



#MakingStrides

2023-2024 Annual Report



VISION

**Thriving children,
youth, families and
communities.**

VALUES

**Excellence
Collaboration
Respect
Courage**



MISSION

**We build strength and resilience with infants,
children, youth and families, through equitable,
accessible, client-driven services, system leadership
and advocacy.**

This year we deepened our engagement to be a more agile, proactive and responsive partner to clients, funders, service providers, and each other.

In this report, we are delighted to share examples of how Strides Toronto continues to innovate in services and systems. New public and private partners are recognizing our expertise in delivering gender-based violence and mental health programming, entrusting our agency with funds to address critical service gaps. For example, we were selected to open a new anti-human trafficking residential treatment program, and with hospital partners, received two Slaight Family Foundation grants to deliver specialized mental health services for young people.

In our Lead Agency role, we launched phase one of coordinated access to child and youth mental health services in Toronto. Help Ahead will make getting help easy, seamless and efficient, providing a single-entry point to the services provided by 23 child and youth mental health agencies. We also partnered with Capitalize for Kids to undertake a review of intensive child and youth mental health services with the goal of improving the quality, accessibility and sustainability of these critical services. We look forward to working with partners to implement phase two of Help Ahead and the recommendations emerging from the intensive services review.

Internally, we implemented a comprehensive leadership development initiative with the goal of strengthening management knowledge, skills and tools in implementing best practice approaches to leading their teams. With The Diversity Institute, we are implementing an inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility curriculum to support staff and board members to develop the knowledge and skills required to ensure inclusive services and workplace. These investments in our leaders and staff will drive better employee and client experiences at Strides Toronto.

Our board Advocacy Committee has actively engaged other agencies and individual community members to include their viewpoints on improving access to children's

mental health supports. Thanks to their contributions, we are advocating in thoughtful, consequential ways for more investment in health human resources. Issues of wage parity have created a crisis in recruitment and retention in our sector in recent years, contributing to staffing shortages at a time when young people need our services more than ever before.

Strides Toronto's Youth and Family Advisory Councils represent yet another avenue of engagement. These inspiring groups contributed valued perspectives to our service development and program evolution, including the design of the new Youth Wellness Hub and input on client surveys. We look forward to incorporating their involvement in more aspects of our operations.

This year also marked the half-way point of Strides Toronto's five-year strategic plan—an appropriate time to assess whether our strategic priorities are still right for our organization and clients to thrive. Through engagement with clients, staff, partners and funders, we confirmed that our priorities remain relevant, and redefined some of the initiatives that will help us reach our goals.

Like many of our clients, our organization has made great strides this year internally, in our service provision and our system leadership. We are grateful for our staff and management teams that are deeply invested in and passionate about the collective impact of Strides Toronto's work. Their energy and skills are boundless. We are also blessed to have a board that is profoundly dedicated to our success, open to learning and growing, and unafraid to support our leaders to take risks and make big changes to improve systems and programs so they better meet the needs of young people and families. Thanks to all of you, the work of Strides Toronto continues to transform the lives of children and families.



Janet McCrimmon

President and CEO



Lauren Dade

Chair of the Board



\$37 million
in funding

368
total employees

38
languages spoken
by our employees

Making Strides on our Strategic Priorities

This year marked the midpoint of Strides Toronto’s aspirational five-year strategy—our guide to achieve the best possible version of our agency and make a powerful difference in the lives of clients, staff, and the systems of support for children, youth and families. Much has been accomplished to date, but a lot has also changed since the plan was created.

This year, we reviewed our priorities to make sure they still resonate. In mid-2023, Strides Toronto engaged stakeholders to participate in a strategic plan refresh. Through Momentum Builder sessions, we invited staff, board members, partners, clients and community members to share their thoughts on emerging priorities that could help us refine each of our five strategic pillars. We are pleased to confirm that our strategic pillars continue to resonate strongly with our stakeholders and we will continue to look to these pillars as we deliver the work that will move us forward through 2025.



Outreach, Visibility and Equity

All infants, children, youth and families have equitable access to the culturally safe services they need to thrive.



PREPARING FOR NEW LOCATIONS

This year, Strides Toronto conducted extensive preparations for the upcoming relocation of three of our offices (Markham, Milner, and Bloor sites) to two new locations in Scarborough. The new offices, on Consilium Place and Eglinton Avenue East, reflect staff and client input on how our physical spaces can best support our service to the community. Located near City of Toronto Neighbourhood Priority Areas in different parts of Scarborough, the new offices offer convenient access for youth and families across more communities. Both buildings are fully accessible, include many more treatment spaces for client service delivery, and will give greater visibility to Strides Toronto as we will offer programs like The Zone Youth Wellness Hub at street level.

Accessible Services and Connected Pathways

Every client feels fully supported from the moment they come through our doors and has clear, connected pathways both inside and outside of Strides Toronto, for all the services they need, from infancy through young adulthood.



AUTISM CORE CLINICAL SERVICES

Our core clinical services continue to evolve and grow, with flexibility and clinical insight at every stage being hallmarks of Strides Toronto's services. This year, using parent and client feedback, our Autism Services team dedicated considerable time to revising our curriculum and services to provide more options for families. Services of varying lengths are now offered, and additional programs have been added to respond to client needs. From intake to service, the team has built a connected pathway that allows staff to adapt and pivot to each client's circumstances, creating a highly individualized suite of services to meet families' needs.



1,194
clients accessed
Help Ahead

This number is as of June 12, 2023, when Help Ahead launched as the coordinated point of access for intensive services for children and youth across Toronto.

System Leadership and Advocacy

Improve accessibility of services and address social determinants of health through system planning, partnerships, influencing policy and sharing our expertise.



TRANSFORMING SYSTEM ACCESS TO INTENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

As Toronto's Lead Agency for Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health (ICYMH), Strides Toronto is leading a multi-year process with our 23 core service partners to transform the way mental health services are accessed across the city. Launched in June 2023, Help Ahead provides a single, coordinated point of access to ICYMH intensive services in Toronto to make getting the right help easy, seamless and efficient and better support families through their journey of care. By fall of 2025, all core funded child and youth mental health services in Toronto will be accessed through Help Ahead.

Empowering Learning Organization

Everyone in the organization is engaged in ongoing quality improvement, learning and development, empowered and supported to work at their best, and feels inspired by the impact of their work.



LEADERSHIP TRAINING

This year, we focused on building a robust leadership development program based on feedback from management about the skills and knowledge they wanted to enhance. Multiple training workshops and working groups are resulting in leaders being more engaged and an overall stronger team spirit.



Efficient, Technology-Enabled Organization

Our robust technology, processes and infrastructure support high-quality client experiences and efficient use of resources.



SECURING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FUTURE

As part of our strategic priority to be an efficient technology-enabled organization, Strides Toronto continued to implement our IT strategic plan. We strengthened our cybersecurity and established off-site backup of our organizational data to ensure business continuity. We also began work to deploy a new wireless single-phone system across all offices, the first step in implementing integrated phone, texting and public address capabilities.

Autism and Developmental Services

By developing a range of programs and services that align with the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) funding model, Strides Toronto's Autism and Developmental Services Team continually adapts to provide the building blocks for success to families with an autism diagnosis. Known for innovation, agility and evidence-based practice, our team of outreach workers, intake professionals, and therapists collaborate to meet the unique and changing needs of families throughout their journey with us.



Outreach and Education

This year, we established an innovative Outreach and Education Team that has been highly effective in connecting with families with an autism diagnosis and strengthening our collaborations with community partners. We maintained a robust caregiver education program and provided the Triple P Positive Parenting program. The team also launched a collaboration with the Scarborough Health Network to support newly diagnosed families registered with the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) who are seeking foundational services. Outreach and Education staff actively participate in school activities, share information about our services at community centres, host information booths at community events, and have significantly surpassed their early targets for family engagement.

Toronto Autism Services Network

As part of the Toronto Autism Services Network—a group of seven agencies providing integrated clinical services citywide—our Autism Services Team continued to deliver Entry to School programming and Urgent Response Services for people with autism aged 18 and younger, as well as Caregiver-Mediated Early Years Services (i.e., Project ImPACT) for families across Toronto. Our partnership with the schools that host our Entry to School program has expanded to include teacher training, parent orientation, service navigation, and invitations to be present at school events, benefiting both the clients and school staff.

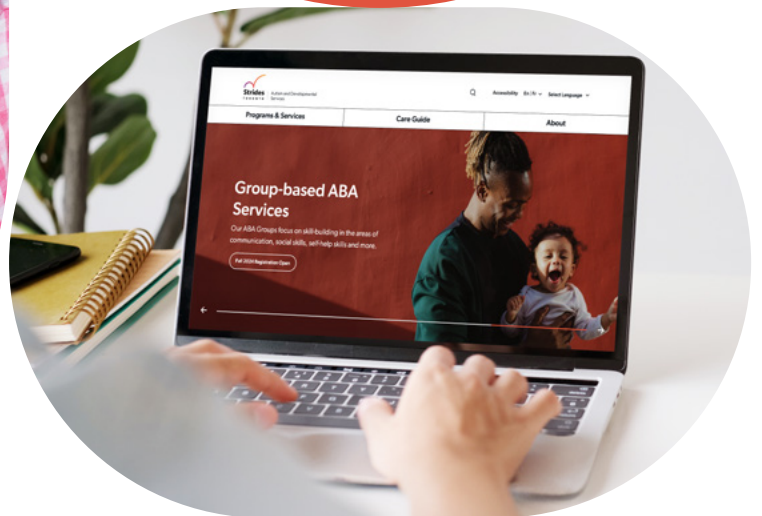
“Our daily updates in [our son’s] journal were amazing barometers of his progress... the staff were always in an upbeat and excited mood, this positivity clearly has an impact! He has developed such strong skills, especially in group dynamics. The program is teaching these kids exactly the skills needed to transition into the school system, and we feel confident he will be successful when he starts school in September. We could not be happier with the success our child has had in this program and we are very appreciative of the effort your team has put into these kids.”

– Parent of Autism Services client



1,221
unique clients
accessed Autism
and Developmental
Services

Unique clients may have
accessed more than one service.



Developmental Services

Strides Toronto offers a range of Developmental Services for children, youth and adults up to age 35. Program changes have resulted in higher registrations and increased participation in parent meetings and program events. Developmental Services also received a grant from the Els for Autism Canada charity, with whom we are building a productive programming and research partnership. The team also developed a new exit protocol to ensure program graduates continue to have the information and support they need.

Website

This year, we launched a new dedicated website for the Autism and Developmental Services department: stridestorontoautismservices.ca. The site is dedicated to serving families working within Ontario's autism service landscape, enabling them to learn about our range of services, see upcoming programs and schedules, and begin the intake process for services. It also offers several educational resources for families to help them support their child.

Organizational and Systems Transformation

Strides Toronto is focused on transforming the experience of infants, children, youth and families with mental health challenges. This includes developing an equitable internal culture and operationalizing system-wide changes to better improve access, experience and mental health outcomes for Toronto's diverse communities.

One Stop Talk/ Parlons maintenant

Aligned with our strategic priority to make systemic improvements in service accessibility, Strides Toronto continued its role as host agency for One Stop Talk/Parlons maintenant (OST/PM) which officially launched in the Fall of 2023. OST/PM is a virtual walk-in program offering children, youth and families in Ontario access to brief, single session therapy. During each session, a registered clinician supports the client to co-develop an action plan, while also providing a warm hand-off to critical mental health resources closer to home as needed. This province-wide service includes therapists from 21 partner agencies contributing clinical expertise from 12:00pm – 8:00pm (Monday to Friday), and 12:00pm to 4:00pm (Saturdays). Service is available at onestoptalk.ca or 1-855-416-TALK (8255).

Gathering Provincial Youth Outreach Workers

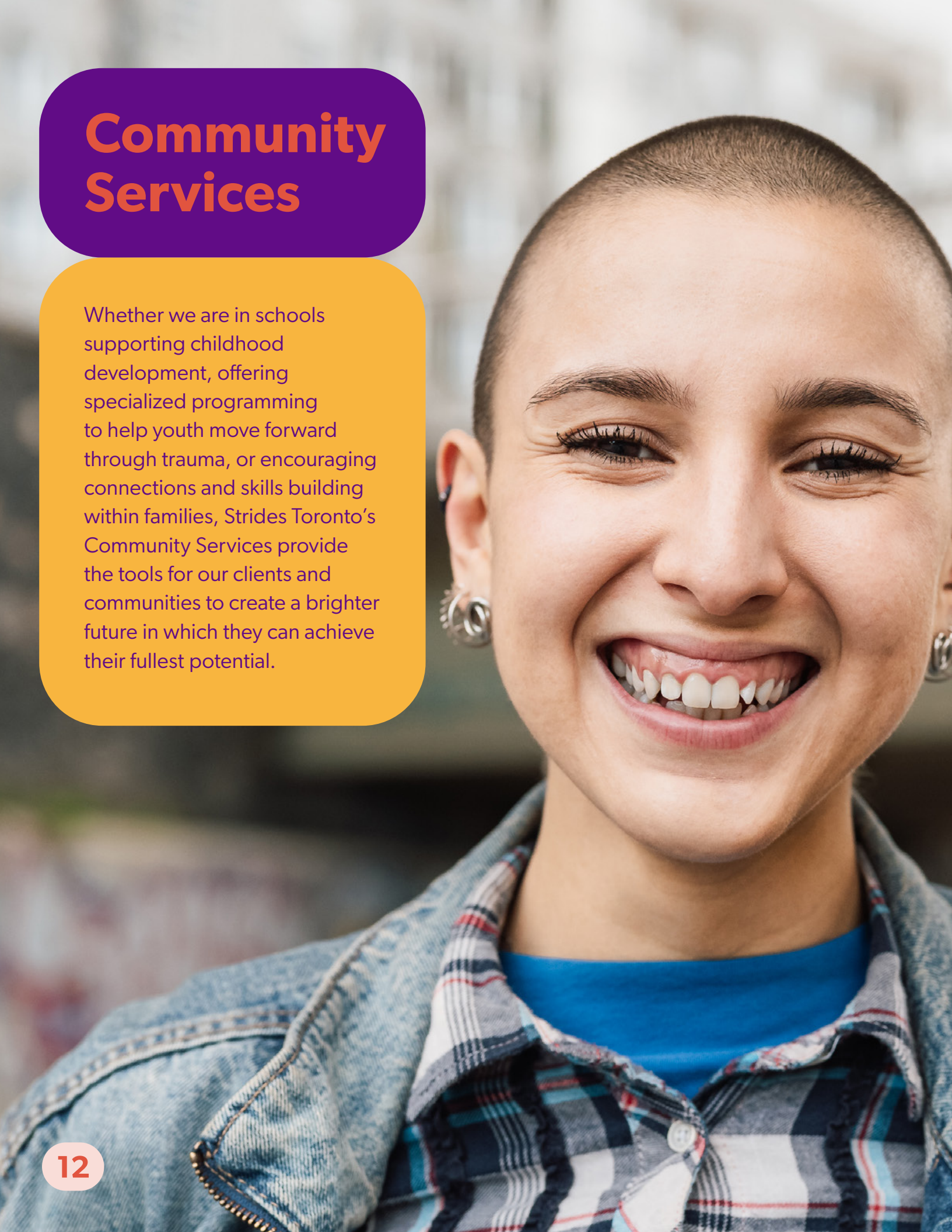
After four years of connecting virtually, the Provincial Youth Outreach Worker (PYOW) program held its first in-person annual conference in February. Coordinated by Strides Toronto and centred on the theme of "Empowerment through change: reconnecting to the humanness of youth engagement," the conference highlighted the dedication, resiliency, and adaptability of the program amid unprecedented changes in service delivery. More than 150 people participated in this successful event, which helped to reduce feelings of isolation that many YOWs face in supporting the program.

HOPE Strategy

Strides Toronto continues to lead a coalition of agencies within Toronto's infant, child, and youth mental health sector who have committed to dismantling anti-Black racism within their agencies and the sector. The 25 core service agencies that signed on to the HOPE Strategy—Honouring Our Promise to End Anti-Black Racism—have met regularly this year to lay the groundwork for the strategy's deliverables, share progress and hold one another accountable to HOPE's commitments to improve access to culturally appropriate and responsive mental health services for Black infants, children, and youth.

Community Services

Whether we are in schools supporting childhood development, offering specialized programming to help youth move forward through trauma, or encouraging connections and skills building within families, Strides Toronto's Community Services provide the tools for our clients and communities to create a brighter future in which they can achieve their fullest potential.



Gender Violence and Human Trafficking

Recognizing our expertise in the areas of gender-based violence, human trafficking services, and live-in treatment, Strides Toronto was selected by the Provincial government to open and operate a live-in treatment program for female-identifying youth who have been sexually exploited. Work is underway to identify a site and build a specialized team. Strides Toronto's approach will leverage our programming expertise and an interdisciplinary staff team of nurse practitioners, psychiatrists, peer workers, child and youth workers, and therapists to not only offer a secure home, but also the kind of trauma support that will help youth feel safe, stable, and engaged.



Youth and Family Advisory Committees

Strides Toronto's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is an enthusiastic group of youth aged 16 to 21 who provide our staff and board with insights into young people's needs and perspectives on the organization. The YAC acts as a bridge between our agency and the youth community to ensure the voices of young people are represented across our organization's services, operations, and governance decisions. The YAC was deeply involved in Strides Toronto's Youth Mental Health Week activities and was also integral to Strides Toronto's space planning discussions for our new locations. The youth provided unique perspectives and insights and advocated effectively for the changes they wanted to see in the new Youth Wellness Hub. YAC representatives also presented an overview of their activities to Strides Toronto's board of directors and explored how the board and YAC could collaborate in future to enhance the governance process.

Strides Toronto also launched a Family Advisory Committee (FAC) this year. A collaboration between staff, clients and their parents, the FAC also has a structured frequency for meetings and actively helps Strides Toronto improve our services and operations. In addition to contributing to Strides Toronto's space planning discussions, the FAC provided input on our client survey and has developed a work plan that includes community education initiatives to build broader awareness of Strides Toronto. Our goal for both the YAC and FAC is to have representation of youth and family clients from all service departments and for these committees to not only consult on issues but to actively collaborate and co-develop initiatives.

Neurodiversity Collaboration (Children)

Our Preschool Speech and Language Program (PSL) spearheaded a Neurodiversity-Affirming (NDA) working group of representatives from PSL agencies across the city. Together, they created a resource toolkit for clinicians and students that includes revamped parent/caregiver education workshops, handouts on child-led interaction and self-regulation, and client goals and strategies to promote neurodiversity-affirming practices. Through this initiative, clinicians empower caregivers to support their child's communication skills with activities that are intrinsically motivating, support regulation, build connections, and promote self-advocacy.



Neurodiversity Collaboration (Youth)

In response to an increase in youth with an autism diagnosis seeking activities offered in a safe space, The Zone and Scarborough Youth Wellness Hub collaborated with our Autism and Developmental Services Team to develop a Neurodiverse Youth Group. This drop-in program provides a safe, fun space for neurodiverse teens to meet, participate in community activities, strengthen their interpersonal skills, and feel empowered.

“Very good program helping me to learn pre and post [natal] information. Every time I come I feel more stress free.”

– Growing Healthy Together participant

2,646
unique clients
accessed
Community
Services

Unique clients may have accessed more than one service.

Mental Health

As Strides Toronto continues to build accessible services and connected pathways to address infant, child and youth mental health challenges, our Mental Health Team established partnerships to provide tailored care and address high-priority crises immediately while also establishing program processes to improve client experience and outcomes across multiple areas of need.



New Youth Mental Health Program

Thanks to a donation from the Slaight Family Foundation, Strides Toronto collaborated with the Scarborough Health Network to implement a new Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) program. The DBT program, which launched in the spring of 2024, offers individual and group programming for youth aged 14 to 24 years. The group program is delivered in two streams based on intensity: comprehensive therapy and skills groups. The skills groups are offered for youth in high school and for transitional-aged youth up to 24 years old.



“I appreciated the welcoming, supportive atmosphere, as well as the efficient organization of the session, from start to finish.”

– What’s Up Walk-In client



Rapid Access to Infant Mental Health

Together with the Children's Aid Society (CAS) of Toronto, we are offering a new program aimed at stabilizing distressed families with children aged 0 to three years. Through the Rapid Access to Infant Mental Health Service, CAS staff identify and refer high-need parents of infants to a Strides Toronto mental health therapist to receive high-priority access to therapy. The program recognizes that intervening as quickly as possible when children are very young increases the likelihood of positive outcomes for the child and family.

Measurement-Based Care

Strides Toronto's Mental Health team officially launched a measurement-based care platform across all its programs. This tool is used by leading mental health organizations across North America. It lets clients complete database tools that enable therapists to measure clients' clinical engagement and progress throughout their care journey. The Mental Health Team first piloted the platform for 18 months within its Intensive Services before rolling it out across the entire department this year. Thanks to the platform's intuitive, user-friendly design, engagement by clients has been quite high and we are benefiting from a clear picture of the impact of our services and utilizing the information to inform our clinical work.

"I am a newcomer, over 40 years old and I conceived after I came to Canada last year. I was so worried about my pregnancy. This program is so wonderful, helped me to learn all [about] resources and staff are very supportive. They gave me confidence about my late pregnancy. I learnt lots of information about childbirth, nutrition."

– Growing Healthy Together participant





1,522
unique clients
accessed
**Mental Health
Services**

Unique clients may have accessed more than one service.

“Nice people and excellent service. If you’re struggling with mental health, consider reaching out to Strides Toronto. Their free counselling is a great resource for newcomers in Canada.”

– What’s Up Walk-In client

Thank You!

We are grateful to these funders and donors whose support makes it possible for Strides Toronto and our clients to take bold steps forward. We are inspired by your generosity and appreciate your partnership.

Funders

Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Children's Aid Society of Toronto
City of Toronto
Dr. Roz's Healing Place
ELS for Autism Canada
Hylands Fund
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Malvern Family Resource Centre
Michael Garron Hospital
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
Operation Springboard
Public Health Agency of Canada
RBC Foundation
Slaight Family Foundation
Surrey Place
Toronto District School Board
United Way of Greater Toronto
Women and Gender Equality Canada
YWCA Toronto

Donors

\$1,000 TO \$9,999

Amazon
CP24 CHUM Christmas Wish
Donna Chow
iN STUDIO Design Inc.
Janet McCrimmon
Judy and Paul Huyer
Lauren Dade
Margaret Wood Foundation
STO Orthodontists
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
Upper Canada College

\$500 TO \$999

Anastasia Giannaris
Jason Pilz
Tom Moutsatsos
William Lumsden

\$200 TO \$499

Edmund Wu
Louise and Michael O'Neill
Paul Van de Laar
Sibel Cicek
The Bishop Strachan School
Virginia Crosbie
Zelma Kelly

UP TO \$199

Andrea Arakelian
Bryan Heal
Cynthia J D'Alleva
Divya Steinwall
Enrico Tan
Jadyn Hsu
Jennifer Tassopoulos
Kiaunna Bennett
Lillian Desorcy
Nadia Sahadeo
Nicole Burke
Omar Quashem
Peter DiNardo
Ragaven Sabaratnam
Ramona Gilmour-Darling
Ross Ridout
Sarah MacLeod
Scott and Amanda Sinclair
Vidya Rajasingam
Vignesh Nithyanandam
Wen-Ching Hsu
William Mancini

Financials

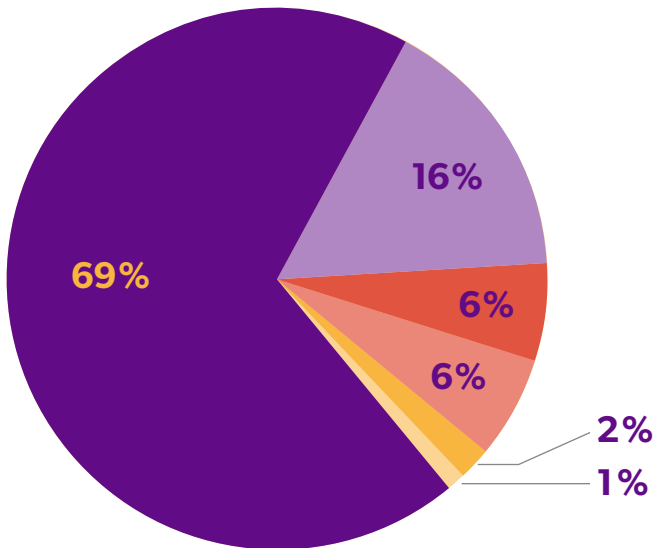
Year ended
March 31

Revenue

	2024	2023
Ministry of Health grant	17,567,436	17,091,950
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services grant	5,050,761	6,984,917
City of Toronto grant	1,813,938	1,699,396
Federal Government funding	1,131,259	1,149,899
Surrey Place funding	6,016,230	4,338,777
Special programs funding	2,400,327	2,349,353
Fee for service	2,133,881	1,183,083
Investment income	797,948	518,278
Donations and fundraising	114,312	44,517
Other	40,790	153,463
TOTAL REVENUE	\$37,066,882	\$35,513,633

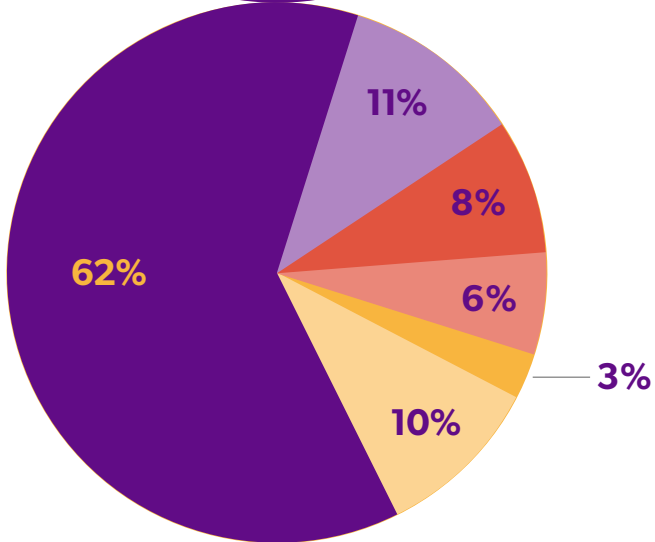
Expenses

	2024	2023
Salaries and wages	22,666,816	22,277,495
Employee benefits	3,948,535	3,174,800
Contracted-out services	3,000,708	3,043,494
Rent	2,178,370	1,902,701
Travel and communication	1,024,279	946,561
Purchased client services	993,551	995,508
Training costs	731,523	780,647
Other services	664,645	539,813
Other supplies and equipment	548,241	483,898
Repairs and maintenance	249,020	264,238
Insurance	217,225	160,497
IT - supplies and equipment	114,329	311,370
Utilities	68,005	67,361
COVID-19 expenses	—	31,289
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$36,405,247	\$34,979,672



Revenue

- Government grants
- Surrey Place funding
- Special programs funding
- Fee for service
- Investment income
- Donations and fundraising (combined with "other")



Expenses (top 5 identified)

- Salaries and wages
- Employee benefits
- Contracted-out services
- Rent
- Travel and communication
- Combined other expense (see page 20)

Other Items

	2024	2023
Unrealized gain (loss) from investments	166,468	(106,412)
Amortization of property and equipment	(1,566,881)	(1,380,190)
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	1,566,881	1,380,190
Amortization of lease inducements	12,583	21,572
TOTAL OTHER ITEMS	\$179,051	(\$84,840)

Revenue Over Expenses

	2024	2023
EXCESS BEFORE "OTHER ITEMS"	\$661,635	\$533,961
EXCESS INCLUDING "OTHER ITEMS"	\$840,686	\$449,121

Big thanks to our team!

We are grateful for the incredible staff at Strides Toronto. Together, we have accomplished so much. Your dedication and commitment has helped so many people reach their potential.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our staff and special recognition for those celebrating service anniversaries last year:

35 YEARS

Karen Kerry, *Community Child Therapist
Community Services*
Paula Carrie, *Manager, Family Supports*

30 YEARS

Dale Miller, *Community Resource Navigator*
Deborah Kernohan, *Senior Manager,
Community Services*
Logan Chung, *Family Home Visitor*

25 YEARS

Anne Balasingam, *Family Home Visitor*
Bella Aleksandi, *Family Home Visitor*
Natalie Subrizi, *Manager, Developmental Services*
Nazi Malakooti, *Family Home Visitor*
Patricia Pearce, *Program Assistant*
Remoshini Mohanarajah, *Family Home Visitor*
Salima Khimji, *Service Navigator*

20 YEARS

Amy Lee, *Live-In Treatment Child and Youth Practitioner*

15 YEARS

Amy Barry, *Live-In Treatment Child & Youth Practitioner*
Delroy Gustavus, *Child Therapist DT*
Dineesa Maloney, *Classroom Facilitator*
Lindsey Cousineau, *Transition Facilitator*
Loraine Bairstow, *Manager, Family Connections*
Nicole Yeung, *Child Care Consultant*
Sheena Church, *Child Therapist DT*
Vijayaluxumy Gnanasegaram, *Program Assistant*

10 YEARS

Alisha Ramachandran, *Manager, Office and Facilities*
Emily Bloom, *Autism Outreach and Education Facilitator*
Jennifer Ann Hammond, *Live-In Treatment Child and
Youth Practitioner*
Kathleen Reyes, *Executive Assistant*
Lisa Tomilson, *Speech and Language Pathologist*
Muhammad Jehee, *Service Navigator*

5 YEARS

Arujhna Rajadurai, *Manager, Youth Wellness Hubs*
Brittany Hernandez, *Developmental Services Worker*
Katayoon Kakavand, *Provincial Virtual Walk-in Clinician*
Kate Mitchell, *Individual and Family Therapist*
Kaylee Avrashi, *Speech and Language Pathologist*
Monique Balbuena, *Social Media Youth Outreach Worker*
Natalie Mowatt, *Program Assistant*
Niruja Surendran, *Classroom Facilitator*
Radhika Patel, *ABA Therapist, Urgent Response Services*
Rashida Clarke, *Youth Wellness Program Animator*
Tara Beaton, *Child and Family Therapist*
Tarena Singh, *Manager, Office and Facilities*

Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who serve on the board. You help Strides Toronto be the best organization it can be!

Our Board of Directors consists of 13 diverse, committed and skilled individuals who care about Toronto and wish to help Strides Toronto achieve its vision of thriving children, youth, families, and communities.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Lauren Dade, *Chair*
Tom Moutsatsos, *Vice Chair*
Nadia Sahadeo, *Treasurer*
Donna Chow, *Secretary*

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Sibel Cicek
Bryan Heal
Paul Huyer
William Lumsden
Jason Pilz
Vidya Rajasingam
Ragaven Sabaratnam
Divya Steinwall



Have a question? Want more information?

contactus@stridestoronto.ca

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