

Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network

VISION: All children in Haldimand and Norfolk grow, thrive and learn in a loving, safe, supportive and healthy community

Terms of Reference

Preamble

In November 2004, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced Ontario's Best Start strategy. Best Start is a comprehensive, evidence-informed early learning and care strategy designed to help provide Ontario's children the best start in life and help them to achieve success in school. The goals of Best Start are:

- Children in Ontario will be ready and eager to learn and excel by the time they start Grade 1.
- Ontario will be an international leader in achieving the social, intellectual, economic, physical and emotional potential of all its children.

Mandate and Priorities

The mandate of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network is to plan and monitor the implementation of Best Start in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties. The Network will fulfill its mandate in accordance with the *Children's Services Community Plan* and in cooperation with other key stakeholders, and Norfolk County as the designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM).

In support of its mandate, the Network will ensure that the following are priorities in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties:

- Partnerships are strengthened within Haldimand and Norfolk;
- Parents are assisted in supporting their children;
- A high quality early learning and care system exists within Haldimand and Norfolk;
- Children in Haldimand and Norfolk are ready to learn and achieve success when they start school;

Accountabilities

Shared Accountability

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will be accountable to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and to community residents for planning and monitoring the implementation of Best Start in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties. Specifically, as a collective, all members of the Network will share accountability in the development and monitoring of the Children's Services Community Plan. This will be accomplished by promoting collaboration, coordination and integration amongst community partners to ensure that the objectives and principles of Best Start and of the Network are met.

Individual Accountability

Various members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will also have individual accountability for planning and implementing certain components of Best Start in accordance with the community's Best Start vision and plans and in accordance with their existing service and funding contracts. This individual accountability will be expressed through open dialogue and through the sharing of agency-specific or program-specific service plans with the Best Start Network.

Internal Accountability

On an annual basis, the Best Start Network will conduct a self-assessment as a means of ensuring that it remains internally accountable. This assessment will consist of updating its Terms of Reference, reviewing its membership, and reviewing the overall effectiveness of the Network (e.g. format and content of agendas; frequency, time and location of meetings; meeting effectiveness, etc.)

Membership

The membership of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network (as illustrated in Appendix A) reflects the urban and rural nature of Haldimand and Norfolk Counties and ensures that the perspectives of a broad range of sectors are represented. The membership of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network is fluid and will continue to be expanded and enhanced over time.

Voting Members

Voting Members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network provide informed advice and make appropriate decisions on behalf of the organization and/or sector that they represent.

Associate Members

Associate Members will receive all meeting agendas, background material and meeting minutes but will have a non-voting status. Associate members will be encouraged to attend meetings of the Best Start Network and to become voting members of the Network.

Ex-officio Members

Ex-officio Members will include representative(s) from provincial ministries and federal departments, and municipal, provincial and federal elected officials or their designates. Ex-officio Members will act in a resource role as advisors to the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network. Ex-officio Members may participate in all discussions but will not be voting members of the Network.

Roles and Responsibilities of Selected Members

The roles and responsibilities of selected members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network are contained in Appendix B.

Structure and Operation of the Network

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will recruit members (on the basis of the identified sectors) and invite their participation. Members will be encouraged to appoint a designate to attend meetings in their absence.

Executive Responsibilities

The Chair of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will be selected by the membership for a two-year term, with the option to serve two additional terms, not exceeding a total of three consecutive terms. The Chair will:

- Chair all Best Start Network meetings
- Ensure the Terms of Reference and other Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network documents are up-to-date
- Contact those members who have missed three consecutive meetings
- Chair the Coordinating Committee meetings
- Provide bi-monthly updates to local politicians

The Vice-Chair of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will be selected by the membership for a two-year term, with the option to serve two additional terms, not exceeding a total of three consecutive terms. The Vice-Chair will:

- Serve as the Chair in the absence of the Chair at Best Start Network meetings
- Assist the Chair in monitoring discussions ensuring that all have equal opportunity to speak
- Oversee the orientation of new members as required
- Serve as the Chair in the absence of the Chair at the Coordinating Committee meetings

The Coordinating Committee of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will be selected by the membership and be responsible for preparing the monthly agenda and setting agenda priorities for the Best Start Network based on the *Children's Services Community Plan*.

Haldimand-Norfolk R.E.A.C.H. will provide the following administrative support to the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network:

- Circulation of meeting agendas to Voting Members, Associate Members and Ex-officio Members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network
- Recording and circulation of Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network meeting minutes
- Monitoring meeting attendance
- Maintaining all Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network correspondence and records

Other Executive positions may be established as deemed necessary.

Minutes and Agendas

All meeting materials of all Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network meetings will be distributed to the membership one week in advance of the upcoming meeting. Network members may refer items to the agenda at the meeting or by contacting the Chair 10 days in advance of the next scheduled meeting.

Meetings

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will determine the schedule of dates, times and locations of meetings. The Network will meet monthly, September to June, and may meet more frequently as circumstances dictate.

Media Spokesperson

The Supervisor for Children's Services, Health and Social Services, Norfolk County, is the designated media spokesperson.

Conflict of Interest

All members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will be encouraged to participate fully in the business of the Network. A conflict of interest may occur when a member of the Network or his/her immediate family (spouse, partner, parents, and children) could benefit personally from a decision that is made. The onus of responsibility rests with each individual member as to whether or not they are in a conflict of interest related to funding or financial matters; the acquisition, sale or lease of property; or to a personnel matter. In such instances, the member will clarify their concerns with the Chair who will determine if the conflict of interest warrants precluding the member's further participation in that portion of the meeting.

Confidentiality

All meetings of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will be open to members of the general public and media.

In-Camera Sessions

The Best Start Network does, however, reserve the right to hold an in-camera session should the topic of discussion pertain to the acquisition, sale or lease of property; information that may be the subject of a judicial or quasi-judicial hearing or inquiry; or the information pertains to a readily identifiable individual or group of individuals. All material and information discussed in an in-camera session will be treated in confidence with only the outcome of such a discussion being brought forward to the public session by the Chair of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network.

Use of Technology

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network reserves the right to use technology, where possible and practical, to conduct its business.

Absences

Members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network are asked to contact the designated administrative support staff from Haldimand-Norfolk R.E.A.C.H. if they or their designate are unable to attend a meeting. If a Best Start Network member or their designate is absent for three consecutive meetings they will be contacted by the Chair to determine whether they are able to continue their involvement. If a member resigns, the vacancy will be filled at the discretion of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network.

Remuneration

Members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will serve without personal remuneration. Honorariums for Community Members will be considered on a case by case basis. Transportation and child care expenses related to the participation of parents may be compensated as necessary to encourage their participation. To promote the participation of staff from licensed child care programs on the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network, funding will be available, where necessary, to ensure that legislated staffing ratios are maintained.

Committees, Task Forces and/or Working Groups

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will establish committees, task forces and/or working groups as deemed necessary. Such groups will be chaired by a member of the Best Start Network and will consist of Network voting and non-voting members and/or other community members as is relevant to the task. Each committee, task force or working group will be accountable to the Best Start Network.

Decision-Making Process and Issue Resolution

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority of eligible voting members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network.

Decision Making

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will utilize a consensus model for decision making. Where consensus is not possible, a simple majority vote will be held (50% plus one of eligible voting members).

Issue Resolution

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network will use open dialogue to avert any issues that may arise. Should an issue arise the Network will identify and analyze the issue, focus on common grounds and goals, and build agreement on appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the issue. Where the issue relates to a conflict between members' individual accountability to their program funders and their shared accountability to the Best Start Network, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Program Supervisor with responsibility for Best Start will meet with those concerned to arrive at a mutually beneficial outcome.

Appendix A

Members of the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network

Member	Affiliation	Representation
Voting Members		
Wendy Carron	Haldimand-Norfolk R.E.A.C.H. and Community Action Program for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early learning services - Preschool programs - Regulated child care provider not-for-profit centre based and home based - Agency working with children with special needs - Residential community service - Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program - Student nutrition program - Behaviour management program - Preschool intervention program for children with autism - Program run by charitable organization
Brenda Blanchard	Grand Erie District School Board	- School Board Superintendent
Arlene Lynas-Dobie	Community Member	- Community Member
Bill Chopp	Brant Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board	- School Board Superintendent
Don Stewart (CHAIR)	Community Member	- Community Member
Jennifer Huxley	Lansdowne Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary care services - Children's treatment centre
JulieAnne West (VICE-CHAIR)	Community Member	- Community Member
Mary Leonard	Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board	- Principal
Barb Mitchell	Haldimand and Norfolk Early Years Centre ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ontario Early Years Centre - Parent resource centre - Early learning services - Early literacy services - Rural resources (toy lending) - Infant development program - Resource teacher program
Patti Moore	Norfolk County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CMSM - Public Health Unit - Preconception and prenatal education - 18 month well baby check-up - Healthy Babies Healthy Children - Preschool Speech and Language
Margaret Voth	Norfolk Community Help Centre	- Low German Speaking Mexican Mennonite population
Wendy Gedye	Norfolk County	- Libraries
Frank Woodhall	CCAC	
Donna Jones	Norfolk County	- Recreation Services
Katherine Walters	Children's Aid Society of Haldimand & Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child protection services - Agency working with children with special needs - Family counseling
Jane Scheel	Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential community service - Charitable organization
Katrina Schmitz	Community Support Centre	
Roseanne Maracle-Ringuette	Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit	- Healthy Babies Healthy Children
Wendy Holmes	Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit	- Preschool Speech and Language
Marnie Warman	YWCA	- Child Care Supervisor's Network

Member	Affiliation	Representation
Associate Members		
TBD	County of Haldimand Community Services	
Roberta Chapman/Debra Jackson	Haldimand County	- Libraries
Arlene Everets	Haldimand Norfolk R.E.A.C.H.	- Regional Student Nutrition Program
Donna Gates	Fanshawe College	
TBD	Norfolk County O.P.P.	
TBD	Haldimand County O.P.P.	
TBD		- Child Care Centre
TBD		- Francophone Principal
Heather King	Norfolk County	- Recreation program
John Crotta	Grand Erie District School Board	- Principal
Laura Martindale	Parent	- Parent
Dorothy Richardson	Community Member	- Community Member
Monica Scott	Norfolk Youth and Children's Association	- Regulated child care provider - Preschool programs - Recreation programs - Charitable organization
Susan Wier	YWCA	- Regulated child care provider - Preschool Programs - Recreational Programs - Charitable Organization
Patti Brooks	Ekwaamjigenang Childrens Centre	- Children's Centre
Johanne Dupre	Francophone Education	- School Board Superintendant
Ex-Officio Members		
JoAnne Guindon	Ministry of Children and Youth Services	- Regional French Language Network
Karen Calligan	Ministry of Children and Youth Services	- Regional office MCYS
Ann Scott	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	- Regional office MOHLTC
Joan Fallis	Ministry of Education	- EDU London District Office
Cathy Jenkins	Ministry of Education	- EDU London District Office
Jayne Ryder	Norfolk County	- Data Analysis Coordinator - Ontario Early Years
Barb LaLonde	Haldimand-Norfolk R.E.A.C.H	- Administrative support
Jodi Guilmette	Norfolk County	- Children's Services Supervisor