



Annual Report 2024



Board of Directors

Members of the volunteer board of directors at RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario play a crucial role in our organization by actively participating in the organization's mission and objectives. This dedicated group, including parents of children in our programs and community members of diverse backgrounds, contributes their expertise to advance the goals of the organization, fostering a collaborative environment that benefits both RisingOaks and the wider communities in which we serve.



Julia Bloom
Chair



Jessica Ronzio
Vice Chair



Stephen Brown
Treasurer



Alisha Michiels
Past Chair



Alex Zhou
Director



Bernie Crawford
Director



Christel Wu
Director



Cindy Ofunne
Director



Jennifer Tieu
Director



Katherine Walsh
Director



Robert MacDonald
Director



Lori Prospero
CEO, Secretary

By the Numbers



1419
Children Enrolled

1027
Families Served

2841
Program Hours

61
Members

Children, their parents, educators and staff belong here. We nurture our community so that everyone who is part of it feels at home. This creates a safe and harmonious place to learn.


263
Employees


90
Placement Students


367
Government Relations Touchpoints


27
Board/Committee Volunteers

80
Satisfaction/
Net Promotor Scores

- Promoters (83%)
- Passives (14%)
- Detractors (3%)


\$5,409,306
Child care fees savings for parents under CWELCC


370,566
Healthy Meals & Snacks served


403
Campers

Shaping Tomorrow: Growth, Advocacy, and Impact

As we close another transformative year at RisingOaks Early Learning, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication of our team and the progress we've made together. 2024 has been a year of growth, advocacy, and impact—one where our commitment to children, families, and educators has remained at the heart of everything we do.

Our strategic vision is clear: to influence system planning, enable sustainable growth, and nurture a thriving team. Through strong partnerships and persistent advocacy, we have helped shape early learning and child care policies, ensuring that the voices of educators and families are heard at the highest levels. The recent inclusion of early childhood educators in Canada's express entry system is a testament to the power of collective action. Our efforts to engage with policymakers, participate in consultations, and collaborate with sector partners have positioned us as a trusted voice in shaping the future of early learning.

Growth has been intentional and thoughtful. We have taken meaningful steps to expand services while ensuring quality and sustainability. With the construction of our RisingOaks Early Learning | St. Patrick location well underway and CWELCC approval for a new community-based child care centre on the horizon, we are actively expanding access to high-quality, not-for-profit early learning and care to help meet growing demand. At the same time, our focus on leadership development, wage growth, and workforce retention is strengthening our ability to serve families for years to come.

Most importantly, we continue to foster an environment where children, families, and educators flourish. We have invested in professional learning opportunities that empower our educators, deepened our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and continue to prioritize employee well-being.

Our annual pedagogy project, where children take on the role of videographer, has reminded us of the power of their perspectives in understanding pedagogy – how learning happens.

With 65% of our strategic performance indicators achieved or on track, we are moving forward with confidence. Our journey is far from over, but the progress we have made is a testament to the resilience and dedication of our entire community. The path ahead is full of opportunity, and together, we will continue to build a future where every family has access to the highest quality early learning experiences and every child thrives.

To our members and RisingOaks' families, thank you for partnering with us to support your child's development. To our team of educators, cooks, admin staff and leaders, thank you for your trust, passion, and commitment to this journey.



Lori Prospero, CAE

Chief Executive Officer



Champions of Belonging Committee

Avocating for You

As leaders supporting children's growth and development, RisingOaks continues to be a strong voice. We are dedicated to quality education, affordability, and accessibility for all learners.



Caregiving is the Curriculum

Exploring the Pedagogy of Care is Education

Reflecting on a child's daily schedule, you'll notice it is filled with caregiving moments - toileting, handwashing, snack time, lunch, rest, dressing, and more. At RisingOaks Early Learning, we deeply value these routines, recognizing them as essential opportunities to nurture trust, respect, and meaningful human connections.

Care routines are not just tasks to complete; they are moments of connection. They offer educators and children precious one-on-one time, allowing us to slow down the pace of the day. These interactions provide opportunities to support children as they learn new skills, whether it's getting their food on the fork and successfully into their mouth, washing their hands, or confidently using the toilet. Sometimes, it's during these quiet moments—sitting together and waiting for the anticipated sound of a tinkle in the toilet or chatting over a meal about the morning's adventures or plans for what's to come in the afternoon—that the most meaningful conversations take place.

Yet, did you know that Early Childhood Educators have often downplayed the role of caregiving when describing their profession? In an effort to gain greater recognition for their expertise and knowledge of child development, many have shifted the focus away from care—despite the fact that it plays a crucial role in supporting children during their most critical years of brain development.

At RisingOaks Early Learning, we embrace the significance of caregiving. We recognize that these daily routines are not just necessities but opportunities to foster independence, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Care is not separate from education—care is education.



Kristine Parsons, RECE

Director of Operations



Changing the World Starts with Caring

“You really can change the world if you care enough.”

- Marian Wright Edelman



“Emotions are data, they tell us what is important to other people.”

- unknown



Care is not a soft skill.... It is a building block for a strong humanity.

-Illuminating Care:
The Pedagogy of Care and Practice in Early Childhood Communities



“One reason big feelings can be so uncomfortable for small children is that they don’t know these emotions are temporary.”

- Dan Siegel



“Toddlers need to be held. They like to be rocked. They like to push. They like that heavy press of a hug.”

- Dr. Bruce Perry

Treasurer's Report



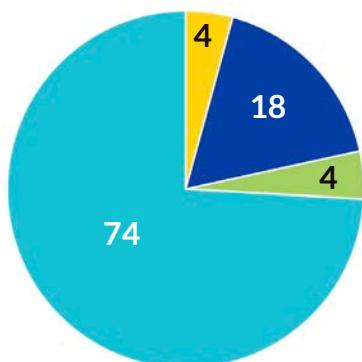
Stephen Brown
Treasurer

On behalf of the board of directors, I am pleased to report that the board has approved the 2024 audited financial statement produced by Hillborn LLP. In the opinion of Hillborn LLP, RisingOaks Early Learning financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at December 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

The 2024 Rising Oaks Early Learning budget was approved with the goal of applying resources to further our mission to provide nurturing play-based early learning to support each child in realizing their potential while giving families peace of mind. Budget for 2024 was board-approved with a deficit of (\$55,005), and forecasts throughout the year were on track. RisingOaks Early Learning ended 2024 with a surplus of \$425,950 due to additional and unplanned funding received in December. Staying on budget throughout the year allowed RisingOaks to apply additional funding received in December to cover our small deficit and spend on expansion costs for 2025.

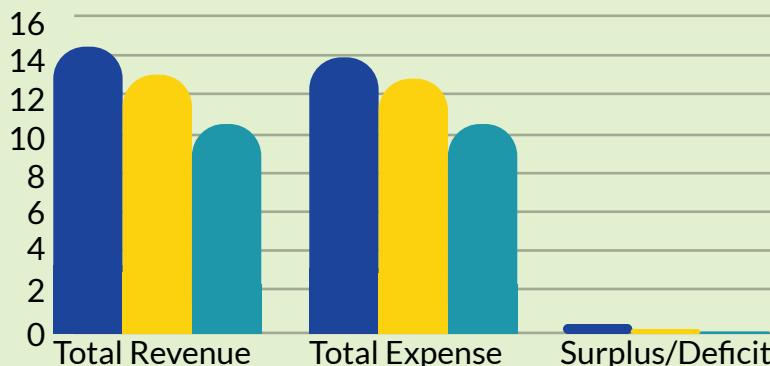
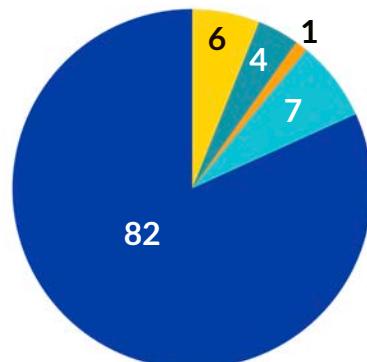
2024 Revenue

- Child Care Services
- Other Grants
- Pov Wage Enhancement
- Other Income



2024 Expenses

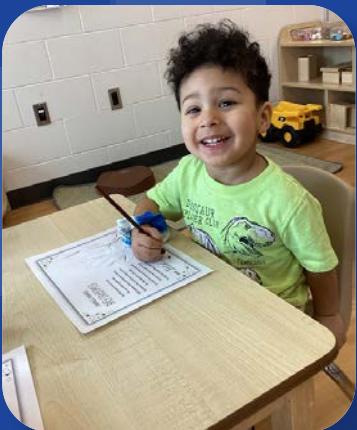
- Wage & Benefits
- Building
- Program
- Amortization
- Other



Year-over-year Results by the Millions

	Surplus/Deficit	Total Expense	Total Revenue
2024	\$425,950	\$14,214,933	\$14,640,883
2023	\$310,884	\$13,350,532	\$13,350,532
2022	\$227,806	\$11,268,597	\$11,268,597

CREATIVITY

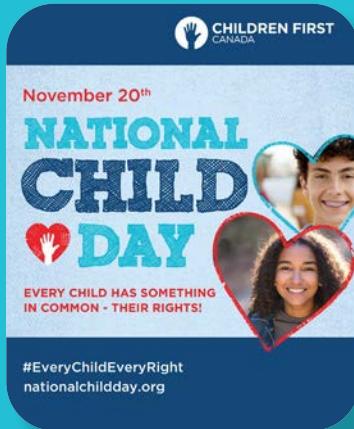


LEARNING

COMMUNITY



ADVOCACY



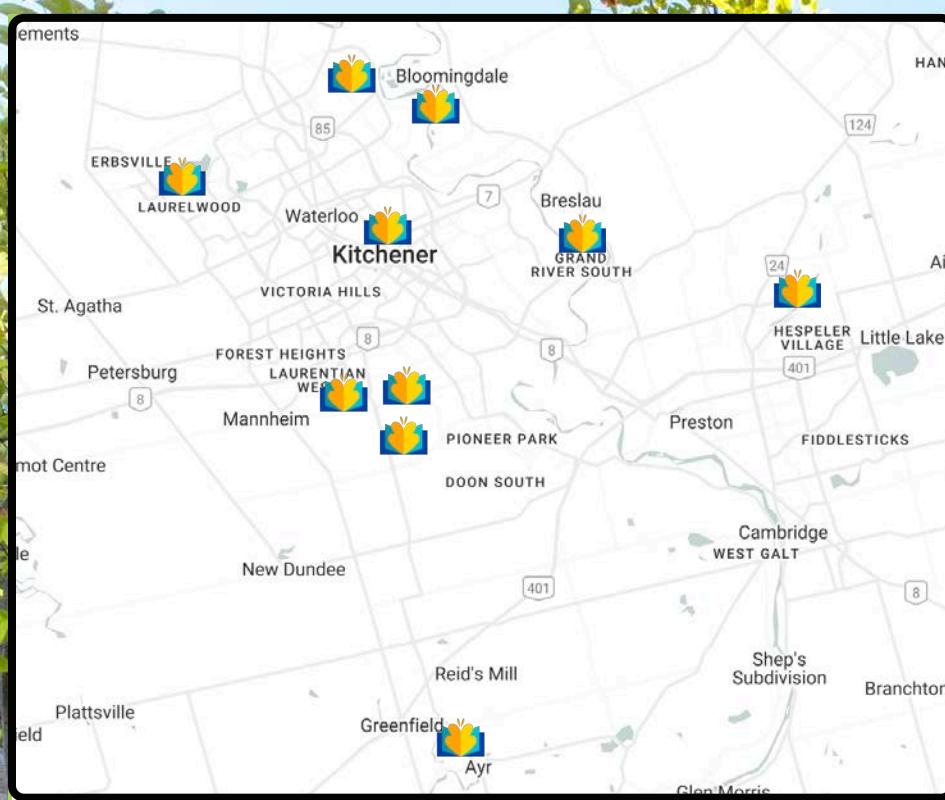
LOVE





RisingOaks
Early Learning

Locations



Administration Office
2-10 Washburn Drive, Kitchener, ON N2R 1S2
519-894-0581, info@RisingOaks.ca



John Sweeney

185 Activa Avenue
Kitchener, Ontario N2E 4A1
519-742-6291
johnsweeney@RisingOaks.ca

Lincoln Road

145 Lincoln Road
Waterloo, Ontario N2J 2N8
519-746-1124
lincoln@RisingOaks.ca

Oak Creek

80 Tartan Avenue
Kitchener, Ontario N2R 1R7
519-893-7529
oakcreek@RisingOaks.ca

Our Lady of Fatima

55 Hammet Street
Cambridge, Ontario N3C 2H5
519-220-1148
olof@RisingOaks.ca

St. Brigid

50 Broom Street
Ayr, Ontario N0B 1E0
519-394-2273
stbrigid@RisingOaks.ca

Saint John Paul II

75 Pebblecreek Drive
Kitchener, Ontario N2A 0E3
519-894-0563
sjp@RisingOaks.ca

St. Luke

550 Chesapeake Drive
Waterloo, Ontario N2K 4G5
519-747-0054
stluke@RisingOaks.ca

St. Matthew

405 Pastern Trail
Waterloo, Ontario N2K 3V6
519-885-0512
stmatthew@RisingOaks.ca

St. Nicholas

525 Laurelwood Drive
Waterloo, Ontario N2V 2N1
519-883-1998
stnicholas@RisingOaks.ca