

Child and Youth Worker

Work alongside kids and teens in group homes, schools and hospitals who have been through trauma. A college diploma, and the job starts on day one of placement.

TYPICAL PAY

\$54,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$75k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Group homes, schools, hospitals, youth shelters

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grade 12
Grade 12 English is the usual requirement. Volunteer with kids: camps, coaching, tutoring, youth drop-ins.
- 2 College diploma** 2 to 3 years
In Ontario the Child and Youth Care program is a 3-year advanced diploma. Other provinces run 2-year diplomas. Expect courses in child development, trauma, counselling and crisis intervention.
- 3 Field placements** Built into the program
Two or three unpaid placements in group homes, schools or hospitals. This is where most people get their first job offer.
- 4 Degree, if you want it** 2 more years
Diploma grads can bridge into year three of the 4-year Child and Youth Care degree at TMU (Toronto Metropolitan University) or similar programs in other provinces.
- 5 Voluntary certification** After a few years of work
Register with your provincial association, such as the OACYC (Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care), or certify through the CYCCB (Child and Youth Care Certification Board), which needs a portfolio and a test.

Pros and cons

- + Real relationships with kids who need someone in their corner
- + You can start with a college diploma
- + Lots of jobs, everywhere in the country
- Low starting pay for the responsibility
- Physical restraints, verbal abuse and burnout are part of the job
- Overnights and weekends in residential settings

Good to know

Ontario's diploma is a year longer

Ontario's Child and Youth Care program is a 3-year advanced diploma, while most provinces run 2-year diplomas. The extra year is mostly placement, which is why Ontario grads can bridge straight int..

The job runs to age 29

Child and youth care is not just about kids. TMU (Toronto Metropolitan University) describes its degree as serving young people aged 4 to 29, and many practitioners work with young adults leaving foster care, s...

Optional boosts

Crisis intervention and de-escalation. Autism and developmental disability training. Degree in child and youth care or social work. Youth justice.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Child and youth worker, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care
Toronto Metropolitan University: Child and Youth Care degree
Child and Youth Care Certification Board

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/child-and-youth-worker>



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