

# Annual Report

June 2006

## President's Report

This past year has been another one of challenges and new beginnings. On behalf of our Board of Directors I wish to acknowledge all the efforts and good work of our Executive Director, Linda Nagle and all of our staff at Children First and extend to them our most sincere appreciation for their support. The success of our organization depends on all our staff, as it is through their daily activities that positive and lasting differences are realized in the lives of the children and families we serve.

I also wish to express sincere thanks and appreciation to my fellow Board members for all their support this past year, especially during the development of our new Strategic Plan. We continue to move forward with the key areas of effort we identified as priorities:

- development of a new governance model and evaluation tools;
- completion of a comprehensive organizational structure and culture assessment and realignments for today and for growth over the next five years;
- growth development plan; and
- Board focused fundraising plan.

These represent major initiatives for the organization, recognizing that staff have already had to adapt quickly to many significant changes. The Board is committed to building on the many strengths of our agency, and ensuring that Children First will be well positioned to continue to adapt to change to meet the challenges of the next generation of children and families requiring our support.

We are truly sorry to accept the retirement of Dr. Godfrey Bachevie, one of our founding Board Directors. He has worked with our staff and board for over 25 years. Godfrey has served as an integral influence in shaping the organization from the beginning and his contribution has been tremendous in making a difference in the lives of children and families. His vision, passion and firm resolve have helped to establish a solid foundation for our organization. We are comforted by Dr. Bachevie's pledge to continue to provide his support outside of formal Board membership, but his regular presence will be truly missed. Dr Nwaesei, who many of you know, has agreed to come on our board and we are very pleased that he will join us in the upcoming year.

At this time, I am pleased to be turning over the awesome responsibility of the President's role to Laura Scali who has served as Vice-President this past year. Laura has been a parent consumer of our services and has taken an active role in fundraising as well as in other areas, such as the new building project. She is a very busy Mom with four children all still at home and I know you will reach out to support her as you have done for all of us in the past.

I am also pleased to announce that Paul Layfield will be joining the Board Executive as Vice-President. His legal expertise has been an asset to our organization and we are delighted that he has agreed to serve as an officer of the Board. Michael Stebila, our Treasurer, will also be continuing on the executive committee for the upcoming year where his expertise is, of course, invaluable.

It has been a privilege and an honour to serve as your Board President during the past three years. I remain committed to supporting Children First in any way I can as Past-President in the coming year and beyond.

Dr. Sheila Cameron

## Board of Directors 2005 - 2006

Dr. Sheila Cameron  
President

Laura Scali  
Vice President

Michael Stebila  
Treasurer

### Board Members

Dr. Godfrey Bachevie  
(Past President)

Rick Farrow  
Joe Germanese  
Karen Hall

Marina Iannitelli  
Paul Layfield  
Gina Liovas  
Marilyn Prior



## 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.



## Principles 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 his/her potential.

## Executive Director's Report

It's been another challenging year! The move to our new office location at 3295 Quality Way marked a new beginning for the agency that, though welcomed, was also a time of adjustment for everyone. Having all Children First staff under one roof and sharing our new space with our friends at Family Respite Services involved seeing new faces and forming new relationships. We worked together all last summer to plan the celebration of our Grand Opening in September – a week of activities for families highlighted by a formal event that proved to be a resounding success! Dignitaries representing our funders joined us and Mayor Eddie Francis presented us with a beautifully framed proclamation to commemorate our special week. Susan Hess along with Giselle Baillargeon and her son Ben gave moving talks that reminded us all why we are so committed to work that supports our special children and families. It was a memorable time in our agency's history.

Now we have a great home base for our staff in an accessible location with appropriate work and meeting space and lots of parking – it's easy to forget how much better those things are for us now! Those amenities have proven to also serve our community well as we are able to share our meeting space with our community partners. While there have been some ongoing building issues to work out, like heating and cooling and some other things, overall we have made good progress there. The possibility of some expansion to the third floor is still being considered in the context of available funding and future growth as we continue to strengthen our capacity for meeting the needs of families. Our current staff complement

has grown to 80, serving 1,070 children and 718 families between April 1, 2005 and May 31, 2006.

With growth inevitably comes growing pains, and there were several issues raised by staff through focus groups and meetings that supported the need to review our organizational structure. This emerged as an area of effort for the Board in developing its strategic plan, resulting in the undertaking of a comprehensive review aimed at improving the current conditions within the agency and our approach to service delivery. At the same time, the City of Windsor, one of our primary funders, undertook a comprehensive review of the child care services they are responsible for and this resulted in recommendations that will increase involvement from Children First. A significant forthcoming change will be the transfer to our agency of special needs resourcing funding from child care centres relative to their onsite Resource Teacher programs. This consolidation of resource services is intended to provide a more coordinated approach to services in our community and will require a concerted effort on our part to ensure a smooth transition.

New funding has been anticipated through Best Start, Ontario's response to the previous federal government's universal child care funding initiative. While the recent change in the new federal government's agenda for child care has been disappointing, the province has pledged new funding to offset the potential loss in relation to the promised funding. We are hopeful that some of this new allocation will help Children First to augment much needed services to children across the local region to promote inclusion and

support successful integration experiences for children with various special needs among their peers in early childhood settings.

As if these challenges were not enough, we spent tremendous energy preparing for our accreditation site review in February which, too, resulted in an extremely positive outcome. This success is directly related to the hours of hard work and commitment of the many staff who gave so willingly of their time and talents to see it through. I would like to thank everyone for their efforts, especially Cathy Martel, Program Manager, who took the lead on this initiative. We can be proud of this accomplishment and the credibility our agency continues to enjoy, having once again achieved accreditation.

Ongoing learning continues to be an important aspect of staff professional development, and we have managed to offer our staff excellent opportunities in this regard, despite current funding limitations. We were fortunate to bring Carl Dunst to our community in January to continue our focus on family-centred services and share that philosophy with community partners. Many of our staff have participated in training for the Triple "P" positive parenting program to enrich their expertise in offering services to families. We have been developing a strategy for prioritizing our identified PD needs to maximize available resources and this will continue to require some creativity on our part. Our staff have continued to volunteer their time to participate in several community events to raise our agency's profile and their dedication has been impressive. We have also provided several groups for parents such as COPE,

More than Words, It Takes Two To Talk, Parent/Child Communication Group and Autism Information Sessions for Parents.

Service demands have continued to exceed our ability to respond, resulting in lengthy wait lists at intake and for all our specialty services. Unfortunately, unless we are properly resourced, this trend will continue. In response, staff have brought forward suggestions for how we handle service to families at intake in an effort to identify needs in a more timely way and provide strategies to help families cope while they are waiting. One example is the new approach our speech and language pathologists are taking to provide screening at intake. Our wait list pressures will continue to be a major focus in the coming year.

The strength of our services is directly linked to our staff and their ongoing willingness to continue to grow professionally, and I am proud to be associated with my colleagues here at Children First. As we continue to grow and evolve amidst an environment of constant change, it will be important to continue to strive to be flexible and adaptable to these changes while at the same time preserving the integrity of our services. I know that there are exciting days ahead and I am optimistic about our success as we move forward together to achieve new goals.

Linda Nagle, M.Ed.



*Children First &  
Family Respite Services*

*Grand Opening  
September 14, 2005*

*Ribbon Cutting Ceremony*

## Accreditation

Accreditation from Children's Mental Health Ontario ensures that Children First meet a standard of excellence that enhances our services to children and families, provides public assurance of quality and adds to our credibility in the community, in the province and with our funders.

The process of planning for re-accreditation of Children First began in the Fall of 2004. This process had been delayed significantly due to the numerous changes and growth our organization had sustained over the past few years. Planning involved determining a work plan that articulated the tasks needing completion over the next year and a half and a timeframe for completion of these tasks, establishing a staff committee that would coordinate and complete a review of the accreditation standards and connecting with community partners, such as Maryvale Child and Family Services, to assist us as mentors in the accreditation process. The involvement and support of our Board of Directors was considered an integral part of the process.

Staff committee members readily engaged in the tasks needing completion and

worked diligently with staff subcommittees. They spent many hours reviewing the accreditation standards which related to every aspect of our service delivery and the management of our organization and determined if we were successfully meeting these standards, and what, if any, changes were needed in policies or procedures. Clinical file reviews were painstakingly completed and proved to be very time consuming but helped to identify the importance of common systems of recording information and training needs for staff. The staff committee's dedication, energy and enthusiasm and most of all their creativity in helping to motivate and prepare the staff through information sharing, posters, games and mock interviews was most beneficial. Staff managed these tasks without compromising their dedicated ongoing involvement with many children and families.

Six weeks prior to our Site Review by the accreditors, a pre site review chart was submitted. This chart assists the agency in the process of a systematic self study and is a major focal point of the accreditation process. The self study process began for

us approximately 14 months before the site review date and, during that period, changes to our policies and procedures were made to ensure that all applicable standards had been met prior to the site review.

The actual site review in February 2006 involved two days of intense scrutiny by a team of experienced professionals exploring all aspects of our program, reviewing relevant documentation, observing staff engaging parents and interviewing staff and the Board individually and the Board as a group. Board questionnaires were completed as well as referral source questionnaires to provide further data. At the end of the two days, the accreditation team met with staff and management to provide feedback and identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. We were extremely pleased with the accreditation results and the fact that we achieved full accreditation. We will now need to consider how to start preparing for Accreditation 2010!

Cathy Martel, Program Manager

## Service Performance

*"Our current staff complement has grown to 80, serving 1,070 children and 718 families between April 1, 2005 & May 31, 2006."*

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Jan-Mar. 06
Number of Referrals	498	381	572	542	555	145
Number served annually	691	816	972	1084	1070	735
Waiting list at the end of Report Period	93	69	40	81	115	101
Discharges	256	416	350	479	517	135
Front Line Staff F.T.E. (at year end)	36	38.4	59.9	58.2	70.9	71.5
Administrative Staff (at year end)	5.8	5.8	6.6	9.6	9.4	9.4
Developmental/Biological	520	571	671	637	568	390
Mental Health	<u>171</u>	<u>245</u>	<u>301</u>	<u>447</u>	<u>502</u>	<u>345</u>
Total	691	816	972	1084	1070	735

## Parent Comments

*"Your program was very helpful for my family. Through information/social work provided by your program, our family is more communicative, loving and respectable of each other. I truly appreciated your help. Words cannot express how thankful I am for your program."*

*"We were very happy with the services from Children First. Everyone we had working with our son were very helpful, positive and friendly."*

*"My family was very happy with the services provided by Children First. I feel that they have given me so many tools and recommendations to improve my child's life and our family's life. The results of their help and support are incredible. I will be forever grateful."*

*"The waitlists were very long. My son was discharged and his name just came up for OT one month prior to being discharged. Unfortunately he did not get OT with Children First which he desperately needed, and he is still waiting to get it through school."*

*"I would love to be a parent advocate with Children First! Everyone involved with our case were extremely helpful. Thanks to everyone involved. Children First turned our family around."*

*"In all, we were very happy with the services we received. The individuals that we worked with were compassionate and caring. As new adoptive parents, we had tremendous support and resource from Children First. This was a very positive experience for us."*

*"The worker we had was very polite, just great. She was like one of the family, always there even if she was at home. She helped the family extremely for the better all thanks to her. All services were excellent no need for change with the worker that I had for the four years we had her. Excellent work!"*

*"Children First was so instrumental in our lives. It gave us the tools we needed to care for our child, support (someone to listen) and a facility to ask questions and get answers."*

*"I would like to thank you for your great service and support you have extended to our child."*

## Parent Satisfaction

In 2005/06, 231 family satisfaction surveys were mailed to parents. Thirteen (13) of these were returned undeliverable. Of the 218 remaining, 47 were returned completed. 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	44	94%		3	6%
Phone calls responded to	46	98%		1	2%
Services were clear to me	46	98%		1	2%
Service plan was helpful	43	91%		3	6%
Resources were helpful	42	89%		3	6%
Satisfied with groups*	22	47%		4	9%
Satisfied with referrals**	36	77%		2	4%
Would recommend CF	45	96%		1	2%

\* 21 or 45% indicated this question was not applicable to their situation.

\*\* 9 or 19% indicated this question was not applicable to their situation.

## Summary of Revenue and Expenditure for 2005-2006

### Programs Funded by Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Preschool Speech and Language Services

	Infant Development		Mental Health (0 to 6)		Preschool Speech & Language	
	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005
Operating grant	\$ 1,115,780	\$ 1,142,425	\$ 1,315,566	\$ 1,315,566	\$ 248,064	\$ 246,072
Other revenue	\$ 14,881	\$ 17,143	\$ 8,622	\$ 8,597	\$ -	\$ -
Total revenue	\$ 1,130,661	\$ 1,159,568	\$ 1,324,188	\$ 1,324,163	\$ 248,064	\$ 246,072
Operating expenditures	\$ 1,144,505	\$ 1,021,659	\$ 1,344,374	\$ 1,255,088	\$ 251,717	\$ 243,666
Capital contribution	\$ 1,202	\$ 137,909	\$ 137	\$ 69,075	\$ -	\$ -
Revenue over/(under) expenditures	\$ (15,046)	\$ -	\$ (20,323)	\$ -	\$ (3,653)	\$ 2,406
Surplus (deficit) beginning of year	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (7,004)	\$ (9,410)
Transfer from donation account	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Surplus (deficit) end of year	\$ (15,046)	\$ -	\$ (20,323)	\$ -	\$ (10,657)	\$ (7,004)

### Programs Funded by City of Windsor

	Day Nursery		Early Learning and Child Care		National Child Benefit - Toy Kits	
	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005
Operating grant	\$ 2,130,177	\$ 2,083,111	\$ 200,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 11,200	\$ -
Other revenue	\$ 25,415	\$ 14,710	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total revenue	\$ 2,155,592	\$ 2,097,821	\$ 200,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 11,200	\$ -
Operating expenditures	\$ 2,201,598	\$ 1,999,402	\$ 209,300	\$ 42,825	\$ 5,070	\$ -
Capital contribution	\$ 1,061	\$ 86,460	\$ -	\$ 567	\$ -	\$ -
Revenue over/(under) expenditures	\$ (47,067)	\$ 11,959	\$ (9,300)	\$ 6,608	\$ 6,130	\$ -
Surplus (deficit) beginning of year	\$ 55,998	\$ 44,039	\$ 6,608	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Transfer from donation account	\$ 16,714	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Surplus (deficit) end of year	\$ 25,645	\$ 55,998	\$ (2,692)	\$ 6,608	\$ 6,130	\$ -

## Honouring Dr. Bachevie on his Retirement

Dr Godfrey Bachevie came to Windsor from London Ontario around 1980 and quickly became familiar with the Program for Encouraging Development (our former name) that was supporting very young children and their families in their first 2 years of life. As a neonatologist he was of course interested in providing on-going support to the children and their families and soon made the acquaintance of Dr Lois Dobson, the founding Executive Director of the program. They met regularly doing rounds in the hospital and built a relationship that supported families in Windsor and Essex County since that time, and now that's over 25 years ago.

In 1988 he became a Board Member and has been providing on-going support to the Board since that time. He served as President of the Board from 1996 to 2003 and since then he has served as Past President. He has participated actively in recruiting and supporting Board members, he has guided us through Accreditation and served as President during two mergers that took place in recent years. Not only as a volunteer did he experience mergers but he lived through the merger of the Windsor hospitals and the move of the neonatal unit across sites. As anyone who has experienced a merger of any kind will report they bring their own challenges, and stress, however committed the parties are to making them work. His sense of humour and sincere commitment to only providing the best care and support possible to children and families has been of great benefit to so many of us, as well as the children and families we have all served over the years. If you really want to chuckle, ask him what he did to the visiting hour rules and regulations on "his" Babies unit when he arrived in Windsor. Of course the families loved the changes....the only thing that mattered was "Is it best for the babies and their families?" Needless to say, that was not always the philosophy of care at the time!!

Somehow in his spare time he has also found time to be an active Rotarian and assist with fund-raising at Art in the Park, at bingo's, and at the Easter Seal Campaign and has been suitably honoured with awards because of his involvement with the Rotary Club. Godfrey has also continued over many years to support his homeland, Ghana, and is well known for his humanitarian work there. He and Bernadette travel there every year and now that their family is grown they even get to go together!

Godfrey you know you will be sorely missed but we take comfort knowing that you will always be providing outstanding care to families and children in our community. On behalf our Board Members, Staff and Children and Families, both past and present, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts and wish you all the best for the future.

Dr. Sheila Cameron

# Children First Staff 2006

## Executive Director

Nagle, Linda

## Management

Haffar, Kamal, Program Manager - Physiotherapist

Martel, Cathy, Program Manager - Social Worker

Patterson, Jane, Manager of Finance and Human Resources

## Admissions Coordinator

Wagner, Leslie

## Administration

Baker, Debbie, Finance Advisor

Brain, Margaret, Administrative Support

Hamelin, Sharri, Administrative Support

Hastings, Jacqui, Administrative Support

Singla, Arvin, Information Technology Analyst

Tiegs, Laurie, Human Resource Advisor

Unholzer, Lisa, Administrative Support

## Resource Teachers

Barber, Shelley

Bell, Sarah - On Leave

Bezaire, Judy

Dew, Laurie

Helkie, Lorelei

Martin, Jennifer

Onions, Lynne

Simard, Sherri

Stevens, Lori

Waddell, Julie

## Occupational Therapists

Panzalovic, Dijana

Weaver, Diana

## Speech-Language Pathologists

Hageniers, Amy

Noal, Lucy

Minnis, Lisa

Mitchell, Heather

Novak, Marie

Patterson, Robin

Quinn, Karen

Riggi, Jenny

Temesvari, Kim

Wilkinson, Sarah

Walker, Jennifer, CDA

Laliberté, Reneé - On Leave

## 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

Jobin, Claire

Kraler, Andrea

Lohnes, Sandra

MacQuarrie, Catherine - On Leave

Manshande, Vera

Melnick, Lori

Merachli, Tracey

Nicol, Patty

Nolan-Bickerton, Donna

Redpath, Heather

Sanford, Kim - Supervisor

Snively, Jodi

Szymczak, Tina

Toffolon, Sophie

Whalen, Sylvia - Supervisor

Wilkinson, Diane

## Social Workers

Andrews, Lee - Supervisor

Brusco-Teti, Patricia - On Leave

DeSantis, Natalie

Irabelli, Kathy

Kapetanov, Laura