



REPORT 2

Jurisdictional Scan: Programs and Services for Black Parents in Ontario

**EVALUATION OF THE INNOVATIVE
SUPPORTS FOR BLACK PARENTS
INITIATIVE**

June 2020



Jurisdictional Scan: Programs and Services for Black Parents in Ontario.
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SECTION 1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Almost 630,000 people in Ontario identify as Black or African Canadian. The term “Black” refers to a diverse group of people from various ethnicities, backgrounds, and identities. Despite this diversity, Black Ontarians share a common African heritage, a common history of colonialism and slavery, and, consequently, the common present-day experience of anti-Black racism, resulting in socioeconomic, health, educational, and social disparities.

Along with structural and systemic anti-Black racism, damaging stereotypes and prejudice negatively impact how African Canadians are treated when accessing services. This web of anti-Black racism hinders equitable access to services and contributes to poor life outcomes for Black children, youth, and families.

Mistrust of various institutions and the stigma associated with seeking help can also prevent Black parents from seeking the services they need for themselves and their children. Some of this apprehension comes from past experiences of anti-Black racism as well as the lack of culturally relevant and responsive services. To support the best outcomes for Black children and youth, Black parents must have access to information as well as to the culturally relevant and responsive programs and services they need, when they need it, to address their and their children’s unique needs.

1.2 Overview of the Innovative Supports for Black Parents initiative

Ontario introduced the Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP) in March 2017 with the goal of reducing disparities for Black children, youth, and families. Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, when fully implemented, BYAP is intended to increase access to supports and opportunities for 10,800 Ontario Black children, youth, and their families across life stages, from early childhood to their transition to school and/or work.

All BYAP initiatives were developed with input from an External Implementation Steering Committee made up of members of the Black community from across the province. With feedback from community engagement sessions, the Steering Committee informed the design and implementation of BYAP initiatives to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of Ontario’s Black children, youth, and families.

In 2017, the BYAP provided 3-year funding to seven programs and three centres under the Innovative Supports for Black Parents (ISBP) initiative. In the call for proposals from

community agencies, the Ministry acknowledged that the research demonstrates that culturally relevant and responsive parenting supports can lead to positive outcomes for Black children as well as parents and/or caregivers. In particular, parenting supports that are culturally relevant and responsive have been found to promote resilience in parents and children and reduce early development of anti-social behaviours in children (e.g., acting out at school or at home).¹ Research has also identified a need for spaces for Black families to gather and access culturally relevant information and supports, with a focus on developing healthy relationships as well as parenting and problem-solving skills within families.²

The overall goals of the ISBP initiative are to enhance the availability of effective, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive parenting supports for Black parents and/or caregivers and to improve outcomes for Black children, youth, and their families. The ISBP initiative funded 10 applicants to develop and implement community-based, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive supports for Black parents and/or caregivers³ and families using a collective impact and cultural identity (CI²) approach.

There are two streams of programming under this initiative:

- Program Stream — Innovative, culturally relevant Black parenting programs that are designed and delivered by grassroots groups, collaboratives, or local organizations to pre-determined target communities or populations. This may include virtual or mobile parenting supports provided outside of permanent physical program sites (e.g., through an online service), and
- Centre Stream — Culturally focused community-based family centres (permanent physical sites), targeted to Black children, youth, and families, offering programs designed and delivered by community-based groups or organizations.

¹Coard, S.I., Foy-Watson, S., Zimmer, C., Wallace, A. (2007). Considering culturally relevant parenting practices in intervention development and adaptation: A randomized controlled trial of the Black Parenting Strengths and Strategies (BPSS) Program. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35, 797-820.

²McCready, L., James, C., Chavannes, V., Foster, N., Tewelde, Y., Kellen, A., Hay, B., Eugene, C. (2013). Gathering our voices: The lived experiences of Black fathers in the city of Toronto. *The Black Daddies Club*.

³Throughout this report, when we refer to parents, we also include caregivers, which could include grandparents, older siblings, aunts/uncles, etc.

1.3 Overview of this project

Recognizing the need to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, and outcomes of the ISBP initiative, the Ministry contracted with Turner Consulting Group Inc. in July 2018 to conduct an evaluation to:

1. Assess whether the overall ISBP initiative goals were met, including the effectiveness of the CI² framework
2. Assess the outcomes and impacts, lessons learned, and best practices found through the delivery of the initiative that can be applied to enhance programs that target and/or serve Black children, youth, and families and more broadly through mainstream programs (e.g., accessibility, physical space improvements, outreach and engagement approaches, pathways to services, pedagogy, etc.), and
3. Create public documents that synthesize findings and make recommendations to the ISBP programs, government, and other relevant funders and sectors (i.e., early years, public health, etc.) for the programs to be improved, replicated, and/or scaled-up in the future.

To determine whether the funded programs meet the needs of the Black community, we must first understand those needs, which other programs and services are being offered, and existing promising practices in the field. To meet these objectives, this project will produce four reports.

The first report in this series — *Assessment of the Needs of Black Parents in Ontario* — explores the unique challenges experienced by Black parents. This research helps expand our understanding of the need for culturally relevant and responsive parenting programs and the types of issues they can support Black parents to address if they are to improve the outcomes for Black children and youth.

This report, the second in the series — *Jurisdictional Scan: Programs and Services for Black Parents in Ontario* — provides an overview of the existing parenting programs and services in Ontario. The goal is to identify the availability of culturally relevant and responsive parenting supports designed to improve outcomes for Black children, youth, and their families and also identify gaps in service.

The third report — *Review of Promising Practices: Supports for Black Parents* — focuses on promising practices that could be used to improve outcomes for Black children and youth by supporting their parents.

Over the 3-year period, we will work with each of the 10 funded agencies to collect participant and outcome data to enable each agency to evaluate the effectiveness of their program. This data will also contribute to our evaluation of the ISBP initiative, which will be documented in the fourth and final report in this series — *The Evaluation of the ISBP Initiative*.

SECTION 2. Criteria for Inclusion in this Report

2.1 Definition of parenting program

To conduct this jurisdictional scan, it was necessary to begin with a clear definition of what constitutes a parenting program. For this purpose, we defined parenting programs as interventions, programs, or services in which parents receive direct education, training, or support that aims to influence child outcomes by:

- Enhancing parenting knowledge, behaviour, or capacity as a caregiver
- Cultivating authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging between parents and their children
- Increasing parental self-esteem and maintaining positive parent–child relationships
- Improving parent outcomes such as parent well-being
- Improving family outcomes such as family relationships, and
- Supporting parents to understand and navigate complex systems to produce better outcomes for Black children and youth.

Included in this definition are both parenting programs (which include parents only) and whole-family programs (which include parents as well as their children).

Not included in this jurisdictional scan are programs that provide:

- Direct education or training to children without involving the parents
- Community-wide education that doesn't specifically target parents
- One-time events, or
- Indirect education to parents via their children.

The person referred to as “parent” may be any adult in the role of primary caregiver to a child. This person may be the child’s biological parent or a grandparent, guardian, foster parent, or other carer.

2.2 Methodology

In compiling this information, various methods were used to engage and collect information from relevant organizations:

- An online survey was developed to collect information on the organization and its programs and services for children, youth, and families. The survey was advertised on social media. In addition, a comprehensive and diverse list of potential survey recipients across Ontario was compiled, including BYAP-funded groups, Black and ethno-specific organizations, and agencies providing child, youth, and family services. Emails were sent to these agencies along with those identified through the research team's personal, professional, and community networks.

The online survey was available from October 1, 2018, to November 15, 2018. Following additional outreach, the online survey was again made available in March and April 2019, and organizations were invited to complete the survey.

- Internet searches were conducted on 211 services; funders' lists/reports were reviewed for potential organizations in various municipalities across the province; and agency mandates and programs were also reviewed online to determine alignment with the target demographic.
- Additional exploratory and follow-up phone calls were made to organizations and emails sent to potential organizations and other contacts in March and April 2019.

Conducting this jurisdictional scan has been limited by the challenges of accessing information on a province-wide basis. First, we faced considerable challenges in identifying agencies and programs for inclusion in this report. An inventory of culturally relevant and responsive parenting programs that would improve outcomes for Black children has never previously been undertaken in Ontario. In addition, there does not exist a comprehensive list of Black-focused organizations or programs and services. As such, this report does not claim to provide a comprehensive list of programs and services for Black parents in Ontario.

We also experienced a challenge with identifying parenting initiatives on websites, because in some cases these services were subsumed under larger programs and required further follow-up to find them. In addition, it also emerged that calling a program a "parenting program" itself was a barrier to identification. Some of the agencies with which we spoke shared that some participants felt that participating in a parenting program carries with it a social stigma as it implies that parents have failed in their role and could be viewed negatively by others, including their own children. As a

result, many organizations have chosen other names for these programs. In addition, accessing parenting programs might mean not only admitting to deficiencies but some may feel that it will attract unwanted attention from child welfare agencies.

Furthermore, the issue of program labelling may be perceived differently depending on the age of the children served. For example, parenting programs for children in the early years may be seen in a more positive light compared with programs for parents of children in their middle years and youth.

We also recognize that the inventory may not capture programs offered by smaller organizations not formally registered as non-profits, places of worship, and groups that provide programs on a more informal basis.

We were also limited by the capacity of community organizations to respond to our inquiries and, in some cases, the lack of desire of mainstream agencies to be included in this inventory.

SECTION 3. Inventory of Programs and Services for Black Parents in Ontario

3.1 Overview

This inventory of programs and services for Black parents attempts to capture all the relevant programs in the ISBP communities of the Greater Toronto–Hamilton Area, Windsor, and Ottawa. It includes parenting programs that would be open to Black parents, whether they are provided through mainstream or Black-focused agencies. Where the programs are culturally relevant to Black parents, this has been identified in the program description.

This inventory provides a short description of the identified parenting programs. The link to the organization’s website is provided should the reader wish more information.

Programs have been organized under specific categories (e.g., target group or service type) and then listed alphabetically by organization name. When agencies have programs with specific names, the name is italicized in the description. The program descriptions are based on information provided in the online survey, information provided via email by the organization, and/or information publicly available on an organization’s website.

Survey input from agencies reveals that a considerable range of organizations across Ontario provide parenting supports. These organizations include:

- Black-focused, mainstream, or ethno-specific non-profits
- Community health centres
- Private businesses
- EarlyON and Family Centres, Children’s Mental Health Centres, Family Services Associations, other health and social service agencies, and settlement agencies, and
- Small volunteer-run groups.

A total of 49 surveys were fully completed and submitted online by organizations. Survey respondents selected an agency type from various categories provided. Of the 28 agencies that identified as mainstream, 67% indicated that Black families comprised a significant proportion of their clients and service users. Another 33% indicated that they offered culturally specific programs to Black children, youth, and families. Similarly, 67% of ethno-specific organizations reported having significant numbers of Black service users and 33% providing culturally relevant programming.

Included in this jurisdictional scan are those programs and services offered by non-profits and community health centres. Private businesses are excluded as they were not the primary focus of this scan. In addition, while EarlyON and Family Centres, Children’s Mental Health Centres, and Family Services Associations, other health and social service agencies, and settlement agencies offer a range of parenting supports and programs, given the sheer number of them, and the lack of focus specifically on Black parents, no attempt has been made to include all these agencies and the programs they offer.

Some respondents to the survey shared that they had difficulty completing the survey and clearly describing the nature of their parenting programs because parenting programs are included as an integral part of other programming and not isolated as a separate program activity nor as a special program designed to specifically address the particular needs of Black children, youth, and families. This suggests that many parenting support services are delivered in a more informal, ad hoc fashion, and/or are integrated into other services such as one-on-one counselling. This was particularly noticeable in child and youth-focused programs, such as homework or educational initiatives. Some of these programs have identified that supports are provided to parents to increase their ability to assist their children in the education system (e.g., such as requiring increased confidence or knowledge to assist with homework, understanding technology, advocating for their children, and/or deciphering report cards). As such, these programs incorporated appropriate programs or supports as part of the existing program without identifying it as a parenting program.

3.2 Inventory of programs

3.2.a Adolescent and young mothers

Agincourt Community Services Association (Toronto)

In partnership with Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA), YWCA offers a drop-in program for mothers aged 14 to 22. This *Teen Mothers’ Program* offers opportunities to build positive parenting skills and gain access to resources that support mothers on their parenting journey.

<https://www.agincourtcommunityservices.com/earlyon-child-and-family-programs>

Applegrove Community Complex (Toronto)

Over the Rainbow is an 8-week therapeutic play program for young children who are experiencing behavioural and/or emotional difficulties in their interactions with other children or their parents. In the program, children use music, art, drama and story-

telling to explore feelings, experiences and behaviours, while parents discuss concerns in a supportive group environment.

<http://www.applegrovecc.ca/progfamily.htm>

Jessie's — The June Callwood Centre for Young Women (Toronto)

Jessie's is a multi-resource centre for pregnant and parenting youth and their children in Toronto. The Parent-Child Centre provides discussions on infant and child development, parenting skills, family supports, and independent living. It is also a forum for young mothers to share experiences with each other.

<https://jessiescentre.org/parenting-groups/>

Massey Centre (Toronto)

Massey Centre is a client-centered infant and early childhood mental health organization in Toronto. The agency serves two main community-based groups of clients: vulnerable pregnant and parenting adolescents and their children; and families and caregivers from the local community. Young mothers aged 13–21 learn life skills for parenting and independent living from two programs: *Prenatal Residential Program* and *Postnatal Transitional Housing Program*. In addition, they attend either school or work or focus on pre-employment activities in the transitional program.

Maternal Infant Mental Health (MIMH) services promote optimal child and youth mental health and well-being by focusing on the health and wellness of the family as a whole.

<http://www.massey.ca>

Young Parents Support Network (Ottawa)

Young Parent Support Network is a partnership of four agencies in Ottawa: Emily Murphy Non-Profit Housing Corporation, St. Mary's Home, Salvation Army Bethany Hope Centre and Youville Centre. The agencies of the Network along with the two projects provide numerous programs and support services to pregnant teens, as well as to young parents under the age of 25 and their children, aged birth to five years.

Programs include:

- Transition to Parenting
- Make the Connection Infant Series
- Make the Connection Toddler Series
- Kids Are Worth It
- Attachment Counselling
- Baby and Me

- Toddler learning Club.

<http://ottawayoungparents.com/brighter-futures/parenting/>

Youville Centre (Ottawa)

Youville Centre serves young/adolescent mothers and their children in Ottawa and offers the evidenced-informed parenting program *Make the Connection*. The program is delivered in two phases to address attachment, parenting role, and relationship skills in the newborn and toddler stages of development.

<http://www.youvillecentre.org/programs-services/>

3.2.b Black fathers

Black Daddies Club (Toronto)

Black Daddies Club (BDC) helps overcome the isolation that Black fathers experience as well as the lack of forums and spaces for Black men to discuss parenting issues and concerns facing the Black community as a whole. The main goals of the organization are to change the image of the “absent Black father” that is prevalent in the media and to assist young Black men to become better fathers. In so doing, BDC aims to support Black children, families, and the larger community.

<http://theblackdaddiesclub.com/>

Macaulay Child Development Centre (Toronto)

More Than a Haircut works specifically to reach Black fathers or father figures and to engage them in conversations about their role. The program is carried out in partnership with local barbers. The groups are held in barbershops in order to reach Black fathers who do not typically access mainstream family support services.

<https://macaulaycentre.org/programs/familyprograms/>

Young and Potential Fathers (Toronto)

The Young and Potential Fathers Initiative addresses the cycles of disengagement, lack of resources, and lack of visible role models for young racialized fathers in Toronto’s priority neighborhoods, with a specific focus on African Canadians. The initiative aims to strengthen the capacity of individuals, families, and the community at large to provide direct support to young fathers and their children.

<http://youngpfathers.org>

3.2.c Black parents

Black Foundation of Community Networks (York Region)

Black Foundation of Community Networks (BFCN) provides *Friday Focus*, a weekly program that engages the whole family unit. The youth participate in activities that involve math literacy, Black history, social skills, and recreation. At the same time, the parent forums engage adults in presentations, workshops, and positive discussions.

<http://bfcn.ca/programs.html>

Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (Toronto)

Caribbean African Canadian Social Services' (CAF CAN) serves Black families throughout the Greater Toronto Area. Its parenting program provides individual support, family mediation, mobile crisis counseling, and crisis intervention to individuals and families. The program is also involved in referrals to community resources, dealing with custody issues, visitations, home assessments, family court parental assessments, and advocacy. The agency also delivers the SNAP program.

<http://cafcan.org/social-services/parenting-program/>

Coalition for Justice, Unity, and Equity (Windsor)

While striving to promote equality, respect, and understanding among all members of the community, the coalition's main focus is on advocating for racialized people, particularly those of African descent. A key directive is supporting family education, employment, and leadership while helping them to maintain healthy family habits. The programs are delivered through the Black lens, especially in terms of history. The organization will also be supporting youth and parents through workshops covering a range of topics such as nutrition, parenting, community activities, home help, etc.

<https://www.cjue.org/>

Tropicana Community Services (Toronto)

Tropicana is Toronto-based multi-service organization that serves all youth, newcomers, people of Black and Caribbean heritage and other residents in Toronto and Durham Region. The *Success Through Aggression Replacement Training (START) for Life* is a life skills development program that provides instruction through reflective discussions, role modeling, and demonstrations to enable participants to strengthen positive social skills, anger control, and moral reasoning. This 10-week program is aimed at adults 18 years and older who are parents, caregivers, or guardians that have been referred by the child protection or criminal justice systems. The agency also delivers the SNAP Program.

<http://tropicanacommunity.org/index.php/programs/our-programs/>

United Achievers Community Services (Peel Region)

United Achievers' Community Services (UACS) supports, encourages and participates in many alliances, collaborations, social events and community activities that strengthen support and promote Peel Region's Caribbean and Black communities.

The *Building Healthy Families Program* offers advocacy and support to families to gain new skills. Parents learn skills to improve communication as well as conflict resolution through parenting/co-parenting education and skills development workshops, mediation, and counseling services. This program, a partnership with the Peel Children's Aid Society, provides culturally appropriate counselling to parents who struggle with managing their children when faced with many intersecting and conflicting problems.

<https://unitedachievers.org/bhf>

Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (Durham Region)

Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC) delivers workshops and culturally specific programs celebrating historical experience of people of African/Black ancestry. The workshops topics are developed based on the interests of the participants, such as effective parenting workshop, advocating for children within the school system, workplace-related stress issues, mental health, and violence prevention.

<http://www.wmrccdurham.org/>

3.2.d EarlyON and Family Centres

EarlyON and Family Centres (EOFC) provide services for parents/caregivers with children in the early years (0–5 years). EOFC are widely available, with about 400 centres in Ontario plus another 700 locations housed in schools, libraries, parks, and community centres. The centres are a combination of four separate programs: (i) Ontario Early Years Centres, (ii) Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, (iii) Child Care Resource Centres, and (iv) Better Beginnings, Better Futures.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>

3.2.e Early prevention, intervention, and treatment

Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre (Toronto)

Aisling offers a variety of prevention, early intervention, and treatment programs for residents of Scarborough and East York, including the following parenting programs:

- *Growing Healthy Together Parenting Program* offers family home visiting and parenting groups for families with children from birth to age 5 who may be new to Canada, are living on a low income, or may be feeling alone or overwhelmed.
- *Parent Coaching* is provided by trained child therapists for families with children from birth to age 6 at home or at the agency's site.
- *Priority Access* is a family-based treatment intervention for families with a parent/guardian who has physically abused their children. The program is for clients that are currently involved with a child welfare agency and living within the city of Toronto. Referrals are made directly by the child welfare worker involved.

<https://aislingdiscoveries.ca/section/what-we-do>

John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington & Area (Hamilton and Area)

The agency works with at-risk individuals and families to develop the skills and assets necessary to make positive and long-lasting life changes. Services are offered in English, French, and Italian.

The *Family Support Program* provides support, information, early intervention, and referral to other services for parents with youth ages 12–17 experiencing parenting challenges. Service is strength based, family centered, and offered in individual or group formats. Topics may include providing effective boundaries, communication strategies, problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution. The program is delivered both on site and off-site throughout Hamilton, Burlington, and Area and is open to community referrals.

<https://johnhoward.on.ca/hamilton/services/community-programs/>

Jean Tweed Treatment Centre (Toronto)

Pathways Child Development Program works in a holistic and culturally responsive manner to reduce harm to pregnant and parenting women who use substances and their children under the age of six years. Pathways offers assessment and referral, information, support, counselling, assistance with child welfare issues, parenting programs and child development services. The agency also provides support to

community services through training, education and consultation on the issues of substance use and pregnancy and parenting.

<http://jeantweed.com/>

Mothercraft (Toronto)

Breaking the Cycle is an early identification and prevention program designed to reduce risk and to enhance the development for substance-exposed children (prenatal - 6 years) by providing services which address maternal addiction problems and the mother-child relationship through a community-based cross-systemic model.

Families receive integrated addictions counselling, health/medical services, parenting support, development screening and assessment, early childhood interventions, child care, access to FASD Diagnostic Clinic, and basic needs support in a single access setting in downtown Toronto, with home visitation and street outreach components.

<https://www.mothercraft.ca/index.php?q=ei-btc&q=ei-btc>

Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (Toronto)

This community health centre offers a range of pregnancy and parenting programs, including:

- Case Management for At-risk Pregnant and Parenting Women
- Great Start Together Perinatal Program
- Feeding Tiny Souls Infant Feeding Program
- Parkdale Parent's Primary Prevention Program
- Post-partum Mood Disorders Program.

<https://pqwchc.org/programs-services/community-services-and-programs/>

YWCA (Toronto)

Here to Help is a 12-week parenting program in south Scarborough for children 4-16 years of age and their mothers who have been exposed to abuse. The program offers mothers:

- Information on how children may be impacted by their exposure to abuse
- Information and support on how to support their children's emotional healing
- Positive ways for dealing with the challenges of parenting children who have witnessed abuse, and
- Ongoing, regular telephone contact with program staff.

<https://www.ywcatoronto.org/OurPrograms/supportservices/parentingafterabuse>

3.2.f Mental health supports

Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre (Toronto)

The *Community Support Program* partners with other organizations to develop and deliver flexible mental health services responsive to the unmet and emerging needs of children from birth to age 12 and their families. The program assists families in establishing and achieving their goals for the healthy development of their children; to enable children to function more successfully in all social contexts (home, school, neighbourhood); and to enhance the capacity of the community to promote the healthy development of children. The services strive to be accessible to all families in relation to location, literacy level, and cultural sensitivity. Parenting groups/workshops and staff training are offered to shelters, schools, and community agencies.

<https://aislingdiscoveries.ca/section/what-we-do>

Crossroads Children’s Mental Health Centre (Ottawa)

Crossroads delivers a wide range of mental health services for children up to the age of 12 and their families in Ottawa. The agency offers parenting services that include home-based parenting support; parent groups; individual (child), family, and parent counselling; and an intersections program for children at risk of justice involvement. Wraparound services are also available for families with complex needs. Services are offered in English and other languages provided by staff from diverse backgrounds.

<https://crossroadschildren.ca/parent-portal/>

Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare - Regional Children’s Centre (Windsor)

The Centre delivers a *Parenting Traumatized Youth* program that defines trauma, has parents examine their own trauma histories, and then discusses how to parent a child who has been traumatized. Participants must attend an 8-week program that includes weekly homework.

<https://www.hdgh.org/regionalchildrenscentre>

McMaster Children’s Hospital (Hamilton)

COPEing with 3-12 Year Olds with ADHD is a 6-week program that teaches specific parenting strategies to assist with ADHD behaviours and strengthen relationship, reduce oppositional behaviour and increase cooperation.

https://www.mchcommunityed.ca/body.php?mid=3&id=51&page_type=S&lang=EN

3.2.g Strengthening parenting skills

Better Beginnings Waterloo (Waterloo)

Better Beginnings Waterloo (BBW) offers a number of parent programs including:

- **Parents Night Out** – This drop in program offers a night out for parents to participate in social activities from painting to game nights. It offers children’s programs for school-aged children and child care for preschool aged children.
- **Coffee and Conversation** – This weekly women’s group offers conversation on various topics based on participant input.
- **English Class** – Parents in the community who need extra help with language and literacy are able to access this weekly class.
- **Parent Wellness Group** – This weekly group discusses topics of wellness including creativity, physical wellness, parenting, and food nutrition. This group is open to parents or caregivers.

<https://bbwaterloo.org/programs-2/>

Centre Francophone de Toronto (Toronto)

The organization’s child and family programs offer various free and confidential services to parents and their children. These services promote healthy child development, provide support and counselling for parents, and facilitate parent–child bonding through family activities. The *Les P’tits marmitons (Little Cooks)* program aims to increase participants’ knowledge of health, healthy food, and active lifestyles to ensure that children 3–6 years old reach or maintain optimal health. *Baby Connection* is a program that enables parents of children aged 0 to 1 to strengthen their bonds with their baby, communicate better, and attune to their baby’s needs. It also aims to support parents in their responsibilities to their baby.

<https://www.centrefranco.org/en/children-families/parent-child-groups/>

Family Education Centre (Peel Region)

The Family Education Centre (FEC) aims to build stronger families through community-based parent-to-parent education, support, and training. FEC offers parenting programming through in-person sessions and e-learning opportunities that may be free of charge or available for a fee. A parent resource library is also available online with tip sheets, podcasts, webinars, and e-learning courses. More specifically, services include parenting courses that range from 4 to 12 weeks; active parenting with concurrent children’s sessions; parenting young children with concurrent child

development sessions; 1–2-hour workshops and 1–2-hour parent meetups. The agency serves families in Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon and services are offered in English and Arabic.

<https://familyedcentre.org/>

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre (Hamilton)

Early Steps Program develops and promotes positive parenting, family support, and healthy child development. Participants of the Early Steps Program have an opportunity to learn about child developmental milestones, positive play healthy parent – child bonding, positive discipline for the various stages of a child’s life and developing healthy family relationships. In addition, participants are provided with opportunities and activities that stimulate healthy development in children.

Life Lessons Parenting Program is a 10 week parenting program that concentrates on developing positive parenting skills that nurtures the child’s growth throughout all developmental stages. Objectives of the program include: increasing knowledge, confidence, and parenting capacity; improving problem-solving and decision-making abilities; providing meaningful activities and education to children; decreasing parental frustrations and emotional burn-out and strengthening the bond between parent and child. The program also works to heal the past wounds due to family loss or family breakdown.

Those participating in the Program are provided with relevant tools and resources including a Parenting Manual.

<http://www.hucchc.com/programs.html>

Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare - Regional Children’s Centre (Windsor)

The Centre delivers the *Community Triple P Program*, which offers information, support, and practical answers to everyday parenting concerns. The Centre has culturally adapted this program for Arabic-speaking newcomer families in its community. Trained facilitators deliver the Triple P Program in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, and German. The program is delivered in various settings in the community based on facilitators’ availability.

<https://www.hdgh.org/triplep>

Macaulay Child Development Centre (Toronto)

Parent Advocacy engages parents in group sessions where they strengthen the skills needed to be an effective voice for their children. Parents gain information about the school system and how to access a range of services their child might need to thrive.

<https://macaulaycentre.org/programs/familyprograms/>

Malton Neighbourhood Services (Peel Region)

Through its EarlyOn Centre, Malton Neighbourhood Services offers the *Growing as Parents* (G.A.P.) program. It is a free 12-week parenting and life skills program available to all pregnant and parenting women in Peel.

<http://www.mnsinfo.org/earlyon-centre/>

Manantial Neighbourhood Services (Toronto)

Manantial neighbourhood Services was formed to serve primarily Hispanic immigrants in the Downsview area of Toronto. *What about your Kids?* is a parenting support program that educates parents of youth between the ages of 13 and 18 years old about youth-related issues and provides active support to parents through workshops on stress and anger management, age-appropriate discipline, parent leadership, communication and depression.

Thinking, Feeling and Playing teaches young mothers how to address behavioural problems in their children as they grow up. Through a series of workshops focused on topics such as children's growth and development, health and illness prevention, first aid and prevention of accidents, young mothers have the opportunity to learn and acquire new skills to be a successful mother.

<https://www.manantial.ca/past-programs>

Regent Park Community Health Centre (Toronto)

The Regent Park CHC offers a range of services and programs for families with children aged 0–4, including pre-natal, post-natal, early childhood education, kindergarten readiness, maternal infant mental health, child and family advocacy, as well as referrals to its primary health care services.

<http://www.regentparkchc.org/infant-child-development>

Rexdale Women's Centre (Toronto)

The Rexdale Women's Centre is an independent, non-for-profit, voluntary agency that serves high-need immigrant, newcomer, and refugee women and their family members residing in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Centre offers *Nobody's Perfect Parenting Groups* where participants learn about child development and effective discipline methods. They also receive information on Canadian institutions and services that can provide them with further assistance. Connecting, sharing, and building skills with peers are often powerful tools in addressing the lack of confidence, self-esteem, or parenting experience needed by caregivers to successfully address everyday challenges.

Through *Parenting and Family Supportive Counselling* the Centre provides support to parents and families in coping with the many challenges and rewards of raising healthy children. Newcomer, immigrant, and refugee parents and grandparents are supported to raise healthy children in a new country with a different culture, values, and language. Oftentimes the resources available for these families are not sufficient, putting them at greater risk of abuse, poverty, and isolation.

<http://www.rexdalewomen.org/index.php?cat=programs&content=parenting-support>

Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre (Toronto)

The Pre/Post Natal Link program offers interdisciplinary classes to prepare participants for the birth of their new child and to help provide the best possible beginning for the baby, including practical tips for healthy birthing, labour, and delivery; relaxation; exercise; nutrition; baby care; baby blues; and breastfeeding.

<https://www.whiwh.com/community-services-programs>

3.2.h Systems navigation

Dixon Community Services (Toronto)

Immigrant Parents Empowerment Program is a program intended to provide on-going training and information sessions about systemic barriers and teach parents how to effectively access the various systems that they and their children interact with. Many of these parents have little knowledge about the different institutional systems that they and their children interact with, from schools, the justice system, the police and landlords, and are also not aware of means to access essential services available to them. Periodic workshops and seminars are held throughout the year.

http://www.dixoncommunity.com/parents_programs.htm

Empowerment Squared (Hamilton)

Empowerment Squared works with newcomer and marginalized youth and communities in Canada and across the world to help them succeed through mentorship, access to post-secondary education, information literacy, and sports and recreation.

The agency also provides the following two parent/caregiver support programs that teach families how to better understand and navigate the education system:

- The *Information Literacy Program* empowers parents, caregivers, and adult allies to support their children and be active participants in their educational journey. It promotes the development of specific skills to build resilient families where children and youth feel supported. It also helps parents communicate better with their children and become engaged within their community, e.g. through digital literacy.
- The *Hamilton Education Law Program* (HELP) empowers students and families to meet challenges encountered in the school system by providing them with information and resources to navigate issues related to student discipline, special education, bullying and harassment, and the right to attend school.

<https://empowermentsquared.org/programs/>

Family Services of Peel (Peel Region)

The *Families and Schools Together* is an innovative, collaborative prevention and parent involvement program in which whole families gather at school and participate in fun, research-based activities aimed at strengthening families, empowering parents, and building healthy communities. This 8-week program in the Region of Peel is offered in elementary schools for children (ages 5–9) to support healthy child development. Involvement of the school’s principal and teachers further builds the relationships between families and school staff.

<https://fspeel.org/services/families-schools/>

Hamilton Community Action Program for Children (Hamilton)

The *Systems Navigation Program* provides one-on-one support and educational opportunities targeted toward increased connection to various child and family systems for families from cultural communities.

The Hamilton CAPC Systems Support Worker works in the community providing one-on-one support to parents with young children. Parents are supported to navigate systems that contribute to the overall health and well-being of families. Monthly

information sessions about various systems that impact on family health including how to access them are also offered.

http://capc.hamilton.on.ca/?page_id=339

Macaulay Child Development Centre (Toronto)

Skills for Success Homework Clubs and *Girls Coding* are after-school programs that reach elementary-age children. These programs build skills, foster positive social networks, and provide access to nutritious snacks and education. *Homework Clubs* include physical activity, and *Girls Coding* specifically encourages an interest in STEM. Both programs engage families/parents and provide group sessions that build the family's capacity to foster their child's success in school and in life.

<https://macaulaycentre.org/programs/familyprograms/>

TAIBU Community Health Centre (Toronto)

TAIBU Community Health Centre is a multidisciplinary, non-for-profit, community led organization established to serve the Black Community across the Greater Toronto Area as its priority population.

Taibu provides supports to parents by improving their capacity to better understand, navigate, and advocate within the different institutional systems that impact their children. The *PLUG Program* supports Black students who are in conflict with the education system (suspension and expulsions). It supports parents in understanding their rights and responsibilities under the *Education Act*.

The program also facilitates access to legal advice and representation for students and their parents.

<http://taibuchc.ca/en/>

The *LEARN Academic Mentorship Program* is a weekly program that supports Black students with their academic achievement by engaging them in six main themes: school comfortability, student-teacher relationship, cultural congruence, classroom equity, perceived threat of racism/discrimination, and reducing barriers to academic support. This program is delivered in the Malvern neighborhood, the Jane and Finch neighborhood, and in various schools. The program is also designed to provide monthly support to parents/caregivers to teach them how to advocate within and navigate the school system.

<http://www.taibuchc.ca/community-development/>

WoodGreen Community Services (Toronto)

The *WoodGreen Community Services' Rites of Passage* is a 32-week program aimed at enhancing youth's confidence, self-awareness, and resilience. It is both a community-building and individual transformational journey that assists youth of African descent between the ages of 12 and 29 to make a healthy transition into adulthood.

WoodGreen's *Rites of Passage* uses a whole-family/community approach and works with youth, parents, and community elders to support this transition. Parents/guardians participate in four sessions that mirror what the youth learn by also exploring the four key questions that guide the process: (i) Who am I? (ii) How did I come to be who I am? (iii) Am I really who I think I am? (iv) What is my life purpose?

<https://www.woodgreen.org/services/programs/rites-of-passage/>

3.2.i Incarcerated parents

Fostering, Empowering, Advocating, Together (Toronto)

Fostering, Empowering, Advocating, Together (FEAT) supports the needs of the over 50,000 children in Ontario that have a parent in the criminal justice system. The program recognizes the multifaceted impact of parental incarceration on children can be devastating.

Caregiver Alliance for Resourceful Empowerment Program is a family-centered initiative designed to provide holistic support and intervention, through targeted and consistent mentorship and peer-support, for under-served children and caregivers who have been affected by familial incarceration.

The program focuses on providing family members with a safe space to build and nurture their relationships with each other, peers with similar experiences, and their community-at-large. Following a needs assessment and program evaluation of the Family Visitation and Peer Mentorship programs, CARE was built from the ground up to meet the unique needs of caregivers of children with a parent involved in the justice system and their children.

Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones. During the trips, FEAT provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

<https://featforchildren.org/>

SECTION 4. Gap Analysis

This section analyzes the gaps identified in the inventory of parenting programs and services, particularly as it relates to providing relevant and accessible services to Black parents.

4.1 Limited number of culturally responsive programs

This jurisdictional scan found that few parenting programs are culturally responsive to the needs of Black parents. Of note is that:

- While mainstream organizations may serve a large number of Black parents, most do not offer programs that are culturally responsive to the Black community. For the most part, culturally responsive parenting programs are provided by Black-focused agencies.
- There are very few examples of mainstream agencies adapting their programs to increase accessibility or relevancy for the Black community groups, even when these agencies served a large number of Black parents.
- Not all types of programs are available in each of the BYAP communities. For example, all of the three programs that serve Black fathers are located in Toronto.
- The limited number of Black-focused programs may not address the needs of particular communities, particularly newcomer or refugee populations. These communities may also need programs that are not only culturally responsive, but also available in specific languages or which address specific needs and issues.

4.2 Not all needs are equally served

Because parenting approaches and needs vary by the age of the child, most of the available parenting programs are based on the child's age. Most of the existing programs are aimed at the early years cohort (0–5 years) and include the following:

- EarlyON and Family Centres (EOFC) — Services for parents/caregivers with children in the early years (0–5 years). EOFC are widely available, with about 400 standalone centres throughout Ontario and an additional 700 locations housed in schools, libraries, parks, and community centres. These centres provide a combination of four separate programs: (i) Ontario Early Years Centres, (ii) Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, (iii) Child Care Resource Centres, and (iv) Better Beginnings, Better Futures.

- Programs for teen and young mothers — With a focus on pregnant and young mothers, programs are available in community settings such as EarlyON Centres, community agencies targeting this population (e.g. Youville Centre in Ottawa), and residential adolescent programs that also have transitional housing and academic education components to their programs (e.g. Jessie’s and Massey Centre in Toronto).

As such, this scan highlights the need for programs to meet the needs of parents with children and youth over age 6.

In addition, few programs are available to meet the needs of:

- Black parents who have experienced trauma
- Parents of Black LGBTQ+ children, as well as programs for Black LGBTQ+ parents
- Persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families, and
- Incarcerated parents.

4.3 Few agencies responsive to the needs of Black parents

Many of the agencies contacted stated that the programs they deliver serve all parents, giving no recognition of the different needs and experiences of Black parents. They shared their perspective that “parenting is parenting” no matter the race or ethnicity of the parent.

In addition, we found that a number of organizations were reluctant to participate in this scan or even comment on the diversity of their service users. They shared that they do not, and do not see the need to, collect identity-based data from service users.

SECTION 5. Summary

It is evident from this review that the development of culturally relevant parenting supports designed to improve outcomes for Black children in Ontario is still very much at the embryonic stage. It appears that the development of Black-focused programs will continue to stay at this level largely because mainstream agencies lack awareness and understanding of Black parents' unique needs and challenges. While some parenting programs have been adapted to address language needs, agencies continue to lack an understanding of the impact of culture and anti-Black racism on parenting and how this can impede outcomes for Black children, youth, and families.

Parenting programs offered by mainstream agencies that do attract Black parents may do so not because the programs have been designed to recognize the particular needs and challenges faced by Black parents but simply because they are the only programs available.

As such, Black-focused organizations will continue to be the main source of culturally responsive parenting programs for Black parents. The few programs targeting the specific needs and realities of Black parents exist largely as the result of community efforts and considerable volunteer energy. The result is that the limited number of programs and services available for Black parents in Ontario cannot meet the needs of the community. The availability across the province is also patchy at best, both geographically and in terms of the content and focus of programming.

In a province as culturally and racially diverse as Ontario, with a government that has formally recognized the impact of anti-Black racism on African Canadians, it is a concern that many respondents to this survey continued to adopt and endorse a "one size fits all" approach to providing service that does little to acknowledge the different needs and experiences of Black parents in support of their children.