

Nurturing Families. Growing Futures.

EAST END CHILDREN'S CENTRE'S mission is to support the development of children 0 - 6, their families and caregivers, through community and inclusive play.



WE'RE LIVING THE DREAMS OF OUR FOUNDERS:

In 1985, a small group of local parents sat at a kitchen table and believed they could create an organization that was responsive to the needs of families and children, and that was accessible and inclusive. The road from that kitchen to where East End Children's Centre is now has not been an easy one, but in 2019 we found so many things sliding nicely into place for our organization and the families we serve. From the continued success of our **No Child Turned Away** project and the stabilization of our daily program capacity, to the **brand new Glitterbug program** and targeted funding to address sensory barriers in our Kimbourne space, we couldn't be more grateful for so many new, almost serendipitous, opportunities to serve our community.

MAKING GAINS SO THAT NO CHILD IS TURNED AWAY:

Since 2015, our most urgent priority has been to increase the capacity of our programs to meet the growing demand within our community without restriction. Because of our generous donors, the **'No Child Turned Away' campaign** made a first big step in securing funds to open its Kimbourne site 6 days a week in 2017, and it was so successful that we've continued the project ever since. This created space for **up to 100 more children per week to participate in our free programs**. In 2019, 372 children and 286 adults accessed these additional play opportunities for a combined 2521 visits.

At our two free and accessible EarlyON sites, we provided almost **19,000 visits to 1139 children and 1127 adults** over the course of the year, **reaching capacity on very few days**. This is an indicator we hoped to see when we created our five year **strategic plan** in 2015. Some of our participants will remember that we used to issue numbered tickets to families waiting, prior to opening and we're thankful those have not been needed for about two years.

GLITTERBUG PROGRAMS FOR LGBTQ2S FAMILIES:

In partnership with **Toronto EarlyON** and the **519 Community Centre**, we started offering the Glitterbug program every Thursday evening at our Kimbourne site. It has been very well received by LGBTQ2S locals and other families seeking targeted programs and safe spaces. What we've heard from parents attending Glitterbug is that the availability of programs that promote inclusion and affirm gender and sexual diversity in children and families are crucial. A recent highlight was story time with



Fay & Fluffy! It has been an amazing opportunity for our organization, as we continually seek to be responsive to communities and learn about all the diverse ways high quality programs look and feel.

BABY TIME

Our weekly Baby Time program started in 2014, arising out of a concern that parents of infants would be more vulnerable if forced to compete with our larger community for limited capacity in our regular programs. In 2019, we **expanded Baby Time hours** in response to the popularity of this program and feedback received in our survey supported this change. Our Baby Time parents (and a few grandparents!) are such an engaged and appreciative group. They come out in any weather and are big fans of Circle Time! We love that our Baby Time participants were very well represented in our recent survey, where they expressed their enthusiasm for this program.

SCHOOL READINESS

Our 3 and 4 year olds had an amazing time in our science/literacy/numeracy based school readiness program last year. They experimented with **mixing colours, cool and warm liquids, sounds, objects that sink or float, plants and the water cycle**. The success of this program led us to plan an expansion for 2020.

RESPONDING TO THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN:

We're proud to have a staff team that is excited about children directing their own play. Our team uses the program planning tool **How Does Learning Happen**, which involves **building relationships** with the children, observing their play and providing opportunities that build on their interests, experiences and strengths. **Loose Parts** activities (materials provided with no specific plan) are now the norm at our craft tables, taking us back to our early roots. Children are supported to **take risks in their play**. Songs and activities that support children's emotional growth are more deliberate in their planning.

RESPONDING TO THE FEEDBACK OF FAMILIES:

In the summer, 134 participants completed our online survey, which guided our plan for 2020. Some highlights:

- 88 % said our program hours were convenient for their families.
- 98% said they felt valued and included.
- Many delightful comments about how great our staff are.
- Favourite things about EECC programs were circle time, Saturdays and the fact that it's FREE.
- The nutritious snacks and evening meals we provide are important to families.
- Some weighed in on how capacity issues are handled, with some offering ideas and 80% saying they're satisfied with the current strategies.

What came across loud and clear in the survey comments was that in addition to the early learning opportunities for children, families love that our **FREE programs** also provide an informal social environment where families and caregivers can connect and support each other in their daily efforts to nurture the growth and development of the children in their lives.

PROMOTING INCLUSION FOR ALL CHILDREN:

EECC has always partnered with participants to create an inclusive space and we continue to look for ways to improve our practices. In particular, EECC strives to foster welcoming environments for all children who need a safe space to play. Our manager, Cathy Wright, has been a contributing member of the **Toronto EarlyON Inclusion Working Group**, which is creating **standards of practice around inclusion** in the Toronto EarlyON Child & Family Centres. This is a great opportunity for our sector and we're excited about our collective potential to uphold the



inclusive integrity of our centres for children and families that may otherwise have few opportunities to play within their communities. The working group has also taken steps to shift the narrative and take the lead of disability and neurodiversity communities in understanding the often complex ways families experience our programs.

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT AND CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDS

In November, EarlyON programs were invited to **re-imagine the potential of our spaces** through the **largest grant opportunity** our sector has ever experienced. Excitedly, our staff team articulated their collective observations of how children and adults function in our spaces, and what needed to change. Anyone who has spent time at our Kimbourne site has certainly experienced sensory overload. We've seen the proactive strategies of children who hide under our climber or brilliantly find shelter by laying inside a bookshelf, as well as some desperately reactive behaviour. What needed to change? Big things...**our lights and our flooring** topped the list. Little things...hideaway cubes and sheltered play equipment, ear defenders for children and adults, and a range of very tactile materials to promote calming. Toronto EarlyON gave 1.5 million dollars in grants to the sector and \$133,000 of that was allocated to our Kimbourne space. The work, which included a top to bottom repainting, began in the new year. The COVID-19 closure was implemented before all projects were completed, but we're confident that when we're up and running again, our families will love the changes we've made. We thank Toronto EarlyON for recognizing the needs of our families at Kimbourne for a **calmer, quieter environment**.

2019 – 20 Board of Directors:

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EECC TEAM:
Manager: Cathy Wright
Program Co-ordinators: Rashida Yashmin; Lisa Mitchell; Anna Wu, Najneen Akhter
Program Assistants: Karen Hirji, Cliona Duah, Abigail Harder, Bailie Wade, Guinevere Pura
Program Volunteer: Christine Calvert
Bookkeeper: Jenny Lowell

What our participating families say about us:

"EECC deserves its excellent reputation. Bright clean space, dynamic staff, cheery vibe, all kinds of resources, healthy snacks. Always a worthwhile visit." —Joanne

"My kids have been coming here for a decade. It's been a constant place of warmth and fun in our lives. So lucky to have the EECC." —Parent



Diner After Dark

IN NOVEMBER 2019, we hosted an evening of laughter, nostalgia, music & dancing, good eats & bevies, live & silent auctions at the ever popular **Rise & Dine Eatery!** The event was attended by 95 people and raised over **\$12,000 for our No Child Turned Away** project. We thank our sponsor **Juliette Fergus of Trust Realty Group** and over 100 prize donors.

Looking forward

EECC USUALLY HOSTS an annual charity gala every fall. Due to COVID-19, it is not feasible to hold our annual gala and we are now considering different ways in which we can raise funds. We recognize that the businesses that have generously and steadfastly supported our event are

now struggling for their survival. We're holding them in our thoughts and looking for ways we can now support them.

We hope that all our families are well and safe through this difficult time. We would also like our community to know that **while we rely on community fundraising** to run our programs, creating some uncertainty about how we will fund our No Child Turned Away project, we continue to receive core funding from Toronto EarlyON that covers our basic costs through these closures and for the rest of the year. Once restrictions are lifted, we **will be here to welcome families** to our programs, and we so look forward to seeing you all once again.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: This year's AGM will be held at 10 am on Saturday, May 23rd. It will be our first time ever hosting an online AGM. The current COVID-19 pandemic closures have made this a necessity.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT: In 2019, we received funding through Toronto EarlyON, private donations (donation jars, online donations through CanadaHelps, Benevity and United Way directed donations) and events and event sponsorships.

EAST END CHILD-PARENT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE OF METRO TORONTO

	2019	2018
REVENUE		
City of Toronto – Children’s Services Division	\$246,840	\$250,712
Canada Summer Jobs	11,223	7,473
Donations	7,283	10,219
Fundraising	16,174	21,431
Miscellaneous Income	3,738	3,415
TOTAL INCOME	285,258	293,250
EXPENSES		
Salaries and Benefits	204,013	199,669
Occupancy	42,483	38,785
Professional Fees	7,295	6,726
Program	14,130	24,528
Office and General	4,507	3,571
Training and Travel	660	2,092
Insurance	3,145	3,123
Communications	1,411	1,458
Fundraising	3,682	7,357
Memberships	200	200
TOTAL EXPENSES	281,526	287,509
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	3,732	5,741

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK!

SUPPORTERS: Parentclub.ca, Open Rhodes Art Show & Sale, Jump For Joy Play Centre, Juliette Fergus of Realty Trust Group, family & friends of Mishi Methven and her daughter Stella Bruner-Methven (April 18th, 2009 – October 22nd, 2012).

We invite you to join our community of donors by going to our website and clicking on the **DONATE NOW** button to make a one-time or monthly donation.

