



Annual Report 2024



A Place Where You Belong

As we reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the dedication and passion that propels our organization forward. At the core of our work is an unwavering commitment to resilience, sustainability, and adaptability embedded in our mission, vision, and strategic priorities:

- 1 Influence early learning and child care system planning
- 2 Enable sustainable growth within an expanding system
- 3 Ensure a flourishing team

By embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) as fundamental principles, we acknowledge the transformative power of our community to create a brighter future for all. Through continuous learning and reflection—at the board table and within our leadership and centre teams—we strive to remove barriers and create a welcoming environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

With the board's support, RisingOaks partnered with Credence & Co. to develop a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Action Plan. This plan was shaped through collaboration among multiple participants including the DEIB reference group, belonging champions from diverse backgrounds, and the leadership team.

The board approved the DEIB Action Plan for implementation, ensuring alignment with the organization's strategic objectives. We recognize and appreciate the dedication of RisingOaks leadership, management, staff, and our broader community in advancing DEIB efforts.

The board remains committed to strong organizational stewardship, ensuring that resources are effectively utilized to support

early learning programs, advocate for quality child care, and positively impact the families and communities we serve.

We remain dedicated to advocacy efforts aimed at establishing a sustainable funding model, expanding access to high-quality early learning and care programs, and ensuring professional compensation for our staff. In 2024 and in our 2025 budget, the board has made strategic investments to support these critical initiatives. This includes enhancements in staff compensation, improved benefits and dedicated professional development days, as well as investments in sustainable organizational growth and maintaining healthy financial reserves.

Our volunteer board of directors is united by a shared passion for service and plays a vital role in shaping the organization by actively supporting its mission and strategic objectives. I sincerely thank our directors for their dedication and expertise. Their contributions drive our goals forward and create lasting benefits for RisingOaks and the broader communities we proudly serve.

On behalf of the board of directors, I encourage you to become a member of RisingOaks Early Learning—if you haven't already—and invite you to join us for our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 8, 2025.

Wishing you all the best in 2025!



Julia Bloom

Chair, Board of Directors

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

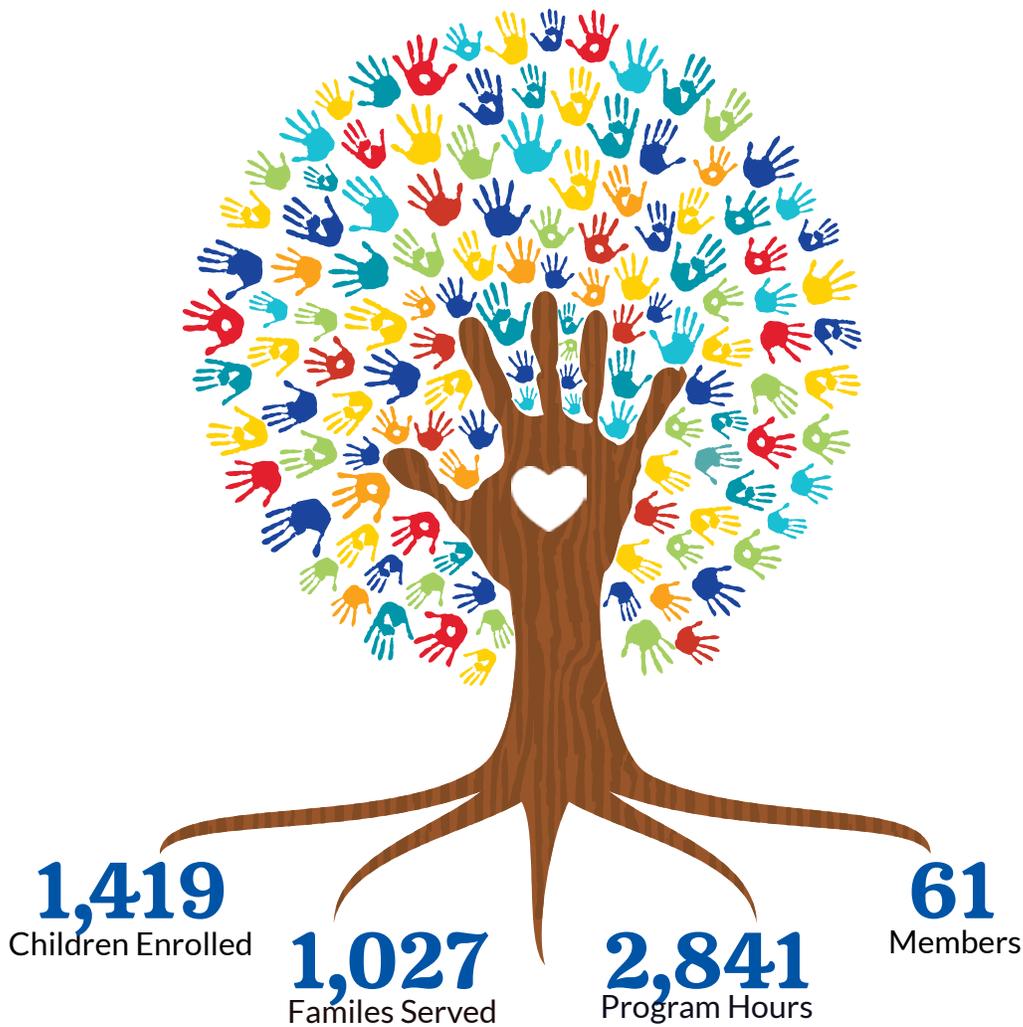


Robert MacDonald
Director



Lori Prospero
CEO, Secretary

By the Numbers



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.



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



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.



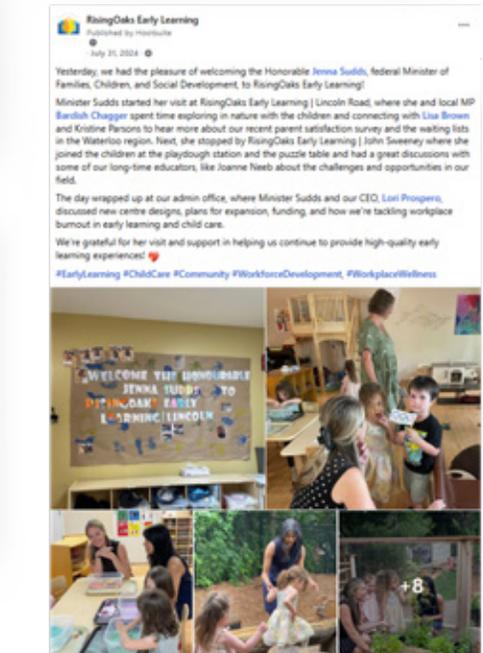
Lori Prospero, CAE
Chief Executive Officer



Champions of Belonging

Advocating 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, CPA
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.

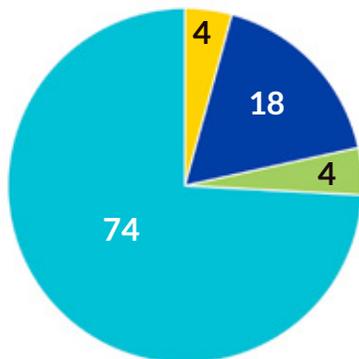
The board of directors maintains several internally restricted funds to support its mission. During 2024 funds were drawn from reserves to support flex care schedules (\$25,993) and playground improvements (\$301,063). Additionally, the board has allocated its surplus and shifted other fund balances into the Renovation and Capital Expansion fund to enable opening new locations in 2025 and subsequent years.

Your board of directors remains committed to monitoring Rising Oaks' financial stability and liquidity as the landscape of early childhood education and care continues to change for the better.

View the full Audited Financial Statements at: <https://risingoaks.ca/agm>

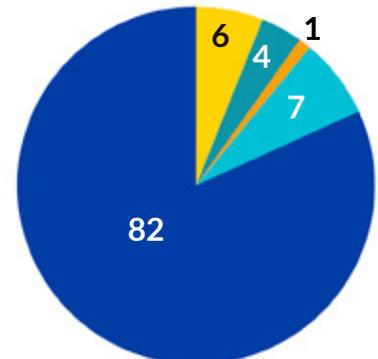
2024 Revenue

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



2024 Expenses

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

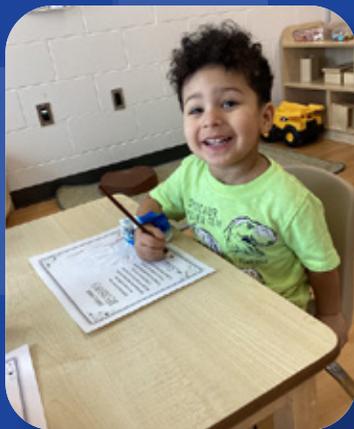


Year-over-year Results by the Millions

	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

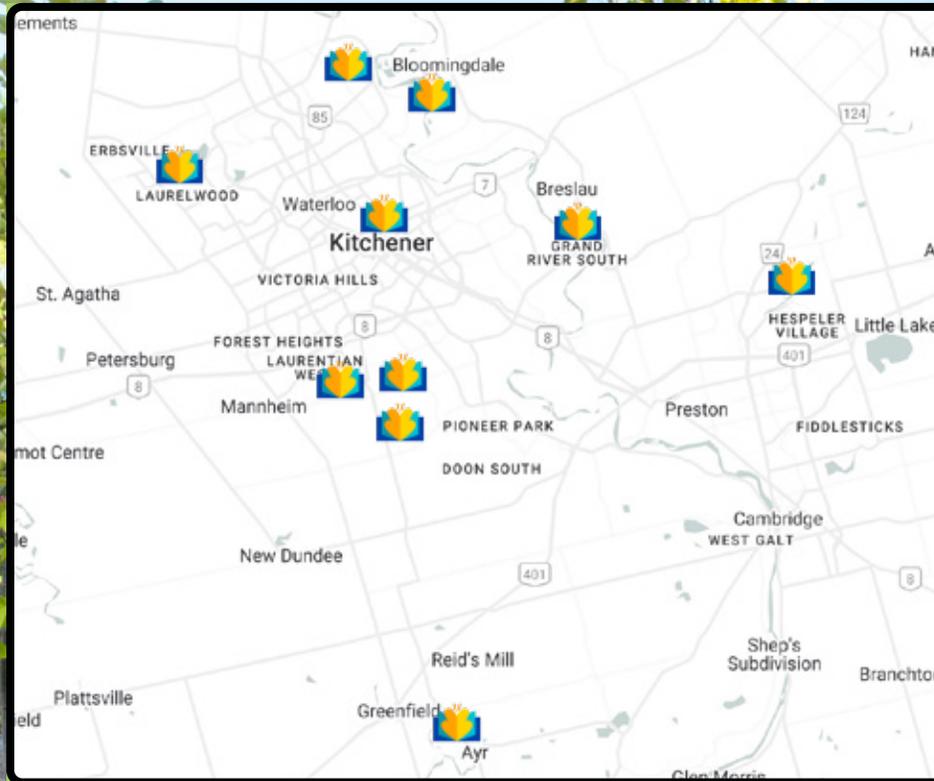


LOVE



RisingOaks
Early Learning

Locations



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