

Hosting a Youth Success Strategy Family Workshop Event

PLANNING GUIDE

Youth
Success
Strategy



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Hosting a Canadian Youth Success Strategy (YSS) Family Workshop Event

Planning a workshop event or any event can be both exciting and stressful. The purpose of this document is to help you and your organization/network plan your YSS Family Workshop event. We have broken down each area and provided step by step considerations and instructions wherever possible. This guide serves as a complimentary tool to the Canadian Youth Success Strategy Workshop Facilitator Guide.

1.0 Getting Started – Planning your Event (Workshop)

There are several aspects to consider when starting to plan your event/workshop. Things such as who will help organize the event, where will your organization host it (virtual or in person), what and when will your event take place, what is the cost and so on.

1.1 Task Force/Committee

Organizing an event can be cumbersome and it is always easier to have a few committed people working together to get the best results. Organizing an event by yourself is possible; however, the amount of time required will increase substantially.

Consider putting together a committee to help. We recommend a small committee of less than 5 people. Larger committees can result in difficulty coordinating schedules and planning. If members of your organization say “no” to being a part of the organizing committee, you can still engage them in other aspects of your event!

Engaging partners in your community such as school boards and community service providers will help you build the profile of your event and help increase attendance as these partners have their networks that they can reach out to.

TIP 1 Committee Partners

- 1st choice – Your own membership/organization
- 2nd choice – Your community partners – school board committees, community service providers, volunteer organizations

TIP 2 Committee Roles

- Your organization should be doing as much of the logistics and financing of the event as possible. Your ‘ask’ of the partners should be to help market the event to the desire audience (educators, families, service providers, etc.).

1.2 The 5 W's

The 5 W's are a must when planning any type of event. The 5 W's include who, what, where, when, and why. The answers to these questions are often very straightforward and will help your committee ensure success.

1.2.1. The first W is “Who”

Who will host your event?

In most instances, your own organization will be the host. But perhaps you are co-hosting with another organization, or a number of organizations are coming together to put together this event. This is where figuring out who will be the host is key to success. This ensures someone is going to be ultimately responsible.

A sure way to identify your “who” is asking the question “who is paying the bill associated with this event?”.

Who is your audience?

The second “who” that you need to figure out is your audience. This guide is meant to help you prepare events with a key audience: stakeholders who play a role in the life of children and youth who have a disability. You want to engage family, educators, and service providers (from health care to employment) to raise awareness about the importance of having high expectations for a child who has a disability and how these expectations influence the way stakeholders interact with that child.

Use the poster provided in the Appendix section of this guide to promote your event or workshop.

TIP 3 The 5 W's

- Make a “wish list” of family networks, educators, and service providers with their contact information to send invitations.

1.2.2. The second W is the “What” - what type of event will you host?

The type of event that you will host is largely dependent on who your audience is! For example: families may be more available to attend an event in the evening while educators may be more inclined to attend an event during working hours.

Consult with community partners who are part of your planning committee. They may have feedback that you will find helpful as you are planning your event.

As you consider what type of event to host, you will need to consider the setting or location. For families, maybe a virtual setting is more welcoming. If you are hosting an in-person event, consider what refreshments and/or food you will offer at the event, if any. And maybe consider a hybrid event – where the opportunity to join via “video” is provided.

TIP 4

TIP 4- The 5 W's - What type of Event?

- Consider asking local schools (high school or post-secondary) for support to host a virtual or hybrid event -technology use for hybrid events can remove barriers to participation!

1.2.3. The third W is “Where” - Where will you host your event?

If you are hosting an in-person event, identifying a location for your family workshop event is crucial. Ensure the space you choose is accessible and familiar for participants. If you are hosting families, the venue you choose should send a message that is welcoming and that provides flexibility. For example: maybe have an area where kids can play while the adults gather to listen to your workshop.

TIP 5

The 5 W's - Where will you host your Event?

- Possible choice for families- consider a neutral location such as Local Community Centre or Library
- Possible choice for educators- consider a location with a more working-environment feel- consult with school boards, libraries, business in your community to find a space that meets your needs.

You also want to consider the amenities offered at the location. Consider accessibility to physical spaces, is your room welcoming of mobility devices? Do you need the venue to provide equipment to do your presentation (projection, screen, and sound system) or do you bring your own? These are some of the considerations that will influence your decision-making process.

1.2.4. The fourth W is “When” - what date is best to ensure participation?

Determining when to hold your event includes choosing a date as well as a timeframe. You do not want to book your Family Workshop event at the same time as local community partners' events are being held - do not force your audience to choose between the two events, unless your community partner is providing you the opportunity to be a guest speaker at their meeting.

Many community partners look for guest speakers for key meetings throughout the year, for example at their Annual General Meeting. This is a great opportunity to present the YSS Employment Workshop for audiences that impact employment outcomes for youth who have a disability.

Make yourself known to key stakeholders in your community! For example, consider approaching your local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and offering to speak at their next meeting.

TIP 6

What Date?

- Pick a date that is most convenient for your audience.
- Consider holidays and summer vacations. Avoid booking an event on a Friday of a long weekend.

1.2.5. The fifth W is “Why” – why host an event? What is your goal?

You have already identified the “why” or the “goal” to host a YSS Family Engagement Workshop – you now need to communicate this well to others in your planning committee and your community at large. ODEN has provided you with marketing material (poster, PowerPoint, Facilitator Guide) that you can use to promote your event.

1.3 Budget

Budgeting is very important particularly if you are hosting an in-person event -there are associated costs you need to consider. Virtual events are a lower budget option, but you may still have a number of expenses to consider (example: Zoom account costs).

Use the sample below to guide you.

Sample Family Workshop Budget		
	Budget	Actual
Revenue		
Sponsorships		
Donations		
Expenses		
Catering - Coffee/Tea/Snacks		
Speakers		
Audiovisual Equipment - microphones, projectors, podiums		
Supplies - name badges		
Printing - agendas, sign-in sheets		
Advertising		
Net Profit (Revenue minus Expenses)		


2.0 Event Format

Keep your event short and on point. Have a single agenda and focus. Avoid adding extra or what you think are related issues and agenda items. Families and educators have busy schedules and time is their most valuable commodity.

Ensure you deliver what you promise, both in terms of content and time allotted.

2.1 Duration of Event

The duration of your event is very important. We all appreciate a concise event that provides the information stakeholders require or desire and then they want to move onto the regular part of their day.



Duration of Event

- Keep your event to 2 hours. That will be plenty of time to accomplish your goals if your agenda is tight and focused. This has also proven to be the maximum time you can expect to keep your audience engaged.

2.2 Typical Format and Agenda - Evening Presentation (in person) example

7:00 pm	Doors open and registration
7:30 pm	Brief Welcome
7:35 pm	Session begins
8:45 pm	Open floor for questions
9:00 pm	Wrap up and event concludes

3.0 Logistics

Logistics is a very broad area covering those tasks required to keep your committee on task and ensure that no activity is forgotten. It keeps everything centralized and provides a reference for when and what needs to be completed.

3.1 Critical Path

A critical path is an important document you will have when organizing a Family Workshop event. This document will contain the tasks to be completed, which committee member will complete the task and the deadline date for when the task needs to be completed.

Use the table below as a guide to start your own Critical Path.

Sample Family Workshop Event Critical Path

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Completed
Compile list of Family networks or other stakeholders with contact information			
Create registration page			
Send out information about event to membership and other stakeholders			
Book facility if needed			
Book food and beverage			
Test your tech if your event is virtual			

3.1 Minute to Minute

Creating a minute-to-minute agenda of the event for the organizers is a great tool as it allows you to determine the flow of each component of the event. It also ensures everything that needs to be covered at the event happens in a timely fashion and your committee knows where they need to be at what time.

Use the table below to start your own minute by minute document.

Sample Family Workshop Minute-to-Minute

Time	Task	Responsibility	Notes
6:00 pm	Arrive on-site at venue	Committee	
6:15 pm	Set-up registration area	Jane	
	Test any and all sound equipment	Sam	
7:00 pm	Doors Open & Registration Begins	Edward	Edward to run registration desk
7:30 pm	Brief Welcome	MC/Presenter	
7:35 pm	Presentation begins	MC/Presenter	
8:30 pm	Question & Answer Period	Presenter	
8:45 pm	Closing Remarks & Thank You	Presenter	
	Directions to more information table and who to speak to if they are interested in the presentation being delivered to another audience	Presenter	Have more than one person available that knows what information is required. A contact form that they can complete in case they do not have a business card to leave with person.
9:00 pm	Clean-up and leave venue	Committee	

TIP 8

Logistics

- Test all audio visual and sound equipment before guest arrive so that you can spend your time networking and greeting guests, not fixing equipment!

3.2 Agendas

Agendas are important to send to participants so that they know what is going to happen. If someone realizes that there is a question and answer period, they will be more likely to not interrupt the speakers. It will also let them know what to expect in terms of timing and food.

An agenda is very simple and parts of the agenda can be taken directly from the Minute to Minute and simplified.

Sample Family Workshop Agenda

Family Workshop Event Agenda

Friday, February 19th

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Welcome

Presentation - Employment: The GOLD Standard for Inclusion

Question and Answer Period

Networking

Adjournment

3.3 Set-up

Each event set-up will have unique features and requirements. However, there are some basic requirements that will be required regardless of the venue and type of event you choose.

You should consider and plan for the following items:

- 3.3.1 Directional signage
- 3.3.2 Microphones
- 3.3.3 Floor or roaming microphones for audience, depending on the size of your event
- 3.3.4 Screen and projector and laptop with appropriate sound system
- 3.3.5 Printed handouts (agendas, evaluations, and any other handouts for event) at the registration table (along with list of attendees with contact information for sign-in)
- 3.3.6 Additional table for information

4.0 Day of Event

The day of your event is a very exciting time and as organizers, we always want to ensure that the event is successful. No matter what issues occur, if all participants think everything was seamless, that is all that matters.

4.1 Support volunteers

Support volunteers provide additional help for those unforeseen tasks that come up during your event. Having volunteers available will allow you to concentrate on the operation of the event. If you can have someone dedicated to overseeing the logistics of the event, this will free you to network with guests.

Have someone dedicated to looking after the registration table. This person can check attendance and ensure everyone has a name badge and is welcomed with directions, etc.

TIP 9 Volunteers

- Have an audio-visual or technology savvy/knowledgeable person on-site
- Have 1 or 2 volunteers that are familiar with the event set-up and critical path

4.2 Evaluations

At the end of your event, asking participants to take two minutes to complete an on-site evaluation is integral to getting immediate feedback.

4.3 Testing/Venue Set-up

It is imperative that you arrive at the venue prior to your participants to ensure all of your equipment is working properly and all of your set-up is complete. If you are not ready when people start to arrive, your event will appear not well organized.

Having someone from the venue on-site will help make any necessary changes and help with anything that needs to be fixed prior to your event opening to participants.

Ensure you have someone knowledgeable about the technical equipment available for the duration of the event. (computers, AV, etc.)

5.0 Marketing

Marketing your event is very important. You can organize a great event but you need to have people attend to make the event a success.

5.1 Promotion

Ensure your message, including the title/name of the event communicates that you are hosting a Family Workshop event and that the message is important for anyone involved in the life of a child or youth who has a disability – consider using the marketing materials included in this Family Guide in the Appendix section.

There are several ways to promote your event including:

- Email your mailing list
- Use your community partners' mailing lists (schools, service providers, etc.)
- Advertisements in local paper, community centres
- Flyers
- Social Media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook)

TIP 10

Marketing

- Make it clear that you need the help of and, this is the expectation of, your partners who are co-hosting the event.
- Wherever possible, include your partners logo on all marketing materials

5.2 Invitations and RSVP's

Your Invitation tells people the specifics of your event and how to RSVP. Your invitation should be short and to the point without a lot of clutter on the page.

By issuing tickets or requesting an RSVP, it allows you to gather contact information ahead of time should you require to make changes to the event -example: cancellation due to weather.

Your invitation should include the following:

- Name of your event
- Date, time, and location
- How to RSVP and
- How participants can identify the need for accommodations

It has been ODEN's experience that people will not RSVP immediately and you will need to be vigilant about continuing your marketing efforts and personal contacts. Ensure you create a list of those attending with their contact information. Ensure you respond to each RSVP with any additional information that you want to communicate or to acknowledge. It doesn't hurt to send out reminders to all attendees a few days prior to the event outlining the event details again and thanking them for attending. Using platforms such as Eventbrite make this process a bit easier.

6.0 Follow-up

Follow-up is key to building and maintaining relationships. Research from the YSS project has shown that in communities where families, schools, service providers and businesses have strong and committed partnerships, youth who have a disability have better employment outcomes. Follow up activities can be the foundation for these partnerships and relationships.

TIP 11

Follow-Up

- Send a thank you not later than two days after your event.
- Follow-up with anyone who expressed interest in receiving more information or who is looking to hire.

Final Comments

Organizing a Family event to facilitate the YSS Family workshop is a very important step to engaging stakeholders in your community to increase employment outcomes for youth who have a disability.

For more information or for any questions about the Canadian Youth Success Strategy or this guide, please contact ODEN via any of the following methods:

Email: info@odenetwork.com

Phone: 1-866-280-ODEN (6336)

Mail: Ontario Disability Employment Network
Box 4047, RPO Thickson
4081 Thickson Road North
Whitby, ON L1R 2X0



Employment – The Gold Standard for Inclusion



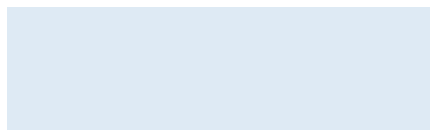
For students who have a developmental and/or intellectual disability, early perceptions of “unemployability” continue to foster lower expectations from families and educators, creating barriers to access critical supports needed to prepare them for a future that includes work.

In this presentation we will discuss how to create an environment where competitive employment is seen as a viable possibility and the natural progression for students who have a developmental and/or intellectual disability once they leave the school system, similar to their peers without a disability.

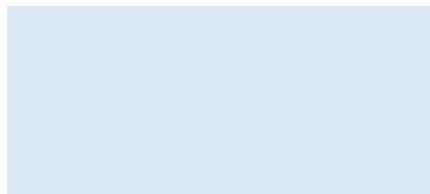
COST

This session is free of charge as part of the Youth Success Strategy funded by **CASE Innovation Lab Grant**.

LOCATION



MORE INFORMATION



WE WILL DISCUSS

- The importance of basic literacy and numeracy
- The importance of providing opportunities, from an early age, for problem solving, team work and *learning to learn*
- The importance of access to Co-Op in community settings and paid summer employment
- And learn about programs in your community that support access to employment.

AUDIENCE

This session is for anyone who is involved in the life of a student who has a developmental and/or intellectual disability, including:

- Parents & Family members
- Educators (teachers, educational assistances, service provider)
- Health care providers (family doctors, physiotherapists)
- Community social workers

