

Levels of care quality standard: Matching the right care to needs and goals

What are levels of care models?

Levels of care models include different types and intensities of care that are organized from least to most intensive. Clients are matched to an optimal level of care and can move through levels as needed.

What is a quality standard?

A quality standard is a resource that has clear, practical, and ambitious statements describing the practices, processes, and supports required to provide the highest quality care, based on the best available evidence.

Why is this quality standard needed?

Ontario's child and youth mental health and addictions agencies are creating and implementing levels of care models to address systemic burdens and improve access to high-quality care.

A quality standard will ensure that foundational elements of levels of care models are adapted to the local context of communities.

It will facilitate consistent application and access to levels of care, leading to better outcomes.

What is the scope of the quality standard?

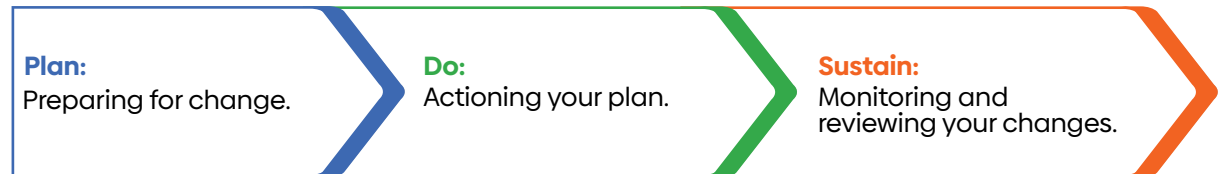
The quality standard focuses on levels of care models that serve infants, children, young people, caregivers and caregiving systems receiving services within the child and youth mental health, substance use health, and addictions sector.

It is designed for use in Ontario's community-based child and youth mental health and substance use health and addictions agencies in collaboration with cross-sector partners.

The quality standard contains quality statements, promising practices, quotes, practical examples, descriptions for different audiences, quality indicators, implementation considerations, and references to related standards and guidelines for each of its 10 core principles. Together, these describe how to develop and implement high-quality levels of care.

Implementing the quality standard

Our implementation resources and supports are here to help you move these ideas into practice. You can tailor the quality standard to your community needs and values by following these stages:



Ready to get started? Check out these [resources](#) today.



Quality standards measurement guide



Implementation guide



Service mapping activity



Levels of care quality standard



Knowledge Institute
on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions

This project is funded by the Province of Ontario. The views expressed herein are those of the Knowledge Institute and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

Quality statements quick reference

Building blocks of levels of care

1. **Levels of care are client centred.** Clients are at the forefront of decision making. Clients' needs, goals, experiences, circumstances, and readiness for care are recognized and respected throughout their levels of care journey.
2. **Levels of care involve caregivers.** Levels of care support and strengthen the caregiving system by creating space to collaborate with caregivers, and valuing and responding to their perspectives and needs in the context of the child or young person's care.
3. **Levels of care advance equitable care and outcomes.** Levels of care specifically and transparently advance equitable pathways, care, and outcomes for children, young people, and caregivers.

Creating levels of care

4. **Levels of care are co-developed with young people and caregivers.** Agencies co-create, monitor, and maintain levels of care with young people and caregivers to ensure the model is relevant, client centred, and effective.
5. **Levels of care are rooted in community and collaboration.** Agencies create levels of care in partnership with other agencies and organizations within and across sectors to ensure comprehensive and responsive levels of care.
6. **Levels of care are built on a complete and multifaceted continuum of care.** Levels of care address a full spectrum of needs and goals through a comprehensive continuum of care, including different types and intensities of care.

Pathways into, through, and out of levels of care

7. **Levels of care are timely and easy to access.** Levels of care are designed with access points and pathways that allow children, young people, and caregivers to easily enter and re-enter levels of care as needed, when needed.
8. **Level(s) of care are matched to the client's needs and goals.** Children, young people, and caregivers are engaged in a process to align the best care and treatment with their mental health and substance use health and addictions needs and goals.
9. **Movement through levels of care is seamless.** Levels of care are designed with pathways that allow children, young people, and caregivers to move through and out of levels of care seamlessly, adapt to their needs and goals, and maintain progress continuously over time.

Sustaining levels of care

10. **Levels of care focus on continuous improvement.** Levels of care are adapted and improved based on the evolving needs of the community.