A Formative Evaluation of Two Crown Ward Education Championship Teams in Ontario

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Executive Summary

Acknowledgements

Herein we report on a formative evaluation that we conducted in 2015-2016 of two local Crown Ward Education Championship Teams (CWECTs) in Ontario: the Highland Shores-Frontenac, Lennox & Addington CWECT, and the Lanark, Leeds, & Grenville-Renfrew CWECT. We wish to thank the stakeholders of both programs and their sponsoring Children’s Aid Societies (CASs) for their excellent collaboration. We thank them also for their openness in agreeing to being publicly identified in this report. We hope our report is useful to both CWECTs, to other local CWECTs in Ontario, and to the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Education (MED), and Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), which are jointly responsible for the provincial CWECT initiative.

Objectives

This was a formative evaluation that aimed to help improve the two local CWECTs by examining their stakeholder needs and intended human and financial resources, activities, services, and desired outcomes. This formative evaluation was also meant to prepare the ground for a later outcome evaluation.

We also hoped that the evaluation would contribute to the improvement of the province-wide CWECT program, which does not appear to have benefitted from any previous evaluation. Between 2008 and 2012, the provincial CWECT initiative grew from a pilot program that involved only a few CWECTs and sponsoring CASs into an Ontario-wide program of 21 CWECTs and some 40 CASs.

Literature Review on Educational Advocacy Programs for Young People in Care

Educational advocacy programs such as CWECT have been implemented to improve access to and retention in post-secondary education (PSE) for youth in care in North America. Although strong evidence of their effectiveness is not available, these advocacy programs have been associated with promising findings, such as less school absenteeism, fewer unplanned school changes, or better high school graduation rates.

PSE graduates with bachelor’s degrees or college diplomas have higher incomes over the short-term and long-term than non-graduates.

Many young people in care experience lower levels of academic achievement than youths in the general population, including lower rates of high school graduation or entry to and completion of PSE.

According to estimates from the OACAS Gateway to Success surveys of educational attainment, only about 46% of former youths in care in Ontario have graduated from high school by the time they are 19 or 20 years of age, compared with 83% of their age peers in the general population.

Without early mastery of basic academic skills in reading and math, young people in care are at increased risk in the shorter and longer terms of lower educational success than is warranted by their academic potential and also at higher risk of school dropout, involvement in criminal activity, homelessness, mental health difficulties, or suicide. The need for effective help is urgent, in the preschool, primary school, and secondary school years, for successful transitions to PSE opportunities.
Current Evaluation

In light of the program-improvement purpose of our formative evaluation and in collaboration with the two local CWECTs involved and their four sponsoring CASs, we formulated four major evaluation questions:

1. What were the needs of the stakeholders, namely, the local young people in care, their caregivers, and community-partner organizations?
2. Did the CWECT program meet the needs of its stakeholders?
3. How was the CWECT program being implemented?
4. Did the CWECT program appear to be working, in the opinion of its stakeholders?

Answers to questions such as these are vital to practitioners, managers, government and voluntary-sector policy-makers, and researchers who wish to improve the educational outcomes of youth in care. Clearly, interventions in Ontario such as the CWECT program that aim to improve educational outcomes, and specifically PSE access and retention, need to be accompanied by a vigorous, ongoing cycle of research, demonstration, evaluation, and program improvement.

Method

To guide the evaluation, we adopted a flexible, 10-step approach to formative evaluation developed by Smith (1989). These steps, which could be followed by any local CWECT program, are the following: decide the purpose of the evaluation; define the boundaries of the program; analyze program documents; clarify the program theory; interview the stakeholders; describe the stakeholders’ perceptions of the program; identify the stakeholders’ concerns; determine the plausibility of the program model; draw conclusions and make recommendations; and plan specific steps for utilization of the evaluation data. Stated another way, we sought to find out how the two local CWECT programs were working “on the ground”, in the opinions of their stakeholders (i.e., the young people in care, caregivers, and community-partner organizations). We also tried to discover how clearly and with how much consensus the stakeholders perceived the intended purpose of the two programs, how useful they saw program meetings, activities, and events, and how helpful they felt the programs had been in improving the educational prospects of the young people in care. Finally, we distilled our findings into a series of recommendations that we hoped would improve the programs and lay the groundwork for a future outcome evaluation. In carrying out the evaluation, we used a range of data-collection methods: an analysis of available documentation, a review of the literature, telephone and in-person interviews, online and paper-and-pencil questionnaires, focus groups, and direct observation.

Results and Recommendations for the Three Sponsoring Ontario Ministries

We commend the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Education (MED), and Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) for launching the CWECT initiative and providing the resources that have allowed it to grow from a small pilot into a province-wide program. In formulating the following recommendations, we hope to contribute to enhancing the relevance and quality of the program. In this spirit of program improvement, we recommend that the three Ministries, MCYS, MED, and MAESD, assist local CWECT programs in the following ways:
Consult with and provide guidance to local CWECTs regarding their perspectives on the need for adaptation of the program goals, scope or procedures (e.g., regarding the age groups to be served among young people in care).

Make funds available to individual CWECTs at the beginning of each fiscal year and, if possible, allocate funds on a 3-5 year basis, to enable adequate annual and multi-year planning and implementation.

Create, with the collaboration of local CWECTs, a set of common measures for program resources, services, and outcomes, in order to enable ongoing comparisons and learning opportunities among CWECTs operating in similar contexts (e.g., rural versus urban).

Work with local CWECTs to make it possible to deploy a full-time CWECT coordinator in each program, as the present model of part-time coordinators simply does not provide enough time for program planning and development and taking care of the many needs of all the stakeholders (the young people in care, caregivers, and staff of community-partner organizations).

In response to CWECT needs for training and consultation, sponsor provincial or regional workshops to help local CWECTs improve their capacity to plan, implement, evaluate, and improve their services.

Change the name of the provincial CWECT program, given that both local CWECTs found it necessary to serve young people who included but went beyond Crown Wards, namely, Society Wards, youth in Customary Care, or youth in Continued Care and Support for Youth [CCSY], etc.

Create a central website to serve the informational needs of all local CWECTs and their various stakeholders. This website would alleviate the need for local CWECTs to try to “reinvent the wheel” (which, in any event, exceeds their financial and operational capacities). The central website would be updated regularly with items about new opportunities related to the education and living situation of young people in care in Ontario. (For an example of what such a website might look like, see http://www.equalfutures.org/about/).

Compile a database of CWECT success stories for local programs to use, and place this database on the central website for easy access.

Consider funding a pilot outcome evaluation in 2017-2018 of one or more local CWECT programs as a needed follow-up to the present formative evaluation.

Results and Recommendations for Local Crown Ward Education Championship Teams

We commend the two local CWECTS that asked us to conduct the present evaluation for the impressive work they have accomplished to date, their sincere interest in improving their services, and their openness in agreeing to be identified publicly. In the hope that this evaluation report will help them improve their offerings and also assists other local CWECTs in Ontario to do the same, we make the following recommendations:

CWECTs should continue to expand their services of information and support to all three stakeholder groups—young people in care, and the caregivers and community partner organizations who are essential collaborators in helping the young people reach their educational and career goals.
• CWECTs should, on a regular basis, hold events for caregivers and provide them with newsletters through online and ordinary mail. The objective would be to inform caregivers about young people’s educational opportunities and obstacles and effective ways of supporting their progress at different stages of their educational careers.

• CWECTs should provide more information-sharing among community partners about the specific needs of local youth in care through a variety of methods (e.g., newsletters, information sessions, or webinars).

• CWECTs should ensure that community partners have easy access to information about the organizations that each committee member represents.

• CWECTs should put succession plans in place to deal with turnover, including summary documents to orient new committee members on the CWECT’s purpose and activities.

• CWECTs should consider matching young people in care with peer mentors to help support the youth through the transition into post-secondary school or employment.

• CWECTs should ensure young people in care receive one-on-one help in making informed choices about their educational and employment options.

• CWECTs should increase group-based experiential opportunities for youth to allow for relationship-building.

• CWECT committee members should acquaint themselves, caregivers, and community partners (including schools) with the wealth of accessible online information (summarized in chapter 4 of this report) about effective, evidence-based methods of intervening to help young people in care to improve their educational outcomes.

• CWECTs should consider especially one-to-one tutoring, by professional or trained volunteer tutors, as the most effective method (next to high-quality classroom teaching) of helping young people in care who are struggling with reading or math (see chapter 4).
Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Origin of the current evaluation

This formative evaluation was undertaken at the request of two senior managers who had key roles as leaders of the two Crown Ward Education Championship Teams (CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R) that are the subjects of the evaluation. (Note to the reader: Crown Wards, in Ontario, are young people who have been removed from their families of origin by judicial order, usually because of maltreatment [i.e., neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse] that poses a serious danger to the child.) One of the senior managers was a staff member of the first Children’s Aid Society (CAS-HS) of the four involved in the evaluation. CAS-HS and CAS-FLA jointly operated CWECT-HS-FLA. The other senior manager was a staff member of CAS-LLG which, with CAS-R, operated CWECT-LLG-R.

In 2015, the senior manager from CAS-HS, after several years of personal experience in working with CWECT-HS-FLA, thought that it would be beneficial for the CWECT and its sponsors, CAS-HS and CAS-FLA, to have an external evaluation of the program. In consultation with the local CWECT committee, the manager contacted the fifth author of this report (RJF) at the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services (CRECS) at the University of Ottawa, which conducts a number of evaluations of community programs each year. The manager and RJF had collaborated on other evaluation or applied research projects in the past. RJF agreed to organize and supervise a team of PhD students who would carry out the needed review of the pertinent evaluation literature and the extensive field work, including attendance at CWECT committee meetings, in-person and telephone interviews, in-person and internet surveys, logic-model development, and involvement in report writing and dissemination. Modest financial resources from CAS-HS were made available to cover stipends for the doctoral students and travel expenses.

Coincidentally, RJF had been invited to give a talk to caregivers at CAS-LLG in the spring of 2015 on the results of a recent research project in which he and several students had found that tutoring of foster children by their foster parents had positive effects on the children’s reading and math skills. After the talk, RJF happened to mention to the senior manager at CAS-LLG and a consultant hired to facilitate data-collection for CWECT-LLG-R that he and a team of PhD students were going to conduct a formative evaluation of CWECT-HS-FLA. The manager and consultant were immediately interested and asked that their own program, CWECT-LLG-R, be included in the evaluation. They were able to make available additional modest funding to cover the cost of the enlarged evaluation, including the larger number of graduate students who would be required. Also, given the importance of the evaluation project for the two local CWECTs and its potential impact on the Ontario-wide CWECT program, RJF made a small contribution from his own research funds. The total budget for the evaluation was approximately $20,000.

In the spring of 2015, RJF was able to recruit the needed evaluation team of four PhD students, three at the University of Ottawa (KW, AJH, and MMF) and one at Queen’s University in Kingston (SS). All of the doctoral students were very interested in improving the education of young people in care, in the positive impact that the evaluation might prove to have on the province-wide CWECT program in Ontario, and in the intensive practical experience in program evaluation that they would gain from taking part in the project. The four students had had doctoral-level training in research methods, and the leaders (KW and AJH) of the two two-person teams that carried out the evaluation had also had two graduate courses and field experience in program evaluation. The supervisor of the evaluation (RJF) had had many years of experience in teaching graduate courses in evaluation and conducting field evaluations in child welfare and related areas.
1.2. Evaluation purpose, scope, and questions addressed

1.2.1. Purpose: A formative evaluation

In agreement with our stakeholders in the local CWECTs and sponsoring CASs, we decided to conduct a formative evaluation. To clarify what this means, however, a few preliminary definitions are in order. Trochim (2006; http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intreval.phppevaluation; see also Trochim & Donnelly, 2006) defines evaluation as “the systematic acquisition and assessment of the worth or merit of some object”. As a well-known evaluation theorist and former President of the American Evaluation Association, Trochim believes that most people see the main goal of evaluation as influencing the making of decisions or the formulating of policies by providing empirically-based feedback. In terms of types of evaluation, the most important distinction is between formative and summative evaluation. In the context of human service programs, the purpose of a formative evaluation is to improve the program by examining its delivery, inputs, implementation, organization, personnel, activities, or procedures. The purpose of a summative evaluation, on the other hand, is to investigate the outcomes of the program by describing what happens after its delivery, evaluating whether the program actually caused the outcome, assessing its longer-term outcomes, or determining how much the program costs.

Within the major category of formative evaluation, there are five subtypes (Trochim, 2006). A needs assessment evaluates who needs the program, how urgently they need it, or what kind of service might meet the need. An evaluability assessment assesses whether an evaluation is feasible or how stakeholders may make it more useful. A structured conceptualization helps stakeholders define the program, its target population, or its possible outcomes. An implementation evaluation assesses the fidelity of the delivery of the program, in light of some original plan or model. Finally, a process evaluation examines the process of delivering the program, including the consideration of alternative delivery procedures.

Given the relative newness of the CWECT program in Ontario, together with the lack of previous evaluations, we chose to conduct a formative evaluation. It would focus on clarifying the nature of the two local CWECTs, including their key goals, allocation of resources, main activities, and subjectively perceived outcomes. We wanted our evaluation to contribute to improving the CWECTs in the short term and to prepare the way for a subsequent outcome evaluation, one that could use more objective outcome measures than were available at present. As our evaluation questions and design evolved during our early field work in the summer and fall of 2015, we found, in fact, that our formative evaluation actually came to include aspects of all five of Trochim’s (2006) sub-types. That is, we investigated the needs of the local CWECT stakeholders, articulated a feasible evaluation plan and stakeholders’ role in contributing to its utility, conceptualized the program action-theory and depicted it in logic-model form, assessed how faithfully the original idea of the program had been implemented, and examined the process of service delivery, with recommendations for its improvement.

Stated another way, we sought to find out how the two local CWECT programs were working “on the ground”, in the opinions of their stakeholders (i.e., their young people in care, caregivers, and community-partner organizations). We tried to discover how clearly and with how much consensus the various stakeholders perceived the intended purpose of the two programs, how useful they saw program meetings, activities, and events, and how helpful they felt the programs had been in improving the educational prospects of their young people in care. We distilled our findings into a series of recommendations that we hoped would improve the programs and lay the groundwork for a future outcome evaluation.
1.2.2. Scope of the evaluation

The CWECT program in Ontario was limited to serving young people in out-of-home care before being extended in 2015 to youth in child protection who were living with their families in the community. In agreement with both local CWECT programs, however, the evaluation team agreed that the scope of our evaluation would be limited to young people in out-of-home care, defined as including Crown Wards, Society Wards, young people in adoption probation or Customary Care, and former Crown Wards who were now aged 18 or over and enrolled in the Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) program. Extending our evaluation to young people living with their families in the community was seen as unfeasible for several reasons: the one-year timeline and modest resources of the evaluation, the absence of any previous evaluations, and the likelihood that the CWECT program would struggle for some time to implement its new, greatly expanded mandate.

Besides our focus on the two local CWECT programs, we also wanted to contribute to the improvement of the Ontario-wide CWECT program. Between 2008 and 2012, the provincial program had grown from a pilot initiative involving only a few CWECTs and CASs into a provincial program of 21 CWECTs and some 40 CASs. Despite this rapid growth, no previous evaluation, formative or summative, had ever been carried out, to the best of our knowledge. We expected that much would be learned from our formative evaluation that could be applied by other CWECTs in Ontario and by the three Ministries that sponsor the overall initiative.

1.2.3. Evaluation questions addressed

In light of the purpose and scope of the formative evaluation and in collaboration with our local CWECT and CAS partners, we formulated four main evaluation questions:

1. What were the needs of the stakeholders (i.e., the local youth in care, caregivers, and community-partner organizations)?
2. Did the CWECT program meet the needs of its stakeholders?
3. How was the CWECT program being implemented?
4. Did the CWECT program appear to be working, in the opinion of the stakeholders?

1.3. History of the CWECT program in Ontario

The objective of the CWECT program in Ontario is to advance inter-organizational relationships between local community partners, including CASs, school boards, postsecondary institutions, and employment services, in order to provide a collaborative approach to meeting the education needs of youth in out-of-home care. Accordingly, CWECT activities may include “offering mentoring, tutoring, and counselling to help Crown Wards transition from high school to college, university or apprenticeship training” (Office of the Premier, 2007). In August 2007, the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Education (MED), and Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) announced that they would invest $500,000 to develop and pilot Crown Ward Educational Championship Teams (CWECTs) in four communities (Toronto, London, Ottawa, and Thunder Bay), with a plan to eventually expand the program throughout the province (Office of the Premier, 2007). Figure 1 provides a map of Ontario that shows the spread of local CWECTs between 2008 and 2012. (For a list of all of the CWECTs in Ontario, including their implementation date and websites, please see Appendix 2.)

The initial investment in the CWECT program was part of the Ontario government’s three-year, $30,000,000 strategy, Reaching Higher: 2005-2008, to help first-generation students pursue
postsecondary education (Government of Ontario, 2007). A further effort to support Crown Wards was provided in the 2008 provincial initiative, Breaking the Cycle: Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy: 2008-2013, which aimed to reduce the number of children living in poverty in Ontario. Specific initiatives aimed at Crown Wards, such as the continued funding and support of CWECTs and bursary programs under the Poverty Reduction Strategy, were termed the Crown Ward Success Strategy. During 2008-2013, the provincial government devoted $19,000,000 per year to implementing the Crown Ward Success Strategy, with approximately $1,600,000 of those funds allocated to CWECTs (MCYS, 2008, 2014) on a yearly basis. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) also provides funding and administrative assistance to the initiative. CWECTs were expanded in 2009 to an additional 10 communities (Thunder Bay Crown Ward Education Championship Team, 2015), and by 2012, the number of local CWECTs had grown to a total of 21 teams (MCYS, 2013). In 2014, a new Ontario poverty-reduction strategy was released, Realizing Our Potential: 2014-2019, although no information regarding the continued funding of CWECTs was provided in the new strategy description in 2014 or in the 2015 annual report.

The CWECT initiative is consistent with current efforts of MCYS, MED, and MAESD to improve the quality and effectiveness of services to vulnerable citizens, including young people in care. The initiative is also congruent with the recent provincial Call to Action of OACAS (2016) which, in collaboration with local CASs and with MCYS, has pledged to strive to continue to improve its services to children, youth, and families across Ontario.

Figure 1. Spread of CWECTs in Ontario, 2008-2012.

1.4. Review of the literature on similar educational advocacy programs

At present, there are no evidence-based interventions for increasing post-secondary access and retention for youth in foster care, according to Salazar, Roe, Ullrich, and Haggerty (2016). A number of educational advocacy programs, however, like CWECTs, do aim to support the educational goals of at-
risk youth. These programs have produced preliminary findings that suggest positive impacts, including fewer school absences or changes in schools, improved high school graduation rates, and successful resolution of education-related challenges (Advocates for Children of New York, 2005; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2004, 2005).

Educational advocacy programs “can be used to address a wide variety of logistical challenges related to achieving educational goals and can be implemented through volunteers or professionals” (Salazar et al., 2016). CWECTs in Ontario involve professionals from community partner organizations such as education, child welfare, and employment services in cross-sector collaboration (see Figure 2). Such collaboration includes the sharing of information, resources, and responsibilities to realize outcomes that cannot be achieved by one sector alone (Altshuler, 2003; Chuang & Wells, 2010; Salazar et al., 2016; Weinberg, Zetlin, & Shea, 2009). Based on these findings, many jurisdictions on the international scene have implemented programs that, like the Ontario-wide CWECT program, incorporate cross-sector collaboration. Several example follow.

1.4.1. Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance (USA)

The Foster Youth Alliance (FYA) was founded in 1999 to advocate for systems change to improve outcomes for foster youths and their families in Alameda County, California (Almeda County FYA, 2016). The more than 30 member agencies in the Alliance engaged in strategic advocacy to develop research and resources and bring about program improvement. Some of the FYA’s accomplishments included developing a policy requiring foster youths to participate in planning meetings in the two years prior to aging out of care; providing legislative and policy analyses to the public, organizing local advocacy, and engaging with local government about child welfare programs; engaging stakeholders across multiple sectors to improve post-secondary educational outcomes among current and former foster and probation youth; and contributing to the creation of a foster
youth campus support program for Peralta Community College District. On March 7, 2016, the FYP was disbanded, due to being "increasingly limited by its divided attention". The FYA noted, however, that its key advocacy functions had now been institutionalized within Alameda County's community of child-serving agencies. (For more information about the program, see Choca, Minoff, Angene, Byrnes, Kenneally, et al., 2004.)

1.4.2. Foster Ed (USA)

The Foster Youth Education (FosterEd) initiative, launched in 2010, helps localities develop educational advocacy systems by forming partnerships with local education, child welfare, and judicial agencies. Anyone working with foster children (e.g., teachers, child welfare workers, judges, foster parents, etc.) can refer a child to FosterEd. The program helps youth identify an educational champion and other supportive adults to form the youth's education team. Team members are trained and coached by a FosterEd education liaison person and work collaboratively to help youth identify educational challenges and achieve their academic goals. To date, the program has been implemented across California, Arizona, and Indiana. (For more information, see http://foster-ed.org/.)

1.4.3. Kansas Partnership for Educating Kids in Care (KPEKC; USA)

KPEKC is a cross-systems collaborative that, since 2011, brings together the child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and court systems to address educational outcomes for youth in care. The focus of KPEKC is to identify and address barriers to the educational stability of young people in care and to share data across systems (Thompson, Holmes, Levy, Garstka, & Lieberman, 2014). KPEKE includes the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Kansas State Department of Education, University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research, and University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, as well as representatives from local school boards and foster parents. Members of KPEKE form cross-systems work teams related to policy, data sharing, youth engagement, and strategic communication to address each of its goals. The work teams meet as necessary to accomplish assigned tasks, and KPEKC meets three times a year to monitor progress and identify next steps. (For more information, see http://kpekc.org/.)

1.4.4. Children and Youth Area Partnerships (Australia)

The organization, founded in 2013, brings together senior representatives in a given local area from state, commonwealth, and local governments, the community sector, and the broader community. New ways of working together are being tested to respond to the needs of foster youth. As a result of the partnership, more vulnerable children are being enrolled in kindergarten and provided with free educational resources, such as books. Partners are asked to co-design solutions that provide more responsive services. Also, in collaboration with Federation University, local evidence about what works is being collected and analyzed, to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people. (For more information, see http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/children-and-youth-area-partnerships.)

1.4.5. Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELSIS; UK)

CELCIS, founded in 2011, is composed of a partnership among foster parents, social workers, teachers, nurses, charities, councils, and government officials. The goal of CELCIS is to ensure that people working with looked after children have the skills and confidence to improve service delivery. CELCIS supports this vision through providing professional development, sharing research, evidence, and examples of good practice. A strategic steering committee governs CELCIS, setting annual objectives
that are then carried out in collaborative projects. http://foster-ed.org/. In 2014-15, CELCIS worked in partnership with over 150 organizations and 31 local child welfare agencies. (For more information, see https://www.celcis.org/.)

1.4.6. Summary regarding educational advocacy organizations

The programs mentioned show that jurisdictions in several countries are, like Ontario, trying to coordinate services that already exist in communities, rather than duplicating services or providing services in silos. These jurisdictions believe that communication networks linking youth-serving agencies should be used to increase youth involvement and support shared efforts. Despite these promising developments, strong evidence regarding their effectiveness is still lacking. Much more attention to evaluation needs to be paid by governments and educational advocacy groups themselves to discover truly ‘best’ practices.

1.5. Major economic payoffs from post-secondary graduation for young people in care

In a very significant new report on the short-term and longer-term (8-year) economic payoffs of PSE in Canada, Ross Finnie, a labour economist and director of the Education Policy Research Initiative (EPRI) at the University of Ottawa, has shown clearly that PSE graduation is linked to higher salaries. In their recent study, Barista or Better? New Evidence on the Earnings of Post-Secondary Education Graduates: A Tax-linkage Approach, Finnie, Afshar, Bozkurt, Miyairi, and Pavlic (2016) demonstrated that the myth of the highly educated but poorly paid barista is just that—a myth. Their tax-linked data showed, in fact, that 2005 university bachelor-level graduates in Canada earned an average of $45,000 (in 2014 dollars) during their first year after graduation and an average of $75,000 eight years after graduation, an average gain of 66%. Their data also showed that 2005 college diploma graduates in Canada earned an average of $33,900 (in 2014 dollars) during the first year after graduation and $54,000 eight years after graduation, an average increase of 59%. (See Appendix 1 for infographics from Finnie et al. [2016] on the bachelor and diploma graduates’ earnings.) Those with bachelor’s degrees or college diplomas who had studied engineering, mathematics, computer science, or business had higher incomes after graduation and greater earnings increases over the 8-year post-graduation period. Graduates in most other fields of study, however, including the humanities and social sciences, also did well. It is crucial that young people in care, their caregivers, and staff in community-partner organizations become familiar with the encouraging findings of Finnie et al. (2016), using them to debunk the persistent myth of the underemployed barista and motivating young people to prepare for, enroll in, and graduate from PSE options that interest them.

1.6. Factors related to the educational outcomes of youth in care

It is well known that many young people in care experience lower levels of academic achievement than youth in the general population, including lower rates of high school graduation and entry to PSE (Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012; Pecora, Williams, Kessler, et al., 2006; O’Higgins, Sebba, & Luke, 2015; Stone, 2007; Trout et al., 2008). Many pre-care and in-care experiences have been found to predict lower educational success for youth in care. For example, pre-care factors such as abuse or neglect by birth parents and subsequent removal from the home can drastically influence a maltreated child’s self-regulation capacities, cognitive functioning, and interpersonal skills (Pears, Kim & Fisher, 2008; Tessier & Flynn, 2015; Tessier, O’Higgins, & Flynn, 2016). In-care events that can have a negative impact on educational outcomes include placement instability (Brownell et al., 2015; Pecora, 2012); school changes (Burley & Halpern, 2001; Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith, 2001); high absenteeism (Brownell et al., 2015); a low level of educational involvement by caregivers (O’Higgins, Sebba, & Gardner, 2014); disrupted relationships (e.g., with peers, caregivers, social
workers, teachers; Courtney et al., 2001; Darmody et al., 2013); and social or emotional difficulties (O’Higgins, Sebba, & Gardner, 2014; Tessier, O’Higgins, & Flynn, 2016).

Without mastery of academic skills and success in education, youth in care are at increased risk of additional adverse experiences, both short-term and long-term, such as school dropout, involvement in criminal activity, homelessness, and suicide (Forsman, Brännström, Vinnerljung, and Hjern, 2016; Trout et al, 2008). Conversely, school engagement and success are important predictors of adult resilience and healthy outcomes (Finnie et al., 2016). Fortunately, the often poor educational progress of young people in care is gaining increasing attention by practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.

1.7. Educational outcomes of young people in care in Ontario

The Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS, 2014) has estimated that only about 46% of former youths in care have graduated from high school by the time they are 19 or 20 years of age, compared with 83% of young people in the general population. Part of the reason for this much lower rate of high school graduation lies in the earlier academic difficulties and more frequent placement in special education of young people in care. One obvious consequence of not having a high school diploma is blocked or delayed entry into PSE (apprenticeships, college, or university).

A good deal of research on the educational and other developmental outcomes experienced by young people in care in Ontario has been based on data collected with the Assessment and Action Record (AAR; Flynn, Vincent, & Miller, 2011) from the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) project. The project is now in its 15th consecutive year of monitoring the service needs and developmental outcomes of children and youth who are in the care of 42 of the 47 CASs in Ontario. We summarize some of that research now.

Flynn, Ghazal, Legault, Vandermeulen, and Petrick (2004) used AAR data to compare two groups of children in care (i.e., 5-9 and 10-15 year olds) to same-aged peers in a national sample of the Canadian population. The results showed that 78% of the younger children and 80% of the older children were rated by their foster caregivers as performing in the same range as the lowest third of the general-population comparison groups in terms of reading, spelling, mathematics, and overall educational performance. Other OnLAC data have shown that 68% of 10-15 year olds in care in Ontario have undergone three or more unplanned school changes and that the percentage of young people experiencing grade retention increased with age, with rates of 16% for 5-9 year, 27% for 10-15 year olds, and 32% for 16-20 year olds (Miller, Flynn, & Vandermeulen, 2008).

In a recent AAR-based study, Tessier, O’Higgins, and Flynn (2016) identified many predictors of educational success among young people in care in Ontario. Tessier et al. (2016) used a cross-sectional OnLAC sample of 3,662 young people in care, aged 12-17, and a longitudinal subsample of 962. Table 1 displays their findings. In the cross-sectional sample, the risk factors of neglect, grade retention, substantial educational needs, ethnic background often associated with discrimination or poverty, behavioural difficulties, and the use of soft drugs predicted lower educational success. On the other hand, the protective factors of higher caregiver educational aspirations for the young person and, on the part of the young person in care, a longer placement with the current caregiver, more internal developmental assets, female gender, more positive mental health, and higher educational aspirations were all associated with greater educational success. In the longitudinal sample, over a three-year period, soft-drug use by the young person in care emerged as an important risk factor, whereas more internal developmental assets, female gender, and more positive mental health all predicted better educational success.
The implications for practice and policy are several. We need to encourage high educational aspirations by young people themselves and their caregivers as well as stable caregiving, preferably in family-based placements. Positive mental health will have major educational and related payoffs for young people in care, as will building a greater number of internal developmental assets. Finally, we need to assess systematically, identify early, and intervene as effectively as possible with the key factors that hinder educational progress, namely, neglect, poverty, grade retention, learning difficulties, behavioural problems, and drug use.

Finally, Hickey, Flynn, and Lostracco (2016) reported recently on data collected with the Woodcock-Johnson III (WJIII) tests of academic achievement (Woodcock & Johnson, 2001) on a sample of 187 children in care in Ontario, aged 5-16 years. As shown in Table 2, the children’s results in reading, spelling, and math were very poor. The “average” grade in which the children were in school was grade 6 (mean grade = 6.25); on the WJIII achievement tests, however, their grade-equivalent results ranged between grades 2 and 3. In percentile terms, this performance was between the 4th and 14th percentiles, on the WJIII norms. Clearly, these Ontario children in care will need a great deal of effective help if they are to make progress in closing the large achievement gap between themselves and their age peers in the general population.

Table 1. Risk and protective factors related to short-term and longer-term educational success in young people in care in Ontario (Tessier, O’Higgins, & Flynn, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factors (associated with less educational success)</th>
<th>Protective factors (associated with more educational success)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-term findings</strong> (based on the cross-sectional sample, (N = 3,662))</td>
<td><strong>Longer-term findings over a three-year period</strong> (based on the longitudinal subsample, (N = 962))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Entering into care because of neglect</td>
<td>- Having a caregiver with higher educational aspirations for the young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being held back in school</td>
<td>- Living with the same caregiver(s) for a longer period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having greater special educational needs</td>
<td>- Possessing more internal developmental assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being part of an ethnic minority (Black Canadian)</td>
<td>- Being a girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having a greater number of behavioural problems</td>
<td>- Experiencing more positive mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being a soft drug user</td>
<td>- Young person having higher educational aspirations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, a good number of children in care in Ontario are seriously lagging in terms of their basic skills in reading and math, which helps explain low rates of high school graduation. This weakness in basic academic skills has its roots in low literacy scores in early childhood (Flynn, Côté, & Cheung, 2016) and in the primary-school years. Unless corrected by means of evidence-based interventions, such as those described in chapter 4 of this report, realization of the high educational aspirations that many youths in care hold for themselves will be very difficult. Moreover, even those youths who do graduate from high school may find PSE programs to be daunting. For, as Courtney, Dworsky, Lee, and Raap (2010) have found in the US, there is a trend among young people in care of increasing PSE
enrollments but decreasing PSE graduation rates, compared with young people in the general population.

Table 2. Average performance on a standardized test of academic achievement (Woodcock-Johnson III) by a sample of 187 children in care in Ontario, aged 5-16 and whose current average grade level was grade 6.25 (Hickey, Flynn, & Lostracco, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Skill</th>
<th>Grade Equivalent</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall academic skills</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Broad reading</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading fluency</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>14th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reading comprehension</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spelling</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>14th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Broad math</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Math calculations</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Applied math problems</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>14th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 2. Methods

2.1. Our approach to formative evaluation

To guide the evaluation, we adopted a flexible, 10-step approach to formative evaluation developed by Smith (1989). She called her model “evaluability assessment” (EA), in continuity with a term coined a decade earlier by Wholey (1979). Wholey’s early version of EA designated a strategy of formative evaluation that aimed to make program evaluations as useful as possible to decision-makers, the hallmark for Wholey of successful evaluations. Thus, his EA model sought information in key program documents, gathered input from stakeholders concerning program goals, content, implementation, and operation, clarified program objectives, recommended needed service improvements, and prepared the way for fuller outcome evaluations (Trevisan, 2007; Trevisan and Huang, 2003). By the time Smith (1989) elaborated her approach, EA for her had already evolved into an evaluation tool that could be employed to comprehend stakeholders’ awareness of the components, goals, and objectives of a program and what was required to obtain desired outcomes. Smith (1979) also saw EA as a valuable tool of program development. She thus proposed her 10-step model as an accessible guide for conducting useful formative evaluations (Trevisan, 2007), and it is in this sense that we adopted her approach, which we see as very compatible with Trochim’s (2006) definition of formative evaluation and its five sub-types.

As previously mentioned, no previous evaluation of any kind had been conducted of either CWECT-HS-FLA or CWECT-LLG-R, nor, it seemed, of the Ontario CWECT program as a whole. Given that in our early field work we found that little guidance (other than business plans) seemed to have been disseminated on the CWECT initiative by the three sponsoring Ontario Ministries and that people
involved in the local CWECTs appeared to have little acquaintance with the action-theory underlying the program, we began our formative evaluation by clarifying the action-theory and key objectives in the form of a logic model of the CWECT program. For, assessing the effects of a program presupposes a clear idea of the logic connecting its intended activities and its outcomes (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004).

2.2. Smith’s (1989) 10-step model

To structure our formative evaluation, we followed, as mentioned, Smith’s 10-step model (see Table 3). We were guided, for example, by steps 5-8 in interviewing stakeholders to discover how they perceived their local CWECT programs. What, in their view, were the main needs of the various stakeholders (i.e., the young people in care, caregivers, and community organizational partners), and to what extent did their local CWECTs seem to be meeting these needs? What was the likelihood that the CWECTs would achieve their intended outcomes? And, in light of Smith’s step 10, for example, what revisions might we suggest to improve the CWECT program, and what would a future outcome evaluation require?

Table 3. Smith’s 10-step model of formative evaluation (see Trevisan & Huang, 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td><strong>Determine purpose, secure commitment, and identify work group.</strong> A clearly articulated evaluation purpose helps foster commitment to the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td><strong>Define boundaries of program to be studied.</strong> Limit-setting further clarifies the purpose and the role of the evaluation team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td><strong>Identify and analyze program documents.</strong> Existing program documents (e.g., grant applications) can help to provide a sense of the intent of the program, as well as what is actually occurring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td><strong>Develop/clarify program theory.</strong> Developing a program theory (as captured in a logic model) helps to construct a reasonable depiction of how the program works so that the plausibility of the model can be assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td><strong>Identify and interview stakeholders.</strong> Interviews focusing on what stakeholders know and perceive to be true about the program can provide important insights and support for program continuation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td><strong>Describe stakeholder perceptions of program.</strong> Summaries and comparisons of stakeholder perceptions are important for further understanding of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td><strong>Identify stakeholder needs, concerns, and differences in perceptions.</strong> Differences can indicate misperceptions of the program’s purpose and theory, or that a program is not meeting the needs of its stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td><strong>Determine plausibility of program model.</strong> Data collected in earlier steps can be used to determine the extent to which the program is properly implemented and its activities are appropriate, to be able to predict that desired outcomes will be met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td><strong>Draw conclusions and make recommendations.</strong> Drawn from the data, conclusions and recommendations can help stakeholders understand key themes and next steps for program improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td><strong>Plan specific steps for utilization of evaluation data.</strong> Outlining ideas for use of the evaluation data might assist with future evaluations of the program (e.g., an outcome evaluation).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3. Overview of CWECT-HS-FLA

CWECT-HS-FLA, founded in 2007, was operated jointly by CAS-HS and CAS-FLA. Together, the two CASs served approximately 1,000 children and youth in care, including some 400 Crown Wards, in 2014-2015. CWECT-HS-FLA was composed of 18 members: 2 co-chairs (one primary and one secondary), 1 children’s services manager, 2 youth in transition workers, 1 children’s service worker, 1 local university representative, 2 local college representatives (1 from each college), 2 employment advisors, 1 part-time student representative, and several school board representatives (1 from the French public district school board, 2 from local Catholic school boards, and 3 from two public school boards). The focus of CWECT-HS-FLA was holistic in nature, aiming to help all young people in care (i.e., not only Crown Wards) in the pursuit of PSE, apprenticeships, or employment training. The funding for CWECT-HS-FLA of $75,000 per year was provided by the Ontario Ministries of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), Children and Youth Services (MCYS), and Education (MED). In 2014-2015, CWECT-HS-FLA held approximately 10 events for its youth in care. As shown in Table 4, the events were quite varied in nature and targeted primarily at youth in care. It is worth noting that there were no specific events held for community partners or caregivers in 2014-2015, although caregivers were invited to all events for youth.

Table 4. CWECT-HS-FLA events held in 2014-2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Target audience</th>
<th>Estimated number attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College tours</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>No record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University tours</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>No record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University experiential learning event (i.e., youth attend university for 1 week and take a variety of classes)</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>23 youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College events (e.g., skills competition)</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>11 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural day</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>8 youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational speaking event/workshop</td>
<td>Youth (grades 11-12 only)</td>
<td>No record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culinary event</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>No record</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.1. CAS-HS

CAS-HS is situated in a small city of 50,000 and serves three rural counties in Ontario (Canada) and their surrounding areas. In 2014-2015, CAS-HS served approximately 700 youths in out-of-home care.

2.3.2. CAS-FLA

CAS-FLA, situated in a city of 125,000 in Ontario, serves 3 rural counties and their surrounding areas. In 2014-2015, CAS-FLA served approximately 300 youths in out-of-home care.

2.4. Overview of CWECT-LLG-R

CWECT-LLG-R also comprised two Children’s Aid Societies (CAS-LLG and CAS-R) and, as of November-December, 2015, served about 310 youths in out-of-home care (including approximately 200 Crown Wards), as well as around 120 youths in continued care (i.e., 18-21 years old). The CWECT-LLG-R committee consisted of 16 members: 1 CWECT chair from the child welfare sector (CAS-LLG), 2 private contractors (1 of which is the CWECT project coordinator), 2 additional representatives from child welfare (1 each from CAS-LLG and CAS-R), 2 youth-in-transition workers, 3 local college
representatives (1 from each college), 1 Ministry of Education representative, and various school board representatives (1 from the French public district school board, 2 from local Catholic school boards, and 2 from local public school boards). As in the case of CWECT-HS-FLA, the target audience of CWECT-LLG-R was broader than that suggested in the program documentation provided by the sponsoring Ministries; CWECT-LLG-R aimed to help all children in care (i.e., not only Crown Wards), including youths aged 18-21 in continued care, to plan for PSE and employment. Finally, CWECT-LLG-R received $75,000 annually (as did CWECT-HS-FLA) from the three sponsoring Ministries, MAESD, MCYS, and MED.

As Table 5 shows, in 2014-2015, the CWECT-LLG-R held approximately 7 events for their youths in care, in addition to various college or university tours. Notably, an event was also held for community partners and caregivers in 2014-2015, although only for stakeholders served by CAS-LLG. Caregivers are usually invited to attend events for youths.

2.4.1: CAS-LLG

CAS-LLG is situated in a small city of 22,000 in Ontario and covers 3 counties and their surrounding areas. In 2014-2015, it served about 160 youths in out-of-home care, as well as around 80 youths through continued care (i.e., 18-21 year olds).

2.4.2: CAS-R

CAS-R is located in a small city of 24,000 and serves a rural county in Ontario. During 2014-2015, CAS-R served approximately 150 youth in out-of-home care, as well as about 40 youths through continued care (i.e., 18-21 year olds).

Table 5. CWECT-LLG-R events held in 2014-2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Target audience</th>
<th>Estimated number attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College/university tours</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>9 youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College experiential learning events</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>38 youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career information session/workshop</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>12 youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sens at Work/School” workshops</td>
<td>Youth, caregivers, community partners</td>
<td>29 youth, 10 caregivers, 8 community partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational speakers</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>32 youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational speaker/CWECT information session</td>
<td>Caregivers, community partners</td>
<td>40 caregivers, 78 community partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5. Participants

In the current evaluation, the participants (from CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R combined) included 23 team members, 103 foster caregivers, 65 youth in care, and 12 community partners not directly involved as members of a CWECT (e.g., child welfare workers or youth-in-transition workers). (Please see Tables 6 and 7 for details). It should be noted that the number of respondents to our youth and community-partner questionnaires was lower than we had originally planned. Caution is thus needed in interpreting the data for these small samples, which are not necessarily representative of the larger groups from which they come.
2.6. Procedures

2.6.1. Data collection

A mixed-methods approach was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation team used a range of data collection methods: online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, reviews of program documentation (e.g., previous minutes of meeting, and business plans), literature reviews, and information gathered through attendance at CWECT monthly meetings. The evaluation team for CWECT-LLG-R also held a youth focus group. The larger evaluation team also met monthly to discuss the project and also consulted two other CWECTs that were not part of the current evaluation, to understand better the CWECT initiative. The perspectives of different groups of people (i.e., program personnel, youth in care, caregivers, and community partners) were included. Table 6 shows the data collection summaries for CWECT-HS-FLA (CAS-HS and CAS-FLA), while Table 7 displays the data collection summaries for CWECT-LLG-R (CAS-LLG and CAS-R).

Table 6. Data collection summary for CWECT-HS-FLA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Collection Method(s)</th>
<th>Descriptive Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CWECT Team Members (N = 11)</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>61% response rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Organizations represented: CAS-HS and CAS-FLA, employment services, school boards, colleges and universities, counselling services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Caregivers (N = 63)</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>26 or 41.3% from CAS-HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 or 39.7% from CAS-FLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 or 17.5% from “other”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Youth in Care (N = 26)</td>
<td>Questionnaires (n = 21)</td>
<td>16 or 76.2% from CAS-HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone interviews (n = 5)</td>
<td>2 or 9.5% from CAS-FLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 4.8% from “other”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 or 9.6% did not indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community Partners (N = 8)</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>2 or 25% from CAS-HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 12.5% from CAS-FLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 12.5% from a counselling centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 12.5% from a college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 or 25% from an employment agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 12.5% youth transition worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Data collection summary for CWECT-LLG-R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Collection Method(s)</th>
<th>Descriptive Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CWECT Team Members (N = 12)</td>
<td>Phone interviews</td>
<td>80% response rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Organizations represented: CAS-LLG and CAS-R, Ministry of Education, employment services, school boards &amp; colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Caregivers (N = 40)</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>15 or 37.5% from CAS-LLG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 or 62.5% from CAS-R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Youth in care (N = 39)</td>
<td>Questionnaires (n = 24)</td>
<td>20 or 51.3% from CAS-LLG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone interviews (n = 6)</td>
<td>19 or 48.7% from CAS-R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Focus group ($n = 11$)

4. **Community Partners**
   - Questionnaires
   - 4 or 100% from CAS-R
   - 4 or 100% Children/Youth Services Workers

### 2.6.2. Data analysis

All interviews were audio recorded. Qualitative summaries and representative quotes were generated to describe sample characteristics, youth, caregiver, and community partner needs, and perceived changes in knowledge and/or behaviour. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize quantitative data.

### 2.7. Measures

A semi-structured interview guide for interviewing CWECT committee members was used (see Appendix 3). Program personnel from both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R participated in interviews of 30 to 60 minutes in which information was collected about perceived stakeholder needs, the purpose and activities of the local CWECT, and the perceived impact of the CWECT on improving educational and employment outcomes for local young people in care.

A semi-structured interview guide for youth in care was also used (see Appendix 4). Young people in care from both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R also participated in 30-minute interviews, either in person or over the telephone. These interviews aimed at gathering information regarding the youths’ academic and employment aspirations, sources of support, awareness of the CWECT initiative, knowledge of available PSE financial resources, and views regarding the importance of PSE.

A questionnaire for young people in care that could be administered either online or in a pen-and-paper version was employed (see Appendix 5). The questions were mainly closed ended, with some open-ended; they dealt with the young people’s academic and employment needs, participation in previous CWECT events, and awareness of current financial resources related to PSE.

An online questionnaire for caregivers (see Appendix 6) collected data on caregivers’ demographic variables, self-perceived influence on the educational plans of their young people in care, needs in order to be able to better support their youths in care, familiarity with previous CWECT events, and awareness of available PSE funding opportunities.

Finally, an online questionnaire for community partners was developed (see Appendix 7). This instrument was used to gather information regarding the partners’ awareness of the CWECT initiative, knowledge of PSE funding opportunities available to young people in care, and perceived needs in order to be able to better support young people.

### Chapter 3. Findings and Recommendations

#### 3.1. Description of logic models

As noted in step 4 of Smith’s 10-step model of evaluability assessment (see Table 3), developing or clarifying the theory of a program is an essential step in an evaluation. Typically, this step involves the elaboration of a logic model, which is simply a visual depiction or diagram that describes how the program in question is intended to work. The logic model captures the various activities of the program and how these are linked to its outcomes, such that the plausibility of the model can be assessed (Alkin, 2011).
In the current evaluation, a general CWECT program logic model was developed to illustrate the underlying theory of the broad CWECT initiative. The logic model depicted the relationships between stakeholder needs and the intended resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the CWECT program (see Table 8). Subsequently, this generic logic model was reviewed separately by stakeholders in CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R and tailored to the unique elements of each. (See Appendix 8 for the logic model for CWECT-HS-FLA and Appendix 9 for the logic model for CWECT-LLG-R).

During the development of the generic and specific logic models, the evaluation team and stakeholders whom we consulted had the critical insight that rather than just one group of CWECT program stakeholders (i.e., young people in care), there were actually three groups or levels of stakeholders, namely, young people in care, their caregivers, and community-partner organizations. Documentation for the CWECT initiative typically identifies only Crown Wards as program stakeholders, but this is incomplete. The two CWECTs that we evaluated intended to serve (and actually did serve) a broader range of young people in care than Crown Wards. In addition, they also sought to serve (and did serve) the young people’s caregivers and staff members of diverse community partners (e.g., schools, colleges, or universities), all of whom contributed in complementary ways to the young people’s educational progress.

3.1.1. Generic logic model for the CWECT initiative as a whole

Table 8 presents our generic CWECT logic model. According to available program documents (e.g., business plans) and our discussions with the three levels of stakeholders, the CWECT initiative aimed to improve Crown Wards’ academic and employment outcomes by increasing stakeholders’ awareness of factors contributing to the young people’s educational success, especially but not only at the PSE, training, and employment level. Caregivers often appeared to have knowledge gaps regarding their crucial role in assisting young people in educational or employment planning. (See section 1.5 and Appendix 1 for new information on the significant economic payoffs of college or university graduation in Canada.) Many staff in community-partner organizations felt they lacked knowledge of the unique educational and employment needs of Crown Wards and other young people in care and how best to meet these needs. Discussions with CWECT committee members made it clear that the provincial program intended to foster stable connections and social support for Crown Wards (even if the local CWECT committees saw a need to serve all young people in care—and not only Crown Wards—who required their assistance.
Table 8. Generic logic model for the broader CWECT initiative.

Note: This table is intended for use by those responsible for the delivery of the program. PSE = post-secondary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>STAKEHOLDER NEEDS (problems program intends to address)</th>
<th>INTENDED ACTIVITIES (interventions)</th>
<th>INTENDED INPUTS (human, physical, financial &amp; pedagogical resources)</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTPUTS (service products or “units of service”)</th>
<th>INTENDED IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &lt; 2 years)</th>
<th>INTENDED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits 2-3 years)</th>
<th>INTENDED LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &gt; 3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crown Wards</td>
<td>Often have poor academic and employment outcomes</td>
<td>Community inventory</td>
<td>Human: program staff and community partnerships</td>
<td>Increase in awareness about PSE options while in high school</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards participating in PSE or training</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards completing high school</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards completing PSE or training (e.g., graduating from college, university, or apprenticeship)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited stable connections and relationships</td>
<td>Communication strategy</td>
<td>Physical: program supplies (e.g., meeting materials) and meeting rooms</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards in experiential learning opportunities while in high school</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards completing high school</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards attaining stable, well-paying employment</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited awareness of value of pursuing post-secondary education or training</td>
<td>Workshops or experiential-learning opportunities</td>
<td>Financial: ministry funding and in-kind support (e.g., project manager time)</td>
<td>Increase in number of Crown Wards planning to participate in PSE or training</td>
<td>Increase in communication with Crown Wards about the value of pursuing PSE or training</td>
<td>Increase in sense of competence in being able to support academic or employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited knowledge about how to support the education and employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical (e.g., guidance from the three Ministries)</td>
<td>Increase in number of caregivers participating in PSE or training</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of their role in education/employment planning for Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of Crown Wards pursuing PSE</td>
<td>Increase in communication with Crown Wards about the value of pursuing PSE or training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>Communication strategy</td>
<td>Research: literature and data from Assessment and Action Record (AAR), from Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) project</td>
<td>Increase in involvement in education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of Crown Wards pursuing PSE</td>
<td>Increase in sense of competence in being able to support academic or employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited awareness of their role in education &amp; employment planning for Crown Wards</td>
<td>Information sessions</td>
<td>Number of activities directed at caregivers for the past year</td>
<td>Increase in number of caregivers participating in PSE or training</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of Crown Wards pursuing PSE</td>
<td>Increase in sense of competence in being able to support academic or employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited awareness of value of pursuing post-secondary education or training</td>
<td></td>
<td>How many caregivers attended each main event</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of their role in education/employment planning for Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of Crown Wards pursuing PSE</td>
<td>Increase in sense of competence in being able to support academic or employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited knowledge about how to support the education and employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in awareness of Crown Wards pursuing PSE</td>
<td>Increase in sense of competence in being able to support academic or employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
<td>Increase in proactive education or employment planning with Crown Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>STAKEHOLDER NEEDS (problems program intends to address)</td>
<td>INTENDED ACTIVITIES (interventions)</td>
<td>INTENDED INPUTS (human, physical, financial &amp; pedagogical resources)</td>
<td>INTENDED OUTPUTS (service products or “units of service”)</td>
<td>INTENDED IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &lt; 2 years)</td>
<td>INTENDED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits 2-3 years)</td>
<td>INTENDED LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &gt; 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community partners</td>
<td>Limited knowledge about education and employment needs of Crown Wards and how best to support these needs</td>
<td>Regular CWECT meetings Partnership protocol</td>
<td>Number of CWECT meetings per month for the past year Number of members and number who attended each meeting</td>
<td>Increase in awareness and communications regarding their contributions to Crown Wards’ PSE and employment</td>
<td>Increase in academic and employment support for Crown Wards</td>
<td>Positive relationships and regular communication between child welfare and other systems (e.g., PSE) involved in the education or employment planning for Crown Wards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All groups</td>
<td>Limited knowledge about how to support the education and employment needs of Crown Wards</td>
<td>Monitor and evaluate success of the program (i.e., business plans, data collection) Modify program as needed</td>
<td>Number of activities from the community partners directed at Crown Wards for the past year Number of activities directed at community partners for the past year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To reach these objectives, the CWECT program aimed to deliver a range of activities with Crown Wards, their caregivers, or personnel in community-partner organizations. Such intended activities included workshops and experiential learning opportunities about PSE and career planning. Regular CWECT committee meetings were also important intended activities, as they allowed pertinent discussions about the academic and employment outcomes of Crown Wards and promoted crucial relationships among individuals involved in the young people’s education. To accomplish these planned activities, sufficient resources—human (e.g., staff), physical (e.g., meeting space), financial (e.g., funding and in-kind supports), and pedagogical (e.g., guidance from governing bodies)—were deemed necessary. Other information, such as descriptions of similar programs (e.g., those described in section 1.4) or outcome data on Crown Wards in the Assessment and Action Record (AAR) reports provided each year to CASs by the Ontario Looking after Children (OnLAC) project), could also be used in the planning and evaluation of program activities.

Assuming that the foregoing resources were adequate to support planned CWECT program inputs and activities, the main outcomes or benefits that the program intended to obtain for Crown Wards, caregivers and community partners (according to the program documents that we consulted and the interviews and surveys we conducted with program stakeholders) were the following:

- **In the immediate term (i.e., stakeholder benefits in the first 2 years), the primary intended outcome was to increase awareness in all stakeholder groups about PSE and employment for Crown Wards (e.g., increase awareness in community partners about contributions they could make to support Crown Wards). Immediate intended outcomes also included short-term behaviour changes related to education and employment planning for Crown Wards (e.g., an intended increase in the number of youth participating in experiential learning opportunities about education and career planning).**

- **In the intermediate term (i.e., stakeholder benefits over 2-3 years), intended outcomes included short-term behaviour changes related to education and employment success for Crown Wards (e.g., an intended increase in the number of Crown Wards entering part-time employment or volunteer positions), as well as availability of relevant resources (e.g., an intended increase in academic and employment support for Crown Wards by community partners).**

- **In the longer-term (i.e., stakeholder benefits beyond 3 years), intended outcomes included long-term, stable behaviour changes related to education and employment success for Crown Wards (e.g., an intended increase in the number of Crown Wards completing PSE), as well as stable and adequate social support (e.g., more positive relationships and regular communication between child welfare and other community partners involved in the education of Crown Ward youth).**

### 3.1.2. Logic model for CWECT-HS-FLA (Appendix 8)

Compared with the generic logic model for the provincial CWECT initiative as a whole, which focused on Crown Wards, the logic model for CWECT-HS-FLA was different in that it showed an intention to serve all youth in care, including Crown Wards, young people on adoption probation, and former Crown Wards over the age of 18. Also, when reviewing their logic model, CWECT-HS-FLA committee members also identified low self-confidence and low engagement related to PSE and employment planning as especially important needs of their young people. Thus, CWECT-HS-FLA included, as intended long-term outcomes, improving their young people’s self-confidence regarding education and employment. Finally, CWECT-HS-FLA also included a youth in a part-time volunteer position as a member of the team. Subsequently, this volunteer position was replaced by a paid, part-time position.
for a college or university student, whose role was to liaise with youth in care. In other respects, the needs, activities, and outcomes seen as important by CWECT-HS-FLA members were largely the same as those in the logic model for the broader CWECT initiative presented in Table 8.

### 3.1.3. Logic model for CWECT-LLG-R (Appendix 9)

As in the case of CWECT-HS-FLA, an important difference in the logic model for CWECT-LLG-R (compared to the generic logic model for the CWECT initiative as a whole) was the focus on all youth in care, including Crown Wards, young people on adoption probation, and former Crown Wards over the age of 18. CWECT-LLG-R also identified low-self efficacy as an important need of their young people, which they hoped to improve over time by means of a range of activities. CWECT-LLG-R also aimed to engage as “corporate parents” a range of caregivers, including foster and kinship parents, as well as caregivers in group-home settings. In contrast to CWECT-HS-FLA, CWECT-LLG-R did not include in its logic model Crown Ward youths as an intended resource.

### 3.2. Evaluation question 1: What are the needs of the various stakeholders?

#### 3.2.1. Findings for CWECT-HS-FLA for evaluation question 1

**3.2.1.1. What are the needs of the young people in care served by CWECT-HS-FLA?**

Demographic data are presented in Table 9 for the 19 young people in care from CWECT-HS-FLA who completed the online questionnaire (see Appendix 5). The majority of CWECT-HS-FLA youth stated that that they thought PSE was important and that they planned to pursue PSE, mainly at the college level. Regarding the young people’s PSE ambitions, however, we must remember that many (but by no means all) performed significantly below their level of academic potential. For example, as we showed in Table 2 (in section 1.7), the average educational achievement of a sample of 187 children from three CASs in Ontario on standardized measures of reading and math fell between the 4th and the 14th percentile, much below the average for young people of the same age in the general population. On a measure of broad reading, the average performance of the sample was at the 12th percentile; on broad math, it was at the 4th percentile; and on overall academic skills, it was at the 9th percentile. These data were gathered at the pre-test assessments conducted as part of several intervention studies for young people in care who were thought likely to need and benefit from the interventions. Thus, these results should not be over-generalized, but they do suggest—in line with a good deal of research in Canada and other countries—that a substantial number of children and youth in care are in urgent need of effective educational assistance, such as tutoring. (See, in chapter 4 of this report, several online resources that provide online descriptions of evidence-based interventions that have been shown to be effective for improving educational and related outcomes.)
Table 9: Demographic data for youth in care (N = 19) served by CWECT-HS-FLA (from online youth questionnaire, Appendix 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of respondents</th>
<th>Number (%) of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS-HS</td>
<td>16 (76.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS-FLA</td>
<td>2 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Number (%) of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11 (52.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8 (38.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Average age = 18 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current type of living</th>
<th>Number (%) of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>12 (57.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship care</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group home</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent living</td>
<td>5 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current school grade</th>
<th>Number (%) of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6 (28.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in school</td>
<td>3 (14.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently working (part-or-full time)</th>
<th>Number (%) of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13 (61.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (part-time)</td>
<td>5 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (full-time)</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 21 youths completed the online questionnaire, with demographic data available for 19.

The consequences for PSE are that young people in care whose basic skills in reading and math are weak may find that the academic demands of PSE are simply too great, leading many to drop out. As Finnie, Mueller, Sweetman, and Usher (2008) noted, positive parental messages about PSE when the child is young, together with parents’ level of education, are important influences on young people’s access to PSE. It is their performance in PSE, however, that is decisive for retention. Recent research in child welfare is consistent with what the research by Finnie et al. (2008) has found regarding poor academic performance and low retention in PSE.

(Note: In formulating the various recommendations to be found in the present chapter, we have noted the organizational unit—CWECT-HS-FLA, CWECT-LLG-R, both CWECTs, or the Ontario Ministries responsible for the CWECT initiative as a whole—to which each recommendation is addressed. We believe, however, that our recommendations are likely to resonate with stakeholders in virtually any CWECT in Ontario and thus...
invite readers to consider the potential relevance of our various recommendations to their own local contexts.)

Recommendation 1 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)

CWECT-HS-FLA should continue to encourage youth in care to pursue PSE, a message that the youth seemed to hear. Given the frequency of important “achievement gaps”, however, we recommend that all children and youths served by CWECT-HS-FLA receive formal educational assessments with reliable, valid, and age-standardized instruments (e.g., the Woodcock-Johnson III), soon after their initial entry into care, to identify their educational strengths and weaknesses and track their progress. Once areas of needed improvement have been identified, we recommend that the young people receive effective educational assistance, such as one-to-one tutoring (see chapter 4), to help them catch up as much as possible and experience educational success.

CWECT-HS-FLA committee members, caregivers, and young people in care all told us that the primary need for academic and employment success was increased awareness and access to relevant resources. In particular, they advocated that increased attention be paid to the process of applying for PSE admission and financial support. As shown in Table 10, however, a majority of the youth from whom we heard were not aware of existing PSE financial resources. One youth, for example, remarked that “everything is in place, but youth don’t always know about them. More direction is needed to help navigate the information online”.

Table 10: Number and percentage of CWECT-HS-FLA youth (N = 21) who were aware of post-secondary financial supports (from online youth questionnaire, Appendix 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Supports</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Tuition Aid</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Learning Grant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Bursary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Grant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS CA/PHD Award</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation 2 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)

We recommend increased one-on-one support to help young people in care navigate processes such as seeking PSE admission, obtaining financial support (e.g., grants or bursaries), or seeking employment (e.g., resume writing, job interview preparation). To generate the necessary staff time for this work, we recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA deploy a full-time educational coordinator. This position could derive from a combination of means, including new Ministry funding, the reallocation by CAS-HS and CAS-FLA of 0.5 FTEs, or a redefinition of tasks and increased collaboration among current CAS staff members. Ideally, the educational coordinator would be familiar with primary, secondary, and PSE (college/university/apprenticeship) and employment programs. Besides working with young people in care to help them apply for PSE and employment-related programs, the coordinator would also be involved in activities such as producing newsletters on education and employment and their regular dissemination, via e-mail or regular mail, to the other key stakeholders, caregivers and community organizations. The newsletters would convey tips and notices about PSE, training, and employment programs.
and would be sent out at key times in the academic year, with content relevant to a given time or season. For example, CWECT-HS-FLA could mail out an issue of the newsletter during the PSE application season with tips about available resources (e.g., campus tours, web links to colleges and universities, and funding opportunities).

Beyond increased information and access to resources and financial aid, young people in care also consistently expressed a need for emotional support and belief in their potential, to build their self-confidence:

“… kids in care often have the mind-frame that they can’t succeed and have really low self-esteem. So, we need to help them look at what they have to offer, understand what their core personality characteristics are, and then help them see where that might fit into a job and give them the tools to succeed” (CWECT-HS-FLA committee member).

“I just need guidance, basically--somebody who will be there for me. That’ll be all I need” (CWECT-HS-FLA youth in care).

CWECT-HS-FLA has done a good job at beginning to foster this process of relationship building, particularly through the one-on-one work of its part-time student position. Many CWECT-HS-FLA committee members noted that the student position has been helpful in its one-on-one work with young people to assist with PSE applications and relaying information from youths to the committee and vice versa. We believe, however, that the amount of time required to reach all of the youth in care, as well as to mobilize their caregivers and personnel in the community partner organizations, is such that a full-time educational coordinator is needed.

Recommendation 3 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)

To build support and relationships that will benefit the young people in care, we recommend that their primary source of support continue to reside within CWECT-HS-FLA and its sponsoring CASs. To increase the overall level of support, however, we also recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA consider developing a mentoring program, as a source of supplementary support. For example, volunteer college or university students could be paired with a youth in care to help the latter navigate the PSE system, including the application process or course selection. The mentor would also help prepare and support the youth in his or her transition to PSE or employment.

With regard to developing and managing mentoring programs, a superb resource is Dubois and Karcher’s (2013) Handbook of Youth Mentoring, which has 36 excellent chapters on developing and evaluating mentoring programs, training mentors, and mentoring youth in out-of-home care, etc. On the positive effects of mentoring, the landmark meta-analysis by Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine (2011) should be consulted. Finally, anyone may sign up to receive an excellent, free newsletter on youth mentoring, the Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring, from Dr. David Dubois at the following address: http://chronicle.umbmentoring.org/changes-to-key-numbers-in-the-mentoring-effect-report/. The newsletter is produced by Dr. Dubois, a community and health psychologist at the University of Illinois in Chicago who is also President Obama’s key adviser on mentoring programs for disadvantaged youth.
3.2.1.2. What are the needs of the caregivers served by CWECT-HS-FLA?

Table 11: Demographic data for caregivers (N = 63) served by CWECT-HS-FLA (from online caregiver questionnaire, Appendix 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of respondents</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS-HS</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS-FLA</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades certificate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-univ. certificate/college diploma</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. certificate/diploma below bachelor degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Job Status</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not employed outside the home</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed outside the home (FT or PT)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to school &amp; works outside home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovering from illness or disability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic data are presented in Table 11 for the 63 caregivers from CWECT-HS-FLA who completed our online questionnaire. As was true of the young people in care, most of the CWECT-HS-FLA caregivers also reported needing greater access to information and resources in order to be able to provide effective help to the youths in their care. They said they needed information about financial aids available, step-by-step guidance regarding PSE applications, and youth employment (e.g., how to build a resume, how to search for jobs, job shadowing, and access to co-op programs). Most caregivers also said they were unaware of available PSE financial aids for their young people in care (see Table 12).
Table 12: Number and percentage of the CWECT-HS-FLA caregivers (N = 63) who were aware of post-secondary financial supports (from online caregiver questionnaire, Appendix 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Supports</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Tuition Aid</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Learning Grant</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Bursary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Grant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS CA/PHD Award</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the caregivers reported encouraging their youth in care to pursue PSE, mainly in conversations about goal-setting and the importance of education. However, they also needed more information to help their youths. As shown in Table 11, 32% of the caregivers had a high school diploma and 44% a college diploma or other certificate as their highest level of educational attainment. Thus, some may have felt that they lacked knowledge or experience that would help their youths navigate certain PSE options, such as university or apprenticeship programs.

“I need to be educated on what the necessary steps are and how to go about them (as things have changed since I went). For example, how to apply for college, residence, OSAP, etc. Also, there are so many grants available for our youths that learning about them and how to apply would be helpful.”

Responses to the online youth questionnaire revealed that young people in care turned most often to their foster parents for support. Caregivers, however, were not always aware of how important their educational role was. Previous research has found that caregiver involvement in education is a significant predictor of young people’s academic success and PSE enrollment (Spera, 2005). Thus, efforts to help caregivers provide effective support by providing them with more accurate and timely information about PSE and employment are likely to be useful.

*Recommendation 4 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)*

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA increase the number of events and amount of information targeting caregivers, to increase their knowledge of relevant resources. For example, such events could be information sessions regarding PSE-related financial opportunities or about effective ways of job-hunting. Given the difficulty of getting large numbers of caregivers to such events, however, we recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA send regular newsletters (via regular mail or e-mail) to its caregivers, with information and tips about PSE, job training, or employment (see also Recommendation 2).

*3.2.1.3. What are the needs of personnel in the community organizational partners served by CWECT-HS-FLA?*

Many CWECT-HS-FLA committee members and staff in community partners stated that their greatest need was for access to three kinds of information:

1. Information about the educational and mental health needs of young people in care. Some community partners said they had little direct contact with youth in care and thus wanted more information about their specific needs.
2. Information regarding available supports for young people in care and about other community partners (i.e., who they were, the services they provided, and how best to connect with them).

3. Information about the “chain of communication” and role clarification. For example, if a partner had a particular question about a young person in care, it would help to know whom to contact (i.e., within either the sponsoring CAS or in a community organization). Regarding role clarification, community-partner staff stated that it was sometimes unclear which partner should take on a given role (e.g., would it be a community partner or a youth’s child welfare worker who would be responsible for accessing needed resources?). One partner asked, “Whose role is it to connect the youth with the resources? Whose job is it to communicate the information to the young person: someone in the home, the worker, myself?”

**Recommendation 5 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

Given the stated need for more information, clear communication, and role clarification between the CASs and community partners, we recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA create a website that provides the following information: a list of the community organizational partners involved in CWECT-HS-FLA; a summary of what each community partner does to support youth in care; contact information for each community partner; and, a step-by-step outline of the communication procedure to use (e.g., community partner to worker to youth).

The community partners also reported that they would like to be know who the young people in care were, noting that it is difficult to help these youth if they do not self-identify.

**Recommendation 6 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

Although confidentiality laws prohibit the disclosure of the identities of youth in care, we recommend that young people in care receive information about the pros and cons of identifying themselves in relation to PSE matters. We also recommend that they be given information about the experience of other youth in care who have self-identified.

### 3.2.2. Findings for CWECT-LLG-R for evaluation question 1

#### 3.2.2.1. What are the needs of the young people in care served by CWECT-LLG-R?

Demographic data are presented below, in Table 13, for the 24 young people in care from CWECT-LLG-R who completed our online questionnaire.

The majority of CWECT-LLG-R youths rated the importance of PSE highly, an average of 7.83 on a scale of 1 (not important) to 10 (very important). All who completed our online questionnaire also planned to pursue some form of PSE: 17 (70.8%) college, 5 (20.8%) university, 5 (20.8%) an apprenticeship, and 1 (4.2%) military training. (These figures add up to more than 100% because 5 youths planned to pursue two PSE options, such as college and university or college and an apprenticeship, while 1 intended to go to college and university and also complete an apprenticeship.) Our results are no doubt upwardly biased, however, as the young people who took part in our evaluation were all participants in CWECT-LLG-R events. We were not able to reach those who did not participate in these events.

It will be important for caregivers and staff in community-partner organizations, including CAS personnel, to take note of these high PSE aspirations expressed by the young people in care. We know from past OnLAC research that such personal aspirations are indeed predictive of greater educational success among young people in care in Ontario (Tessier, O’Higgins, and Flynn, 2016). At
the same time, basic skills in reading and math require strengthening from an early age if the young people are going to be able to graduate from high school and take full advantage of PSE opportunities. For this, many young people in care are likely to require special and effective assistance from their schools, CWECTs, or CASs (see chapter 4).

Table 13: Demographic data for youth in care (N = 24) served by CWECT-LLG-R (from online youth questionnaire, Appendix 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Respondents</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS-LLG</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS-R</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Placement</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent living</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current School Status</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Job Status</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not working</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of needs related to PSE planning were identified by the youth served by CWECT-LLG-R: increased awareness of and access to people or information resources that could help them with PSE planning and applications, financial supports, and preparations for the transition to a different education/training environment or independence. One young person, for example, mentioned needing “help researching different colleges, help with budgeting, help in developing more skills related to whatever program I may want to go into.” Furthermore, when the CWECT-LLG-R youths were asked if they were aware of a variety of financial supports available to them, the results were mixed (see Table 14). It should be noted that youth are nominated for the OACAS awards (e.g., OACAS Clark Bursary) by child welfare staff, which may explain why fewer youth were aware of them.
Table 14: Number and percentage of CWECT-LLG-R youth (N = 24) who were aware of post-secondary financial supports (from online youth questionnaire, Appendix 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Supports</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Yes, aware</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Tuition Aid</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Learning Grant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Bursary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Grant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS CA/PHD Award</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation 7 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)

We recommend that increased one-on-one support be provided to help youth in care with PSE planning or direct entry into employment. As already mentioned in recommendation 2, to generate the needed staff time, we recommend that CWECT-LLG-R deploy a full-time, paid educational coordinator, through a combination of means such as Ministry funding, the reallocation by CAS-LLG and CAS-R of 0.5 FTEs, or redefined tasks and increased collaboration among current CAS staff members. Ideally, the educational coordinator would be familiar with primary, secondary, and PSE (college/university/apprenticeship) and employment programs as well as with a range of school-related roles (e.g., teacher, guidance counsellor) and employment planning. Job responsibilities would include one-on-one help for youths with PSE or financial-support applications, with preparation for seeking employment (e.g., resume writing or job interview skills), and increased support to caregivers and community partner organizations.

CWECT-LLG-R committee members also unanimously reported that having few stable relationships significantly interfered with the educational progress of youth in care, including success in primary and secondary school and in PSE planning. The youth were seen as needing positive, supportive, and consistent relationships, particularly to help them build their confidence in being able to achieve their current and future educational goals:

“… an adult they can have a conversation with and feel confident that, you know, the person knows their strengths and will help them.”

“…a loving, caring, concerned person who says ‘I know you can do it’.”

“… community connections that allow them to have a sense of belonging somewhere.”

“… social and emotional support, even more than academic.”

Previous research in out-of-home care has consistently shown the detrimental impact on academic outcomes of placement instability and unplanned school transitions, due in part to interruptions of interpersonal relationships (Brownell et al., 2015; Pecora, 2012; Ward, 2009).

Recommendation 8 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)

We recommend that practical ways of increasing youths’ experience of consistent, supportive relationships be explored. For example, funds could be devoted to improving access to and participation in extra-curricular opportunities, such as team sports or arts groups, to promote peer relationships, a sense of connection, and developmental gains. CWECT-LLG-R could also develop a mentoring program, through which volunteer university or college students could be
paired with former or current youth in care to help the latter with PSE planning (e.g., applications or course selection), supportive experiences, and encouragement. (See also Recommendation no. 3.)

We recognize that CWECT-LLG-R has consistently devoted time and resources to motivational-speaker events. This is a strength of this team, and these events have allowed youth to hear about others’ experience with PSE planning and transitioning to independent living. For example, youth served by CWECT-LLG-R appeared to be quite engaged when they were able to relate to a speaker who was a former Crown Ward who shared personal experience of PSE, employment, and transition to independent living.

Recommendation 9 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)

CWECT-LLG-R should continue to plan motivational-speaker events for youth in care. These events can help youth by providing information about PSE planning, building relationships, and promoting the feeling of being heard and connected. When planning these events, it is important that youth and speakers be able to relate well to each other.

3.2.2.2. What are the needs of the caregivers served by CWECT-LLG-R?

Demographic data are presented in Table 15 on the 40 caregivers from CWECT-LLG-R who completed our online questionnaire.

Table 15: Demographic data for caregivers (N = 40) served by CWECT-LLG-R (from online caregiver questionnaire, Appendix 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Respondents</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS-LLG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS-R</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades certificate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-univ. certificate/college diploma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. certificate/diploma below bachelor degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Job Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed outside the home</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed outside the home (FT or PT)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to school &amp; works outside home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovering from illness or disability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our findings suggest that increased awareness of and access to relevant sources of information are fundamental needs of caregivers. For example, caregivers stated that they wanted more information about different university and college programs and assistance with course selection, which would enable them to prepare their youths for PSE planning and to help them with applications. Like many of the young people in care, many CWECT-LLG-R caregivers were not aware of the range of PSE financial supports available for which Crown Wards or other youth in care were eligible (see Table 16). Again, we note that young people are nominated for the OACAS awards by child welfare staff, which may help explain why fewer caregivers were aware of these awards.

Table 16: Number and percentage of the CWECT-LLG-R caregivers (N = 40) who were aware of post-secondary financial supports (from online caregiver questionnaire, Appendix 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Supports</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Yes, aware</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Tuition Aid</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Learning Grant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Bursary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS Clark Grant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OACAS CA/PHD Award</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews with CWECT-LLG-R committee members and program documentation confirmed that attempts have been made to share this kind of information with caregivers (e.g., evening information sessions, including guest speakers). CWECT-LLG-R committee members commented, however, that it is a challenge to get caregivers to attend knowledge-sharing events, and many were not sure why. Some members speculated that geographic factors (e.g., large rural areas requiring considerable time for travel) are a big obstacle for their efforts to engage all groups, including caregivers.

**Recommendation 10 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

**CWECT-LLG-R should invest time and resources in providing information to caregivers about PSE planning for young people in care.** Information-sharing should take the form of information sessions or events and the distribution of regular newsletters, by e-mail or ordinary mail, that provide information and tips about PSE and employment-training opportunities. The content of such newsletters should match caregivers’ and young people’s informational needs at particular times of the year, such as when college, university, or apprenticeship applications are due.

Many CWECT-LLG-R committee members also stated that caregivers need more information about their important role in and influence on the educational plans and achievement of youth in care. Tessier, O’Higgins, and Flynn (2016 found in a recent paper, based on AAR data from the OnLAC project, that higher caregiver academic aspirations for their young people in care, like higher academic aspirations of the young people for themselves, were associated with greater educational success. Thus, caregivers can with confidence encourage their young people in care to pursue their future goals, remind them of the major economic payoffs from PSE graduation (Finnie et al., 2016; see also Appendix 1 of this report), provide homework assistance (which is especially effective in high school, according to a website discussed in chapter 4 of this report [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit), and communicate regularly with school staff.
In the online questionnaire, caregivers rated how much they encouraged the young persons in their care to pursue PSE or employment training. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (frequently), their average rating was 7.90 out of 10, indicating a good degree of encouragement, on average. Caregivers from CWECT-LLG-R described a variety of ways in which they supported their young people in care:

“We help them to find what they are passionate about and then encourage them to find what it is they need to go into that field. We consistently tell them that they can achieve anything they put their mind to.”

“I participate in all decisions related to their education: IPRCs, IEPs, homework, or school projects.”

“I have conversations about what she wants to be when she grows up. For example, I see her interest in animals, so I’ll say ‘Wow, you really do like animals. I bet you would make a good vet!’ She is only 5, but I find these little ways to encourage it.”

**Recommendation 11 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

Holding caregiver-appreciation events that CWECT-LLG-R committee members also attend would be a good way to recognize and celebrate caregivers’ efforts and to communicate that they are vital contributors to the educational success of youth in care. Such events would also build closer relationships among all partners involved in the education of youth in care.

**3.2.2.3. What are the needs of the personnel of the community organizational partners served by CWECT-LLG-R?**

Based on our interviews with CWECT-LLG-R committee members, we concluded that the biggest need for staff of community-partner organizations was greater awareness and more information. Many CWECT-LLG-R committee members stated that community-partner staff needed more awareness of youths’ needs, especially those that went beyond academics (e.g., in the area of mental health). Committee members also thought that staff could benefit from learning more about how positive school experiences and supportive relationships could significantly influence the young people’s educational and social success. Only 4 individuals from a single community organization completed our online questionnaire for community partners. They wanted more information about available supports and how to help.

**Recommendation 12 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

More explicit information-sharing needs to take place with community partners about the diverse educational and socio-emotional needs of youth in care and how the partners can assist. A mix of evening presentations, teleconferences, or newsletters (distributed by e-mail or ordinary mail) could be used to deliver this information. Training could also include discussions about the roles of community partners in different substantive areas (e.g., training about the education system could be provided to child welfare practitioners, supervisors, and managers; similarly, training about the child welfare system could be made available to teachers, principals, and other educational personnel).

**3.2.3. Summary of findings for evaluation question 1 for both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R**

It was consistently reported by CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R that the primary need for young people in care and for caregivers was increased awareness of and access to information and resources on the topics of PSE, training, and employment. Youth in care reported feeling overwhelmed in trying to navigate the PSE process, including selecting a program, completing applications, and managing
finances. They often said they did not know where to find appropriate resources. Similarly, caregivers from CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R stated that they needed more information to be able to guide their young people effectively with respect to schooling and employment.

**Recommendation 13 (addressed to both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)**

We recommend that young people in care receive more one-to-one help in navigating the educational and employment system. To meet this and other needs of young people, caregivers, and community partners (as mentioned in recommendations 2 and 7), we also recommend that each CWECT deploy a paid, full-time educational coordinator, through means such as Ministry funding, the reallocation by the co-sponsoring CASs of 0.5 FTEs, or redefined tasks and increased collaboration among current CAS staff members. This person would work with youths in care on educational and employment matters, including applications to PSE programs and campus housing, financial management, résumé-writing, and job search. The full-time coordinator would also help caregivers and community partners increase their effectiveness by organizing information events and mailing out newsletters related to PSE applications, available financial opportunities, and employment.

**Recommendation 14 (addressed to both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)**

We recommend that the CWECTs help to foster supportive relationships by implementing an appropriate mentorship program. The mentors could be volunteer PSE students, for example, from college, university, or apprenticeship programs. These and other mentors would help support the young people as they transition from high school to PSE or employment. (See recommendation no. 3 for specific sources of information on establishing, operating, and evaluating mentoring programs, including those for youth in care.)

In terms of the needs of community-partner organizations, both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R stated that their partners required more information about the unique needs of young people in care in areas such as education and mental health. Moreover, community partners were said to need more information about other community partners, concerning the nature of and access to services available to youth in care.

**Recommendation 15 (addressed to both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)**

We recommend that both CWECTs explore ways of increasing information-sharing among community partners about the diverse needs of youth in care, in areas such as education and mental health. This could be accomplished through information sessions, webinars, or newsletters. We also recommend that the CWECTs define clearly the role of their community-partner organizations.

**Recommendation 16 (addressed to both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)**

To help target the needs of all levels of stakeholders served by the CWECT, a centralized, interactive website should be designated (or created), such that young people in care, caregivers, and staff of community-partner organizations could easily access comprehensive information about the education and employment. This interactive website would provide information about applications or finances but would also enable young people, caregivers, or community partners to pose questions to their CWECT and communicate with other stakeholders. The website would be updated regularly with pertinent information. (For an example of what such a website could look like, please see www.fosteredconnect.org).
3.3. Evaluation question 2: Does the CWECT program meet the needs of its stakeholders (i.e., is the program well designed)?

3.3.1. Findings for CWECT-HS-FLA for evaluation question 2

CWECT-HS-FLA has partnered with local PSE institutions, school boards, child welfare agencies, and employment services to support the young people in care within its large geographic region. There was a general consensus among the CWECT-HS-FLA committee members that the goal of the program was to make it possible for all youths in care to “be successful, learn, and be active and productive citizens”. A CWECT-HS-FLA committee member also commented:

“I think we fundamentally do share all the same beliefs, I think we do believe in the importance of keeping the needs of children and youth in care at the forefront, and I think that we’re all committed to doing the best we can and continuing to get better in serving those kids within the structures that we have—within whatever system we come from. That’s fundamentally why I believe that we do what we do.”

Moreover, according to another committee member, “members agree that the program is built on the conviction that a single person or organization cannot do what is needed alone. Relationship-building and working together are essential to achieve a common goal”.

CWECT-HS-FLA committee members met once a month to discuss the planning and implementation of program activities. Many noted that there were differences in planning and implementation in the various geographic areas covered by CWECT-HS-FLA, along with a lack of agreement on whether this was a limitation or not. Members remarked that these differences and lack of agreement presented them with many challenges of a practical, geographic nature. A CWECT-HS-FLA committee member commented as follows:

“It’s challenging because of the people who make up the team and the massive region encompassed. Finding somewhere to meet that works for everybody is itself challenging”.

In addition, some members noted that because there is only one person representing each community-partner (e.g., school board, employment services), stakeholder involvement was heavily dependent on consistent attendance at the monthly meetings. However, this had been an issue, as a committee member commented:

“A member was here today who had not been able to attend the previous four meetings. It’s a challenge just to keep things moving forward when people are coming and going. For example, no school boards were present today. I know what they are going through (i.e., labour negotiations), but, at the same time, things have to keep moving forward and we need their input on certain matters”.

Besides attending monthly meetings, committee members sat on specialized sub-committees which covered employment and apprenticeship, educational supports, outcomes and indicators, protocol development, and the implementation of the business plan. It was a strength that these sub-committees met as needed throughout the year to plan and implement CWECT-HS-FLA’s goals in relation to the area of responsibility of the sub-committee. A committee member stated, however, that the fact that all of the members of a particular sub-committee came from the same geographic region made it difficult to plan events in that domain for the other regions within CWECT-HS-FLA.
Recommendation 17 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA have more than one person or organization involved from each stakeholder group, that it continue to use teleconferencing and web-conferencing technology to increase stakeholder participation, and that it make its sub-committees geographically focused.

Regarding the relevance of its services to different age groups, the original purpose of the CWECT initiative was to support Crown Wards with their transitions to PSE (see section 1.3, history of the CWECT program in Ontario). CWECT-HS-FLA committee members were all proud of the efforts made to support young people in care, with many activities focused on providing youth aged 13-17 years with experiential opportunities, such as motivational speakers, skill-training workshops (e.g., Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System [WHMIS]), and week-long immersion programs at a local university for high school students.

The decision to focus primarily on older youths has resulted in leaving younger youth in care, who also need educational support, out of CWECT-HS-FLA programming. CWECT-HS-FLA has also begun to expand its services to include caregivers, child welfare workers, and community partners. For example, CWECT-HS-FLA has hosted information nights for caregivers and youth to enable them to learn more about PSE options. The program has also created information packages for carers to use as ‘conversation starters’ in discussing education and career planning with their young people in care.

Recommendation 18 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA continue expanding services to encompass all three stakeholder groups, as caregivers and staff in community-partner organizations are essential partners in helping youth in care reach their educational and career goals.

With respect to accountability, CWECT-HS-FLA, like all CWECT programs in Ontario, is supported by and accountable to three provincial Ministries: Children and Youth Services, Education, and Advanced Education and Skills Development. The evaluation team received mixed reports from CWECT-HS-FLA committee members regarding the level of involvement of the three Ministries in their work. Some felt that they had received sufficient guidance, stating that they valued being able to be creative and flexible in trying to meet the needs of their young people in care. As one committee member said, “They have designed things so that the CASs can use the material and information in a way that works for them within their own system.”

Other committee members, however, remarked that they did not receive enough guidance. For example, according to one member, “There have been statements made about expectations that change without formal communications coming out. And so, there’s a lot of misunderstanding, I believe, around what the expectations are”.

In addition, CWECT-HS-FLA committee members wanted help in recognizing “what works” (for detailed information regarding effective, evidence-based interventions, please see chapter 4 of the present report). One member suggested that the Ministries share what other CWECTs in Ontario have done that has produced positive outcomes. For, in the absence of such information, “everybody feels that they have to reinvent the wheel”. Moreover, many committee members said that they often received late notices of yearly funding approvals. In the words of one member, “Who knows if we will get any funding next year? And often, we don’t even know if we are actually going to get funding until three months into the year”. 
CWECTs are required to deliver mid-term and final reports every year to MAESD to remain eligible to receive funding. The reports consist of detailed financial statements of yearly operating costs, together with a description of key deliverables furnished and milestones met during the year. Additionally, MAESD asks CWECTs to provide qualitative data on service gaps identified and actions taken to address them. CWECTs also provide the Ministry with descriptive statistics on the percentage of youths with Crown Ward status who participated in PSE, training or employment, on the percentage of community service providers who consider that they are now better prepared to assist Crown Wards achieve their PSE, training, or employment goals, on the percentage of community service providers who believe that their services are now better coordinated within the community, and on the number of Crown Wards who have been identified and tracked by the community partners.

Feedback from the Ministries regarding CWECT-HS-FLA’s annual business plans was reported to be very minimal. Committee members said they wanted more comments on the likely impact of their proposed plans and those of other CWECTs in the province. They would like the Ministry to consolidate the reports submitted by individual CWECTs and disseminate a synthesis to all of the CWECTs in Ontario.

One CWECT-HS-FLA committee member mentioned another issue faced by MAESD in collecting data on the program:

“If you notice in the business plans, there are some data that the Ministry collects. But we define things very differently, such as ‘graduation from high school’. That sounds as if it should be fairly simple. But there are so many ways to graduate from high school now. The Ministry of Education defines it one way. But if you ask a given CAS, it will give you a number based on its own understanding of what ‘graduation’ means. So, if a youth graduates from high school at age 20, the Ministry of Education does not consider that a graduation from high school. I think that a student has to graduate within five years of when he or she started in order to be considered a graduate of high school, according to the Ministry records. Now lots of my kids don’t graduate within five years; they have to go back to school and don’t graduate until they are 20. Or, they don’t graduate but do go on to a college program that allows them to get the same stuff as an adult. So, is that a graduation or not? We all gather data differently. So, the Ministry has all these data that are completely useless, and nothing is ever done with the data”.

In 2017, the Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services plan to begin to collect data in a more systematic manner on Crown Wards’ educational outcomes, which is promising. Currently, however, CWECT-HS-FLA did not have common provincial indicators to use nor did it have a systematic way of collecting feedback from its stakeholders. At the time of our evaluation, feedback was provided by means of ad hoc surveys and qualitative responses, although many committee members wanted to create more robust and standardized measures to show that they were actually having an impact. Also, despite having had a youth advisory committee in the past, CWECT-HS-FLA disbanded the committee because of a perceived lack of diversity in the youths who came to the monthly meetings.

**Recommendation 19 (addressed to the three Ontario Ministries that sponsor the CWECT initiative, including CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)**

We recommend that the three Ministries collaborate in compiling information on successful and unsuccessful CWECT programs and experiences for the use of individual CWECTs. Ministry funding should also be delivered on time each year, and consideration should be given to longer-term funding (e.g., 3-5 years) that would enable CWECTs to engage in long-term planning. Also, the Ministries should create a set of common measures that all CWECTs in the
province could use to gather uniform information from young people in care, caregivers, and staff in community partner agencies and to evaluate their own outcomes.

On the question of sustainability, CWECT-HS-FLA committee members said they were satisfied, in general, with the level of financial and physical resources they received. Nevertheless, many members also stated that they lacked the staff capacity to support the implementation and planning of activities. At times, this resulted in more discussion than action and a lack of focus. As one committee member remarked, “the ability to hire someone to implement some of these things would speed up implementation, because at present this is nobody’s full time job”.

Many members highlighted the usefulness of the current position at CWECT-HS-FLA for a part-time student, in terms of working directly with the youth. They noted, however, that the student worked only 15 hours per week and that the student’s time was ‘stretched’. Some committee members also indicated that they had been members of the CWECT-HS-FLA committee for less than a year and that the turnover rate in its membership could be quite challenging.

Young people in care were informed about events through “a school point-person, but usually it goes through the CAS worker” (a committee member). At the time of our evaluation, there was no website to inform youths or other stakeholders about CWECT-HS-FLA activities:

“I don’t even think that the kids know that they are benefiting from our CWECT because we don’t market ourselves. Is it important for the kids to know that we exist? Some CWECTs do spend a lot on marketing for meet-and-greets and web sites, but we spent nothing on promoting ourselves” (a committee member).

**Recommendation 20 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA deploy a full-time coordinator position for the program. A succession plan should also be put in place to deal with committee turnover, including documents that would review the purpose and activities of the CWECT for new members. Finally, a CWECT-HS-FLA web site should be created to provide up-to-date information on all activities and resources for each group of stakeholders.

**3.3.2. Findings for CWECT-LLG-R for evaluation question 2**

Following the identification of the needs for each stakeholder group as described in the results for the first evaluation question (i.e., for youth in care, caregivers, and community partners), program documentation and information from the interviews with the CWECT-LLG-R members were used to determine whether the current program activities seemed to be addressing the needs of each stakeholder group.

For CWECT-LLG-R, it appeared that the educational and employment needs of youth in care were being partially met, as the majority of CWECT-LLG-R activities in 2014-2015 appeared to focus on information sharing and experiential opportunities, as well as some relationship-building opportunities for the youth. For example, planned college or university tours likely increased youths’ awareness of what a college or university could offer, whereas motivational-speaker events allowed information-sharing to take place, particularly about the transition to independent living and PSE or employment. Caregivers were typically invited to attend the events planned for youth. These kinds of activities are clearly a strength and should continue.

Community-partner staff who were working directly with the two CAS agencies that sponsor CWECT-LLG-R mentioned that they did not always know how to distinguish youths who were currently in care or had recently been in care from youths who had never been involved with child welfare. Some
youths may not wish to identify themselves as being involved with the child welfare system because of stigma. A solution to this problem appears to be at hand, however, as we learned recently that all CASs in Ontario are now required to identify their youths in care.

**Recommendation 21 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

All CWECT committee members and community partners need to be aware of which youths are currently or were recently in care, in order to be able to determine their unique education and employment needs and whether their needs are being met.

Most CWECT-LLG-R members expressed concern that many caregivers from both CAS-LLG or and CAS-R were not participating in planned activities, including those offered to the youth and those planned specifically for caregivers. It is thus likely that the CWECT-LLG-R program is not meeting adequately the needs of caregivers at this time.

**Recommendation 22 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

Caregivers and community members are essential partners in helping youth in care reach their educational and career goals. Accordingly, CWECT-LLG-R should continue to explore activities that could serve all three groups together or separately.

Due to difficulties with recruiting staff in community partners to participate in the evaluation of CWECT-LLG-R, we were unable to assess whether the needs of the community partners served by CWECT-LLG-R were being met.

**Recommendation 23 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

More information needs to be gathered from community partners about the extent to which CWECT-LLG-R is meeting their needs related to education and employment planning for youth in care.

A strength of CWECT-LLG-R was its routine collection of feedback from youths and caregivers who attended their events and its wish to do even more. This was important because asking stakeholders for their feedback shows them that their contribution is valued and may dispose them to more active participation in the program. In the phone interviews, several CWECT-LLG-R committee members said they wanted to collect additional data and use standardized measures to monitor the outcomes of the program. In fact, one of the CWECT-LLG-R committee members was recently hired as a private contractor specifically to develop data-collection procedures.

**Recommendation 24 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

CWECT-LLG-R should continue its commendable practice of routinely gathering feedback from youth, caregivers, and community partners, to find out whether the program is meeting stakeholder needs. Gathering feedback on an ongoing basis will permit needed changes to be made over time.

**Recommendation 25 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

To evaluate the outcomes of the CWECT-LLG-R program, it would be necessary to complete the work begun with the present formative evaluation by conducting a pilot summative evaluation. In section 1.2.1., we cited Trochim’s (2006) definition of this term, as follows: “The purpose of a summative evaluation….is to investigate the outcomes of the program by describing what happens after its delivery, evaluating whether the program actually caused the outcome,
assessing its longer-term outcomes, or determining how much the program costs.” An important part of planning an outcome evaluation of CWECT-LLG-R would be to prepare a data-collection plan, based on a thorough inventory of short-term and longer-term process and outcome measures that either currently exist or would need to be constructed, at the Ministry, CAS, or other levels. A pilot outcome evaluation of one or more local CWECT programs in 2017-2018 would yield a set of common measures that other local CWECTs could use to collect information on their own effectiveness and enable ongoing program improvement.

3.3.3. Summary of evaluation question 2 for both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R

In summary, in responding to evaluation question 2 about whether CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R were meeting the needs of their respective stakeholders (see their program logic models in Appendices 8 and 9, respectively), we believe that the following statements apply. First, committee members in both CWECTs were participating in the program ‘for the sake of the youth’. Second, they were unsure whether their programs were having an impact (which speaks to the need for an outcome evaluation). Third, they perceived a lack of guidance from the three Ministries responsible for the CWECT initiative. Fourth, to implement the many activities they planned and delivered to young people in care, caregivers, and the staff of community-partner organizations, and thus to achieve their goals, each CWECT needed to deploy a person in the role of full-time coordinator. Fifth, the model in which two different CASs sponsored a CWECT (i.e., CAS-HS and CAS-FLA in the case of CWECT-HS-FLA, and CAS-LLG and CAS-R in the case of CWECT-LLG-R) was the source of many service-delivery challenges. In light of these findings, we recommend that several actions be taken.

Recommendation 26 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA, CWECT-LLG-R, and the three Ontario Ministries that sponsor the CWECT initiative)

We recommend that through additional funding, staff redeployment, or task redefinition and improved collaboration, CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R each appoint paid, full-time educational coordinators (see also Recommendations 2, 7, and 20). In the opinion of the evaluation team, there is simply too much important work to do (i.e., plan, implement, and monitor numerous activities and supports for young people in care, caregivers, and community partners) for a part-time person to be able to accomplish well. We also recommend that the Ministries create a province-wide website, which all CWECT programs in Ontario could use, to provide accessible and up-to-date information on initiatives, activities, educational opportunities, financial resources, process and outcome evaluation instruments, and Ministry guidance. The website could also be used to communicate success stories from which local CWECTs could learn. We also recommend that the Ministries deliver their funding each year in a timely way and that longer-term funding be considered (e.g., 3-5 years). This would enable local CWECTs to engage in long-term planning, secure in the knowledge that they would continue to exist over the funding cycle. Finally, we recommend that the Ministries consider funding a pilot outcome evaluation, such as was mentioned in Recommendation 25. The use of a common set of process and outcome measures would eliminate the familiar problem of local CWECTs having to reinvent the proverbial wheel.

3.4. Evaluation question 3: How is the program being implemented?

3.4.1. Findings for CWECT-HS-FLA for evaluation question 3

Program documentation (i.e., business plans and minutes of meetings) and information gathered via interviews with CWECT-HS-FLA committee members were used to determine the CWECT program as it
was intended to be implemented. The fundamental premise guiding CWECT-HS-FLA has been that young people in care can achieve according to their academic potential and succeed in PSE and employment when given adequate encouragement and support by caregivers, and staff of community partner-organizations, including CAS personnel. As shown in Appendix 8, the CWECT-HS-FLA logic model indicates that three levels of stakeholders—young people in care, caregivers, and community partners—need to be taken into account by the program and its activities, outputs, and outcomes. As reported by the CWECT committee members, however, the program actually tended to focus on activities for the youths alone. For example, in 2014-2015, CWECT-HS-FLA held approximately 10 events, aimed primarily at young people in care. Caregivers were invited to the events but rarely attended, perhaps in part because they saw the activities as being of limited relevance to them. Similarly, few activities were organized for the other important audience, staff in community-partner organizations.

**Recommendation 27 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA organize activities aimed specifically at caregivers and community partners. Such activities could include information sessions for both groups, but—given the difficulty in getting individuals to attend face-to-face meetings—we recommend that a centralized website be created that would furnish easily accessible, up-to-date information about educational or mental health resources and events. A regularly produced online newsletter would be another economical and easily accessed source of information for all three audiences.

Responses by young people in care to our interviews and online questionnaire suggested that while they may have been aware of some CWECT-HS-FLA events, they tended not to attend them. The best-attended events were the college and university tours and experiential learning events, which were well received. One youth noted, for example, that “I now feel more comfortable in going off to one of these schools. I have a good idea on how things work and what is offered in the way of courses”.

**Recommendation 28 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA evaluate why more youths in care do not attend the activities organized for them. Is it because of lack of interest, geographical location, or the timing of events? We also recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA create events that cover the full range of needs, as described in evaluation question 1. For example, several youths said they wanted information about finances (e.g., how to manage their money while in school or working). Finally, we recommended that CWECT-HS-FLA gather regular feedback (e.g., by means of simple questionnaires) from the youths following events to assess their reactions and plan future events that are as interesting and relevant as possible.

Our data indicated that CWECT-HS-FLA tended to focus mainly on activities for youth at the high school level, which is understandable given the goal of increasing transitions to PSE and employment. However, the research literature suggests that some young people in care begin to lag behind children in the general population even as infants or toddlers, in their motor, social, and cognitive development (Flynn, Côté, & Cheung, 2016).

**Recommendation 29 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

Given that the achievement gap for many children in care begins to manifest itself at a very early age, we recommend that CAS-HS and CAS-FLA strive to implement as much evidence-based intervention for their infants and young children in care. Such early programming will
obviously not be part of the CWECT program, which cannot attempt to be all things to all age groups. Rather, early intervention that is evidence-based and as available as possible will provide much-needed long-term preparation for benefitting from educational and employment interventions in adolescence.

One of the main strengths of CWECT-HS-FLA is its creation of community partnerships. The program has focused on helping to create as many community partnerships as possible to increase resources for their youth and has done an excellent job of fostering these relationships. Many CWECT-HS-MLA committee members said they would even like to expand their community partnerships, particularly with organizations that serve younger children and youth mental health.

**Recommendation 30 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA continue to foster community-partner relationships by establishing a communications subcommittee to identify new potential partners. The members of this subcommittee need not sit at the CWECT table; they could serve in an advisory role.

The CWECT-HS-FLA committee members were consistent in describing their roles, functions, responsibilities, and priority-setting. Priorities are set at the beginning of each year. The CWECT-HS-FLA chair brings forward suggested events and activities for the year to review with the committee, which discusses the suggestions and lessons learned from previous years and then creates a business plan. The members reported that this is a collaborative process, and the majority felt involved in the process. Once the activities have been agreed upon, the subcommittees are assigned specific activities to implement. It was noted that the majority of hands-on and follow-through work takes place in the subcommittees. Several CWECT-HS-FLA members indicated that it can be difficult to set goals and priorities for the year, given the frequent uncertainty with respect to funding. Funding from the three Ministries is often confirmed only months before the new fiscal year begins. As a result, committee members stated that it was often difficult to plan for the year.

**Recommendation 31 (addressed to the three sponsoring Ministries)**

We recommend that the three sponsoring Ministries consider implementing a 2-3 year funding cycle. This would allow better planning, the implementation of more activities, and aligning the actual program more closely with the intended program.

Some CWECT-HS-FLA members highlighted the challenges that can arise when trying to turn discussion into action. One member remarked, “a lot of times we have these big discussions and there’s not always action…but I think breaking it down to the smaller subcommittees really helps”. It was also reported that at times it can be challenging to move from discussion to action because all CWECT-HS-FLA members have other responsibilities: “the biggest weakness [of the team] is the competing demands on partners”. Moreover, another challenge was that there is often only 1 member representing an entire community partnership, such that it can be difficult to achieve action if that member does not attend the monthly meeting (and thus the community partner is not represented).

One CWECT-HS-FLA member noted that “the ability to hire people to take action on some of these things, I think, would help speed up implementation, because this is nobody’s full time job”.

**Recommendation 32 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

We recommend that the subcommittees continue to operate and be responsible for action on specific items. We also recommend that the program deploy a paid, full-time coordinator
position (as mentioned in several previous recommendations) to oversee the subcommittees and help carry out actionable items. We also recommend that, at the end of each CWECT meeting, a summary of the points discussed be prepared, with a listing of the key action items and the person responsible for each one.

When asked about the two-CAS approach to sponsoring a single CWECT, CWECT-HS-FLA committee members reported that the implementation of activities did not differ between the two CASs. The considerable geographical distance between the two CASs, however, had a dampening effect on attendance, such that people from CAS-FLA were less likely to attend events at CAS-HS, and vice versa.

Most members of the CWECT-HS-FLA committee said that the majority agreed that the purpose of the program was to bring together community partners to better help youth in care reach their educational and employment potential. On a 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale, the average level of agreement was 8.32. CWECT-HS-FLA members reported that most of their interactions with other members occurred at the monthly committee meetings, unless a respondent was part of a subcommittee. A few committee members reported feeling less involved in CWECT activities because they did not work directly with youth in care: “I’m here but I don’t work with the kids on a regular basis, so it’s hard… I’m not involved in the action”. Other members reported feeling that their skills were not being used optimally and viewed their positions as more advisory than active.

**Recommendation 33 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA)**

We recommend that CWECT-HS-FLA increase its awareness of members’ strengths and resources, to ensure that they are being utilized effectively. For example, it may be advisable to pose certain evaluation questions (see Appendix 2) from time to time, to check with CWECT committee members to make sure that they feel involved.

**3.4.2. Findings for CWECT-LLG-R for evaluation question 3**

Program documentation and information from the interviews with CWECT-LLG-R stakeholders were used to determine the intended program (see Appendix 9, for the logic model for CWECT-LLG-R), which we compared with the actual program that was being implemented.

In general, it seemed that CWECT-LLG-R has devoted most of its resources to activities for the young people in care. This is undoubtedly a strength, as the program has been able to organize a good number of events for youth each year, in the face of late funding and little guidance from the sponsoring Ministries. At the same time, however, little focus has been placed until recently on increasing caregivers’ knowledge of educational issues or cultivating the relationship of the program with them. Likewise, few CWECT-LLG-R committee members could describe how the program nurtured the knowledge and involvement of its community partnerships, beyond the regular CWECT meetings. This was in contrast to the intended program, which aimed to improve youth academic and employment outcomes by targeting not only the youth themselves but also caregivers and community partners. To improve the education and employment of youth in care, the needs of all stakeholders should be addressed.

**Recommendation 34 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

Program resources and activities should be directed to all stakeholder groups identified by the CWECT as targets of the program. In particular, we recommend that CWECT-LLG-R re-allocate some of its resources to activities aimed at caregivers and community partners.
CWECT-LLG-R program activities for youth in care have also focused specifically on secondary school. Many members, however, mentioned that focusing only on secondary students was a limited strategy and referred to many team discussions about the importance of addressing educational needs earlier in development. In fact, the CWECT-LLG-R program chair indicated that planning activities for youths earlier in their educational careers (e.g., in elementary school) was already a priority for next year.

**Recommendation 35 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

We recommend that CWECT-LLG-R continue to maintain a primary focus on students in secondary school and those in transition to PSE. At the same time, we recommend a secondary focus on helping caregivers and community partners take into account in planning their informational activities that the roots of success in secondary school and PSE are laid down during the pre-school and elementary-school years.

Most CWECT-LLG-R committee members reported that their activities were planned collectively but scheduled separately by CAS region, to try to improve attendance. The members indicated that holding CWECT-wide events was not feasible, given the large rural regions served by each CAS. A few CWECT-LLG-R members also stated CAS-LLG and CAS-R differed regarding the identification of youth in care to schools. The members felt that this difference interfered with the implementation of program activities at one of the CASs.

Also, we found mixed opinions among CWECT committee members regarding the benefits versus challenges of having two CASs co-sponsor a single CWECT. Several CWECT-LLG-R members described their being co-sponsored by two rural CASs as difficult, but not impossible. One member added that co-sponsorship had been a benefit because the two CASs had learned from one another and had utilized one another’s strengths. Several members also said that problems with attendance at events had predated the creation of CWECT-LLG-R and stemmed mainly from the large rural areas in which the CASs were located.

**Recommendation 36 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

Consistency in the implementation of program activities is important for tracking program impact. Thus, we recommend that CAS-LLG and CAS-R try to hold identical events, as much as possible. Other options include exploring ways to engage youth in care from both CASs at one event (e.g., through videoconferencing), or providing youth, caregivers, and community partners access to a website through which they could access the information from all CWECT events.

Regarding priority setting and turning discussion into action, CWECT-LLG-R set priorities in accordance with the goals outlined in the business plans provided by the Ministries. These priorities were reviewed at team meetings, at which individuals were able to voice their opinions. CWECT-LLG-R members also reported that they considered lessons learned from previous years in determining their focus for future activity planning. This year, CWECT-LLG-R members also scheduled discussions with external partners (e.g., researchers) to guide priority setting, planning, and action. Annual funds from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development were typically received, however, halfway through the fiscal year, which always led to precipitous planning and implementing of activities (e.g., "… the focus has usually been what we can do quickly that would directly benefit the kids… like campus tours and guest speakers… because of time and financial limitations").

Despite often working within a short timeframe, many team members believed that CWECT-LLG-R as a whole was effective at turning discussion into action. Tasks for planned activities tended to be
assigned immediately during team meetings and documented in meeting minutes. It also seemed that committee members were generally reliable in bringing their assigned tasks back to the community partner they represented.

All of the CWECT-LLG-R members spoke positively about the program chair (e.g., “… excellent at providing direction for the team”, “… great leader for the team and in child welfare more generally”). Some members added, however, that having a program chair who already had a full-time job in child welfare was a limitation of the current CWECT model and that a full-time program coordinator was needed. This was not a criticism of the current chair; rather, it was yet another restatement of the need to deploy a full-time coordinator made in earlier recommendations.

**Recommendation 37 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making, we recommend that consideration be given to creating sub-committees in which community partners would be charged with carrying out actions that fit their competencies (e.g., in employment planning or engaging caregivers). We also recommend that a full-time coordinator support the sub-committees by ensuring that their planned actions are carried out.

Members of the CWECT-LLG-R committee said they felt supported, involved, and valued as contributors to the program. This is an important strength, given that it was apparently difficult to get committee members together for monthly meetings in the early years of the program. We did not interview members who attended CWECT meetings on a regular basis, however, and it is possible that they felt less valued and supported.

**Recommendation 38 (addressed to CWECT-LLG-R)**

We recommend that the CWECT-LLG-R chair make sure that all committee members feel supported and valued, to motivate their full engagement in CWECT activities, such as monthly team meetings.

**3.4.3: Summary of evaluation question 3 for both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R**

Committee members appeared to agree with how their respective CWECTs had implemented their intended programs, including the activities that had been prioritized and how they had been executed. Most members also reported feeling heard and supported by their programs, which is likely to have increased their attendance at meetings and carrying out of activities. Both CWECTs, however, appeared to have achieved only partial implementation of their intended programs. Specifically, both tended to devote most of their attention and resources to activities for their youth in care, with much less emphasis on the needs of caregivers and community partners.

Program activities have also focused mainly on meeting the needs of young people in care in secondary school, despite the importance of addressing educational needs early in development. Indeed, recent research from the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) project has indicated that children in care aged 12-47 months have already fallen behind their age peers in the general population in motor, social, and cognitive development, with respective average (median) scores at the 25th versus the 50th percentiles (Flynn et al., 2016). Such a large gap in early development is likely to have a negative influence on the children’s educational development in later years. The role of caregivers is especially crucial in promoting optimal literacy and school readiness in young children in care.
Recommendation 39 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)

To reach all of the key stakeholders involved in the education of young people in care, we recommend that both CWECTs reallocate some of their resources to activities aimed at caregivers and community partners. Furthermore, as we noted earlier in recommendation 29, although the CWECTs cannot be expected to be all things to all age groups, the CASs that co-sponsor each program need to include programming that helps children in care much earlier in life, during their pre-school and elementary school years. (For information on a range of topics affecting young children, see the Early Years Toolkit in chapter 4 of the present report; see also, https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/early-years-toolkit.)

Implementation of their intended versions of the CWECT initiative would be easier for both CWECTs with increased support and guidance regarding priority-setting and planning from the three Ontario Ministries that sponsor them.

Recommendation 40 (addressed to the three Ministries that sponsor CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)

The three Ministries that sponsor the CWECT initiative need to provide increased and regular support to individual CWECTs. Such support could include the provision of a central CWECT web site, ongoing conversations with CWECTs by a representative of the Ministries who is very familiar with developments in the province-wide initiative, the distribution of updated program documentation, and newletters that highlight stories from CWECTs that have been especially effective in a given program area (e.g., outcome monitoring, engaging caregivers, or reaching community partners). Positive encouragement from the three Ministries would also help improve the morale and productivity of individual CWECTs.

That both CWECTs have been only partially successful in implementing their intended programs (described in Appendices 8 and 9) is related to the fact that the CWECTS have often received their funding halfway through the fiscal year. This has led to precipitous planning and implementation of activities.

Recommendation 41 (addressed to the three Ministries that sponsor CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R)

As previously mentioned in recommendations 19 and 26, funds for individual CWECTs should be delivered promptly at the beginning of each fiscal year. If the distribution of the full amount for the year is not possible, then a portion (e.g., 50%) should be made available at the beginning of the fiscal year (with the balance available six months later), to ensure that CWECTs have enough funds to begin planning their activities immediately. A funding cycle of 2-3 years at a time would allow for even longer-range planning and implementation of CWECT activities.

3.5. Evaluation question 4: Did the program seem to be working, in the eyes of stakeholders?

3.5.1. Findings for CWECT-HS-FLA for evaluation question 4.

All of the CWECT-HS-FLA committee members told the evaluation team that they hoped they were making a difference, although several said they were unsure about this because the program had not gathered objective data to support their subjective intuitions in this regard. Be this as it may, their part-time student coordinator had been able to collect anecdotal data in conversations with Crown
Wards and descriptive data on the number of youths who had been given one-on-one support over the previous two years. Committee members also reported that the biggest benefit for them was the relationships created among the stakeholder groups who attended the monthly meetings. As one committee member noted,

“I think we’re having an impact because we continue to work together and gain more community partners. I think we gain a better understanding the longer we work together. Understanding the perspectives of others will help us in supporting kids.”

Had CWECT-HS-FLA not existed, many committee members believed some programs and resources would still have been offered to support young people in care. The activities, however, would probably have been offered at a slower pace and in an uncoordinated way. Moreover, without the dedicated funding from the Ministry, there would have been far fewer activities aimed at Crown Wards.

3.5.2. Findings for CWECT-LLG-R for evaluation question 4

CWECT-LLG-R members all said they hoped they were making a difference for young people in care, thought that they were doing so, but had no real evidence that this was the case. They felt more confident about their impact in the areas of increasing communication between community partners and increasing awareness of and opportunities for young people in care. A committee member said their college was not one of those in Ontario that offered free tuition to young people in care. By sitting on the CWECT-LLG-R committee, however, the member was able to put pressure on senior CAS management to offer free tuition to Crown Wards.

According to some CWECT-LLG-R members, there has been an increase in the number of young people who have shown interest in new things, including going to PSE. The team still needs to find ways to get young people and their caregivers more involved in activities. They are aware of upcoming activities but need that extra nudge to participate.

When we asked committee members to imagine what things would be like without the CEWCT initiative, many responded that they pictured the young people going onto PSE or employment without knowing what kind of support was available to them. This could be especially problematic for these youths, considering their past adverse experiences and ongoing disrupted relationships. Thus, while all young people need support from others, those in care require extra support from teachers, child welfare workers, or guidance counsellors to build their confidence and help them plan for their futures.

“If the CWECT initiative didn’t exist, the young people would be sitting at home and relying more on their foster families than on themselves.”

Finally, some committee members commented that community partners were helping young people in care in a more coordinated fashion.

3.5.3: Summary of evaluation question 4 for both CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R

From our interviews with CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R committee members, a consensus emerged that the program had had a positive impact on collaboration between child welfare and education. There were, for example, more targeted conversations and increased consistency between the two systems about how young people in care were to be supported. There was also a greater sense of accountability regarding adherence to plans regarding support. One committee member said, “we are getting much closer to talking the same language now in terms of the educational needs of these kids.” This sense of greater contact between child welfare and education certainly is in accord
with the intent of the CWECT initiative, even though the extent to which young people in care have actually been helped must await the collection of more objective outcome data.

If individual CWECTs or the broader CWECT initiative aim to evaluate program outcomes in future, community partner organizations will have to be able to identify young people in care. In the case of CWECT-HS-FLA and CWECT-LLG-R, it was unclear at times whether this was so. A committee member from a PSE institution commented, for example, that “if our goal is student achievement, I cannot cite a specific case in which, because of our work, a young person in care has benefited. I cannot say so because we didn’t know who they were.” Thus, CWECT committee members and staff in community partners need to be aware of which youths are in care, both to support them and to monitor the effect of CWECT program activities.

To be able to determine the impact of individual CWECTs or the broader initiative, a serious outcome evaluation will be needed. Earlier, in section 1.2.1., we adopted Trochim’s (2006) distinction between formative and summative evaluation. In the context of a human service program such as the CWECT initiative, the purpose of a formative evaluation is to improve the program by examining its delivery, inputs, implementation, organization, personnel, activities, or procedures. In contrast, the purpose of a summative evaluation is to assess the outcomes of the program by describing what happens after its delivery, evaluating whether the program actually caused the outcome, assessing its longer-term outcomes, or determining how much the program costs.

In the present instance, it would be essential that sufficiently objective data be available from CASs or Ministries on the outcomes experienced by the three main CWECT stakeholder groups—the young people in care, their caregivers, and the personnel in the community partners (including the two CASs)—before a comprehensive outcome evaluation would become possible. The current Children and Youth in Care Data Sharing Project, in which MED and MCYS are collaborating, is scheduled to run until 2018 and could potentially provide the outcome (and some process) data needed. In any outcome evaluation, it would be useful to include more than two local CWECTs and a correspondingly larger number of CASs than were involved in the present formative evaluation. The kinds of outcome data that are likely to be useful include the following (which does not pretend to be an exhaustive list): OnLAC risk and protective variables that predict educational success, as identified in Tessier et al., 2016; data from the Education Quality and Accountability Office of Ontario, including EQAO data from grades 3, 6, and 9, and grade 10 data from the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT); the number and proportion of students who receive levels 3 and 4, versus 1 and 2; potential data arising from the recent Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA; MED & MCYS, 2015); grade 9 and grade 10 credit accumulation, which is seen as a good predictor of eventual high school graduation; the distribution of grade 9 marks in compulsory courses in English, math, and science; and validated high school graduation rates.

Recommendation 42 (addressed to CWECT-HS-FLA, CWECT-LLG-R, and the three Ontario Ministries that sponsor the CWECT initiative)

To prepare the way for an eventual outcome evaluation, we recommend that the three Ministries first fund a pilot outcome evaluation in 2017-2018, as a follow-up to the present formative evaluation and to avoid loss of momentum. The goal of the pilot would be to determine three things: first, whether sufficient outcome data would be available for an eventual outcome evaluation; second, whether cost data would also be available for the outcome evaluation; and third, in light of the first two objectives, to devise a maximally valid plan for the eventual outcome evaluation, including suggestions for the types of outcome and cost data that the sponsoring CASs and the three Ministries would need to collect on a regular
basis and also making as much provision as feasible for tracing the causes of improved outcomes to the CWECT initiative rather than to extraneous sources.

Chapter 4. Evidence-Based Interventions to Improve the Educational Outcomes of Young People in Care

If programs such as the CWECT initiative are to become mainstays in our efforts to help young people in care to improve their high school results and increase their rates of enrollment and graduation from PSE (college, university, or apprenticeships), they are going to have to prove themselves. To do so, it will be necessary, as much as possible, to deliberately select and implement faithfully interventions that are as evidence-based as possible. Such interventions typically address the needs of young persons in care, but many are intended for use by the young persons’ caregivers and the community organizations (e.g., CASs and schools) that serve young people. In order to make these evidence-based interventions better known to and more widely used by child welfare practitioners, teachers and their assistants, and policy makers, we provide in this final chapter a non-exhaustive survey of the kinds of effective programs (academic and non-academic) that are currently available to assist young people to achieve better educational success. Most of the sources cited are online and thus easily explored.

4.1. The present situation: Recent progress

In terms of creating and validating the evidence-based interventions needed to help young people in care improve their educational success, we believe that in the last decade an encouraging degree of progress has been made. Before about 2006, little controlled research on effective educational interventions for young people in care took place. For example, in their review of studies conducted in the United States on the academic status of young people in care during the 66-year period from 1940 to 2006, Trout, Hagaman, Casey, Reid, and Epstein (2008) found only 9 published intervention-related articles, a mere 4 of which had been published in the previous decade (1996-2006). Because of the sheer lack of intervention research, Trout et al. (2008) had to abandon their original goal of including in their review an evaluation of intervention studies aimed at improving the academic functioning of young people in care.

Against this backdrop of research inattention, Forsman and Vinnerljung (2012) provided grounds for some cautious optimism. In a scoping review of interventions aimed at improving the educational achievements of children in care, they were able to identify a total of 11 studies that had satisfied the following inclusion criteria: the studies had been published in English or a Scandinavian language (Swedish, Danish, or Norwegian); had evaluated an intervention intended to improve school achievements; had targeted children in care in primary school (aged 6-15 years); had assessed school achievement in terms of grades, aged-standardized measures, or longitudinal teacher assessments; and had been either a randomized controlled trial (RCT), a quasi-experiment with pretest-posttest measures, or a pretest-posttest study with age-standardized assessment instruments but no comparison group. Forsman and Vinnerljung (2012) found that most of the 11 studies (4 in the UK, 3 in the USA, 3 in Canada, and 1 in Sweden) had been carried out within the last three years. They also found that tutoring had been the most frequently evaluated intervention and that 4 out of 5 tutoring evaluations had yielded positive results. Overall, 9 of the 11 studies had reported positive outcomes, suggesting that the educational success of children in care can be improved. Also, a more recent pretest-posttest evaluation of the tutoring method known as paired reading (Vinnerljung, Tideman, Sallnäs, & Forsman, 2014) also yielded positive reading and cognitive outcomes in a 16-week intervention in Sweden with a sample of 81 foster children aged 8-12 years. (On the other hand, a
recent RCT of the non-tutoring, literacy-promotion method known as the Letterbox Club [Mooney, Winter, & Connolly, 2016] failed to find any impact on literacy outcomes in a sample of 116 children in care in Northern Ireland.)

4.2. Useful online reviews of interventions taken from the general educational literature

We believe that practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers looking for ways to improve the educational success of young people in care would do well to look at but also beyond the small intervention literature in child welfare to the rich array of research reviews and interventions to be found in the general-population educational literature. Moreover, by its very multi-sectoral nature, the CWECT initiative is well suited to building collaborations between CASs, local schools, and other organizations, to form local service systems in which many of the evidence-based interventions that we survey could be implemented. We limit attention here to four useful overviews, all available online.

First, the online What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) of the US Institute of Educational Sciences (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/findwhatworks.aspx) provides a great deal of information on a wide range of relevant topics, such as early childhood education (with subtopics such as reading comprehension, early reading and writing, math achievement, social-emotional development, and language competence); literacy (e.g., reading comprehension, reading fluency, writing achievement); mathematics (e.g., math achievement, algebra); or postsecondary education (e.g., educational attainment, college access and enrollment). For each of the many specific interventions listed, the WWC provides an improvement index (i.e., the average percentile gain expected for students receiving the intervention, compared with the average [i.e., the 50th percentile] for those not receiving it); a rating of the effectiveness on outcomes of the intervention (ranging from positive through potentially positive, mixed, none discernible, potentially negative, and negative); and the amount of evidence on the intervention (small vs. medium-to-large amount).

A second online resource is the Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit and its associated Early Years Toolkit (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit). The Sutton Trust is a “do” tank (as opposed to a “think” tank) that has the mission of improving social mobility through education. The EEF is an independent charity founded by the Sutton Trust and other partners that strives to weaken the relationship between family income and educational achievement and enable children from various backgrounds to realize their potential.

The Teaching and Learning Toolkit currently covers 34 topics (for ages 4-18 years) that are updated as new evidence becomes available. For each topic, the Toolkit “provides information on the average impact on academic achievement, strength of the available evidence and relevant costs” (Katsipataki & Higgins, 2016, p. 904). For example, the approach of meta-cognition and self-regulation (also known as ‘learning to learn’) attempts to help learners think more explicitly about their own learning. It has been found to have high impact (an average gain in educational attainment of 8 months over a school year) and very low cost, based on extensive evidence. One-to-one tuition (i.e., one-to-one tutoring) produces a moderate impact (an average attainment gain of 5 months), although at relatively high cost, based on extensive evidence. Social and emotional learning, which focuses, for example, on how children work with each other or with their teacher rather than on the cognitive aspects of learning, has a moderate impact (an average achievement gain of 4 months) and moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.
The Early Years Toolkit (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/early-years-toolkit) provides information on 12 topics. For example, communication and language approaches have been found to have a high impact (an average achievement gain of 6 months over a school year) and very low cost, based on extensive evidence. Parental engagement (for example, encouraging parents to read and talk with their children at home or to participate in activities in the early years setting) has a moderate impact (an average gain of 5 months, at moderate cost and based on moderate evidence).

A third useful online resource is the fifth edition (2016) of Brooks’ compendium, What Works for Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties? The Effectiveness of Intervention Schemes (http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/assets/What-Works-5th-edition-Rev-July-2016.pdf). Brooks reviewed studies carried out in the UK on the effectiveness of some 81 interventions (with a few duplications in different chapters) for struggling readers and writers. More specifically, he sought to answer these two questions (Brooks, 2016, p. 11): “What intervention schemes are there which have been used in the UK in an attempt to boost the reading, spelling or overall writing attainment of lower-achieving pupils between the ages of 5 and 18, and have been quantitatively evaluated here?” And, “What are those schemes like, and how effective are they?” In the fifth edition of his compendium, Brooks reiterated the overall conclusions that he had formulated in earlier editions. Three of his general conclusions are especially worth quoting (Brooks, 2016, pp. 15-16):

- “Ordinary teaching (‘no treatment’) does not enable children with literacy difficulties to catch up….Implication: Although good classroom teaching is the bedrock of effective practice, most research suggests that children falling behind their peers need more help than the classroom normally provides. This help requires coordinated effort and training.

- “Large-scale schemes, though expensive, can give good value for money. Implication: When establishing value for money, long-term impact and savings in future budgets for special needs must be considered, particularly when helping the lowest-attaining children.

- “Good impact – sufficient to at least double the standard rate of progress – can be achieved, and it is reasonable to expect it. Implication: If the scheme matches the child’s needs, teachers and children should expect to achieve rapid improvement. High expectations are realistic expectations in most cases.”

A final useful online resource is the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE; http://www.bestevidence.org/), produced by Robert Slavin and his colleagues at the Center for Research and Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University in the US. The BEE has extensive reviews of programs in early childhood education (to improve literacy in preschool children); mathematics (elementary, middle, and high school); reading (e.g., for beginning, elementary, and struggling readers); and science (elementary and secondary). Comprehensive reviews of programs and their effectiveness are available within these categories. For example, Slavin, Lake, Davis, and Madden (2009, 2011) provided a comprehensive review of 96 high-quality studies of the achievement-related outcomes of a range of approaches to helping struggling readers: one-to-one tutoring, small group tutorials, classroom instructional processes (e.g., cooperative learning), and computer-assisted instruction. Slavin et al. (2009) concluded that one-to-one tutoring is very effective in improving reading, that tutoring focused on phonics obtains much better results than others, and that small-group phonics-based tutoring can also be effective, although not as effective as one-to-one phonics-based tutoring. Cooperative learning also can be an effective approach for struggling readers. Slavin et al. (2009, p. 3) concluded that, “Taken together, the findings support a strong focus on improving classroom instruction and then providing one-to-one phonetic tutoring to students who continue to experience difficulties.”
4.3. Tutoring, an evidence-based and feasible intervention

We believe that tutoring deserves much greater use in practice by schools and CASs, together with increased research attention and investment. As Forsman and Vinnerljung (2012), the Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit, and Slavin et al. (2009) have asserted, tutoring is an especially promising strategy to help young people improve their educational success.

4.3.1. Tutoring for children in the general population

Several meta-analyses have established that tutoring can be effective for children in the general population. Ritter, Barnett, Denny, and Albin (2009), for example, evaluated the effectiveness of tutoring by volunteers (i.e., adult, non-professionals, including undergraduates who may have been paid a small stipend, parents, or community members). The tutees were students in grades K-8 (i.e., in elementary or middle school), and the tutoring interventions had an academic focus and lasted for at least one month. A total of 21 English-language studies, with 28 cohorts, were included; all had been conducted in the US and evaluated in randomized field trials. Ritter et al. (2009) gave a positive response to their central research question of whether volunteer tutoring is an effective strategy for improving young students’ academic skills. Tutored students, compared with control-group students, improved their overall reading by about a third of a standard deviation, as well as higher scores (with effect sizes ranging between 0.26 and 0.45) on letters and words, oral fluency, and writing. The overall effect size of 0.27 for tutoring in math, based on only five studies, was not statistically significant.

Slavin (2016) provided additional positive evidence on the effectiveness of tutoring that updated the favourable view he had expressed earlier (Slavin et al., 2009). He noted that the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) in the UK had funded six recent randomized trials of tutoring by paraprofessionals that produced effect sizes ranging from mildly to very positive (i.e., 0.12 to 0.51). He also cited six recent randomized trials of tutoring in the US that had generated moderate to large effect sizes (i.e., 0.20 to 0.69). These results are all the more important, given that randomized studies, on average, produce smaller effects sizes in education than quasi-experiments (Cheung & Slavin, 2016). This may help to explain why Shenderovich, Thurton, and Miller (2016), in a meta-analysis of randomized trials of cross-age tutoring in kindergarten and elementary schools, found positive but relatively weak effects on measures of composite reading (0.18), decoding skills (0.29), and reading comprehension (0.11). Highly-structured reading programs were more effective than loosely-structured ones.

D’Agostino and Harmey (2016) conducted an international meta-analysis of Reading Recovery (RR; Clay, 2001), a widely implemented and researched literacy program that consists of one-to-one tutoring by a trained RR teacher. D’Agostino and Harmey synthesized the results of 16 studies (9 randomized, 7 quasi-experimental) that met what they considered stringent criteria of high fidelity and methodological quality. The overall effect size of 0.59 meant that the impact of RR placed it in the top 10% of the early literacy programs reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse.

Dietrichson, Bog, Filges, and Klint Jorgensen (n.d.), from the Danish National Centre for Social Research, conducted a systematic review of academic interventions for children in elementary and middle school who were from families of low socioeconomic status (SES). Their review included 101 studies that had aimed explicitly at improving educational performance (of the interventions, 36% had used tutoring, 10% cooperative learning, and 5% feedback and progress-monitoring), had employed a treatment-versus-control group design (of which 76% were randomized controlled trials and 24% quasi-experimental designs), and had been carried out in western countries (with 95% in the US and the other 5% in Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, or Sweden). Overall, Dietrichson et al. (n.d.) found
that, in terms of average effect sizes, the three most promising educational interventions for low-SES students were tutoring (average effect size of 0.36), feedback and progress monitoring (0.32), and cooperative learning (0.22). The researchers recommended these three types of programs as educationally important, statistically significant, and robust.

Finally, a recent meta-analysis of computer-based intelligent tutoring systems (ITs; Kulik & Fletcher, 2016) has suggested that earlier negative judgments about the relative ineffectiveness of computer-mediated approaches to improving school performance may need to be revised. Kulik and Fletcher noted that Slavin, Lake, and Groff (2009) and the What Works Clearinghouse (US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2009) had found little improvement in math performance through the use of the Carnegie Learning Cognitive Tutor program for middle school or high school students (https://www.carnegielearning.com/learning-solutions/software/cognitive-tutor/). Defining ITs as second-generation tutors, however, compared with first-generation systems known as computer-assisted instruction (CAI) tutors, Kulik and Fletcher (2016) stated that ITs are based on artificial intelligence and cognitive theory and lead students through the various steps of a problem via hints and feedback from expert-knowledge data bases. In their meta-analysis of 50 controlled ITs, they found a median effect size of 0.66, a moderate-to-large effect equivalent to moving educational performance from the 50th to the 75th percentile. Clearly, ITs appear to warrant further experimentation.

4.3.2. Tutoring for children in care

To the best of our knowledge, only three randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have been completed to date of tutoring interventions with children in care. The first was an evaluation of the Early Start to Emancipation Preparation Program (ESTEP) Tutoring program in Los Angeles, California (Courtney, Zinn, Zielewski, Bess, Malm, Stagner, et al, 2008; Zinn & Courtney, 2014). The ESTEP program, offered through 12 community colleges, had the goal of improving the reading and math skills of young people in foster care, aged 14 or 15 years, who were 1-3 years behind grade level in reading or math. The young people were eligible for up to 65 hours of tutoring, mainly in their own homes, including 15 hours that tutors could use for preparation, mentoring, and other activities. In terms of effects, the ESTEP evaluation, based on 445 participants, found that the program had no impact on educational outcomes. The outcomes included letter-word identification, calculations, and passage comprehension from the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III (Mather, Wendling, & Woodcock, 2001); student-reported school grades; educational attainment (i.e., highest grade completed, including attainment of high school diploma, or general equivalency diploma, GED); and coping with the demands of school (e.g., getting along with teachers or other students; getting homework done). There were no statistically significant differences found on these outcomes between the ESTEP and control groups at follow-up (Courtney et al., 2008). The potential reasons for the ineffectiveness of the program (besides the content of the program itself) included these: on average, the young people received only 35 hours of tutoring (18 hours of math and 17 hours of reading/language); 14% of the youths were more than three years behind in both reading and math; 12% of the control group inexplicably received the ESTEP intervention; many in the control group received tutoring from other sources (e.g., school-based programs); and 38% of the youths randomly assigned to the tutoring group never took part in the intervention.

The RCT of tutoring conducted by Flynn, Marquis, Paquet, Peeke, and Aubry (2012) was, to our knowledge, only the second randomized trial to be conducted in the international child welfare literature and the first to produce positive results. The intervention used foster parents as the tutors of their own foster children and was conducted with the participation of nine local Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario. The sample consisted of 77 foster children aged 6 to 13 years who were in
primary-school grades 2-7. Forty-two foster children were randomly assigned to the experimental group, which received Maloney’s (1998) version of direct-instruction tutoring (3 hours of individual tutoring per week provided by the children’s foster parents, for 30 weeks), and 35 foster children were randomly assigned to a wait-list control group. The Wide Range Achievement Test—Fourth edition (WRAT4; Wilkinson & Robertson, 2006) was the main instrument used to evaluate the outcomes of the tutoring. At the post-test, the 30 foster children in the experimental group had made greater gains than the 34 in the control group on the WRAT4 sub-tests of Sentence Comprehension (Hedges’ g = 0.38, p < .05), Reading Composite (g = 0.29, p < .10), and Math Computation (g = 0.46, p < .01), but not on Word Reading (g = 0.19, ns) or Spelling (g = −0.08, ns). Overall, the RCT demonstrated that tutoring could be effective with children in care. Moreover, despite the demands made on them as tutors, the foster parents had a favorable opinion of the intervention: 79% said they would recommend the Maloney program “without hesitation” to other foster parents, 14% said they would recommend the program “with some hesitation”, and only 7% “would not recommend it”.

In the third tutoring RCT, Harper and Schmidt (2016) also used Maloney’s (1998) Teach Your Children Well version of direct-instruction tutoring. They used a small-group format and university students as tutors, who provided 2 hours of tutoring per week for 25 weeks. The children were 6-13 years of age and in primary grades 1-8. Close to 80% were of Aboriginal (First Nations) descent. Fifty foster children were randomly assigned to the tutoring program, and 51 to the wait-list control group. Among the 45 children who received tutoring, compared with the 46 who remained in the control group, there were statistically significant effects on WRAT4 Word Reading (Hedges’ g = 0.40, p < .001), Spelling (g = 0.25, p < .02), and Math (g = 0.34, p < .04), but not on Sentence Comprehension (g = 0.15, ns). As Harper and Schmidt (2016) pointed out, specific differences between their own findings and those of Flynn et al. (2012) may have been due to differences in several aspects of the respective tutoring programs, as implemented. To this we add that the participants’ lower pre-test reading and math scores in Harper and Schmidt’s study, compared with those in that by Flynn et al. (2012), may also help to explain why Harper and Schmidt’s participants made gains in reading in the more basic skills of word reading and spelling, whereas the participants in Flynn et al. (2012) made gains in the more complex skill of sentence comprehension. Overall, we concur with Harper and Schmidt (2016) that their positive findings and those of Flynn et al. (2012), in contrast to the null findings and major methodological problems of the ESTAP tutoring program evaluated by Courtney et al. (2008) and Zinn and Courtney (2014), indicate that tutoring is a promising avenue to improving the often weak reading and math skills of children in care. Like Forsman and Vinnerljung (2012) and Flynn et al. (2012), Harper and Schmidt (2016) called for more widespread consideration of and research investment in tutoring and other educational interventions to help the many young people in care who urgently need to improve their educational success.

It is encouraging that the recent trend of using randomized designs to evaluate tutoring and other interventions continues to gather momentum in child welfare. Besides the three RCTs just reviewed, there are at least four others that are currently underway, with results that are likely to become publicly available in the next couple of years. In Denmark, the Danish National Centre for Social Research (2014; n.d.) is conducting an RCT that, when completed, is likely to be particularly informative. Led by Misja Eiberg, the Danish project, A Randomized Controlled Trial of Educational Support Interventions for Children in Care, is comparing two different programs for children in foster care, aged 6-13, with a control group. The first intervention is a school-based program, conducted by professionals, that consists of a comprehensive assessment of the child and an individually targeted intervention plan. The other intervention is a home-based program in which foster parents tutor their foster children for three hours a week for 40 weeks (Danish National Centre for Social Research, n.d.).
At the University of Ottawa, Andrea Hickey and Robert Flynn are now completing three tutoring-related controlled studies. The first is a pilot RCT aimed at determining whether working memory in children in care can be improved through training (Söderqvist & Nutley, n.d.). Previous research that did not include a control group has suggested that improvement in working memory may enable enhanced educational performance, especially in math. The second RCT, building upon Flynn et al. (2012) and Harper and Schmidt (2016), is comparing shorter (25 sessions) and longer (50 sessions) versions of Maloney’s (1998) Teach Your Children Well direct-instruction tutoring program. If the two versions prove to be of approximately equal effectiveness, child welfare organizations could use the shorter version, at considerable savings in time and cost. In their third RCT, Hickey and Flynn are assessing the impact of a relatively new tutoring program, TutorBright, with children in care. The program is currently delivered to many children in the general population in their own homes but not yet to children in care. The organization that offers the program recruits, trains, deploys, and supervises its own tutors, thereby alleviating the logistical burden on the CAS that pays for the service. Interventions such as these need to be deployed more widely and evaluated more rigorously. If they prove to be effective, they will offer much needed assistance to many young people in care and many advantages to the child welfare organizations that serve them.

Chapter 5. References


Chapter 6. Appendices

Appendix 1. Infographs for 2005 Bachelor and Diploma Graduates

Bachelor Graduates, 2005 cohort (Finnie et al, 2016, Barista or Better?)
Diploma Graduates, 2005 cohort (Finnie et al., 2016; Barista or Better?)

Barista or Better?
New Evidence on the Earnings of Post-Secondary Education Graduates: A Tax Linkage Approach
Analysis of College Diploma Graduates

Overall Earnings (2005 Cohort)

Average First Year Earnings After Graduation (2005–2012 Cohorts)

Faculty Earnings Comparison

Distribution of Earnings by Percentile (2005 Cohort)

Average Cumulative Eight Year Earnings (2005 Cohort)

Gender Comparison

Earnings One Year After Graduation (2005 Cohort)

Earnings Eight Years After Graduation (2005 Cohort)

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simcoe</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston-Frontenac/Lennox-Addington/Hastings</td>
<td>2010</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haliburton/Peterborough/Northumberland/Kawartha</td>
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<td><a href="http://bethebold.ca/">http://bethebold.ca/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescott/Russell/Cornwall</td>
<td>2011</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanark/Leeds/Grenville/Renfrew</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>2007</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton/Brant/Haldimand/Norfolk</td>
<td>2008</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guelph/Waterloo/Wellington</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abetterchance.ca">http://www.abetterchance.ca</a> and <a href="http://www.cwect.ca">www.cwect.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><a href="http://www.crownwardeducation.com">www.crownwardeducation.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>2009</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey/Bruce/Huron/Perth</td>
<td>2010</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simcoe</td>
<td>2008</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudbury/Manitoulin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cochrane/Timiskaming</td>
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<td><strong>End of table.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CWECT Evaluation (2015-16) - CWECT members in person interviews

Name: Affiliation:
Date/Time: Interviewer:

Introduction:
First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I am here today to ask you some questions about your experiences with the Crown Ward Education Championship Team. There are no right or wrong answers. Feel comfortable to say what you think and feel. This discussion is completely voluntary and will remain confidential. I am here to gather information and opinions, positive or negative, and your responses today will remain anonymous.

Please note I will be audio-recording our interview today so I can remember what we talked about. However, this will not be shared with anyone outside our research team. Any identifying information recorded during the interview will also be removed so that your responses remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

Icebreakers:
1. Please present yourself and your role/functions/responsibilities within the CWECT.
2. How long have you been part of the CWECT?

Evaluation question #1: What are the needs of the stakeholders?
1. What are the needs of Crown Ward youth?
2. What are the needs of the caregivers?
3. What are the needs of the community partners involved in post-secondary education/training planning for Crown Ward youth?
4. Do the needs differ within the program (i.e., between the two CWECT teams)?

Evaluation question #2: Does the program meet the needs of the stakeholders?
1. What are the assumptions/key ingredients as to why this program should help Crown Ward youth with post-secondary education and employment outcomes?
2. Does your team use these assumptions/key ingredients to guide their decision-making and activity planning? If yes, how? If no, why not?
3. Why is your team doing what it is doing?
4. What isn’t your team doing that may be helpful?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do team members agree about what has been done/what is being done to help Crown Ward youth with post-secondary education and employment outcomes?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

6. Are the current human, physical and financial resources sufficient? If no, what resources are needed?
7. Have you received sufficient guidance from the tri-Ministries in terms of what to do and why? If no, what information is needed?
Evaluation question # 3: How is the program being implemented?

1. Who is in charge of your CWECT team?
2. How does your CWECT team turn discussion into action?
3. How does your CWECT team set priorities?
4. On a scale of 1-10, how involved are you in your CWECT group (1 = being not involved, 10 = being very involved)?
   
   Please describe what your involvement consists of.

5. What are the current activities of your CWECT for each stakeholder group (i.e., Crown Ward youth, caregivers, community partners)?

6. Does the implementation of these activities differ within the program (e.g., between LLG and Renfrew)? If yes, please explain.

7. How are community partnerships nurtured besides the monthly CWECT meetings?

8. Do you feel support/heard by the CWECT team? Please explain your answer.

Evaluation question # 4: Do you think the program is working?

1. Is your CWECT team making a difference? If yes, how and what is contributing to this? If not, what is getting in the way?

2. Imagine the CWECT initiative didn’t exist. What would the education and employment picture for Crown Wards look like?

Conclusion:

These were the questions we had to ask you today. Thank you for the time you have allowed us. Your answers and questions will be incredibly valuable. Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions or comments you would like to ask us before we finish the session?
Appendix 4. Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Youth in Care

CWECT Evaluation 2015-16-Youth In-Person Interviews

Name: ______________________ Agency: ______________________
Date/Time: ______________________ Interviewer: ______________________

Introduction:
First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I would like to ask you some questions about school and your future plans. There are no right or wrong answers. Feel comfortable to say what you think and feel. This discussion is completely voluntary and will remain private.

Please note I will be audio-recording our interview today so I can remember what we talked about. However, this will not be shared with anyone outside our research team. Any identifying information recorded during the interview will be removed so your responses remain private.

Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

Background:
1. What is your age? _________
2. What is your sex?
   _______ male
   _______ female
3. What is your date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)? ___/____/________
4. What school do you go to? ____________________________________________________
5. What grade are you in? ____________
6. Please describe your current placement (foster home, kinship care, group home, independent living, or other):
   __________________________________________________________________________
7. Are you currently working (part- or full-time)?
   ___ No
   ___ Yes (part-time)
   ___ Yes (full-time)
   If yes, please describe:
8. Are you currently volunteering?
   ___ No
   ___ Yes
   If yes, please describe:
   __________________________________________________________________________
9. What do you like to do for fun?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Social relationships:
10. Who do you go to when you need to talk about something that is bothering you?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

11. Who encourages you to pursue your education (i.e., complete high school and/or post-secondary education or training)?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Education:
12. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to finish high school? Please explain your answer.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
______________________________________________________________________

13. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to pursue post-secondary education or training (e.g., university, college, apprenticeship)? Please explain your answer.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
______________________________________________________________________

14. What do you plan to do when you are finished high school?
______________________________________________________________________

15. Are you planning to pursue further education or training after high school? If no, why not? If yes, what post-secondary education or training options are you considering?
   ___ No
   ___ Yes
______________________________________________________________________

16. What do you need to help you make decisions about your post-secondary education or training?
______________________________________________________________________
17. Do you know what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team, or CWECT, is? If yes, please describe what this team does.
   ___ No
   ___ Yes

18. Are you aware of any financial supports available to Crown Ward youth pursuing post-secondary education or training? If yes, please indicate which ones.
   ___ No
   ___ Yes

19. Have you participated in any activities related to post-secondary education or training (e.g., campus tours, motivational speaker, etc.)? If yes, which ones and were they helpful? If no, why not?
   ___ No
   ___ Yes

Future goals:
20. Where do you see yourself next year at this time?

21. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

22. What is your dream job? Do you think you are capable of getting this job? Why or why not?

Conclusion:
These were the questions we had to ask you today. Thank you for the time you have allowed us. Your answers and questions will be incredibly valuable. Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions or comments you would like to ask us before we finish the session?
Appendix 5. Online/Paper Questionnaire for Youth in Care

CWECT Evaluation 2015-2016 - Online Youth Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study!

We are interested in gathering information about school and future education and career plans for youth in care. Everything that you share with us in this survey is confidential and will not be shared with anyone from the Children’s Aid Society. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel comfortable to share what you think and feel.

1. What are the initials of your first and last name? __________
2. What is your sex?
   □ Male □ Female
3. What is your date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)? ____________
4. What is your age (in years)? _______________
5. Which Children’s Aid Society are you involved with? _______________
6. Which of the following best describes where you are currently living?
   □ Kinship care □ Foster home
   □ Group home □ Independent living
   □ Other (please specify) _______________
7. What school do you go to? _______________
8. What grade are you in? _______________
9. Are you currently working (par-or-full time)?
   □ No □ Yes (part-time). If yes, please indicate where: _______________
   □ Yes (full-time). If yes, please indicate where: _______________
10. Are you currently volunteering:
    □ No □ Yes. If yes, please indicate where: _______________
11. What do you like to do for fun?
    ___________________________________________________________
12. Who do you go to when you need to talk about something that is bothering you?
    ___________________________________________________________
13. On a scale of 1-10, how much do each of the following people encourage you to pursue your education (i.e., complete high school and/or post-secondary education or training)? Please answer once for each (e.g., circle 1 if you are not in contact with that person).

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<thead>
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<th>Person</th>
<th>1 Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5 Somewhat</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10 Frequently</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other school staff (e.g., counselor)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-in-transition worker</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend(s)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please describe)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to finish high school?

☐ (Not important) ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (Somewhat important)
☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 (Very important)

15. If you do not plan to finish high school: Could you please tell us why not?

____________________________________________________________________

16. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to pursue post-secondary education or training (e.g., university, college apprenticeship)?

☐ 1 (Not important) ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (Somewhat important)
☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 (Very important)

17. If you do not plan to pursue post-secondary education or training: Could you please tell us why not?

____________________________________________________________________

18. If you do not plan to pursue post-secondary education or training: What do you plan to do when you are finished high school?

____________________________________________________________________

19. If you do plan to pursue post-secondary education or training: Please indicate which options you are considering:
☐ University  ☐ College  ☐ Apprenticeship  ☐ Other (please describe) ____________

20. If you do plan to pursue post-secondary education or training: What do you need to help you plan for your post-secondary education or training:
_____________________________________________________________________________

21. Do you know what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team, or CWECT, is?
☐ No  ☐ Yes

22. Please describe what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team (CWECT) does.
_____________________________________________________________________________________

23. Before now, were you aware of the following financial supports available to Crown Wards pursuing post-secondary education or training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Support</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards (50-100% of tuition coverage up to a maximum of $3,000 per year, for full-time students)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Bursary (multi-year) award of $3500 per year for up to 4 years</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Grant (one-time award of $1000)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAF/PHD award (one-time award of $3000)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Tuition Aid for Youth Leaving Care (combination of Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards and top up by participating post-secondary schools, for full-time students)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Learning Grant ($500 per month to youth 21-24 years of age who are enrolled full-time in post-secondary education or training programs)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. For all of the activities listed below, please check all activities you knew about (before they happened), and all activities you participated in during the last year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Knew about</th>
<th>Participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Day with Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House, Queens University</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Competition, Loyalist College</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Competition, St. Lawrence College</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens Prep U program</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Campus Tour (St. Lawrence, Loyalist)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culinary Event at St. Lawrence</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. Thinking of these activities for Crown Wards that you participated in: Were they helpful?
   □ No □ Yes

26. Please describe why the activities for youth in care that you participated in were helpful or not helpful:
   ____________________________________________________

27. What other events do you think should be offered to you and other children in care about post-secondary education or training/employment planning?

28. Where do you see yourself next year at this time?
   ________________________________________________

29. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
   ________________________________________________

Appendix 6. Online Questionnaire for Caregivers

CWECT evaluation (2015-2016) – Online Caregiver Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study!

We are interested in gathering information about school and future education and career plans for the children/youth who are currently in your care. Everything that you share with us in this survey is confidential and will not be shared with anyone from the Children’s Aid Society.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel comfortable to share what you think and feel.

1. What is your sex?
   □ Male □ Female

2. What is your age (in years)? ____________

3. Which Children’s Aid Society are you involved with? ______________

4. What do you consider to be your current main activity?
   □ Not employed outside the home
   □ Employed outside the home (part- or full-time)
   □ Going to school
   □ Going to school and employed outside the home
   □ Recovering from illness or disability
   □ Retired
   □ Other (please describe below) ________________________

5. Highest level of education (completed or in progress)?
   □ High school diploma
   □ Trades certificate – vocational school – apprenticeship training
   □ Non-university certificate or diploma from a college
   □ University certificate or diploma below bachelor level
   □ Bachelor degree
6. Total number of children or youth in care who live at home: ____________
7. Total number of children or youth not in-care who live at home: ____________

Please complete the following questions for the child or youth in care who is currently in your care:

8. What are the initials of the first and last name for the child or youth in care? ________
9. What is the sex of the child or youth in care?
   □ Male □ Female
10. What is the date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY) for the child or youth in care? ____________
11. How old is the child or youth in care (in years)? _______________
12. Which of following best describes the current placement of the child or youth currently in your care?
   □ Foster care
   □ Kinship care
   □ Adoption probation
   □ Customary care
   □ Group home
   □ Other: ____________________
13. Is the child or youth in care currently attending school?
   □ Yes □ No
14. What is the current grade and school for the child or youth currently in your care?
   Grade _________________  School ___________________________

For the remaining questions, when we refer to post-secondary education or training, this includes apprenticeship training, college, or university.

15. On a scale of 1-10, how important do you think it is for your child/children or youth in care to pursue post-secondary education or training?
   □ 1 (Not important) □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 (Somewhat important)
   □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 (Very important)
16. How far do you hope your child/children or youth in care will go in school?
   □ Secondary or high school graduation
   □ Apprenticeship program
   □ College
   □ University degree
More than one university degree

Other (please describe below) ____________________

Doesn’t matter to me

17. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you encourage your child/children or youth in care to pursue post-secondary education or training?

1 (Not at all) 2 3 4 5 (Somewhat)

6 7 8 9 10 (Frequently)

18. What do you do to support your child/children or youth in care who plan to pursue post-secondary education or training?_____________________________________________________________________________

19. On a scale of 1-10, how much influence do you think you have on your child/children or youth in care regarding their decision-making about post-secondary education or training?

1 (No influence) 2 3 4 5 (Some influence)

6 7 8 9 10 (A lot of influence)

20. On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel helping your child/children or youth in care plan for post-secondary education or training?

1 (Not confident) 2 3 4 5 (Somewhat confident).

6 7 8 9 10 (Very confident).

21. What do you need to help your child your child/children or youth in care plan for post-secondary education or training?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

22. On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel helping your child/children or youth in care plan for employment once they are finished school?

1 (Not confident) 2 3 4 5 (Somewhat confident)

6 7 8 9 10 (Very confident)

23. What do you need to help your child your child/children or youth in care plan for employment once they are finished school?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

24. Do you know what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team, or CWECT, is?

No  Yes

25. Please describe what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team (CWECT) does.
26. Before now, were you aware of the following financial supports available to Crown Wards pursuing post-secondary education or training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Support</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards</strong> (50-100% of tuition coverage up to a maximum of $3,000 per year, for full-time students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clark Bursary</strong> (multi-year) award of $3500 per year for up to 4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clark Grant</strong> (one-time award of $1000)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAF/PHD award</strong> (one-time award of $3000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100% Tuition Aid for Youth Leaving Care</strong> (combination of Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards and top up by participating post-secondary schools, for full-time students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living and Learning Grant</strong> ($500 per month to youth 21-24 years of age who are enrolled full-time in post-secondary education or training programs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. Please indicate below which of these activities for youth in care you knew about (before they happened), and which activities you participated in during the last year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Knew about</th>
<th>Participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Day with Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House, Queens University</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Competition, St. Lawrence College</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens Prep U program</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culinary Event at St. Lawrence</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. Thinking of these activities for Crown Wards that you participated in: Were they helpful?

☐ No
☐ Yes

29. Please describe why the activities for youth in care that you participated in were helpful or not helpful: 
_______________________________________________________________________________

30. Please describe why this event for caregivers was helpful or not helpful: 
_______________________________________________________________________________

31. What other events do you think should be offered to you and/or children in care about post-secondary education or training/employment planning?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 7. Online Questionnaire for Community Partners.

CWECT Evaluation (2015-2016) - Community Partner Online Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study!

We are interested in hearing about your knowledge and experience related to post-secondary education/career planning with Crown Ward youth (foster care youth).

Everything that you share with us in this survey is confidential.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel comfortable to share what you think and feel.

1. Which organization are you affiliated with?
2. What is your position/role within this organization?
3. How long have you been working for this organization?
4. Please describe your involvement with youth in care (foster care youth).
5. Please describe what you believe children in care (foster care children) need to be able to pursue post-secondary education or training. Note. When we refer to post-secondary education or training, this includes apprenticeship training, college, or university.
6. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to your organization to help children in care (foster care children) to pursue post-secondary education or training?
   □ 1 (Not important) □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 (Somewhat important)
   □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 (Very important)
7. On a scale of 1-10, how much does your organization encourage children in care (foster care children) to pursue post-secondary education or training?
   □ 1 (Not at all) □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 (Somewhat)
   □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 (Frequently)
8. What does your organization do to support children in care (foster care children) who plan to pursue post-secondary education or training?

____________________________________________________________________
9. What does your organization need to better support children in care (foster care children) who plan to pursue post-secondary education or training?

____________________________________________________________________
10. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to help children in care (foster care children) pursue post-secondary education or training?
   □ 1 (Not important) □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 (Somewhat important)
   □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 (Very important)
11. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you encourage children in care (foster care children) to pursue post-secondary education or training?
   □ 1 (Not at all) □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 (Somewhat)
12. What do you do to support children in care (foster care children) who are pursuing post-secondary education or training?

13. What do you need to better support children in care (foster care children) who are pursuing post-secondary education or training?

14. On a scale of 1-10, how much influence do you think your organization has on children in care (foster care children) regarding their decision-making about post-secondary education or training?

15. On a scale of 1-10, how much influence do you think you have on children in care (foster care children) regarding their decision-making about post-secondary education or training?

16. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to your organization to help children in care (foster care children) pursue employment once they are finished school?

17. On a scale of 1-10, how much does your organization encourage children in care (foster care children) to pursue employment once they are finished school?

18. What does your organization do to support children in care (foster care children) who are pursuing employment?

19. What does your organization need to better support children in care (foster care children) who are pursuing employment?

20. Do you know what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team, or CWECT, is?

21. Please describe what the Crown Ward Education Championship Team (CWECT) does.
22. Before now, were you aware of the following financial supports available to Crown Wards pursuing post-secondary education or training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Support</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards (50-100% of tuition coverage up to a maximum of $3,000 per year, for full-time students)</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Learning Grant ($500 per month to youth 21-24 years of age who are enrolled full-time in post-secondary education or training programs)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. What events/activities do you think should be offered to you about helping children in care (foster care youth) with post-secondary education or training/employment planning?

______________________________________________________________________

24. What events/activities do you think should be offered to Crown Ward youth and/or their caregivers about post-secondary education or training/employment planning?

______________________________________________________________________
### Appendix 8. Logic model for Highland Shores-Frontenac, Lexington, & Addington CWECT

**Note:** This table is intended for use by those responsible for the delivery of the program. PSE = post-secondary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>STAKEHOLDER NEEDS (problems program intends to address)</th>
<th>INTENDED ACTIVITIES (interventions)</th>
<th>INTENDED INPUTS (human, physical, financial &amp; pedagogical resources)</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTPUTS (service products or “units of service”)</th>
<th>INTENDED IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &lt; 2 years)</th>
<th>INTENDED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits 2-3 years)</th>
<th>INTENDED LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &gt; 3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Youth in care**  
(Crown Wards, youth in adoption probation, and former Crown Wards over 18 years) | Often have poor academic and employment outcomes  
Limited experiential learning or opportunities for education or employment planning  
Limited number of stable connections and relationships  
Limited awareness of value of pursuing PSE or training  
Low self-efficacy/self-confidence and low engagement | Community inventory, communication strategy, workshops or experiential-learning opportunities | Human:  
Program staff  
Youth in Care  
Community partnerships | Physical:  
Program supplies (e.g., meeting materials) | Financial:  
MCTU funding  
In-kind support (e.g., project manager time, anecdotal information from community partners) | The number of Crown Wards by age group (e.g., elementary, high school) per agency  
Number of activities directed at Crown Wards for the past year  
How many Crown Wards attended each main event | Increase in PSE options or in informed decision-making  
Increase in number of youth participating in experiential learning opportunities prior to transitioning out of secondary school  
Increase in number of youth planning to participate in PSE or training | Increase in number of youth participating in PSE or training  
Increase in number of youth completing secondary school  
Increase in number of youth attaining entry-level or part-time employment or volunteer positions | Increase in number of youth completing PSE or training (e.g., graduating from college, university, or apprenticeship, etc.)  
Increase in number of youth attaining stable, well-paying employment  
Increase in youth’s sense of self-efficacy, as well as optimism and hope for their future  
Increase in stable connections and relationships |
| **Caregivers**  
Limited/varied awareness of their role in education/employment planning for youth in care  
Limited/varied awareness of value of pursuing post-secondary education or training | Communication strategy, information sessions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Community partners                  | Limited knowledge about education and employment needs of youth in care and how best to support these needs | Limited/varied knowledge about opportunities available to support the education and employment needs of youth in care |  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|  |
|                                    | Variations/instability in community partner relationships | Monitor and evaluate success of the program (i.e., business plans, data collection) |  |
|                                    | Lack of knowledge of community partners (i.e., who are the partners?) | Modify program as needed |  |
|                                    | Regular CWECT meetings; partnership protocol | Monitor and evaluate success of the program (i.e., business plans, data collection) |  |
|                                    | business plan of the three sponsoring Ministries (MCYS, MED, MAESD) |  |  |
| Research:                          | Literature. |  |  |
|                                    | Data from Assessment and Action Record (AAR), from Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) project |  |  |
|                                    | Number of CWECT meetings per month (for how long) for the past year | Number of data products generated by CWECT team to monitor and evaluate post-secondary planning for youth in care |  |
|                                    | Number of members and number who attended each meeting |  |  |
|                                    | Number of active community partnerships |  |  |
|                                    | Number of activities from the community partners directed at youth for the past year |  |  |
|                                    | Number of activities directed at community partners for the past year |  |  |
|                                    | Increase in awareness of contributions they could make to support the educational and employment needs of youth in care | Increase in academic and employment support for youth in care |  |
|                                    | Increase in communication between community partners involved in supporting PSE or employment options for youth in care |  |  |
|                                    | Positive relationships and regular communication between child welfare and all other systems (e.g., post-secondary) involved in the education/employment planning for youth in care |  |  |
# Appendix 9. Logic Model for Lanark, Leeds, & Grenville-Renfrew CWECT

*Note:* This table is intended for use by those responsible for the delivery of the program. PSE = post-secondary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>STAKEHOLDER NEEDS (problems program intends to address)</th>
<th>INTENDED ACTIVITIES (interventions)</th>
<th>INTENDED INPUTS (human, physical, financial &amp; pedagogical resources)</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTPUTS (service products or “units of service”)</th>
<th>INTENDED IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &lt; 2 years)</th>
<th>INTENDED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits 2-3 years)</th>
<th>INTENDED LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES (stakeholder benefits &gt; 3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth in out-of-home care and former Crown Wards over 18 years</strong></td>
<td>Often have poor academic and employment outcomes  Limited experiential learning or opportunities for education or employment planning  Limited number of stable connections and relationships  Limited awareness of value of pursuing PSE or training  Low self-efficacy and low engagement</td>
<td>Community inventory, communication strategy, workshops or experiential-learning opportunities</td>
<td>Human:  Program staff  Community partnerships  Physical:  Program supplies (e.g., meeting materials)  Financial:  MCTU funding  In-kind support (e.g., anecdotal information from community partners)  Pedagogical:  Guidance from the three Ministries  Research:  Literature</td>
<td>Number of youth by age group (e.g., elementary, high school) per agency  Number of activities <em>directed at youth</em> for the past year  How many youth attended each main event</td>
<td>Increase awareness in youth about PSE options or informed decision-making  Increase in number of youth participating in experiential learning opportunities prior to transitioning out of secondary school  Increase in number of youth planning to participate in post-secondary education or training</td>
<td>Increase number of youth participating in PSE or training  Increase in number of youth completing secondary school  Increase in number of youth attaining entry-level or part-time employment or volunteer positions</td>
<td>Increase in number of youth completing PSE or training (e.g., graduating from college, university, or apprenticeship)  Increase in number of youth attaining stable, well-paying employment  Increase in youth’s sense of self-efficacy, as well as optimism and hope for their future  Increase stable connections and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caregivers (e.g., foster caregivers, group home/&quot;corporate parents&quot;)</strong></td>
<td>Limited awareness of their important role in educational or employment planning for youth in care  Limited awareness PSE or training</td>
<td>Communication strategy, information sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of caregivers for youth by group (e.g., foster, group home), per agency  Number of activities <em>directed at caregivers</em> for the past year  How many caregivers attended each main event</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of their important role in educational or employment planning for youth  Increase in awareness of value of pursuing PSE  Increase in involvement in educational or employment planning for youth</td>
<td>Increase in communication with youth about the value of pursuing PSE or training  Increase in sense of competence in being able to support academic or employment needs of youth in care</td>
<td>Increase proactive education/employment planning with youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>STAKEHOLDER NEEDS (problems program intends to address)</td>
<td>INTENDED ACTIVITIES (interventions)</td>
<td>INTENDED INPUTS (human, physical, financial &amp; pedagogical resources)</td>
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</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Community partners | Limited knowledge about educational and employment needs of youth in care and how best to meet these needs  
Variability or instability in community partner relationships | Regular CWECT meetings; partnership protocol | Data from Assessment and Action Record (AAR), from Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) project | Number of CWECT meetings per month (for how long) for the past year  
Number of members and number who attended each meeting  
Number of active community partnerships  
Number of activities from the community partners directed at youth for the past year  
Number of activities directed at community partners for the past year | Increase in awareness of contributions they could make to support the educational and employment needs of youth  
Increase in communication between community partners regarding PSE or employment options for youth | Increase in academic and employment support for youth in care | Positive relationships and regular communication between child welfare and other systems (e.g., PSE) involved in the education or employment planning for youth |
| All groups | Limited knowledge about opportunities available to meet the educational or employment needs of youth in care | Monitor and evaluate success of the program (i.e., business plans, data collection)  
Modify program as needed | Number of data products generated by CWECT team to monitor and evaluate PSE planning for youth | No data in cell. | No data in cell. | No data in cell. | End of Table. |