

Child Welfare Service Performance Indicators – Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions

Well-being Outcome: The Quality of the Caregiver and Youth Relationship

Definition:

The average score for children in care (aged 10-17) from a standard scale that measures a young person's perception of the quality of the relationship with his or her primary caregiver. The scale measures the child in care's response to the following four items:

Thinking of your caregiver (female or male):

1. How well do you feel he/she understands you?
2. How much fairness do you receive from him/her?
3. How much affection do you receive from him/her?
4. Overall, how would you describe your relationship with him/her?

Each of these four items is rated from 0 to 2, yielding a composite score with a minimum of 0, and a maximum of 8.

Why Is This Measure Important?

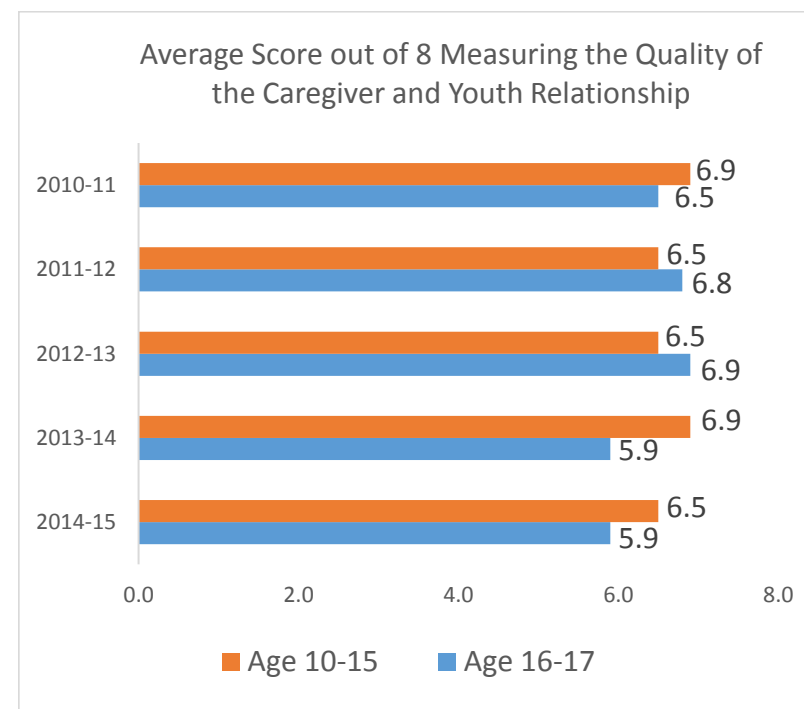
The quality of the caregiver-youth relationship is at the heart of service to children in care. Research demonstrates that a young person's perception of the quality of his/her relationship with his/her caregiver predicts the following: current happiness; self-esteem; positive behaviour; and placement satisfaction and stability. As scores increase on the quality of the caregiver relationship scale, so do positive outcomes across each of these areas (e.g. higher self-esteem).

Limitations of the Data:

These data form part of the Ontario Looking After Children assessment, which is completed annually for all children who have been in the care of a Children's Aid Society for at least one year. A very small number of children who should have completed this assessment are not assessed within the required timeframes. Therefore, their data are not included in these results. Child protection workers ask children to provide responses verbally with the caregiver present and the child's responses may be influenced by this approach. Children usually respond to the 4 questions based on how they are feeling that day not necessarily how they have felt over the past year.

Key Considerations:

The key influencing factors in measuring the quality of the caregiver and youth relationship include; the age of the youth, the type of placement, gender and the length of the placement.



Results:

Children in care between the ages of 10 to 15 years old have scored the quality of their relationship with their caregiver 6.5-6.9 out of 8 based on the answers to the questions and the youth age 16 and 17 scored the quality of their relationship with their caregiver between 5.9-6.9 out of 8.

These data are compiled and analyzed by the University of Ottawa, Centre for Research and Community Services.