



Improving lives together.

Annual Report 2020-2021



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Improving the lives of
children and families in the
midst of a global pandemic



Mission and Values

Our Mission

Serving communities within the District of Thunder Bay, our purpose is to improve the quality of life for children and youth within their family and community environments.

We provide services that:

- Improve child and youth mental health.
- Address children's developmental, social, and behavioural needs.
- Strengthen the family's capacity to parent children.
- Build the community's capacity to support children, youth and families.

Our Values

In our work with the people we serve, our community and each other, Children's Centre Thunder Bay will:

- Be respectful, honest, compassionate and fair.
- Embrace diversity and support inclusion.
- Collaborate and build partnerships.
- Take responsibility and be accountable.
- Strive for learning, growth and excellence.
- Lead, serve and say thank you!

Children's Centre Thunder Bay, its staff, students, volunteers and Boards want to formally acknowledge that we are in the Robinson-Superior treaty territory of 1850 and the land on which we work, live and serve our children, youth and families is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek.

Children's Centre Thunder Bay CEO and Chair Message – 2021



So without a doubt we can honestly say it has been a gruelling year. Just gathering up the energy to write these words feels daunting. What can one say that truly captures the frustrations and fears we have all experienced trying to navigate a never-ending global pandemic and consequences of public health rules that are both necessary and feel unfair?

It has been a year of paradoxes where you realize that people and our relationships are the most important part of being human and yet being too close to people can make you sick. It has been a year where we muscled through strategic planning to carve out a path through the future, while we have been slogging through the present day-to-day fog to not only serve our clients, but to concurrently be caregivers, teachers, the IT help desk, the hockey coach, the friend and the caregiver. We have stayed connected virtually while our eyes burned at the end of the day and all we wanted to do was hang out with some friend, shake a hand or give a hug. Work has been both a blessing and escape, and yet another thing to navigate. We have become more LEAN in our thinking and work, and less lean in our physical and emotional health. Our waitlists have come down yet we know the mental health burden of the pandemic is growing exponentially. New staff have joined the CCTB family and old friends have left.

In the end what truly matters most is that we continue to anchor our efforts onto our collective purpose and the values which shape our actions, as these both nourish us and carry us forward. Despite all the adversity, Children's Centre has stayed open to serve our community and improve the lives of children and families. We have laughed and cried, we have learned and served, and we have accomplished amazing things holding true to our mission. Never before have the three words: "improving lives together" been more critical and poignant in its meaning. We should be both proud and humbled, exhausted and energized.

In closing, it is the words of Helen Keller that resonate with profound meaning:

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.

With many thanks, gratitude and respect

**Diane,
CEO**



**Tara,
Board Chairperson**





Employee Years of Service - 2021

35 Years

Brenda Budge
Resource Consultant

Kevin Turner
Child & Youth Worker

30 Years

Fred Schmidt
Director, Clinical Development,
Evaluation & Research

Michelle Kooistra
Child & Youth Worker

25 Years

Colleen Doran
Computer Technician

Karen Stevenson
Psychological Associate

20 Years

Kristy Bodnar
MSW

Martha McClelland
Speech Language Pathologist

15 Years

Laura Meisner
Program Manager

Lisa Joubert
Program Manager

10 Years

Tanya Carreiro
Child & Youth Worker

Joni Nelson
Director Programs & Services

Tracey Dowling
Resource Consultant

Jennifer Waite
Administrative Assistant

Retirees

Darlene Niemi
Manager of Engagement, Planning and Quality

Janice Hogan
ICFI Worker

Lisbeth Hyslop
Administrative Assistant



“It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power.”

- Alan Cohen

Thank you to our clients; the children, youth and families, who continue to put their trust in our ability to help.

Thank you our staff. We know this year has not been easy and we see the many roles you have tirelessly taken on. Your unwavering dedication to our mission has been extraordinary and has not gone unnoticed.

Thank you to our Board and Parent Council who through their leadership, passion and the gift of time uphold the work of the Centre.

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

- John F Kennedy

Thank you to our community partners who so generously collaborate with us to create a better system of services for children and their families.

Thank you to Indigenous people for sharing this land and supporting settlers as we unlearn racist dogma and re-learn how to be an antiracist people.



Board of Directors 2020-2021

Tara Gauld, Chair

Tricia Murdoch, Vice Chair

Carolyn Leroux, Secretary-Treasurer

Sandra Beaulieu, Director

Marie-Claude DeAgazio, Director

Crystal Edwards, Director

Paul Francis, Director

Jordyn Howie, Director

Aiden Kivisto, Director

Jim Lees, Director

Michelle Probizanski, Director



Child and Youth Mental Health

Throughout the pandemic, CCTB Child and Youth Mental Health staff proved their dedication to the families we serve. They reached clients face to face (following COVID protocols), by telephone, virtually, and through backyard and driveway visits to deliver programming, assessments, and other services.



STAT Live-In Treatment

Despite COVID, we continued to provide in-person services for youth 10-18 who are in severe crisis through increased PPE and sanitizing, twice-daily staff screening, physical distancing, and by restricting non-essential visitors. Seven staff received Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training to improve our trauma-informed care services.

Day Treatment Classrooms

Our Day Treatment classrooms continued to support children within the schools and in person, even during the extended school closures.

Virtual Services

CCTB provided various equipment to clients and clinicians such as loaned Roomie tablets and access to the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) services to connect with partner agencies.

Overall Experience with Virtual Services

WEIGHTED AVERAGES (out of 10)

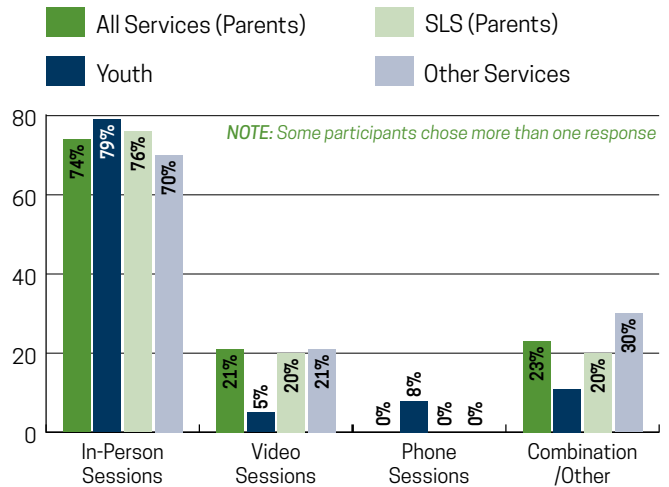
All Services (Parents): 7.79

Youth: 7.54

PSL (Parents): 8.72

Other Services: 6.81

Preferred/Favourite Method to Receive Virtual Services after the Pandemic



Intake Review and Access – LEAN Green Belt streamlined direct service scheduling, improving efficiency and resulting in an 85% cost savings.



Infant Child Services (ICS)

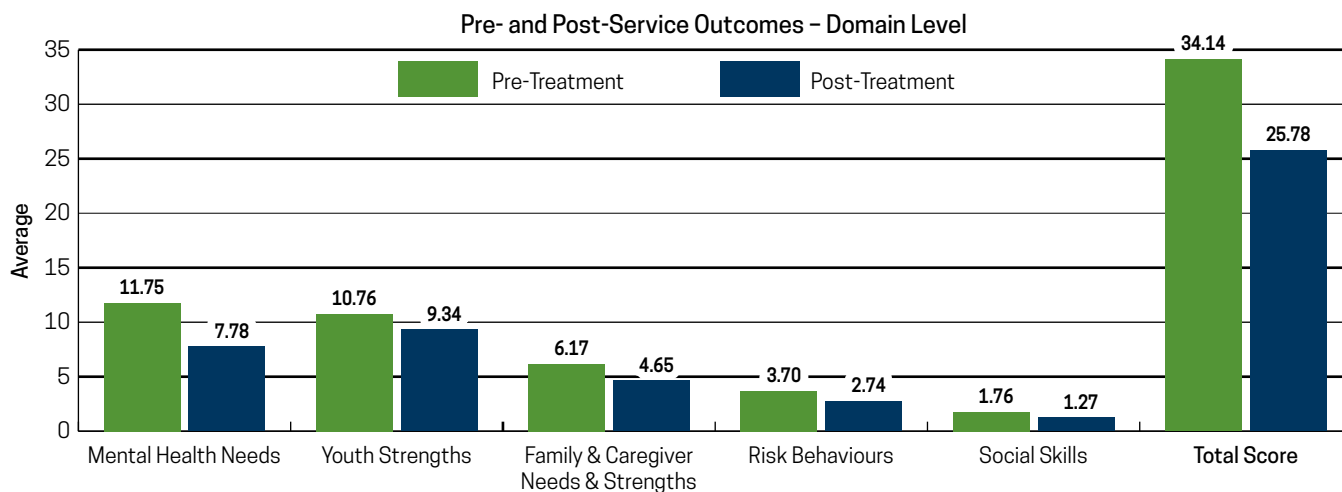
Research shows that early childhood development including mental health can influence a child’s developmental trajectory including their capacity to learn, their physical and mental health, and their behaviour. The Infant Child Services team connected with community service providers to highlight the important services CCTB offers for children and families experiencing infant mental health.



Youth Engagement

CCTB engaged youth, in many cases virtually, through groups such as Youth Voice, New Mentality, The Other 10% and Gender Journeys.

Adolescent Services – Coping with Anxiety for Teens (2 groups: Youth, and Youth/Caregiver)



This pilot project successfully provided skills training to 33 youth referrals (16 youth only, 17 youth and caregiver groups) to help them better understand, manage and cope with anxiety. Virtual programming reduced transportation barriers, and CCTB provided technology for those without access.

Gender Adventures Day Camp – August 17 to August 22, 2020

The camp welcomed seven 2 Spirit, Trans, Non-binary, and Questioning youth in this, its fifth year in partnership with the lead agency, the NorWest Community Health Centres. Due to COVID, the camp offered a hybrid approach with both online and socially distanced in-person programming. This mirrored Gender Journeys issues such as trans lives, diversity, inclusion, rights, and health. Programming also included three days of in-person arts and community-based activities, and an elder-led sharing circle.



The Other 10%

The Other 10% was one of the first groups to pivot to virtual services, re-launching on April 16, 2020. The bi-weekly Zoom events reached 36 new youth attending at least one meeting and most attending 3+ meetings. Participants came from South Gillies, Kaministiquia, Armstrong, Fort Frances and remote First Nations as well as Thunder Bay. Programming included art-based activities exploring identity and creativity, discussions on queer relationships and dating, health information, a panel of trans and non-binary community members, and social time including trivia, music and videos.

“It’s always more personal at an in-person appointment, but given the circumstances (during COVID) this is a great service.”

– Client Comment



Developmental Services

CCTB delivers a number of developmental programs services to children including speech/language, screening programs, assessments, and specialized developmental services. CCTB maintained all programming during the pandemic and in many cases developed virtual delivery models.

Resource Consultants Within Childcare Centres

Our Resource Consultants continue to provide face-to-face services within the community and childcare centres with enhanced personal protective equipment. Last year, we made changes to the way we collect child information so we could be more efficient and clinically driven.

Preschool Speech & Language (PSL)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Preschool Speech and Language team developed a process for virtual services using Zoom and green screen technology. This education was shared with staff during employee training.



Sherbrooke Public School

The PSL program has many longstanding community partnerships, including with Sherbrooke Public School. In an effort to meet young learners' communication needs, we are proud we could continue offering preschool speech assessments and therapy to JK students at Sherbrooke virtually. We collaborated with educators and other service providers to offer flexible service options to promote healthy child development.

Infant Hearing Screening Program

CCTB worked alongside community partners to adapt and resume the infant hearing screening clinics when other services were suspended. Families on a waitlist were contacted and offered a hearing screening at CCTB.

Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program

CCTB provides specialized, family-centred services designed to give children who are born blind or with low vision the best possible start in life. Services continued throughout the pandemic.

"It is comforting to know of the progress my son has made throughout his PSL sessions. Being a part of the process allows us to follow through with the tools and provide consistency in the methods used to improve his speech."

- Client Comment



Preschool Assessment & Consultation Program (PACP)

Last year, CCTB facilitated professional development training and presentations to over 300 participants including families and child care workers throughout the City and District of Thunder Bay. These presentations were recorded and are now accessible on our website. PACP has implemented a consultation model, driven by the educator, to increase access to multidisciplinary services. <http://childrenscentre.ca/en/developmental-services/preschool-assessment-consultation-program>

Autism Assessments & Diagnostic Hub Designation

Between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, CCTB engaged in a community partnership as a Regional Diagnostic Hub for children and youth who would not otherwise qualify for our internal Autism assessments. Under this joint partnership, CCTB was able to provide an additional 35 Autism diagnostic assessments. Our internal Autism assessment team was able to complete 21 assessments. We are proud to say that a total of 56 assessments have been completed this year for children and youth!

Portfolio Realignment

Continuity of care within CCTB and across partner agencies is important. CCTB realigned all services available from birth to 6 years under one manager to streamline care. This realignment increases both continuity and quality of care, and better supports the coordination of mental health and developmental services.

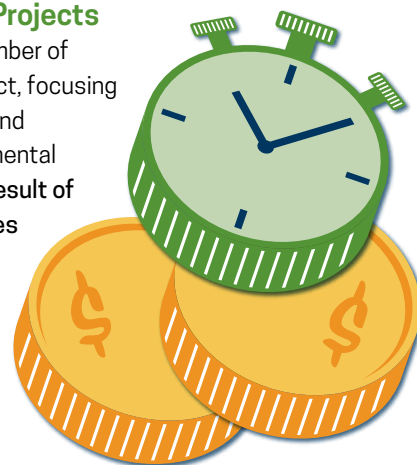


Early Years Screening (EYS)

Several Thunder Bay agencies and school boards collaborated to develop the Early Years Screening (EYS) initiative, which will provide infants and children with targeted screening for developmental vulnerabilities. Earlier identification will lead to earlier service referrals for better short- and long-term outcomes for children. The EYS will level the field of opportunity for disadvantaged, marginalized, racialized and oppressed infants, young children and their families.

LEAN Green Belt Projects

CCTB completed a number of LEAN Green Belt project, focusing on eliminating waste and streamlining developmental service delivery. The result of these projects includes a cost savings of over \$160,000 and 2,500 hours.





Parenting

Parents and caregivers can help children and youth with special needs by improving their own skills. CCTB supports parents and caregivers through a variety of programs and services.

Partnership with Parents' Lifeline of Eastern Ontario (PLEO)

PLEO, a non-profit family peer group, offers a parents' help crisis line, support group, and mobile one-on-one support. CCTB partnered with PLEO to enhance and complement our ability to meet the needs of parents and caregivers within the District of Thunder Bay.

Supervised Access Program (SAP)

Despite the various challenges the pandemic caused, SAP continued to provide a safe environment for visits and parental access. CCTB gave families the option to meet face to face or virtually. SAP is in the process of creating a safe and inviting outdoor space for families to use during their visits.

Triple P Parenting

CCTB invested over \$10,000 in evidence-based training for staff, including Triple P Parenting and Circle of Security programming. This investment in staff training will help provide a range of parenting groups to meet the needs of families, as well as reduce wait times to access groups.

Parent Support Group

In December 2020, CCTB launched our Parent Support Group as an additional way to meet the needs of parents and caregivers. The group uses a hybrid model of both in-person and virtual participation. The group is open to anyone who is connected to CCTB and in a caregiver role, no matter where in their service journey they are.





Parenting Groups

During the pandemic, CCTB successfully adapted our parenting groups to offer a virtual option for participation. Parents can work through the modules independently with clinician support or participate in a virtual group.

We've also launched a LEAN Green Belt project to review the process in which parents are referred to parenting programs. The project will identify areas of waste in time and resources, and improve efficiencies in processing parenting group referrals.



Intensive Child and Family Intervention (ICFI)

The Intensive Child and Family Intervention (ICFI) program helps parents and caregivers develop and improve parenting skills and knowledge by offering coaching, teaching and hands-on strategies in the home environment. This year, a complete program evaluation highlighted some very positive service outcomes for people receiving this service. Overall, assessment data analysis demonstrated clinically significant results. This suggests the ICFI program is achieving meaningful results with parents and caregivers, targeting high-need clinical areas such as the development of parenting skills and improving caregiver-child relationships.



Parent Council

The CCTB Parent Council continues to advocate for children, parents and services in Northwestern Ontario. Their latest video project, "Navigating the Mental Health System in Northwestern Ontario", sheds light on the challenges our families face due to limited services and long waitlists for unique care. https://youtube.com/watch?v=DV4D1_c7VvU&ab_channel=Children%27sCentreThunderBay





Community Leadership

CCTB continued to provide community leadership to overcome the challenges that arose during the pandemic. CCTB remained open throughout and never stopped providing essential services to our clients or partners.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Our FASD worker provided a series of capacity building training sessions aimed specifically at parents and caregivers using understandable language. In total, 296 families across Ontario participated including 33 from Northern Ontario. Additionally, our FASD team provided 22 educational presentations to 266 participants from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, and helped facilitate an FASD awareness presentation viewed 800+ times.



Youth Tragic Events Fan-Out Response (YTEFOR)

CCTB participates as the co-chair for a community collaborative that provides enhanced communication and response to tragic events including overdose and suicide. The goal of the committee is to minimize the risk of such events on other youth by sharing information about initiatives across agencies.



Coordinated Service Planning (CSP)

Coordinated Service Planning (CSP) coordinates the services of local agencies and government ministries to create a single plan of care. During the pandemic, CSP developed a hybrid model of in-person and virtual planning and treatment meetings. **CSP supported over 300 clients across 10 organizations to meet the unique needs of families.**



Complex Special Needs (CSN)

CCTB, as the head of CSN, worked closely with the Case Resolution Table to ensure our clients remain in their communities. We identified creative options within the paediatric and adult systems to help clients receive services closer to their families and supports. The Table also worked diligently to bring children back to Thunder Bay who previously had to leave our community in order to receive services.

French Language Services

CCTB continues to advance their efforts to provide French Language Services through increased education and engagement at the staff and board levels.

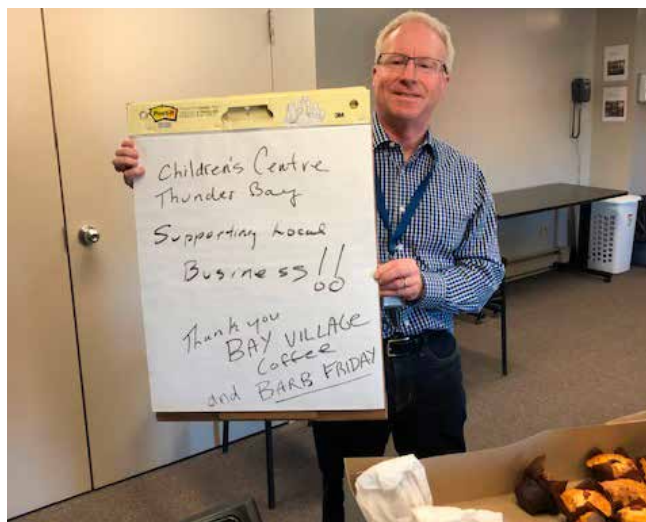


Walk-In/Talk-In Counselling Clinic

Recognizing the need for increased access to mental health services during the pandemic, CCTB expanded our free weekly walk-in counselling clinic, operated in partnership with Thunder Bay Counselling, to five days per week. Further, CCTB added phone and virtual “talk-in” options to improve access and provided services for children’s parents.

CCTB’s Dedication to Local Organizations and Businesses

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CCTB increased our efforts to support local businesses including the purchase of food items and gift cards distributed to client families and staff. Additionally, CCTB provided financial resources to local organizations to support food security programs for children and families.



Children’s Holiday Drive-Through Event

CCTB partnered with local businesses to offer a drive-through holiday event at Christmas. Each client family received a gift bag filled a gingerbread house decorating kit, crafts, and a gift card to a local pizza shop.

CYMH Planning Table

The Child and Youth Mental Health Planning Table builds system pathways within the city and across the District of Thunder Bay. We continued to remove barriers to service access, address systemic racism and other forms of oppression that impact families’ capacity to participate in services, and increase access to appropriate crisis response services.

Rural District Collaborative Working Group

The Rural District Collaborative Working Group, an affiliate group of the CYMH Community Planning Table, ensures equitable access for children, youth and families living in rural areas within the District of Thunder Bay at all planning meetings. CCTB recognizes the need to extend services beyond mental health to include all services that exist to enhance the health and wellbeing of children, youth and their families.



Summarized Financial Statement

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021 (WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR 2020)

Revenue	2020/21	2019/20
Advances from MCCSS	\$3,848,852	\$3,791,324
Ministry of Health	7,113,558	6,784,186
District of Thunder Bay Social Services Admin Board	1,398,909	1,520,029
Ministry of Attorney General	133,989	175,065
Other	1,353,548	1,012,882
United Way		47,871
Donations	10,553	10,569
Interest	11,363	28,118
Recoveries	197,435	198,678
	14,068,207	13,568,722
Expenditures		
Salaries	9,160,193	9,067,482
Employee Benefits	2,266,783	2,228,436
Travel	49,619	147,113
Staff Training	134,032	110,886
Building Occupancy	416,594	312,381
Purchased Services – Non-client	169,171	102,219
Program Expenses	178,053	147,440
Professional Fees – Client	890,631	885,806
Office Administration	651,451	358,490
Capital Acquisitions	15,763	40,632
Other	73,608	120,513
	14,005,898	13,521,398
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures for Year	<u>62,309</u>	<u>47,324</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets, beginning of year	698,447	635,264
Unrestricted Net Assets, end of year	\$760,756	\$698,447

Audited financial statements are available upon request.

Message from the Children's Centre Foundation



It is difficult to believe that it has been over a year since we found ourselves among numerous unforeseen obstacles that accompany fundraising amidst a global pandemic, supporting those who need us most while keeping ourselves and those around us safe.

This past year has brought to light more difficulties that children and families face, so many of which have been exacerbated by COVID-19. At the Foundation, we have found ourselves navigating these unprecedented times as a team – one that has shown creativity, resiliency, and the motivation to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in our community. It has become more important that we step up and rise to the challenge of providing increased financial support to the vital programs and services offered by Children's Centre Thunder Bay. The fact that nearly all of these services have been operating throughout the entire pandemic truly speaks to the dedication of the entire team at Children's Centre – not to mention each and every one of their commitments to serving the needs of our community. The Foundation is so fortunate to have the ability to support the essential work they all do.

We are very fortunate that our community has also stepped up to help us meet this increased need. Each and every meal purchased during our FEED the Foundation events, our NYE WineSations celebration, the empty bottles donated, and all of the steps walked in our Virtual Mental Health Marathon continue to support the work that the Children's Centre does to help each child do better

in this world. This year, we also helped them work through the challenges of isolation, being away from friends and family, and learning from home. Without your consistent support, we would not have the reach that we are so very proud of.

Our support of various programs has also continued to strengthen our connection to the families in our community who need it the most. I could not be more proud of all of the work that has gone into achieving these accomplishments, and I feel so grateful for each of these connections we have developed.

When it is safe for all of us to gather together, I look forward to celebrating our achievements over this past year in a room full of excitement, chatter and smiling faces. Until then we will continue to advocate for the needs of children, youth and families, embracing inclusion and seeking to give a voice to all those who need to be heard the loudest.

With deepest gratitude and appreciation,

Christina Foresto
Chair, Children's Centre Foundation Thunder Bay





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