

**Official Statement from the Child and Youth Services System Committee (CYSSC)  
Regarding Anti-Black Racism**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER AND SO DO OUR ACTIONS.**

The *Hamilton CYSS Committee* is comprised of leadership from over 25 child and youth serving agencies in Hamilton. We represent sectors that include child and youth mental health, education, child welfare, youth justice, health, developmental services and early years care. Many of the people we work with have experienced ongoing systemic injustice, including social, economic and health disparities, inequity and violence that targets Black people.

As committee members we share the world's outrage and grief over the killings that are a direct result of systemic racism and our society's reluctance to address it. We understand that Black, Brown and Indigenous people are disproportionately represented within our service system and are more likely to be marginalized, including experiencing the negative impact that marginalization has on people's well-being, hope, and resilience. We recognize the need to pause, step back, listen to, and learn from the people we serve. We are deeply motivated to make meaningful change and work with young people and their families who use our services, our staff, and our communities to challenge systemic racism that exists within our systems with the goal of creating a more equitable and inclusive community. We recognize that our leadership does not reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural and gender diversity of those we serve. We know that it is essential that we foster a broad and inclusive culture that encourages a diversity of perspectives and range of voices within our committee and service system. This cannot be accomplished without also acknowledging the issue of police brutality and by expressing our solidarity with all victims of police violence and with those groups and individuals working for an end to police violence. We recognize the need to do so in a way that is respectful, ethical, and equitable. We must be especially mindful of those members of the Black community as well as Indigenous People and People of Colour who have historically been disenfranchised by law enforcement.

***We realize that we simply have not done enough.***

We will hold ourselves and each other accountable to the following steps. We recognize that while it will take time to get it right, we share a common commitment to begin the process.

**We will learn.** We will make a commitment to education and awareness to increase our understanding of the challenges and issues faced by people who are impacted by systemic racism. We will create safe spaces for these courageous conversations. We acknowledge the work of the Equity Working Group, a subcommittee of the CYSSC, in helping to identify and address issues of systemic racism.

**We will listen.** We will listen to understand how issues of race, power and privilege affect our membership and those we service. We are teachable and open to "unlearning." We will be vigilant in monitoring ourselves for defensiveness. We will commit to allyship realizing that it is not a static role but one requiring ongoing work and practice.

**We will be accountable.** We will listen to the perspectives of people with lived experience of systemic racism in order to develop our actions going forward. We will foster a commitment to better reflect our communities and to formalize incorporating awareness of race and privilege into all facets our work. These plans will be specific, actionable, and measurable.

It will take all of us, together, to recognize, understand, and acknowledge systemic racism and to address the harm it causes to the people subjected to it. We commit to working to address these barriers to racial justice.

*This statement was co-developed with members of the CYSSC agencies and the CYSSC Equity Work Group.*