

Big Bear Child & Youth Advocacy Project



A Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) is in development for Kamloops and Surrounding Area

The Big Bear CYAC (BB CYAC) is in development with an advisory committee that is comprised of the BB CYAC society, Kamloops RCMP, Ministry for Children & Family Development, Secwépemc Child & Family Services, Interior Health, City of Kamloops, and Thompson Rivers University (Canada Research Chair in Culture and Communities: Children and the Law). We are excited to announce that DAA Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services (LMOFCS) has recently joined the BB CYAC advisory committee as well. BB CYAC is proudly funded by the Department of Justice Canada and the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch of the Government of BC. BB CYAC is part of the Canadian National Network and has steering membership with the Provincial CYAC Network.

The BB CYACs mission is to provide a collaborative response to child maltreatment through advocacy, intervention and continued support to children, youth and families in a child-friendly environment. This approach involves all investigative services working together under one roof and at a single facility. Having a multi-disciplinary team in one building will strengthen communication between agencies and enhance efficiency in case-tracking and case management.

The BB CYAC will bridge the gap of communication between agencies and increase referrals to support/healing services for ALL children and youth who have disclosed being maltreated while honouring their unique healing needs through the many amazing services that Kamloops and area offers.

The vision is to have a community where every child and youth is respected and heard, and child maltreatment is not tolerated.

The BB CYAC is in year 2 of its 4-year strategic development plan. Year 2 involves different phases of service delivery. BB CYAC is pending its charitable status – once this is achieved BB CYAC will begin its fundraising launch that will go towards year 3 & 4 of its development.

More on What is a Child & Youth Advocacy Centre?

Children and youth who have experienced maltreatment undergo a challenging involvement with the criminal justice system; in many cases, this involvement is extremely traumatic for the child/youth and their families. Child Advocacy Centres/Child & Youth Advocacy Centres (CACs/CYACs) address these challenges by providing a coordinated and collaborative approach to support children, youth and their families.

The goal of a CYAC is to have a child-friendly facility where a multidisciplinary team (MDT) is created that includes law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, mental health, medical and victim advocacy professionals so they can work together to investigate abuse while making support to children, youth and their family top priority.

The CAC concept was developed in the United States almost 40 years ago; there are now almost a 1000 CACs in the United

States and CACs are operating in over 20 countries worldwide. Canada has almost 40 centres either open or in development; the Department of Justice Canada chairs a national network of CACs in response to the continual interest expressed by a number of Canadian CACs and communities wanting to develop one.

Why the Name: 'Big Bear'?

Different animals and their Indigenous meanings were presented to several children and youth (who represented a diversity of cultural/ethnic/gender/age backgrounds). 100% of the children and youth liked the meaning of THE BEAR: strength, confidence, standing up against adversity & having a healing spirit. They also liked the fact that bears are often seen in our communities. One youth suggested a name for the CYAC as 'The Big Bear Centre' - it was 100% unanimous - all the children and youth loved this name.

Thank you to our Partnerships!

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