

Intersections

WHAT IS THE SYSTEM CHALLENGE?

Canada's youth justice legislation (the Youth Criminal Justice Act, YCJA) only applies to children and youth ages 12 to 17. This means that there is no clear approach for responding to children under 12 who come in contact with police. There is also no consistent approach for identifying the service needs of children and youth at their earliest contact with the justice system and then supporting them to access appropriate services and supports. In addition, considerable police resources (75 to 85 percent of calls for service) are invested in responding to offenses for which charges cannot be laid. Many of these calls are related to issues that require the involvement of social service agencies (e.g., mental health and addiction services).¹ The challenge is clear – how do we create a consistent approach for identifying mental health and other needs among children and youth at their first contact with the justice system and for directing these children and youth to appropriate services and supports? How do we do this in a way that streamlines resources and best supports children, youth, and their families?

WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

Intersections is an evidence-informed early intervention program that helps children and youth (8-17) access appropriate supports and services before they become involved in the justice system. The Champlain Youth Justice Service Collaborative developed this evidence-informed intervention by adapting the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) Model.² Evaluation of the YJLD model² showed that early intervention programs for children and youth who come in contact with the police should include:

- systematic screening and assessment,
- integration with existing services, and
- a child and family-centred approach.

MORE ABOUT THE INTERVENTION

Intersections helps police redirect children, youth and their families so that they receive the right service, by the right provider, at the right time. This means that children and youth are able to receive supports for mental health, addictions, or developmental disabilities, as needed.

This intervention provides an opportunity for police to be responsive to youth and families instead of having to “wait” to get them help when they turn 12 (when the Youth Criminal Justice Act becomes applicable) or until they engage in activities that could lead to a chargeable offense.



Intersections

The Intersections Worker listened to me and talked to my son. Yes, that was the biggest piece. And now we have help, and it is working. I could not be happier. — Family member

IMPLEMENTATION

Intersections was implemented by the Champlain Youth Justice Service Collaborative (CYJSC) with support from CAMH's Provincial System Support Program. The CYJSC brought together 150 partners from diverse sectors across five regions, including community, justice, police, mental health and addictions, education, primary care, developmental, and child welfare, along with family members.

Intersections is active in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville; Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry; and Renfrew County. Over 66 partners are actively implementing and providing **Intersections** supports. In order to support early intervention efforts of other communities across Ontario, PSSP is supporting the expansion of **Intersections** to Prescott Russell, Ottawa, and the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington area.

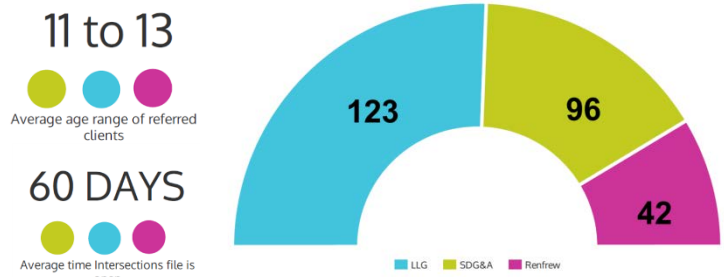
OUTCOMES

60% of youth referred to **Intersections** have had no police contact within three months of their referral to **Intersections**.

As of May 2016, **Intersections** has provided support to over **263** children, youth, and families in Champlain

Intersections workers indicate that police are referring the appropriate children and youth – over 98% of all referrals received from police have been appropriate.

Referrals for Intersections to date



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1. Russell, H.C. & Taylor, N.E. (2014). *New Directions In Community Safety*. Ontario Working Group on Collaborative, Risk-driven Community Safety. <http://www.oacp.on.ca/Userfiles/StandingCommittees/CommunityPolicing/ResourceDocs/OWG%20New%20Directions%20in%20Community%20Safety.pdf>

2. Haines, A., et al. (2012). *Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) scheme: Evaluation final report* [Presentation]. Liverpool, UK: University of Liverpool. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/215121/dh_133009.pdf