



Family & Children's Services
of Renfrew County

Services à la famille et à l'enfance
du comté de Renfrew



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

Together, A Caring Community



OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES

Hello, Kwey, Bonjour,

We are pleased to present our annual report, and hope you will join us in honouring the individual and collective journeys of the people we serve, of our own organization, and of our partners in the community over the past year. As we pause and reflect on what we've learned and how we can bring this learning into the year ahead, we also celebrate the work and progress of the past year. In this, we pledge to remain steadfast in our journey to further equity, diversity, and inclusivity for all people.

We are so proud of the innovative work of our team, and our heartfelt thanks is extended to foster, kin, adoptive and host families, staff, volunteers, and the Board of Directors for their contributions to this work. We encourage every one of our readers to embrace the possibility of the positive impact we can have individually and collectively, to remain open and curious to learning, and to go forward bravely in taking action to serve.

KATHY DAVIS

Executive Director

IVAN SAARI

Board Chair

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND ON WHICH WE STAND

We at Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County wish to express our ongoing commitment to formally recognize and acknowledge the traditional lands on which we live and work. We find it essential to honour that for time immemorial, and long before our arrival, Indigenous Peoples lead fruitful and full lives on these lands.

We acknowledge that the land we are standing upon is the traditional territory of the Algonquin People. The citizens of the Algonquin Nation did not relinquish title to their land to the government by treaty or otherwise. The Algonquin way of living has resulted in great stewardship of this land and preservation of the beautiful landscape and bounty provided by Mother Earth.

As we journey along the path of reconciliation, we commit to educating ourselves as individuals, as professionals and as a community. We look forward to a new reconciled, respectful relationship with all Indigenous People.

OUR PATH TO RECONCILIATION

In Renfrew County, there are currently 33 Indigenous children and youth in care and continued care of FCSRC. There are also a number of Indigenous children, youth, adults and families that are involved in other capacities within the agency as well as generations after generations of Indigenous families who have been involved in the child welfare system with long-lasting effects of years of inter-generational trauma. The hope of the Restorative Practice team is to make learning available, and to support reconnecting to culture and spirit for all families, youth and children to begin their walk once again on their red road and in finding Mino-Pimatisiwin (Good Life).

Programs we offer that provide this connection include: the Support Bundle program with the access center, Indigenous children in care, and with community, as well as the support program for Indigenous families. .

Practices and work with families will be brought back to the circle process and work hand in hand with Indigenous service communities such as Métis Nation of Ontario, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation and Wabano Centre. Continued internal training and development is also a focus of the Indigenous teams as without insight and understanding it is hard to move forward in awareness and culturally appropriate practices. A restorative remedy is one that places the emphasis on healing the harm done within social welfare, and rehabilitating work practices to avoid future harms. New processes need to be in line with traditional indigenous views and teachings. The core of the organization's priority is to build processes to support relationship building, healing and circles, which aim at developing a consensus on how to repair the harmful results of social welfare involvement with a family, their community and their collaterals involved.

The discovery of 215 undocumented remains of children reportedly as young as 3 years of age at the Kamloops Residential School is one more horrific truth that allows us to put focus on the 94 calls to action made in the Truth and Reconciliation Report released in 2015.



“It is important to understand our history, to acknowledge the oppression we have suffered, and recognize the significance of our emergence as a people known as Métis.”

- Tom McCallum, Métis Elder

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY: OUR JOURNEY

Over the course of this past year, the foundation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has continued to support policy and practice during a pandemic that has disproportionately affected marginalized communities. In the early days of the pandemic, Dr. Kwame McKenzie of the University of Toronto wrote how/that ‘flattening the curve’ could only be achieved by considering who was ‘under the curve’ when developing strategies that aimed to ensure equitable outcomes.

The millions of people whose voices were muted from under the curve for years were heard strong and clear during the Black Lives Matter movement that rose to new heights in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. “I Can’t Breathe” became the symbolic phrase for the Black Lives Matter movement in a continued quest for systemic justice and equality for all Black and racialized peoples.

COVID 19 and the aftermath of George Floyd’s

Caring Services

murder have not only magnified inequities in our social systems and programs, but they have also made space for renewed conversations, reflections and meaningful action. This past year has been one of revelation, challenge, and changing conversations. It has created new opportunities to examine our personal biases, privilege and engage in self-reflexivity. At Family and Children’s Services of Renfrew County, we have examined how service can look different and continue to support individuals who live and breathe from underneath the curve. We have supported staff as they too have navigated challenging situations in their personal lives while remaining committed to the children, youth, adults and families they serve and support. We have also reached out to community and will continue to do so in attempts to better understand, better serve and better connect. We remain committed to continuing the momentum for meaningful change.

INVITING COMMUNITY TO LEARN

FCS Leadership hosted its first conversation with invited community members during Black History Month.

Our Journey
Honouring Black History Month: A Conversation on Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity

Hosted by Family & Children's Services of Renfrew County's Executive Leadership Team and facilitated by Clea Adams-Musick, Regional Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Children's Aid Society - Eastern Zone

Family & Children's Services of Renfrew County
Services à la famille et à l'enfance du comté de Renfrew

Please Join Us
Date: Wednesday, February 24
Time: 3:30 - 4:30 pm
RSVP: <https://bit.ly/renfrewonline>
A link to the virtual event will be provided upon registration.

About the Event
Join Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County in recognizing Black History month and talking about our journey of embedding equity into our practice.

As we celebrate Black History Month, it's critical that we not only recognize that anti-Black racism exists but we commit to acting on the systemic barriers that need to change. It's a journey for each individual and organization.
#TheFutureIsNow



Caring Services

Developmental Services staff delivered planting pot kits as well as thoughtful cards to help support adults at a time of increased social isolation.

Additionally, both Developmental Services and Direct Support Provider staff embarked on a new community garden project at both our Isabella St. and Mary St. office locations. Adults learned new gardening skills through the planting and maintaining of the gardens throughout the growing season. All participants in the garden project were recipients of the produce and also be encouraged to share with their neighbours and friends to encourage fostering relationships.



Thanks to COVID-19 relief funding provided through the County of Renfrew, FCS has been able to offer families using services, free grocery bundles and delivery. The bundles include full meal-making essentials, including fresh meats, fruit and vegetables as well as non-perishable items and other important needs, including diapers and formula where needed.

GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT YOUTH ELIGIBLE TO AGE OUT OF CARE

The Government of Ontario has also continued to maintain service to support youth in the Continued Care Support for Youth Program in response to the pandemic. This means youth that would normally be discharged from service at age 21 continue to receive the full breadth of service until September 2022. This has been invaluable for youth who may not have been ready to launch to independence especially with the added stress of a pandemic where finding employment, finishing education and remaining connected to the community would be very challenging.

HERE TO HELP DURING COVID-19

Recognizing the impact of COVID and isolation on youth, FCSRC committed to providing service in-person wherever and whenever possible. This included hosting youth programming with COVID-19 protocols in place.

Our teams also rose to the challenge of creating new forms of engagement and connection - from virtual cooking classes and trivia nights to prepping and delivering friendship bundles and post-secondary survival packages for youth in care - just to name a few.



EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

With assistance from the Employment & Social Development Canada's COVID-19 Emergency Community Support Fund, FCS has been able to host free, fun and educational workshops and activities for youth across Renfrew County. The activities, delivered in-person and virtually, when needed, have allowed youth to connect with their peers in a safe way. The program also supported many small businesses across Renfrew County through the facilitation of the activities.

MAKING IMPACT. ENGAGING IN NEW WAYS.



180 grocery bundles delivered
Supporting **322 children** and
180 families



631 caregivers & children participated in our virtual programming offered by our Pembroke and North Renfrew EarlyON Centres on Facebook.



44 youth supported by Renfrew County Safe Shelter for Youth, our partnership program with Phoenix Centre for Children and Families, Columbus House and United Way East Ontario.



13 fathers successfully graduated our Caring Dads program, facilitated in partnership with Bernadette McCann House.



11 youth in care receiving FCSRC Millennium Scholarships for post-secondary education or training.

BUILDING AWARENESS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

FCSRC is a member and chairs the regional Renfrew County French Language Services Committee. The committee is dedicated to promoting Active Offer of French Language Services to Renfrew County's francophone population. Last November, the committee hosted a week-long virtual celebration with fun and engaging activities for community members, as well as an educational presentation from Health Nexus on their early childhood project and accessing resources in French.



WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT EXPECTING PARENTS

October 15 marked the end to the practice of birth alerts in Ontario - the notification made to a hospital by a Children's Aid Society when we believe a child may be in need of protection services once born. Our agency welcomed this new directorate as research has shown that birth alerts can disproportionately affect Indigenous parents and other marginalized families, and they can also create mistrust and severely inhibit the relationships FCS wants to build with expecting parents in need of support.

As an agency dedicated to a strength-based practice, rooted in keeping families together – our focus continues to be providing caring services to expecting parents and connecting them to our many partners for the support they need in their circle of care. Part of this work is continuing to collaborate with our county's health care centres and providers to ensure we have effective processes in place for expecting parents and families who require supports.

Caring Community

Spotlight



DRESS PURPLE DAY

Dress Purple Day is an opportunity to educate communities on the challenges families are facing, how we work with them, and the important role that their own families, all social service agencies, and economic and social systems play in providing help and ensuring children’s safety and well-being. Across Renfrew County and the entire province, we were joined by schools, social service organizations, government and families to show that we all have a role to play in helping children and families, especially now.



SUPPORT FOR KIN & DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES FAMILIES

For the past 33 years, the Renfrew County Real Estate Board has been a proud supporter of Family and Children’s Services of Renfrew County. This year, their donation of \$6,398 is supporting kin and developmental services families due to limitations in financial assistance for child-related expenses.



FCS HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

Through generous giving from individuals, businesses and staff, we were able to support over 400 local children and youth with gifts on their wish lists and 50 families with holiday meals - a new addition to our Holiday Program in 2020!

“Thank you very much for the gifts and the meal. This year was a difficult one for us and having the meal prepared was such a treat (especially for me). I was able to use the time to spend it with the kids instead of cooking...” - Service User

IMPLEMENTING OUR 'SIGNS OF...' APPROACH

'Signs of' is a strengths-based practice model to support the service of families. It's rooted in the Signs of Safety approach, developed for child protection casework, and FCS has tailored it to support all the work we do for children, youth, families and adults.

When we think of this past year and the Agency's progress in our Signs of... implementation, it is hard to do so without thinking of the impacts of COVID-19. The pandemic has impacted the families, children and youth in our service, our staff at all levels and our community in ways that no one could predict. It has asked us all to humble ourselves, focus on small changes within our control, and aspire, not assume that the positive changes we all believe in are forthcoming. The Agency is now starting to see and feel the principles of Signs of... in all aspects of our service delivery. It is also present in our anti-oppressive practice (AOP) work and

the steps we are taking towards our commitments to Reconciliation with Indigenous people.

Families are noticing a change in how they are being engaged in service with a stronger focus on collaborative problem-solving and efforts to work in the least intrusive ways while maintaining an emphasis on child safety and well-being. The combination of Signs of, AOP and an Indigenous focus certainly demonstrate our Caring Services. This past year also saw the completion of a Meaningful Measures plan that will help us to demonstrate our successes achieved through data analysis and client feedback. This will be used to inform further Signs of... Learning for staff; aid in Organizational Alignment across departments and mentor and reinforce Leadership throughout our implementation journey.

WHAT IS THE SIGNS OF APPROACH TEACHING US?

"It feels more open and inclusive than past methods...It holds both the worker and the service recipient accountable."

"I like being able to provide families with a vision for the work that needs to be done - and a process by which they can determine what that work is."

"I appreciate the positive way of interacting with clients, and the effort to ensure that families remain highly connected."

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER. LEARNING TOGETHER.

Whether it was a learning pause, a mental minute or simple sunshine - even a "Teams" time with friends, supervisors and staff kickstarted a grassroots effort to engage their colleagues in creative and supportive ways to maintain learning and encourage self-care practices. As well, their interactive videos introducing staff, teams, and relevant learning discussions, allowed new staff to learn about the agency and their colleagues during a pandemic.

Spotlight

TEAM "STILL UP TO SNOW GOOD" RAISES OVER \$12,500!



For the past two years, a passionate group of FCS staff have participated in The Grind Pembroke's Coldest Night of the Year walkathon - a fundraiser to support the fight against homelessness in Renfrew County. We're so proud of this participating staff team - together, they raised over \$12,500!

SAFETY, HEALTH & WELLNESS

Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) has a complement of front-line staff and managers. Since March of 2020, the JHSC has committed to reviewing guidelines, protocols, and various health tips and tricks to support all staff at FCS in regards to COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, the members of the committee have completed their monthly building inspections and remain instrumental in keeping our buildings safe and well maintained. As of late, the committee has had a focus on ergonomics (working from home) and the overall wellbeing of staff. The committee remains committed and active in providing recommendations regarding the health, safety, and wellbeing of staff at FCS.

A PASSION TO HELP



Developmental Services staff took it upon themselves this year to raise much needed funds for our local food bank during the holiday season. With some exciting incentives, they raised over \$900!

SERVICE OVERVIEW

CHILD WELFARE

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Investigations Completed	882	806	853	706
Ongoing child protection cases closed	126	141	145	121
Children in care at end of year	131	114	93	94
Referrals to community links	168	229	335	407
Total adoptions completed	12	4	6	6
New foster homes approved	0	2	2	0
Children in kinship service at year end	26	36	46	23

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Adult Behaviour Services users	118	111	89	70
Child Behaviour Services users	247	193	195	117
Infant Development Services (children served)	119	126	177	88
Infant Development Services waiting list	25	23	19	4
Adult Urgent Response Services users	7	19	26	10
Adult Protective Services users	250	218	229	179
Child Service Coordination Services users	447	439	483	459
Adult Residential Program users	38	48	54	55
Speech & Language Services users	49	65	46	61
Complex Special Needs Program users	25	16	18	17
Community Enhancement Services users	43	46	33	37
Coordinated Service Planning users	34	46	78	64
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder users	n/a	23	40	36

FAMILY VISITATION & EXCHANGE SERVICES

Families served	79	80	51	54
Visits facilitated	419	638	319	228
Exchanges facilitated	575	400	294	77

KUMON MATH & READING PROGRAM

Program registrants (as of March 31)	115	140	132	77
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FINANCIAL NUMBERS

REVENUE

Child Welfare	\$13,595,481
Developmental Services	\$10,823,678
EarlyON	\$308,582
Supervised Access	\$209,765
Other Programs	\$246,675
Trust Funds	\$572,432
Capital Fund	\$91,661
TOTAL REVENUE	\$25,848,274

NET COST OF ALL SERVICES

Child Welfare	\$13,595,085
Developmental Services	\$10,823,615
EarlyON	\$291,599
Supervised Access	\$209,760
Other Programs	\$245,741
Trust Funds	\$312,788
Capital Fund	\$229,947
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$25,708,535

