



KidsAbility Centre for Child Development  
Year in Review 2021-2022



## OVERVIEW

As the world, country, province and community continued to be impacted by the ongoing presence of COVID-19, KidsAbility remained committed to providing valuable and valued services for children, youth and families while striving to keep the health and wellbeing of staff and clients in the forefront of all our decision making.

When the Government of Ontario announced its budget, there was provision for a \$60 million investment in Children's Treatment Centres. In August, KidsAbility was pleased to welcome Mike Harris, MPP to announce that \$4.3 million was allocated to our organization. While this investment was so needed, coming halfway through the year presented both opportunities and challenges. We were able to expand Community and School Based Rehabilitation services and the Pre-School Speech and Language program. However, health human resources recruitment is an issue throughout the sector and full recruitment has been challenging to obtain. This challenge coupled with an increase in the number of referrals we are receiving post-pandemic has resulted in children waiting too long for service. This is unacceptable and we need to find new ways to break this impasse.

In April 2021, Public Health of Dufferin, Wellington, Guelph transferred funding for the delivery of the Pre-School Speech and Language program to KidsAbility so that children throughout our catchment area may experience this program in a similar way.

Throughout the fiscal year, the province continued to roll out the new Ontario Autism Program (OAP). This has resulted in the introduction of new programs such as the Caregiver-Mediated Early Years (C-MEY) and Entry to School (ETS) programs.

MCCSS has mandated the Children's Treatment Centres to function as Smart Start Hubs. This is seen as a first step toward greater integration in the child developmental services system. Announced in March, the work is currently underway.

KidsAbility was proud to achieve Exemplary Status with Accreditation Canada and a score of 100%. We recognize this as an external endorsement of all our teams do every day to provide the best quality services for children, youth and families.

This year, KidsAbility began work on a new strategic plan – our big IDEAS to move the organization forward in the areas of Innovation, Diversity, Experience, Access and Strength.

## INNOVATION

In order to solve complex problems, innovative solutions need to be identified, welcomed and embraced. The introduction of an “innovation” hub has helped unlock potential. Staff have been invited to advance creative ideas through the Bright Ideas initiative. We have begun to use partnerships with academic institutions to explore solutions. Thanks to the support of the KidsAbility Foundation, we have been able to direct resources to this work as part of our efforts to serve more children, reduce wait times and find administrative efficiencies.

Relationships with academic partners such as CanChild is helping us find new ways to deliver School Based Rehabilitation Services and further integrate services through the Smart Start hubs. We are leveraging the resources in our own backyard by promoting partnerships with student learning.

KidsAbility continues to develop its model for purchase of services in Behaviour Support Services (BSS) in line with the government direction to advance a direct payment model of services for children diagnosed with autism. New programs developed in autism take advantage of evidence-based service delivery for maximum results. As the province introduces the new AccessOAP KidsAbility will continue to evolve its service responses.

## DIVERSITY

Like many organizations, KidsAbility is undergoing self reflection. We have used the services of an external consultant in EDI and some Indigenous resources this year to undertake learning and consider our practices. We have approached this work in a spirit of learning and understanding.

KidsAbility’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has been re-imagined and provided with resources to advance our work. In the new fiscal year, an EDIA (EDI and Accessibility) Co-Ordinator will be hired.

KidsAbility’s Resource Centre is a lending library with books and games that families may borrow to help realize their full potential through access to information. After closing due to the pandemic, we were excited to re-open the Resource Centre in September 2021 – within just a few short months we were back to pre-pandemic levels of circulation. Through collaboration with our staff,

we've added a number of new inclusive resources including LGBTQ+ resources, Indigenous resources, and resources that reflect many of our clients' experiences.

As we recruit positions, particularly client facing roles, we seek to reflect our services as welcoming to all members of our community. We continue to rely heavily on Interpreter Services with the most requested language being Arabic.

## EXPERIENCE

The complexity of clients at KidsAbility is increasing. We are seeing more clients requiring two or more services. (Early Years: 52%; School Years: 63%). Almost two thirds of our Autism clients are also accessing Community Based Rehabilitation Services.

The hybrid service model introduced during the pandemic provides for flexibility in face to face and virtual visits to accommodate client goals and family need. Client satisfaction remains high with 83% of the families surveyed in 2021 suggesting that their experiences are positive (target: 75%).

Outcome Measurement tools are slowly being introduced. At year end, 16 therapists were using the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) tool, but the results are promising with clients showing a 93% pre to post improvement. Utilization will increase in the new fiscal year.

At a staff level, we are committed to making KidsAbility an employer of choice for our staff. The workplace engagement and well-being survey we conducted this year gave us a lot of information about what is working and what improvements we need to make.

Mental and physical health of the workforce is a major focus for employers everywhere. We are all feeling the impact of 2+ years of pandemic life. At KidsAbility we have tried to support the wellbeing of our team members. By the end of the fiscal year, we had issued an RFP for a new benefits provider with a greater emphasis on mental health supports.

## ACCESS

As the year progressed, we began to see an increase in the number of clients seen and the number of visits. In total, we saw 14,331 clients (target: 11,917) and provided 65,252 visits (target: 66,027). Families and clinicians alike have identified that hybrid services need to continue. By year end, visits were 47% face to face; 32% virtual and 22% by telephone (target: 50% face to face, 50% virtual/telephone).

The surge in referrals has resulted in a wait list of 2,008 (target: 1,000) within our Community Based Rehabilitation Services – the highest in recent memory. The wait list for occupational therapy has almost doubled in a year (654 waiting) and there are 1,272 children waiting for speech therapy. The wait time is currently sitting at 29 weeks (target: 12 weeks) – this is unacceptably long and we are committed to advancing initiatives to decrease wait times. Within our School Based Rehab Services, the wait list has also grown significantly. There are now 3,774 (target: 2,500) children waiting.

## STRENGTH

In order to continue to be a strong organization, investments in infrastructure needed to be made. A significant effort was put into accelerating the 3 year Information Technology plan to keep pace with the increased pressures on IT. Many finance functions were changed to a more digital format.

The physical space where services are provided has been an interesting challenge. We know that hybrid work is here to stay. To a greater or lesser degree most staff are able to split their work location. The growth in staff, along with the need to distance people, has resulted in space pressures. The new programs we have introduced have also created space challenges. As a result, much of the year has seen minor and major renovations occurring at all sites.

## DISCUSSION OF RISKS IMPACTING PERFORMANCE AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

**Change Management:** This has been a year of unprecedented growth and change – new and expanded funding, transitioning staff to more time on site, Accreditation, and numerous large scale projects to address efficiencies and IT systems continue to challenge the organization and leadership. KidsAbility has continued to keep staff involved and informed of changes as they occur, conducted check ins with staff, sought feedback and developed action plans to respond to feedback obtained.

**Pandemic Response:** The global pandemic continues to highlight the risks of outbreaks and continued uncertainty with respect to programming and community spread. Throughout the year, KidsAbility strictly followed Public Health guidelines and ensured appropriate cleaning and PPE protocols at all sites. As a result of the diligence and hard work of our staff, we are thankful that we have had no cases of COVID-19 due to direct transmission at any of our sites.

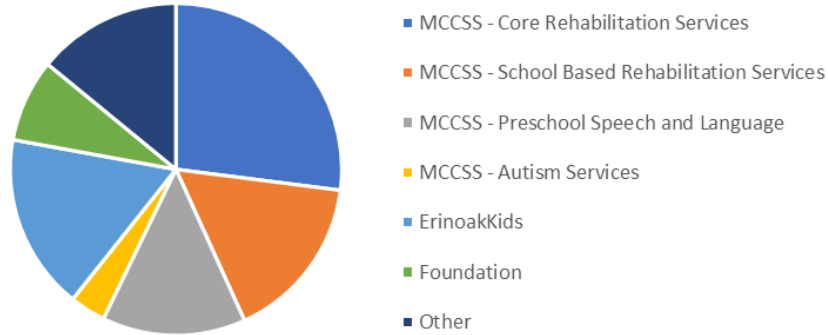
**Recruitment:** While KidsAbility has been fortunate to receive additional funding to expand services and address waitlists, the province is experiencing a severe labour shortage in pediatric care clinicians. To address this challenge, the team is streamlining internal recruitment processes, developing a value proposition to attract new talent, and extending job offers to students prior to graduation to secure talent.

**Access to Service:** The impact of the pandemic has been profound for children. During the lock downs and remote work periods, many of the usual referral sources, such as child care centres, doctors' offices and schools were closed. Families were balancing many stressors and there was less contact with extended family and friends. As a result, many developmental milestones were overlooked. As community services began to open up more, the number of referrals we have been receiving has resulted in a wait list that is the highest it has ever been. Initiatives which are currently underway to decrease client wait times include projects to address challenges in intake and client appointment scheduling, increased clinical oversight to monitor and improve client flow, and restructuring to ensure that geography does not influence wait times. KidsAbility also flagged for MCCSS concerns related to the wait list for children born in 2018 who will be entering school and we were successful in requesting a carryover of one-time funds to address this particular wait list.

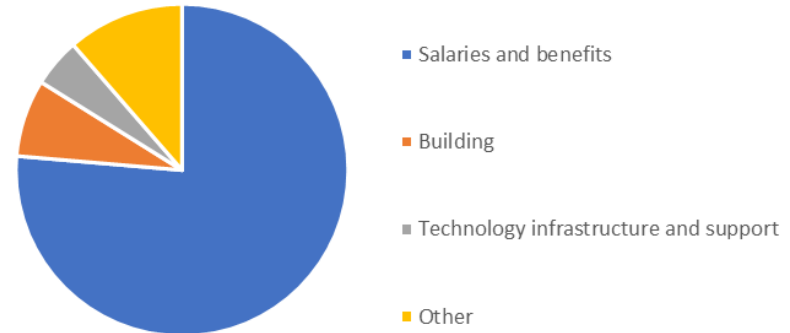
## FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2022

### Review of actual expenditures compared to budget

Revenues



Expenses



Salaries and benefits expenses were below budget for fiscal 2022 due to the significant recruitment challenges already discussed. This allowed for some one-time investments in strategic priorities such as IT and building initiatives.

Expenses	Actual	Budget	Variance	
Salaries and benefits	18,373,972	20,404,203	(2,030,231)	-10%
Building	1,810,819	1,233,911	576,908	47%
Technology infrastructure and support	1,136,509	598,437	538,072	90%
Other	2,741,371	2,328,319	413,052	18%
	<u>24,062,671</u>	<u>24,564,870</u>	<u>(502,199)</u>	

## CONCLUSION

Just when we thought no year would be like 2020/2021, we found ourselves in yet another unprecedented year. This year, we endeavoured to make significant progress on our strategic and operational goals with a backdrop of a continuing world wide pandemic. All stakeholders knew that it was imperative that we continue to break down barriers in order that children, youth and families could achieve their potential.

KidsAbility is so well served by a committed Board of Directors, a passionate leadership team and a talented team of staff across the organization. Because all of these stakeholders bring their keen minds and caring hearts to all we do, children, youth and families are able to realize their dreams.