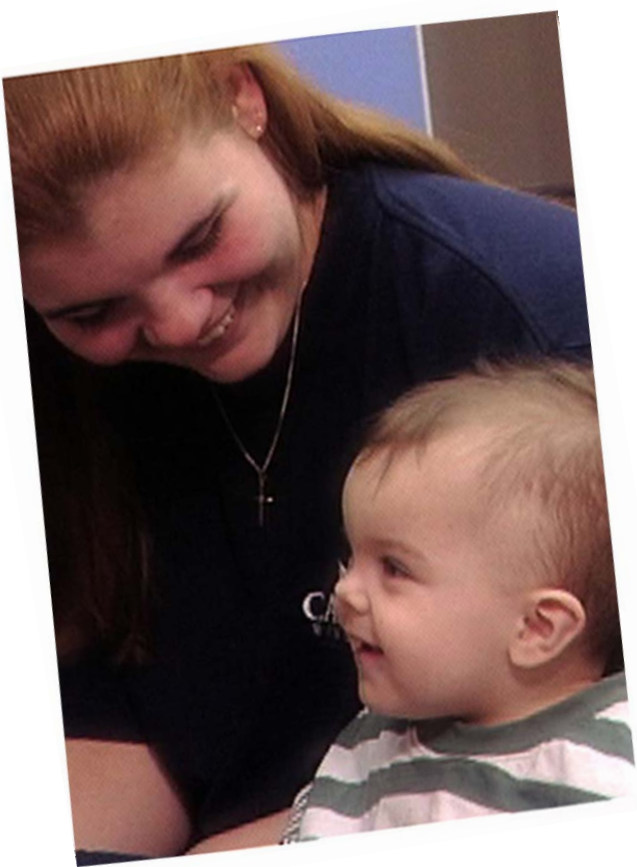




2006-2007
Annual Report



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DIRECTORS**

2006-2007

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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.

PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2006-07 HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is important to pause for a moment and reflect upon some of the challenges Children First has faced over the past year and to celebrate the many opportunities and accomplishments realized through the efforts of those involved with our agency. This is especially true for our hard-working, dedicated staff who have put so much of themselves into the program and the services delivered to our children and families each and every day, and who have managed to continue providing quality, professional supports to our clientele throughout the adjustment to several changes within the agency. It is also true for our Board members who have consistently volunteered their time and energies to ensure that the agency is well-supported and positioned to embrace the future growth required to meet the changing needs of families within our community.

Last summer, several internal changes were implemented as a result of a reorganization effort directed by the Board as part of its strategic plan to “complete a comprehensive organizational structure and culture assessment and realignments for today and for growth over the next five years.” Some of the major initiatives related to this undertaking included:

- Reprofiled the 3 developmental and 3 mental health teams to form 6 Family Service Teams composed of a cross-section of staff from various domains and designed to realize a greater blend of skillsets for providing a more holistic approach to serving children and families who have a range of complex needs;
- Revamping the 3 geographic areas across Windsor and Essex County to 6 more defined areas with the intention of enabling a more intense focus for each clinical team working with families and community partners;

- Consolidating the former “Child and Family Consultant” and “Resource Teacher” positions to form the “Resource Consultant” position to allow for greater flexibility in “following the child” from home to the group setting, be it playgroup, child care centre or school;
- Redefining the role of the Team Supervisor and Program Manager positions to support the overall infrastructure of a much larger, more complex agency than before and recognizing the potential for further growth; and
- Planning for the decentralization of some intake functions to the team level, beginning with managing the wait list.

Developing these strategies to respond to identified needs was no simple task. Each one was only part of the broader overall plan for implementing change – change that is intended to sustain the agency, not only in its role today but far into the future. Change on such a scale is not easy. We know that there is still a great deal of work to be done and we have continued to do our best to strive forward in a spirit of continuous improvement. For instance, there is a need for more staff development as we work towards a more thorough and common understanding of the skillsets needed to respond most effectively to the issues children and families are presenting and that need our help. Diversity training was arranged for every staff across the agency as part of a community-wide initiative to set a common foundation for building upon future professional development relative to our community’s diverse population. Comprehensive training on new standards for Best Practices was provided onsite over two days to all our Resource Consultants by a team from the Ontario Association for Infant Child Development (OAICD).

Recruitment efforts have resulted in the hiring of three additional specialist positions to support our teams – an Occupational Therapist, Social Worker and Speech Language Pathologist. Other positions are in process of being filled, and it is the agency’s intention to hire much needed specialists within the limits of available funding. Several additional Resource Consultants were hired with funding made available by the City of Windsor through the transfer of special needs resourcing funds from onsite Resource Teacher programs in community-based child care centres, as well as through the Best Start initiative. The Board approved the use of fundraising dollars for continuing with our partnership with Dr. Elizabeth Macklin to provide developmental pediatric consultation and assessment services to some of our children, and we are entering into a new partnership for psychiatry services with Dr. Farzana Tak from Maryvale Child and Adolescent Services. Two psychology student placements were facilitated to help reduce our wait list and staff participated in facilitating six other student placements: a Resource Teacher; a Developmental Services Worker; two Speech Language Pathologists; a Child and Youth Worker; and a Human Kinetics student.

We have been blessed with two volunteers who have joined our Fundraising Committee - Jonathan Deneau and Andrea Tremblay, two individuals who have committed their time and energies to helping us develop and action a fundraising strategy. Their involvement has brought fresh enthusiasm and new ideas for raising funds to support our program where there are gaps resulting in wait lists, while at the same time raising our profile to market our services. A heartfelt thanks goes out to them for all their efforts – we are happy to have them on board!

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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.



... CONTINUED

One-time capital funding was procured from the City of Windsor to facilitate an office space expansion on the third floor of our location at 3295 Quality Way.

This was in conjunction with Best Start and our role in supporting children with special needs among their peers in the child care environment. After successfully negotiating with our landlord, the new office space was finalized and one team has already moved in. This takes some pressure off our space needs, for the time being. We were also fortunate to benefit from the provincial “Economic Stimulus” initiative that provided \$22,800 in one-time funding for building improvements. This additional funding helped to realize a recommendation from the File Room Committee for addressing issues with the layout to improve the functioning of the file room and allow for the expansion of client files.

Our funding relationship with the City of Windsor has increased to represent just over half of the overall funding that supports Children First. This is due to three new initiatives – first, through the new funding opportunity with Best Start; next, through the transfer of special needs resourcing dollars that previously funded Resource Teachers employed by a few licensed child care programs; and finally through our recent role in managing a limited amount of Program Support funding to assist in supporting the inclusion of children with challenges in child care classrooms. The latter has proven to be the most difficult, not only for our staff but also for the child care operators who are experiencing a change in the process. However there has been significant progress made on this front since January and we will continue to monitor the progress as we move forward. Some staff have graciously stepped up to the plate to help pioneer this process and we are very appreciative of their involvement in making this change work.

Another new initiative has been the introduction of applying a “Levels of Service” assessment whereby our Resource Consultants determine, together with the child care operator and parent, the level of support to be provided to a child in the child care centre. This process developed from a request from operators who wanted to be clear about the level of service they can expect from Children First. The new approach was spear-headed by the City who funds both child care subsidies for operators and our resource services in child care centres, and endorsed by community partners and parents who are also members of the community’s Inclusion Network Committee. It was very reaffirming to find that, through the process of applying this new approach, it was revealed that our staff have in most cases already been providing the appropriate level of service required. This is another indication that our staff are indeed doing great work!

We want to thank our staff for their continued cooperation and patience in the changes that were needed to keep up with the growth of the agency. We congratulate them on their continued commitment to and compassion for the children and families they serve, as their involvement leaves an imprint on those lives that will empower them for many years to come.



“We congratulate them (staff) on their continued commitment to and compassion for the children and families they serve...”

ONGOING LEARNING FOR STAFF, PARENTS & CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Children First is involved in many unique and exciting ways in learning initiatives that benefit the staff as well as the various consumers of our services. Learning and personal growth are lifelong goals that can be accomplished not only through our staff's participation at formal training events but also in their day to day relationships with families and other professionals. Families and children continually "teach" us so much as we journey alongside them, share in their joys and struggles, and learn together. The following captures some of the opportunities for mutual learning during the past year:

- The Community Parent Education Program (COPE), an evidenced based parenting course for parents of children demonstrating a variety of disruptive behaviours, was offered several times at different community locations. Parents commented on how important it was for them to be with other parents who understand their struggles while at the same time they are developing new coping strategies and learning from each other.
- Three child care centres benefited from "Learning, Language and Loving It", a Hanen program offered to Early Childhood Educators to help them learn how to use play and daily routines to create enriched, interactive language learning environments that include all children in the centre.
- "It Takes Two to Talk" provided a number of parents with children who have language delays with support, information and specific strategies to facilitate their children's communication skills. "More than Words" also offered these strategies for parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. These Hanen programs were delivered by our Speech Language Pathologists and often in partnership with SLPs from the Essex Preschool Speech and Language "Talk 2 Me" program.
- "Triple P" is an exciting new Positive Parenting Program that supports parents and families in their efforts to prevent severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by increasing and enhancing parents' skills and knowledge and giving them confidence in their child-rearing practices. Triple P training was provided to many of our staff who were able to share that knowledge individually in their daily work with some families and also by offering parenting seminars.
- Two of our staff participated in a new initiative in partnership with the City of Windsor and St. Clair College to offer professional development for large groups of child care staff, with the first two events focused on behaviour management and that generated extremely positive feedback.

Staff regularly share their knowledge and expertise by actively participating in many community training and public relations events throughout the year (e.g. Multicultural Health Access Day, Mom 2 Mom Family Expo, etc.) to familiarize people with the services and supports available through Children First. This year, one of our Speech and Language Pathologists provided a workshop in Milton for the Provincial Schools on the topic "Working with Children with Cochlear Implants."

In a spirit of continuous learning, we hope that all of us – parents, staff and our community partners – will continue to share and learn together!

Cathy Martel, Program Manager

"Families and children continually 'teach' us so much as we journey alongside them, share in their joys and struggles, and learn together."



WHAT OUR FAMILIES HAVE TO SAY.....

“Thank you so much for all you’ve done for our family. It made our son’s transition to school much smoother and has had a tremendous impact on our lives.”



“We loved having the professionals come to our home as this was very convenient for us.”

“Staff was very supportive to our family needs. They always responded quickly to any issues that arrived for us. We feel truly blessed in the help we received from both workers.”

“Having someone accompany me to assessment appointment was very helpful.”

“My only concern is the wait list for speech therapy.”

“Children First worker has changed my son’s behaviour extremely and has taught myself how to deal with my son. She has been really great with us and has helped us out so much.”

In order to allow for more input from our families as to how they view our service, a committee was formed, which included two of our consumers, to revise and improve the survey questionnaire we mail out to families. The process was also changed to gather feedback from families currently receiving services in addition to those families who have been discharged. Overall, the response rate for 2006/07 was 22%, a slight increase from the previous year’s rate of 21.5%. However, there was a 32% response rate from surveys sent to families having 6 months’ involvement with Children First.

	Always
Services offered were clear	84%
Service Plan helpful	77%
Phone calls responded to	84%
Satisfied with service	76%
Would recommend	91%

SERVICE PERFORMANCE

	2002– 03	2003– 04	2004– 05	2005– 06	2006– 07
Number of Referrals	408	595	554	534	564
Number served annually	884	1092	1124	1041	1137
Waiting list at the end of Report Period	73	87	106	101	97
Discharges	415	362	502	536	456
Front Line Staff F.T.E. (at year end)	38.4	60.8	61	62.1	70
Administrative Staff F.T.E. (at year end)	5.8	6.6	9.6	9.4	8.9

Our current staff complement has grown to 86, serving 1137 children between April 1, 2006 & March 31, 2007

“WOW” COMMITTEE – WORKING ON WELLNESS!



The WOW Committee began as an idea back in the summer and fall of 2006 and has since become an important initiative at Children First.

A group of employees had expressed an interest in supporting each other in their quest to lose weight and Children First consequently hosted a 12 week session of “Weight Watchers at Work” during the summer of 2006. After the session ended, a group has continued to meet at our “Skinny School” to help each other with their weight loss goals.

Linda Nagle, Cathy Martel and I had previously attended a workshop presented by Health Action Windsor-Essex called “Building a Healthy Workplace.” Following that, in October, Linda, Jane Patterson and I attended the annual “Workplace Wellness Awards” where we discovered many community organizations were successfully implementing Workplace Wellness programs. This led us to striking our own committee in January 2007 and our name was chosen through a “Name the Committee” contest. The WOW (Working on Wellness) Committee held a kick off event at our All Staff Meeting in February. Serving on the Committee with me are: Laura Kapetanov, Sherri Toupin, Courtney Gibbons, Alana Frimer and Karen Palamides. We are an enthusiastic committee - passionate about promoting wellness at Children First!

One of the first things we implemented was our Wellness Basket which is placed on someone’s desk when s/he is having or has had a bad day or is going through a hard time. The basket contains some simple self care items, such as a relaxation CD, a stress ball, tea, a “Do Not Disturb” sign to display on a workstation and, of course, *chocolate!*

Some of the other activities we have hosted so far include posting signs encouraging employees to use the stairs as well as Brown Bag Lunch and Learn sessions with presentations by a Registered Dietician about the new Canada Food Guide and Cooking Healthy Meals and by a representative of the Ontario Breast Screening Program who spoke about breast health and breast cancer prevention. Our most recent event was a very successful Massage Break where a Registered Massage Therapist provided ten minute chair massages at lunch time.

The Committee looks forward to bringing more exciting and informative activities to the staff and to helping Children First win our own Workplace Wellness Award in October 2007. *“Skinny School!” “Skinny School!” “Skinny School!”*

SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2006-2007

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

	Infant Development		Mental Health (0 to 6)		Essex Preschool Speech & Language		Economic Stimulus 2007
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	
Operating grant	\$ 1,113,940	\$ 1,115,780	\$ 1,265,566	\$ 1,315,566	\$ 258,428	\$ 248,064	
Other revenue	\$ 10,669	\$ 14,881	\$ 12,288	\$ 8,622	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,800
Total revenue	\$ 1,124,609	\$ 1,130,661	\$ 1,277,854	\$ 1,324,188	\$ 258,428	\$ 248,064	
Operating expenditures	\$ 1,123,274	\$ 1,144,505	\$ 1,238,890	\$ 1,344,374	\$ 259,928	\$ 251,717	
Capital contribution	\$ 1,335	\$ 1,202	\$ 38,964	\$ 137	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,800
Revenue over/(under) expenditures	\$ -	\$ (15,046)	\$ -	\$ (20,323)	\$ (1,500)	\$ (3,653)	
Surplus (deficit) beginning of year	\$ (15,046)	\$ -	\$ (20,323)	\$ -	\$ (10,657)	\$ (7,004)	\$ -
Surplus (deficit) end of year	\$ (15,046)	\$ (15,046)	\$ (20,323)	\$ (20,323)	\$ (12,157)	\$ (10,657)	\$ -

Programs Funded by City of Windsor

	Special Needs Resourcing		Early Learning and Child Care		National Child Benefit - Toy Kits		Best Start 2007
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	
Operating grant	\$ 2,368,243	\$ 2,130,177	\$ 250,002	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,386	\$ 11,200	\$ 516,666
Capital funding	\$ 23,397	\$ 25,415	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33,398
Other revenue	\$ 2,391,640	\$ 2,155,592	\$ 250,002	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,386	\$ 11,200	\$ 550,064
Total revenue	\$ 2,205,215	\$ 2,207,205	\$ 259,798	\$ 209,300	\$ 16,516	\$ 5,070	\$ 435,620
Operating expenditures	\$ 60,388	\$ 3,244	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 82,703
Capital contribution	\$ 126,037	\$ (54,857)	\$ (9,796)	\$ (9,300)	\$ (6,130)	\$ 6,130	\$ 31,741
Revenue over/(under) expenditures	\$ 23,115	\$ 55,998	\$ (2,692)	\$ 6,608	\$ 6,130	\$ -	\$ -
Surplus (deficit) beginning of year	\$ -	\$ 21,974	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Transfer from donation account	\$ 149,152	\$ 23,115	\$ (12,488)	\$ (2,692)	\$ -	\$ 6,130	\$ 31,741
Surplus (deficit) end of year	\$ 149,152	\$ 23,115	\$ (12,488)	\$ (2,692)	\$ -	\$ 6,130	\$ 31,741

CHILDREN FIRST STAFF 2007

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nagle, Linda

PROGRAM MANAGER

Martel, Cathy

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Patterson, Jane

FAMILY SERVICE TEAM SUPERVISORS

Andrews, Lee (Social Worker)

Haffar, Kamal (Physiotherapist)

Hofmans, Kathleen (Psychologist)

Martin, Helen (Psychologist)

Sanford, Kim (Resource Consultant)

Whalen, Sylvia (Resource Consultant)

ADMISSIONS COORDINATOR

Wagner, Leslie

ADMINISTRATION

Baker, Debbie - Finance Advisor

Brain, Margaret - Administrative Support

Hamelin, Sharri - Administrative Support

Hastings, Jacqui - Administrative Support

Parks, Lisa - Administrative Support

Singla, Arvin - Information Technology Analyst

Tiegs, Laurie - Human Resource Advisor

SOCIAL WORKERS

Airgid, Crona

Brusco-Teti, Patricia

Irabelli, Kathy

Kapetanov, Laura

Towne, Natalie

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Kinny, Jennifer

Panzalovic, Dijana

Weaver, Diana



RESOURCE CONSULTANTS

Alexander, Mike

Augustine, Carrie

Barber, Shelley

Bell, Sarah

Bezaire, Judy

Blair, Colleen

Bryant, Lynda

Cady, Deborah

Campeau, Pam

Constable, Diane

Crouchman, Lisa

Dew, Laurie

Fantin, Lorri

Ferguson, Bethany

Fisher, Kim

Fryer, Anne

Gibbons, Courtney

Gould, Denise

Hales, Kim

Helkie, Lorelei

Holmes, Debbie

Holmes, Jolan

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Balazs, Kate

Frimer, Alana

Grebe, Susan

Squire, Faye

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Marshall, Lacey

Minnis, Lisa

Mitchell, Heather

Muscedere, Angela

Noal, Lucy

Novak, Marie

Jackman, Toni

Jobin, Claire

Kraler, Andrea

Lohnes, Sandra

Manshande, Vera

Martin, Jennifer

Melnick, Lori

Merachli, Tracey

Nicol, Patty

Nolan-Bickerton, Donna

Onions, Lynne

Redpath, Heather

Snively, Jodi

Stevens, Lori

Szymczak, Tina

Toffolon, Sophie

Toupin, Sherri

Waddell, Julie

Wilkinson, Diane

PSYCHOLOGISTS

Goertzen, Larissa

Leggatt, Jillian

Raval, Vaishali

Smith, Carla

Palamides, Karen

Patterson, Robin

Peralta, Sarah

Riggi, Jenny

Temesvari, Kim

Walker, Jennifer (CDA)



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