



Annual Report June 2005

Board of Directors 2004-2005

Dr. Sheila Cameron
President

Giselle Baillargeon
Vice President

Michael Stebila
Treasurer

Board Members

Dr. Godfrey Bacheyie
(Past President)

Norma Coleman
(Past President)

Rick Farrow
Joe Germanese
Karen Hall
Marina Iannitelli
Paul Layfield
Gina Liovas
Michael Marchand*
Laura Scali

* resigned during the
year

President's Report

This past year has certainly been an exciting one for us all filled with many changes and many challenges. Yet, it has also been a year of opportunities for moving forward. On behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to extend to all the staff at Children First our most sincere appreciation for all of your efforts and support during the past 12 months. A heartfelt thanks goes out to each and every one of you for your time, your energy and, most of all, your commitment to the children and families of Children First.

Special thanks also to each you for the support you have given to Linda Nagle as our Executive Director, I know she is most grateful to you all. Your patience and continued hard work during this time of change in leadership has been critical in ensuring that our families continue to receive the quality services that have been the hallmark of this agency. As well, your cooperation and flexibility has been most appreciated with the big move to our brand new facility. We have grown rapidly during the past years and working from two sites had added its own stresses. So it is especially wonderful to finally have all the staff under one roof!

I also wish to express my personal thanks and appreciation to my fellow board members for all your support during this past year and for your perseverance and attention during the enormous undertaking of the construction project. Many of you were very involved over and above the normal Board meeting expectations this past year – selling property, reviewing construction tenders, developing a fundraising strategy, ensuring a sound financial plan, and resolving landlord issues are but a few of those extra tasks that needed your attention. We are all especially grateful to you for your commitment

It is with sadness that we bid farewell to two long-standing board members who are now retiring: Norma Coleman and Giselle Baillargeon. These members have contributed countless hours and personal energy to improve the quality of life for young children and their families, and they have truly made a difference to the care provided at Children First and in our community. Their vision and passion have helped to ensure that our organization has a firm foundation and a path that always puts children and families first. I invite the remaining Board and the staff to join me tonight in welcoming to the Board our new members who will have the awesome task of continuing the vision and keeping us all true to our values.

As Giselle is leaving us at this time I have been asked to serve as President for a further year and am privileged to do so and look forward to your continued support in the coming year.

Dr. Sheila Cameron

MISSION STATEMENT

Children First was founded on the knowledge that the early years of life are crucial to the healthy development of children and families. We are dedicated to promoting and providing family-centred services to children up to six who are demonstrating special needs.



Executive Director's Report

It is with a sense of humble pride and awe that I write this, my first annual report as Executive Director of Children First. It hardly seems possible that nearly a year has passed since I arrived here August 30th in 2004 to take on the daunting responsibilities of my new position. I feel privileged to follow Dr. Lois Dobson - founding director, former colleague and personal friend - after her distinguished career leading the agency to where it is today.

What a year it has been! The beautiful "Welcome Breakfast" the staff prepared for me my first day on the job still brings a smile to my face. And from that moment on, we've immersed ourselves in one challenge after another, always with a view to moving forward in small steps or in leaps and bounds, depending on the tempo that was played for us, and always with an eye to the reason we are all here - to respond to the needs of children and families.

Between April 1, 2004 and March 31st, 2005 our staff has grown to 74 and we have served 1,026 families. I have to say it is a pleasure working with our staff of professionals who are so devoted to our families. I am impressed by their commitment and expertise, and especially by their advocacy that has brought issues to my attention and provided opportunities for us to work together within the agency and also with our community partners to make services work better for children with special needs. I appreciate all their support and patience in my learning curve as one of the newest members of Children First. I am still in the process of getting to really know everyone and our recent re-location from two sites to our new office "home" is already helping with that.

The move to 3295 Quality Way represents the culmination of a great deal of effort on the part of many to bring together developmental and mental health services for children from birth to age six. During the past year, a tremendous amount of planning, organizing and negotiating went into the construction phase of this process as we worked to bring the design of leasehold improvements for the new space into reality. The result is office space that is brighter and more spacious and conducive to our work. There are now more space options for people to come together for training and for planning services, as well as for families to participate in assessments, observations, and group activities. The location offers excellent access to families and community partners. The facility also affords the potential for further expansion, should there be an opportunity for continued growth in service delivery to address wait lists and meet new demands for service. We look forward to continuing our positive partnership with our partners in Family Respite Services who are co-located with us and who provide services that are compatible with ours. We also look forward to welcoming yet unknown new partners to the third and fourth floors of 3295 Quality Way Place.

The Labelle building finally sold in January, 2005 and we celebrated with staff, Board and funders to mark this turning point that allowed us the funding necessary to move forward and complete the project. I am happy to report that, with the proceeds of the sale and with the support of our provincial and municipal funders, we were able to complete the project within budgetary parameters. Overall, the big move went smoothly with everyone doing their part, and now we are wrapping up a myriad of details. Throughout this process, front line service to our families was maintained and staff are to be commended for their efforts.

At the same time, we were involved in multiple other initiatives that required our attention. Some highlights include:

- * The redesign of our computer data system that merged two programs into one new and improved "Children First Information System" (CFIS).
- * The launch of our preparations for accreditation in anticipation of our site review in January, 2006.



- * New strategies to market our services in conjunction with our new address, i.e. new brochure, identification of translation needs, etc.
- * Revamping our family satisfaction survey and corresponding process for distribution and analysis to solicit meaningful feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement.
- * Participation in a wide variety of professional development, including staff presentations and public relations; training onsite to use the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS); and two half-day sessions for all staff to support and reinforce our transdisciplinary model of family-centred service and to identify and discuss strengths and challenges in the delivery of our services.
- * Bringing a better balance in direct service demands for Resource Teachers through the recruitment of four new positions with an infusion of \$200,000 in fiscal child care funding related to community planning for a more coordinated service system, in conjunction with the anticipated federal "Best Start" initiative.
- * Introduction of a new partnership with Dr. Elizabeth Macklin, developmental pediatrician, to provide consulting services for families to augment services provided by our staff.

Through it all, our dedicated staff remained loyal to the agency with only a few changes due primarily to maternity leaves for four staff and two resignations due to a family move away from Windsor as well as the pursuit of educational goals. There has been more pressure than usual for staff to volunteer their time and energy to participate in a variety of internal committees and work groups, i.e. CFIS, accreditation, moving, fundraising, etc. and much progress has been realized as a result of their efforts and cheerful enthusiasm.

Board members have also been busy working on committees relative to the new building, fundraising and finance, as well as participating in sessions relative to Board Governance. I have appreciated all the support and encouragement I have received from the Board during the introduction to my position. It is evident that we have a Board that cares about the children with special needs in our community and the kind of service we provide to them. Changes are also underway for the Board with new members joining as long-time members are retiring from years of service.

So we are continuing to evolve as an agency - to change and grow as new issues and opportunities come our way. I am counting on all of us to welcome change as a necessary part of growth, so that we can continue to shape our services in ways that fulfill the mission, principals and values of Children First.

Linda Nagle, M.Ed.

PRINCIPALS AND VALUES

We believe that:

- Family relationships are the foundation for growth and learning.**
- Families are the primary resource and decision-makers for their children.**
- Services are best provided through flexible partnerships with families and the community.**
- Every child has the right to be supported to reach their potential.**



Service Performance

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Jan-Mar. 05
Number of Referrals	259	498	381	572	542	166
Number served annually	475	691	816	972	1084	764
Waiting list at the end of Report Period	26	93	69	40	81	106
Discharges	307	256	416	350	479	116
Front Line Staff F.T.E. (at year end)	16.5	36	38.4	59.9	58.2	61
Administrative Staff (at year end)	4	5.8	5.8	6.6	9.6	9.6
Developmental/Biological Mental Health Total	314 <u>161</u> 475	520 <u>171</u> 691	571 <u>245</u> 816	671 <u>301</u> 972	637 <u>447</u> 1084	459 <u>305</u> 764

Parent Satisfaction

In 2004/05, 164 family satisfaction surveys were mailed to parents. 9 of these were returned undeliverable. Of the 155 remaining, 42 were returned completed, thus a return rate of 27%, which was higher than the previous year. Most of the surveys included comments that indicated their appreciation for and satisfaction with the services they received.

	Always or Almost Always		Sometimes or Never	
Satisfied with service	41	98%	1	2%
Phone calls responded to	40	95%	2	5%
Services were clear to me	40	95%	2	5%
Service plan was helpful	40	95%	2	5%
Resources were helpful	39	93%	3	7%
Satisfied with groups*	21	50%	4	10%
Satisfied with referrals**	36	86%	2	5%
Would recommend CF	41	98%	1	2%

* 10 or 24% indicated this question was not applicable to their situation, and 7 or 17% did not answer.

** 2 or 5% indicated this question was not applicable to their situation, and 2 or 5% did not answer.



Comments From Families:

“I have received excellent help in all aspects as they came up. If there was a concern or question I was always supplied with examples (and) suggestions as well as professional advice. Both of my children loved the worker and I truly enjoyed talking to her and all my questions, fears, etc. regarding my children were addressed. Knowing I was on the right path helped tremendously. The kindness was extremely appreciated as well as the knowledge and guidance which was offered all the time – helped a lot.”

“My husband and I found Children First very helpful. (Our worker) was wonderful to work with – we will miss her.”

“The workers are very well educated and help a lot.”

“(Our worker) was extremely helpful. She changed my life in many ways. She was not only a great worker but she was a good friend, too. I can’t imagine how you could improve upon the job that she did.”

“Children First should not be limited to age 6. There is nothing that I experienced that needs improvement from the services I received from Children First.”

“The services were very motivating for my family. Similar services would be great for highly stressed mothers – teen mothers – with ‘normal’ children/infants. For myself, the stimulation of adult company has been beneficial, almost a sanity check.”

“We were fortunate to have very dedicated professionals who truly cared. Only complaint – transition time between Children First and new services when our child turned 6 years.”

“(Our worker) was awesome. My daughter became very attached to her. I felt very comfortable talking to her about anything. My daughter’s emotional upsets and change of lifestyle has changed for the better.”

“I am very pleased with the services that were made available. (Our worker) was an instrumental resource in helping my son achieve the positive results we were looking for. He has come a very long way and we thank everyone at Children First who have helped.”

(Our worker) was truly wonderful. She was very helpful in finding what areas our child needed a little more attention in, and great ideas, games and techniques to help. We will miss working with her.”

“Your services are great! I wish there wasn’t such a big wait list to start in your program.”

“(Our worker) was wonderful! She genuinely cared about my son’s problems and was excited at every progress that was made. She gave us great ways to get through to him and I know he is a better student because of it.”

“We feel that we were truly blessed with some very special people advocating for our daughter who has special needs. May God continue to bless the work that you do.”

“The service we received was very helpful. Our counselor was most helpful and gave me and our family very much hope in the future with our son.”

“Very happy overall with the services that were provided. However, with my experience, the ‘Movement and Communication Group’ is what really gave us hope and a positive outlook for our son that has Downs. I strongly urge that this program be started up for all others with newborns coming into the world with disabilities.”



Summary of Revenue and Expenditure for 2004-2005

	Infant Development		Mental Health (0 to 6)		Mental Health (Non Residential)	
	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004
<u>Operating grant</u>	\$1,142,425	\$1,116,408	\$ 591,098	\$577,726	\$724,468	\$703,488
<u>Other revenue</u>	\$ 17,143	\$ 8,583	\$ 3,701	\$ 17,398	\$ 4,896	\$ 3,280
<u>Total revenue</u>	\$1,159,568	\$1,124,991	\$ 594,799	\$595,124	\$729,364	\$706,768
<u>Operating expenditures</u>	\$1,021,659	\$1,052,932	\$ 551,937	\$565,759	\$703,151	\$687,299
<u>Capital contribution</u>	\$ 137,909	\$ 99,681	\$ 42,862	\$ 51,136	\$ 26,213	\$ 69,493
<u>Revenue over/(under) expenditures</u>	\$ -	\$ (27,622)	\$ -	\$ (21,771)	\$ -	\$ (50,024)
<u>Surplus (deficit) beginning of year</u>	\$ -	\$ (9,405)	\$ -	\$ (4,170)	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Transfer from donation account</u>	\$ -	\$ 37,027	\$ -	\$ 25,941	\$ -	\$ 50,024
<u>Surplus (deficit) end of year</u>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Programs Funded by City of Windsor and Prechool Speech Language Initiative

	Day Nursery Developmental		Day Nursery Mental Health		Early Learning		PSLI	
	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004
<u>Operating grant</u>	\$1,591,491	\$1,467,240	\$ 491,620	\$ 491,610	\$50,000	\$ -	\$ 246,072	\$ 211,943
<u>Other revenue</u>	\$ 11,077	\$ 7,255	\$ 3,633	\$ 2,305	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Total revenue</u>	\$1,602,568	\$1,474,495	\$ 495,253	\$ 493,915	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ 246,072	\$ 211,943
<u>Operating expenditures</u>	\$1,571,493	\$1,325,091	\$ 427,909	\$ 557,214	\$42,825	\$ -	\$ 243,666	\$ 219,725
<u>Capital contribution</u>	\$ 86,460	\$ 27,435	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 567	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Revenue over/(under) expenditures</u>	\$ (55,385)	\$ 121,969	\$ 67,344	\$ (63,299)	\$ 6,608	\$ -	\$ 2,406	\$ (7,782)
<u>Surplus (deficit) beginning of year</u>	\$ 107,338	\$ (14,631)	\$ (63,299)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (9,410)	\$ (1,628)
<u>Transfer from donation account</u>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Surplus (deficit) end of year</u>	\$ 51,953	\$ 107,338	\$ 4,045	\$ (63,299)	\$ 6,608	\$ -	\$ (7,004)	\$ (9,410)



Honouring our Board Retirees

Norma Coleman

Norma's service pre-dates the agency's incorporation in 1988, as she was a member of the Advisory Committee since 1985. She became involved as a parent since the birth of her daughter, Katharine, and was active on the Parent Support Group that the agency offered to parents. She served as Board President for 6 years (1988 – 1994) and was instrumental in raising the profile of the agency as a critical support for children and families with challenging needs. Norma has worked tirelessly in her advocacy efforts on behalf of families and her influence has helped to bring Children First to where it is today. We have been so fortunate to have Norma on the Board - the agency has benefited tremendously from her generous gifts of time, energy and passion for children and families. We wish Norma all the best as she retires from our Board.

Giselle Baillargeon

Giselle became involved with our agency with her family and she impressed our staff with her strong advocacy for her son's needs. Not satisfied to just accept wait lists, she readily expressed her concerns to those who could make necessary changes to the system, and her advocacy efforts were on behalf of all children who needed services, not just her own. She joined the Board in 2000 and is a member on the Parent Consumer Sub-Committee. She has served on the Board Executive as Vice-President since 2003. Giselle has approached her role on the Board with passion and vigor, always determined to influence services that support families and recognizing the importance of supporting staff in realizing our mission. She has been a model for Board and staff and her contributions have truly made a difference. We know that leaving the Board was a difficult decision for Giselle to make, and we wish her all the best.



Children First Staff - 2005

Executive Director

Nagle, Linda

Management

Haffar, Kamal, Program Manager - Physiotherapist

Martel, Cathy, Program Manager – Social Worker

Patterson, Jane, Human Resource & Finance Manager

Admissions Coordinator

Wagner, Leslie

Administration

Baker, Debbie, Finance Advisor

Hamelin, Sharri, Administrative Support

Hastings, Jacqui, Administrative Support

Moir, Anne, Human Resource Advisor

Singla, Arvin, Information Technology Analyst

Unholzer, Lisa, Administrative Support

Occupational Therapists

Animesh, Anand

Weaver, Diana

Physiotherapists

Balazs, Kate

Frimer, Alana - On Leave

Grebe, Susan

Squire, Faye

Psychologists

Goertzen, Larissa

Hofmans, Kathleen - Supervisor

Martin, Helen - Supervisor

Leggatt, Jillian - Supervised Practice

Raval, Vaishali - Supervised Practice

Smith, Carla - Supervised Practice

Resource Teachers

Barber, Shelley

Bell, Sarah

Bezaire, Judy

Dew, Laurie

Helkie, Lorelei

Martin, Jennifer

Onions, Lynne

Stevens, Lori

Mancini-Waddell, Julie

Child and Family Consultants

Alexander, Mike

Augustine, Carrie

Blair, Colleen

Bryant, Lynda

Cady, Deborah

Campeau, Pam

Constable, Diane

Crouchman, Lisa

Fryer, Anne

Gould, Denise

Hales, Kim

Jackman, Toni

Kraler, Andrea

Lohnes, Sandra - On Leave

MacQuarrie, Catherine - On Leave

Manshande, Vera

McGugan, Kerrilyn

McMath, Mary - On Leave

Melnick, Lori

Merachli, Tracey

Nicol, Patty

Nolan-Bickerton, Donna

Panzalovic, Dijana

Redpath, Heather

Sanford, Kim - Supervisor

Snively, Jodi

Szymczak, Tina

Tiegs, Laurie

Toffolon, Sophie

Walker, Jennifer

Whalen, Sylvia - Supervisor

Wilkinson, Diane

Social Workers

Andrews, Lee - Supervisor

DeSantis, Natalie

Harris-Eze, Florence

Irabelli, Kathy

Kapetanov, Laura

Speech-Language Pathologists

Fields, Sheila

Grennell, Katherine

Hageniers, Amy

Laliberté, René - On Leave

Minnis, Lisa - On Leave

Noal, Lucy

Novak, Marie

Patterson, Robin

Quinn, Karen

Riggs, Jenny

Temesvari, Kim

Wilkinson, Sarah