care professionals work in conjunction with many other professions in some settings, the interventions provided during the other 23 hours outside therapy or psychological services are typically provided by CYC professionals. The work is unique to Child and Youth Counsellors in the ways that Child and Youth Counsellors use relational practice and create a therapeutic milieu regardless of the actual setting and in a multitude of settings (as mentioned previously). The interventions provided consider the life space and take place within that life space. While Child and Youth Care Counsellors are considered change agents, similar to Social Workers, the ways that Child and Youth Care Counsellors intervene, is specific to Child and Youth Care practice and education. The Child and Youth Care scope of practice recognizes that the Child and Youth Care professional creates, supports and maintains care plans that consider theories of development and implements these care plans in consideration of the contexts within which the child, youth or family exists. While other professionals who work alongside Child and Youth Care Counsellors also consider theories of development and contexts in their care of children, youth and families, the Child and Youth Care professionals are distinct in their collaborative and team efforts. Since many of the children and youth that Child and Youth Care work with will be placed within residential group care, the team dynamic and collaborative component of work is vital. Child and Youth professionals provide services for children and youth who are often under-served by other professions, for example, adolescents involved in the sex trade, teenaged parents, young substance abusers,

sexually, physically and emotionally abused or neglected children and youth and their families, and adolescent sex offenders to name a few such populations.

The range and scope of therapeutic methods for intervention may be similar to a variety of other professionals since the existing theories (behavioural, cognitive, developmental, solution focused) are similar in most helping professions. The use of these theories by a Child and Youth Care profession is distinct however. The application of the theory must be adapted to a life space. When a child or youth is working with a psychologist, for example, the theory being considered or applied will take place within an office and the child or youth will be asked to generalize to their life space. The Child and Youth Counsellor who may be in collaboration with the psychologist is able to adapt the theory to the life space and help the child, youth or family with generalization. At times, there are few or no collaborating partners and the Child and Youth Counsellor will create care plans within the life space environment considering the context and the use of his or her relationship with the child, youth or family.

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