

Children First

2024-2025
ANNUAL REPORT



A Message From The President of the Board of Directors



The work Children First does is a critical component to the early years sector. I am always in awe of the quite calm, but profound leadership I see in the work that is done and the role that is played for children and families in our community. Little by little, brick by brick, Children First staff have made this organization into what it has become.

Through the dedication they have built an organization people trust, rely on and confidently turn to. The work they have done in supporting the evolution of our board's strategic direction and the work we have collaboratively done with each other has been some of the proudest moments of my professional career. I am deeply thankful to all of them. The members of this board are also truly exceptional. I have never met a more committed, kind, selfless, and diversely knowledgeable group of people. I think what our organization has built together is truly exceptional and I know we are all just getting started.

Coming together as a board and management team to create our strategic directions has been a joy and has made me a better person and leader. I will never forget when together we came up with our vision of

“Every Child. Every Opportunity. Any Future.”

How wonderful that felt that we collectively found our vision and a vision that perhaps even found us. I remember what that room felt like when we found that together. There was a newfound purpose, a clear direction that inspired us and what we saw for the future of Children First.

Children First makes such a difference in the work that they do.
Thank you for giving me the privilege to be a part of it.



Rachel Stewart

Rachel Stewart
President of the Board of Directors

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Rachel Stewart

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Celebrating the work we do and love while caring for our people



Children First was founded on the knowledge that the early years of life are crucial to the healthy development of children and families.

I want to acknowledge the significant challenges our staff face in providing services to families with children from birth to six years old who have mental health or developmental concerns. Their dedication and hard work in addressing these complex needs are truly commendable.

Our staff survey highlighted that we have much to celebrate and some areas of improvement to be made.

Some Things We Are Doing Well:

- “My employer promotes work-life balance”
- “I can talk to my supervisor when I am having trouble maintaining work-life balance”
- “I feel supported at work when I am dealing with a personal issue”

Some Things We Can Do Better At:

- “I feel burned out in my job”
- “My home life suffers because of work”

We understand that working with young children and their families requires not only professional expertise but also immense compassion and patience. Each family and child is unique, and the emotional and developmental needs of these children can be demanding.

Despite these challenges, Children First staff's commitment to delivering high-quality care and support is making a profound difference in families' lives.

Lori Kempe

Lori Kempe
Executive Director





2120

UNIQUE CHILDREN RECEIVED SERVICE

1139 new referrals received by the agency at Central Intake

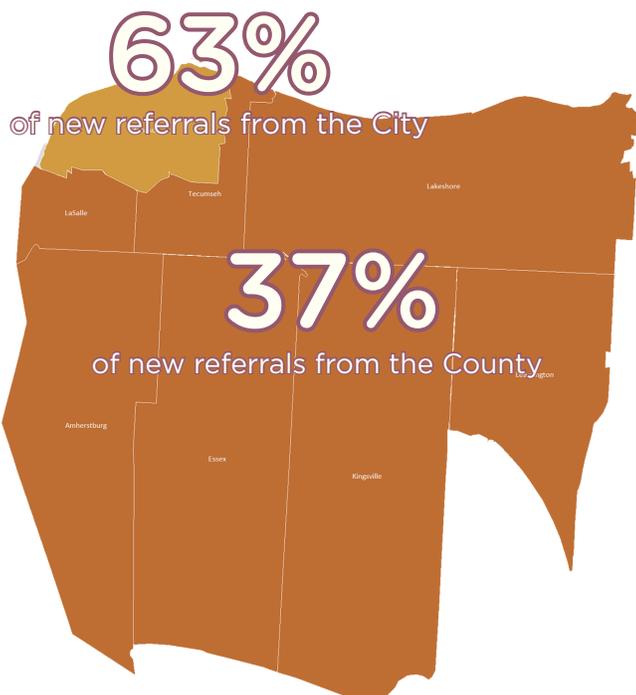
32% of referrals identified as female  **68%** of referrals identified as male 

Number of New Referrals to Children First with the Query of Autism by Year

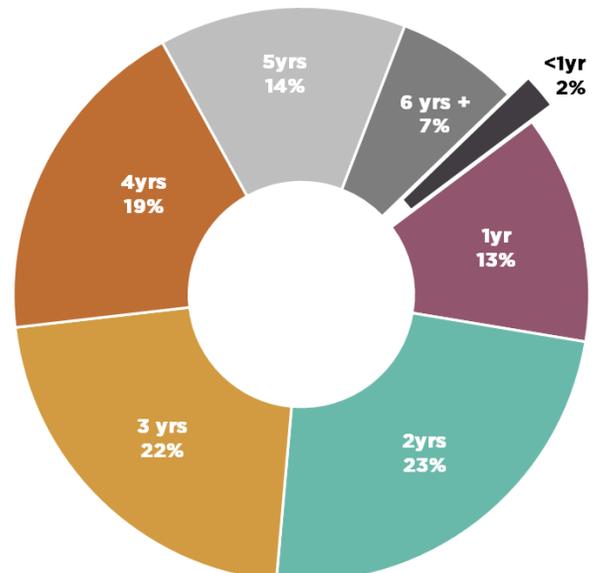
2024-25	157
2023-24	145
2022-23	208
2021-22	268
2020-21	102
2019-20	90
2018-19	93

Autism continues to be a primary referral concern increasingly represented in all service streams. There was a slight increase from last year, however, there remains a 74% increase from pre-pandemic levels.

2.9 years is the average age at referral for Children First services



Age at Referral to Agency



Distribution has been stable since last year. Continue to see increase in the no wrong door referrals for those 6+

TOP PRESENTING CONCERNS AT REFERRAL

- Parent education
- Parenting education
- Communication
- Regulation
- Delayed development
- Anxious or distressed parent

Anxious or parent in distress has elevated from the 10th most common concern to tie for 5th at referral.

Top 5 Presenting Concerns by Service Area



Program and Service Performance Data 2024/2025



Program/Service	New Referrals to program	# of Children Received Service	Average Service Duration (DAYS)	Average Wait Time (DAYS)
ASD Hub	84	78	50	75
OAP- Caregiver Mediated	10	26	195	34
Brief Service	107	145	56	87
Special Needs Resourcing *	350	689	350	27
Infant and Child Development	211	393	221	53
Mental Health	186	436	267	116
Social Work **	20	45	151	122
Child Life	35	44	122	13
Psychology	43	59***	110	103
Occupational Therapy	49/37	96***	263	55
Speech and Language	304	938	336	110
Circle of Security Group	95	114	8 weeks	Self-register
FRIENDS Group	40	49	8 weeks	Self-register
Zoom Rooms	Thirty Zoom Room Sessions were provided through 2024/25 with topics of Parenting, Sleep, Toileting, School Transition, Picky Eating, and Screen Time.			

*Figures based on January – December 2024 as reporting period to funder based on calendar year.

** Social Work referrals directed to brief service counselling as a response to increased demand in agency referrals.

***Psych provided 82 consultations in addition to assessments completed. OT provided 161 consultations upon referral.

Service Contact

Total Agency Contacts with Children and Families by Method

Change in number of contacts from 2023/2024

email  9,400 contacts
1,378 hours

phone  18,639 contacts
5,504 hours

video  1,913 contacts
1,570 hours

in person  20,772 contacts
19,290 hours

+17%

+3.5%

-11%

+10% time

Stream totals

50,724

documented contacts

27,742

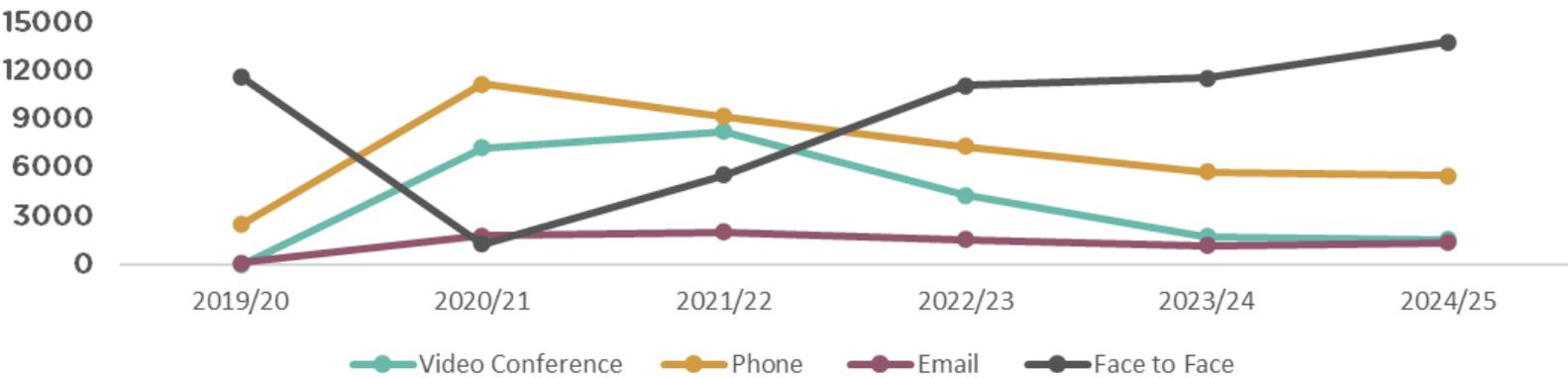
documented hours

Increase of approximately

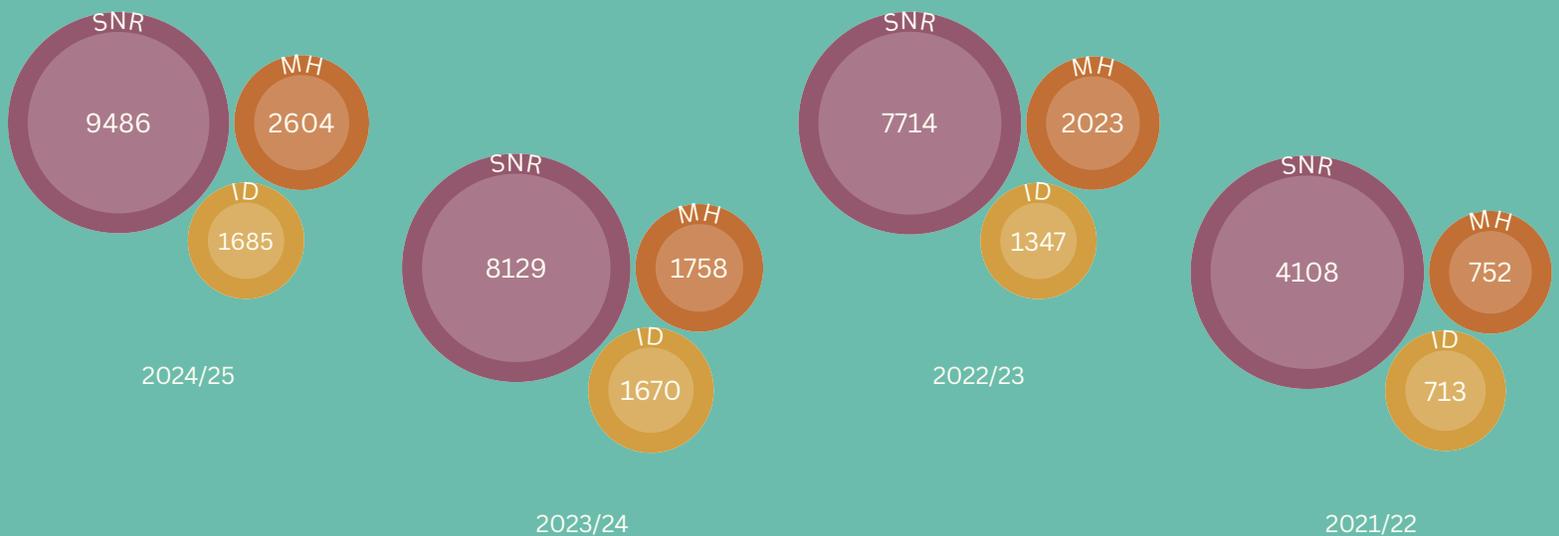
4,500

more contacts

Clinical Staff Contact Time in Hours by Method



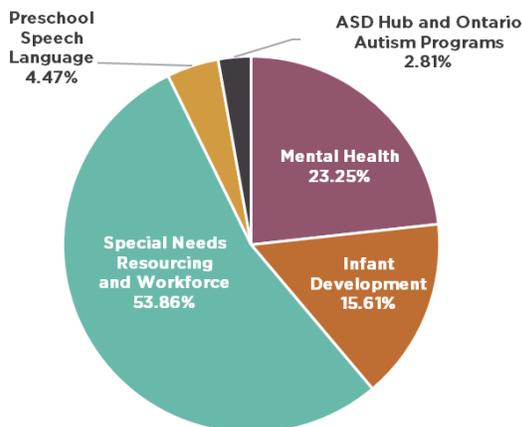
Hours of Face to Face Contact per Year by Service Stream



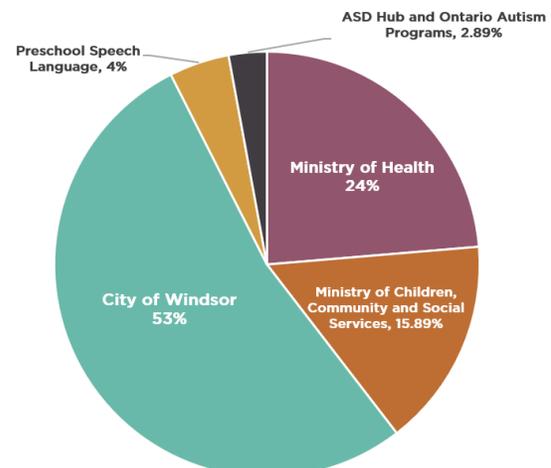
2024-2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue Fund for the year ended March 31, 2025	Total
Funding:	
City of Windsor	\$3,816,109
Province of Ontario	\$2,849,227
Connections Early Years Family Centre	\$390,968
ASD Hub	\$146,629
Rebates, Interest and Recoveries	\$71,680
Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare	\$90,366
Fundraising	\$3,344
	\$7,368,323
Expenses:	
Salaries and Benefits - program	\$5,845,617
Program Expenses	\$1,001,839
Administration	\$722,584
	\$7,570,040
Excess (shortfall) of revenue over expenses	\$ (201,717)

2024-25 Expenses by Program



2024-25 Funding



THE LEGACY OF CONNECTION

*"Children are not a distraction from more important work.
They are the most important work."*

-Dr. John Trainer

*"In the end the legacy that matters won't be what you
built in the world. It will be who you raised and whether
they felt safe, seen and loved in your presence."*

-Aubert Bastiat



It has been a privilege to spend the last 22 years of my career working for Children First and with a team of professionals whose mission is to support and make a difference in the lives of children and families in our community.

My favourite memories will always be those of connection.

Connection with children experiencing the pure joy of play and playful interactions with their trusted caregivers, parents, educators and of course each other.

Connection with our amazing community partners and outstanding opportunities for professional development and learning. We have much to celebrate in our collaborative work together.

Finally, **connection** with a tremendous group of colleagues and mentors who have patiently helped and supported me through the sharing of insights, ideas, and offering of guidance... especially around all things IT related. I know I will miss the laughter, story sharing and just "doing life" alongside you.

Moving forward into this new season, I'm excited to have time to spend time with my expanding family, friends, travelling, learning to cook, playing guitar, exercising...consistently, reading and exploring volunteering opportunities.

In closing, my heart is full of admiration and gratitude for all the time, talent and passion that you, the Children First Team (Board of Directors, Management Team, Supervisors and frontline practitioners) pour into the lives of children and families day in and day out.

I will be always be proud to say that I have been a team member at Children First and will be cheering you on as you continue the important work you do.

Julie Mancini Wadell
Resource Consultant, Intake Team

