

2022-2025

# STRATEGIC PLAN



# Looking to our *future*, building off our past



Since 2003, EarlyON Simcoe North has successfully utilized strategic planning as a key governance and management tool and continues to be active in this area with the last Strategic Plan undertaken in 2019.

When the 2019 Strategic Plan took a sharp turn during its final markers due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March of 2020, we quickly pivoted from in-person supports to virtual connections. Our competent staff developed and delivered an impressive range of high-quality virtual programs, activities and resources that enhanced children's healthy growth and development and helped parents / caregivers become more confident and competent in their various parenting and nurturing roles, all while navigating a worldwide pandemic.

In this Strategic plan, we look at the effects of the pandemic and truly consider its long-term effects for families. We are compassionate with our goals and introduce more focused impact statements outlining how our work makes a difference in the lives of our families, our people, and our community.

We would like to quickly thank the Board, staff and community partners that took the time to give their feedback and reflect on how to make our efforts more effective and truer to our values.

Working together as Executive Director and Board Chair, we are fortunate to be supported by an engaged Board of Directors who truly understand our commitment to Simcoe North families and hold our vision to create an environment to grow and learn in at the heart of their work.

We will be reviewing the Strategic Plan regularly, collecting data to support our work, and adjusting where necessary. We will be purposeful in our conversations and collaborate with each other to make our vision a reality.

We look forward to celebrating the milestones we reach along the way with all of you.

Christine VanderByl  
Executive Director

Michele MacDonald  
Board Chair

# CELEBRATING RESILIENCE

In 2019, we launched our strategic plan under current leadership. The ambitious plan set out goals supporting:

- Our Families
- Our Profile
- Our Partnerships
- Our People and
- Our Resources.

About a year into the execution of the 2019-2021 strategic plan, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. 2020 changed the lives of many parents, caregivers and families throughout Simcoe North, Ontario, Canada, and the world.

The global pandemic has altered the way in which we engage with our communities and social supports. Further, increased public awareness of systemic racism and health inequities have driven an increased demand by the public to address these issues head on.

Although it has been a challenging few years, we have successfully adapted and evolved all while meeting our goals outlined in the 2019-2021 strategic plan. As we look forward, we have refreshed and re-established our 3-year strategic plan – ensuring that our Vision, Mission, and goals are reflective of the new environment that we are all living in.



since 2019...

**290%** increase in referrals to community agencies

Of all families attending programming in 2021, **68.7%** were new families to our services, with **31.3%** as returning families.



## CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

"I love the way you jump right in - keeping their attention right away and your energy is contagious. I am really seeing my little guy get more engaged from week to week and he especially loves when you are both leading the show."

"It was very good for online/zoom! I'm excited to join similar programs in the future."

"Thank you, even a 15 minute circle time is great for him and her to connect to the community and see familiar faces they use to see. It also keeps some routine for them."

"This place has been a wonderful resource for my two children. I've spent so many days here that it will be a sad day when my youngest attends school in September. I hope this place continues for future parents to bring their children."

"I really enjoy the programming and staff interaction. A friendly child safe environment to further develop learning and development for my daughters ever changing needs."



# EarlyON Child and Family Centre Simcoe North

## ABOUT US

EarlyON Centres<sup>1</sup> are welcoming places open to all families across Ontario that offer a range of services and resources, where families can:

- join fun activities such as reading, storytelling, sing-alongs and games
- get advice from professionals trained in early childhood development
- find out about other family services in your community
- connect with other families with young children



MIDLAND



ORILLIA

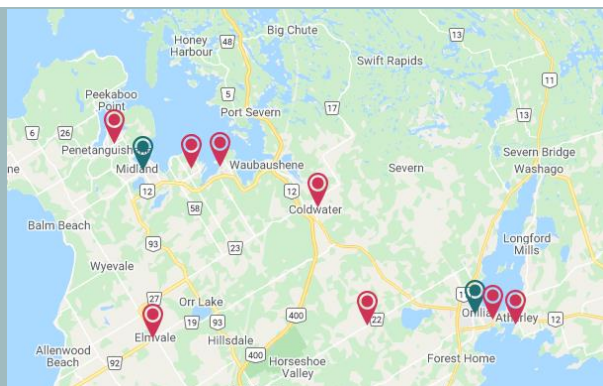
## OUR LOCATIONS

As part of our Service Agreement with Simcoe County, EarlyON Simcoe North is required to deliver EarlyON services at two main sites 5 days per week, 12 months a year, and 8 satellite locations up to 2 days per week.

📍 2 main sites (Midland, Orillia)

📍 8 satellite sites

- Coldwater
- Elmvale
- Jarratt
- Penetanguishene
- Orillia (St. Bernard's Catholic School)
- Port McNicoll
- Ramara
- Victoria Harbour



Municipality <sup>2</sup>	Population	0 to 4 yrs	5-9 yrs	0-4 yrs %	5-9 yrs %
Orillia	31,166	1,415	1,495	4.5%	4.8%
Oro-Medonte	21,036	890	1,090	4.2%	5.2%
Midland	16,864	695	810	4.1%	4.8%
Severn	13,477	570	610	4.2%	4.5%
Tiny	11,787	405	485	3.4%	4.1%
Tay	10,033	425	435	4.2%	4.3%
Ramara	9,488	330	375	3.5%	4.0%
Penetanguishene	8,962	345	350	3.8%	3.9%

1. "Find an EarlyON Child and Family Centre." Ontario.ca, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>.

2. Statistics Canada. (2016). Census Profile: Census Subdivisions Municipalities. Age Characteristics.

# OUR PROGRAMS

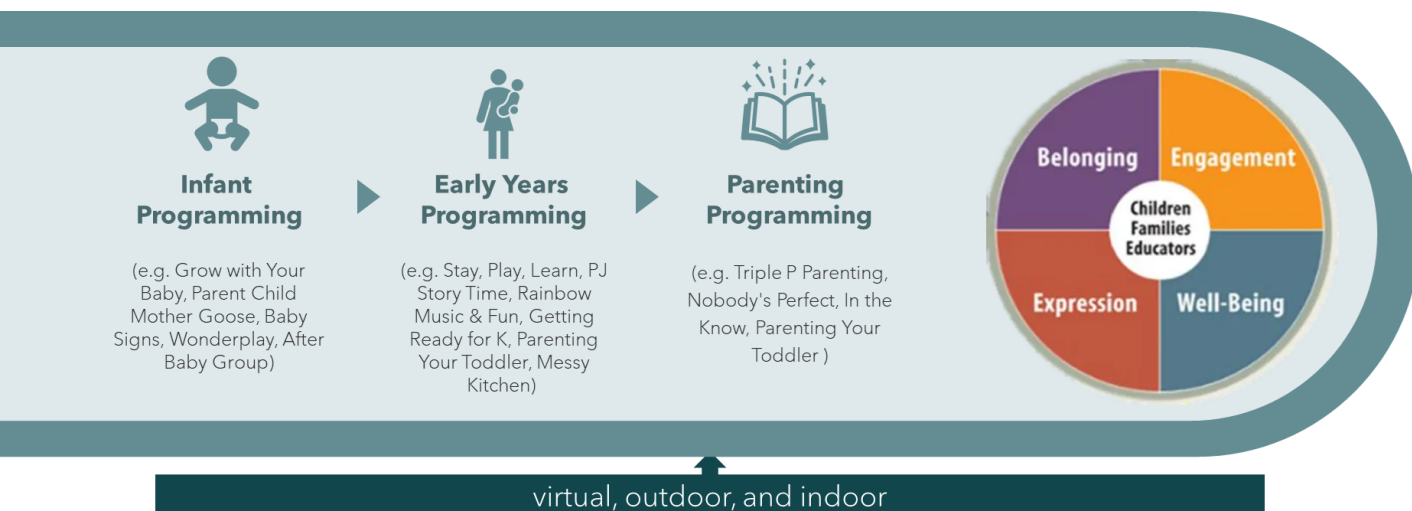


All EarlyON Child and Family programs are guided by the provincial pedagogy “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years” which is built on the four foundations of learning: Belonging, Well-being, Expression and Engagement.

FOUNDATIONS	GOALS FOR CHILDREN	EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAMS
<b>Belonging</b>	Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.	Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.
<b>Well-Being</b>	Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.	Early childhood programs nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
<b>Engagement</b>	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.	Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.
<b>Expression</b>	Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways.	Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014).

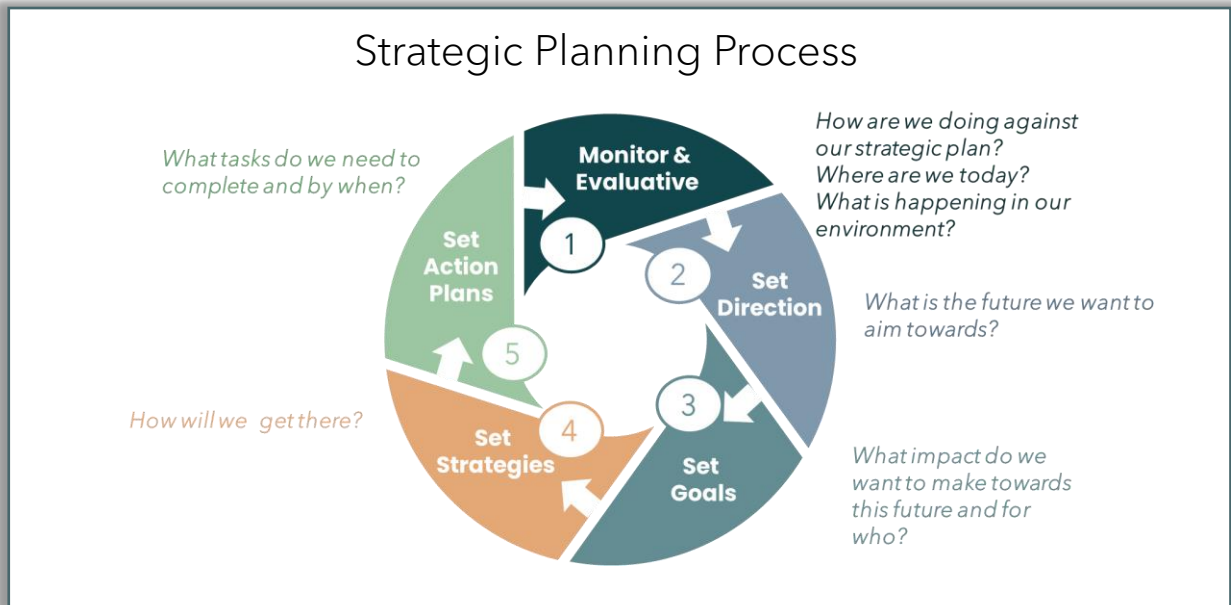
We deliver on this pedagogy by offering families and caregivers with children prenatal to 6 years of age, a range of free core services which can assist them in their parenting or caregiving role. This includes drop-in programs/activities, developmental screening for children, information and referral to a variety of supports and services, a parenting resource library, a wide range of workshops, newsletters, and a friendly atmosphere that fosters networking among parents and care providers.



In response to COVID 19, EarlyON SN began to offer several of its programs virtually and outdoors, and has now reopened indoor programming following provincial public health guidelines

# OUR APPROACH

Strategic planning is a continuous on-going exercise that we at EarlyON SN are committed to undertaking on a 3-year basis. This allows us to set direction regularly and proactively, increase focus and efficiency, inspire collective action, and enhance our organizations impact and sustainability. We do this by answering questions along the 5-stepped continuous approach to strategic planning.



In line with our approach to strategic planning, through September 2021 to December 2021, we engaged in the following strategic planning activities.

## 1. Monitor & Evaluate

### Environmental Scan:

- Detailed environmental scanning, research, population needs analysis, and review of background material

### Comparative Review of “Peer” EarlyON Centres

- Four (4) “peer” EarlyON Centres in Ontario were reviewed
- Hamilton, Barrie, North Bay, South Riverdale (Toronto)

### Stakeholder Feedback & Engagement:

- Three (3) 1:1 key stakeholder interviews
  - Executive Director, Board Chair, and Participant
- Three (3) surveys
  - Participant survey – 9 responses
  - All staff/Board survey – 10 responses
  - Community Partner survey – 5 responses

## 2-4. Set Direction, Goals & Strategies

### Collaborative Strategy Design:

- One (1) staff strategy design session
- One (1) Board strategy design session

## 5. Set Action Plans (NEXT STEP)

Our next step is to outline concrete action plans that will drive the direction, goals and strategies that are outlined in this 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. These plans will be continuously monitored and evaluated throughout the 3-year period.

# Where are we now?

As part of the strategic planning process, an environmental scan and stakeholder engagement was completed. We gathered findings and grouped them into three key areas:

1. OUR PROGRAMS
2. OUR CAPABILITIES
3. OUR ENVIRONMENT



## OUR PROGRAMS

### TAKEAWAY 1:

Most programs that we offer should reflect the needs of most Simcoe North families – **median income families with two parents who speak English.**

- Programs should reflect the greatest population demographics of the region.
- Some targeting programming is needed, especially in urban centres, (ex. programs for vulnerable populations, immigrant programs etc.).

### TAKEAWAY 2:

Most programs that we offer should reflect the needs of the majority of EarlyON SN participants – **mothers on parental leave bringing children 0-18 months and preschoolers.**

- Some variation between sites, - more preschoolers in Orillia and more infants/babies in Midland.
- Some targeting programming is needed , especially in urban centres (ex. dad programs etc.).

### TAKEAWAY 3:

Programs that we offer should reflect the greatest needs of participants – **developing social skills and learning skills for their children.**

- In-person programs continue to have the highest satisfaction ratings.
- Continue programming to support developing parental skills and empowering parents as a child's first teacher.

### TAKEAWAY 4:

Current program accessibility is moderate due to the vast Simcoe North geography, COVID 19 limitations, and site barriers – **addressing program accessibility should be prioritized.**

- Need for a new Midland location by 2025.
- Quality of satellite sites highlighted as a barrier to accessibility.
- Advantages and limits of virtual programming accessibility - balance on in-person and virtual needed to achieve the best results.

# Where are we *now*?

## OUR ENVIRONMENT

### TAKEAWAY 5:

COVID 19 greatly changed the lifestyles of families in Simcoe North - program structure should reflect these changing needs.

- More parenting supports for new parents in a pandemic.
- More outdoor programs and outdoor space.
- Appropriate balance between in person and virtual programs.
- Increased opportunity to use virtual technologies.
- Anticipated population changes due to people moving to SN from urban centres.

### TAKEAWAY 6:

Increased public awareness and priority on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and cultural safety.

- Reflect in the strategic plan, actions, and goals as enhanced priorities.
- Embed in ways of working and organizational culture.
- Leadership commitment to an ongoing journey of raising awareness and addressing the importance of DEI and cultural safety.

## OUR CAPABILITIES

### TAKEAWAY 7:

Staff of EarlyON SN are a core capability and key driver of success.

- Overwhelming support and praise for staff.
- Staff engagement and recognition should continue to be prioritized.

### TAKEAWAY 9:

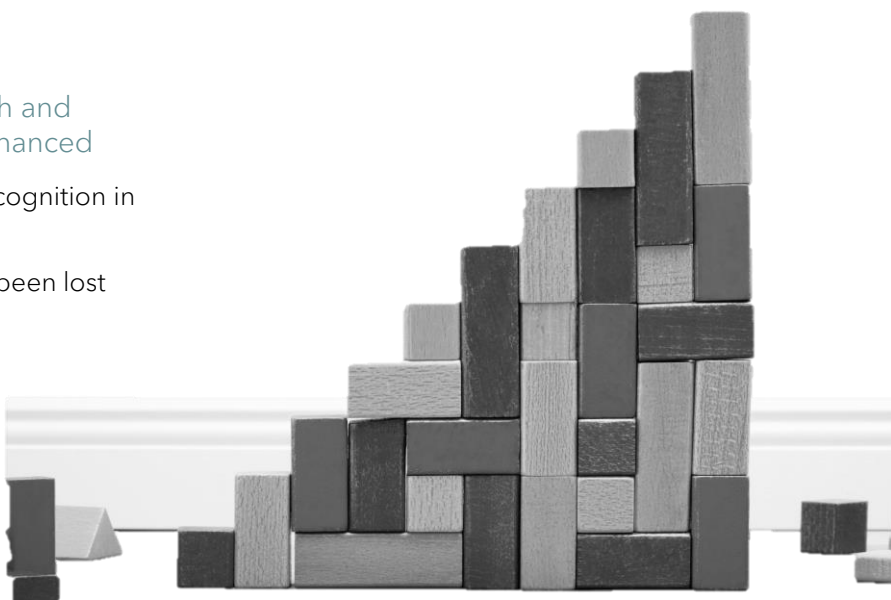
Our capability and avenues to reach and connect with families should be enhanced

- Enhance our community brand recognition in order to reach new families.
- Reconnect with families that have been lost through the pandemic.

### TAKEAWAY 8:

Social media is an important organizational capability and resource gap.

- Social media is a primary method to communicate with new young families.
- Important competency for us to build and prioritize.





# OUR VISION



# OUR MISSION

Through nurturing relationships, high quality programming, and play based environments, EarlyON Simcoe North fosters and supports learning, developing, and well-being of children, families, and caregivers within their community.

# OUR VALUES



In pursuit of our Mission, our **Organizational Values** guide how we work together - our behaviours and interactions with participants, partners, community members, and each other.

## RESPECT

We strive to achieve diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural safety in how we work and who we work with.

We honour all individual rights for development and learning.

## INCLUSION

We create accessible environments where all members are safe, empowered, valued, respected and feel a sense of belonging.

We create nurturing and empathetic community environments where love, well-being, and caring, blossom.

## EXCELLENCE

We hold ourselves to the highest standard of delivery through responsiveness, use of best practices, and development of strong relationships.

## COLLABORATION

We engage and partner with families and community agencies to strengthen our capabilities and service offerings.

## INTEGRITY

We insist on honesty and transparency from our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and community partners.

# OUR IMPACT

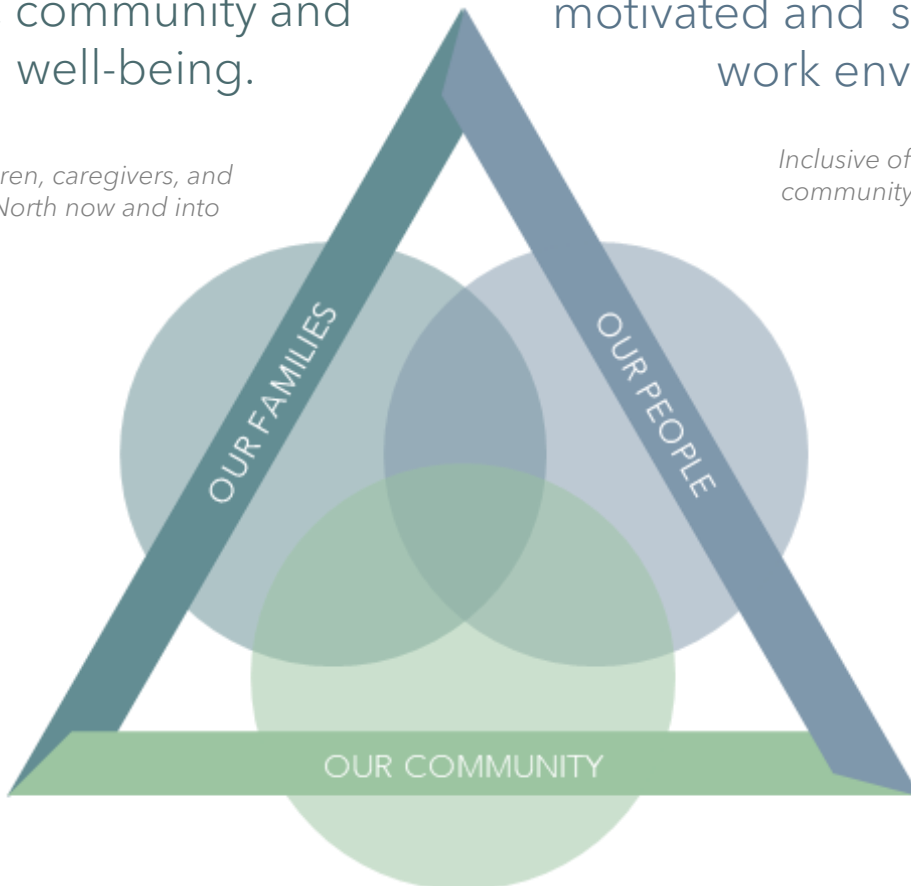
Our **Impact Statements** outline how our work makes a difference in the lives of our families, our people and our communities. These Impact Statements create a framework for our 3-year strategic goals, objectives, and ultimately action plans.

**OUR FAMILIES** experience inclusivity, community and enhanced well-being.

*Inclusive of all children, caregivers, and families in Simcoe North now and into the future*

**OUR PEOPLE** feel engaged, motivated and safe in their work environments.

*Inclusive of our staff, volunteers, community partners, and Board members*



**OUR COMMUNITY** thrives with opportunity and belonging.

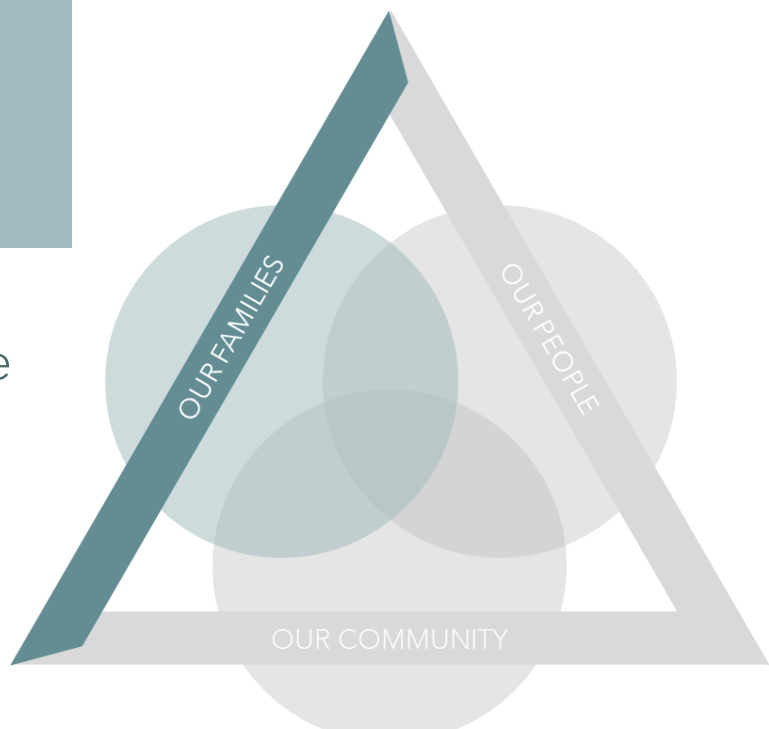
*Inclusive of the natural environment in which we work, live, and play in Simcoe North as well as the broader collective of agencies, institutions and people within and around it*

# OUR IMPACT

## OUR FAMILIES

**OUR FAMILIES** experience inclusivity, community and enhanced well-being.

*Inclusive of all children, caregivers, and families in Simcoe North now and into the future*



3-Year Strategic Goal	3-Year Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Enhance programming</b> to reflect the current and future needs of all our families	Improve mix of safe and high-quality programming to continue meeting evolving family needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio of virtual programs vs in-person programs per centre</li> <li>Ratio of targeted programs in each urban centre</li> <li># of parenting programs and resources</li> <li># of programs and resources that address/discuss family and child mental health</li> <li># of community partners that we have referred to that offer community mental health supports to families</li> </ul>
	Increase parenting programming and resources	
	Increase family and child mental health and wellness programming and resources	
<b>Increase access</b> to high-quality programming and resources for all our families	Secure and launch a new accessible Midland program location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility accessibility and quality participant satisfaction rate</li> <li>Program accessibility and quality participant satisfaction rate</li> <li>Facility accessibility and quality staff and volunteer satisfaction rate</li> <li>Program accessibility and quality staff and volunteer satisfaction rate</li> </ul>
	Improve quality, atmosphere, and accessibility of urban centres and satellite sites	
	Enhance virtual and in person programming accessibility	
<b>Increase inclusivity</b> of high-quality programming and resources for all our families	Increase access to high-quality programming and resources for diverse and vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of partnerships that enhance programming and resources for diverse and vulnerable populations</li> <li>Conversion rate from targeted programs for vulnerable populations to other programs</li> </ul>
<b>Increase reach</b> of our programs and services among existing and new families	Reconnect with families that have disengaged during COVID 19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of new families per year</li> <li># of new visits per year</li> <li># of visits/family/year</li> <li># of returning families who did not access services in 12 months or longer</li> <li>Net promoter score</li> </ul>
	Secure new families	

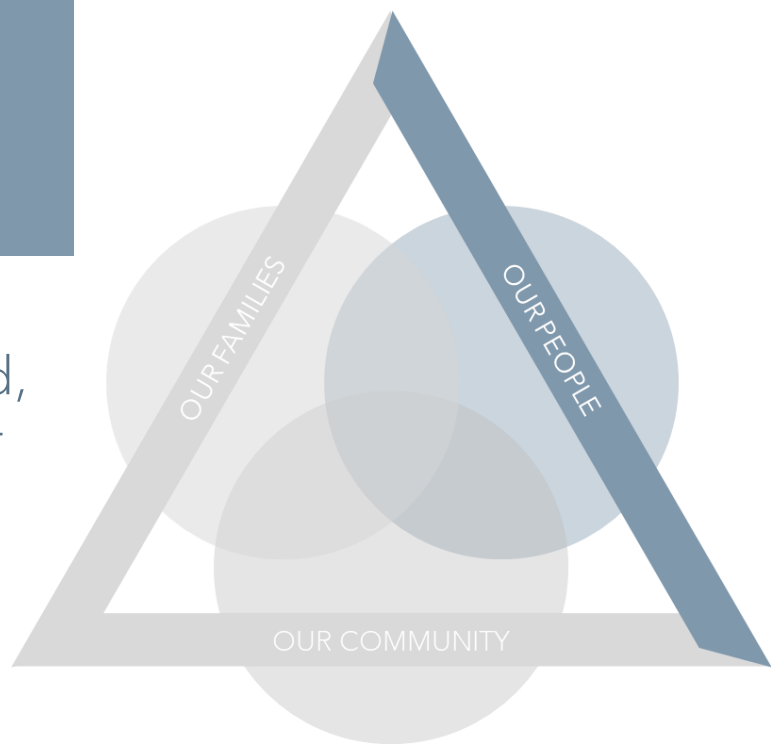


# OUR IMPACT

## OUR PEOPLE

OUR PEOPLE feel engaged, motivated and safe in their work environments.

*Inclusive of our staff, volunteers, community partners, and Board members*



3-Year Strategic Goal	3-Year Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Enhance engagement</b> and well-being of our people	Increase staff performance management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff, volunteer, Board member, and community partner satisfaction rates</li> <li>• Staff turnover rates</li> <li>• # of new policies/ procedures/ activities related to engagement</li> </ul>
	Increase staff, volunteer, and Board engagement practices and policies	
<b>Increase capabilities</b> and competencies of our people	Increase social media capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff, volunteer, and Board training completion rate per organized training program</li> <li>• Total professional development budget</li> <li>• # of organized professional development events</li> </ul>
	Increase knowledge and awareness in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and cultural safety	
	Increase virtual programming capabilities	
	Increase support and opportunities for professional development, training, and networking activities	
<b>Enhance governance</b> effectiveness and decision making	Enhance leadership and governance succession planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of capable individuals prepared to assume leadership positions</li> <li>• # of identified and managed risks</li> <li>• # of organized Board development events</li> <li>• Board training completion rate</li> </ul>
	Enhance board and organizational risk management	
	Increase Board and leadership competencies	

# OUR IMPACT

## OUR COMMUNITIES

**OUR COMMUNITY** thrives with opportunity and belonging.

*Inclusive of the natural environment in which we work, live, and play in Simcoe North as well as the broader collective of agencies, institutions and people within and around it*



3-Year Strategic Goal	3-Year Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Increase brand</b> visibility, presence, and influence in the community	Increase community brand awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website traffic</li> <li># of community engagement events (online &amp; in-person)</li> <li># of social media campaigns</li> <li># of engagements on social media (followers, tweets, mentions etc.)</li> <li># of new community partners (by partner category)</li> </ul>
	Increase community engagement activities	
	Increase use of social media to connect with families and the community	
	Build new community partnerships	
<b>Foster inclusivity</b> in our organization and across the community	Increase organizational awareness and knowledge of equity, diversity, inclusion, and cultural safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff, volunteers, and Board training completion rate for DEI and cultural safety training</li> <li># of new policies/procedures related to DEI and cultural safety</li> </ul>
	Enhance organizational policies and practices related to DEI, and cultural safety	
<b>Enhance partnership</b> effectiveness	Evaluate and adjust existing partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership effectiveness rating</li> <li># of referrals generated from partners</li> <li># of opportunities influenced by partners</li> </ul>
<b>Increase environmental stewardship and sustainability</b> of our business processes and practices	Enhance environmental stewardship practices and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of new policies/procedures related to environmental stewardship</li> <li># of environmental stewardship community partners</li> <li>Participation rate at community environmental stewardship events</li> </ul>



Prepared By:

|||||  
BOARDWALK  
|||||

Info@BoardWalk-Group.com

[www.BoardWalk-Group.com](http://www.BoardWalk-Group.com)