



Families Matter

Learn • Play • Love

20 YEARS OF LEARN, PLAY, LOVE

2023 Annual Report

www.familiesmatter.ca







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Welcome



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE CALGARY FOUNDATION

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis, and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, as well as the Iyathe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina nations.

We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta District 6. Finally, we acknowledge all Nations – Indigenous and non – who live, work and play on this land, and who honour and celebrate this territory.

This sacred gathering place provides us with an opportunity to engage in and demonstrate leadership on reconciliation. Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment to join our team on the lands of Treaty 7 territory.

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SE, Calgary, AB T2X 1M2

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PLEDGE TO DEI

Families Matter acknowledges the historical and ongoing marginalization, discrimination, and underrepresentation faced by Indigenous peoples and racialized minorities. We recognize our responsibility to confront the legacies of colonization and systemic oppression. We are resolute in embarking on a path of reconciliation and anti-racism.

We will proactively integrate initiatives into our work to address intergenerational trauma within our community. Families Matter envisions a community characterized by safety, justice, and equality for women, Indigenous and racialized families, Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. We will actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all our endeavours, with a focus on serving the needs of every family.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

We wish to thank our funders for their generous support that makes our programs possible. We also wish to acknowledge our private donors and their generous contributions to the agency.



BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES



FAMILIES MATTER

Our slogan “Learn, Play, Love” serves as a guiding principle for our agency, influencing both our work with families and our values as a staff team. **For families, we believe that “Learn, Play, Love” encapsulates the essential elements that help families grow stronger and more resilient together.** We are convinced that a combination of learning new skills, utilizing tools and strategies, engaging in meaningful play (for both children and parents), and cultivating a loving and supportive environment are all essential to help families reach their full potential.

At Families Matter, we also apply the principles of “Learn, Play, Love” to our staff. We prioritize staff development and invest in enhancing the knowledge and skills of our team. **In 2023, our staff collectively spent 1310 hours in professional development; actively learning, growing, and expanding our capacity to provide the highest standard of care to our community.** We also value the importance of play within our team, whether through quarterly social outings, shared potluck gatherings, or our Annual Think Week in September. Moreover, we deeply believe in the work that we do. In our annual Employee Satisfaction Survey, **100% of staff expressed that the mission of Families Matter makes them feel that their work is important.**



OUR MISSION

To empower families so that caregivers and children build resilience and thrive.

OUR VISION

A connected community in which children and families are nurtured and supported to be happy, healthy and resilient.

Families Matter is all about healthy, resilient thriving families. *ALL families.*



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with pride in our collective accomplishments and the resilience demonstrated by Families Matter. The year 2023 stands as a testament to our organization's commitment to our mission and the significant strides we have made toward achieving our objectives.

Throughout the past year, we set ambitious goals to expand our reach, enrich our programs, and deepen our impact. Through the dedication of our team and the generous support of our partners, donors, and volunteers, we not only met but often surpassed these targets.

Some of these achievements include:

- Successfully launching our new program, **Early Learning Across Cultures**, which addresses the critical need for educational and connection-based activities tailored to caregivers and children. This innovative program incorporates cultural traditions, customs, and celebrations, providing newcomer families with vital resources and support.
- Witnessing a remarkable **70% increase in participation** in our Family Centre Programs from 2022 to 2023, which has served as a beacon of hope and transformation for a number of families with young children seeking connection and relationship-building opportunities.
- **Establishing transformative partnerships** and nurturing collaborative relationships aimed at enhancing our ability to drive meaningful change.

Despite encountering challenges such as leadership transitions and funding constraints, our team's agility and the support from our community empowered us to navigate these hurdles, emerging stronger and more resilient.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the remarkable Foundations whose generosity ensured that we concluded the year in a position of financial strength. This responsible stewardship of resources guarantees our sustainability and enables us to pursue our ambitious objectives.

Looking ahead to 2024, our teams are excited by the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Our primary focus will be on expanding our capacity to deliver top programs with enhanced family care, while prioritizing support for our exceptional staff. We are committed to embracing adaptability within a resilient operating model while striving for continuous improvement, innovation, and leveraging the invaluable lessons learned over the past year to move our mission forward.

I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who has been part of this journey, our dedicated staff, our Board, outstanding volunteers, generous donors, and invaluable partners.

Your belief in our mission and your commitment to serving families, drives our progress and inspires us daily.

Together, we have made a profound difference in the lives of those we serve. I am excited about continuing this extraordinary journey, as we reach even greater heights in the year ahead.

Lisa Barton
Executive Director

“

For families, we believe that “Learn, Play, Love” encapsulates the essential elements that help families grow stronger and more resilient, *together*.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Dear Families Matter Community,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits.

For those I have not had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Carla Marsh and I am the newly appointed Chair of Families Matter Society (“Families Matter”). I’ve been involved on the Board of Families Matter for several years, participating on various committees and as the Treasurer. I joined the Board as I am truly passionate about supporting parents and children, with the goal of creating well-supported, loving families with resilient children. I believe this creates a positive ripple extending throughout our society and to future generations.

Families Matter, with over two decades of dedication to the Calgary community, embodies resilience, growth, and an unwavering commitment to empowering families. I am honored to share that through 2023 we not only supported the largest community yet, but also developed a highly focused and intentional strategy that provides long-term stability and an opportunity to extend our community impact further.

Let me share our highlights from the year.

New Leadership

We were delighted to officially welcome Lisa Barton as our permanent Executive Director. With nearly two decades of experience in empowering and supporting families, as well as her lengthy background at Families Matter, Lisa’s dedication and strengths align directly with our vision.

Her strategic thinking and collaborative approach will undoubtedly drive Families Matter forward. We have also restructured the leadership team to set us up to continue enhancing programming and overall agency efficiency.

Refreshed Strategy

In response to the evolving needs of our community and changing economic landscape, we developed a robust multifaceted strategy by leveraging perspectives and experiences of our staff, board, and community partners. Our new strategy focuses on these three key pillars.

1. **Best-in-Class Programming:** Elevate our impact by adapting and improving our family-centered approach.
2. **Industry Leading Teams:** Attract and retain exceptional individuals who are dedicated to our mission.
3. **Resilient Model:** Diversify our revenue sources to enable further programming investments.

So, what can you expect for 2024? With new leadership in place and a refreshed strategy, Families Matter is poised for success and continued growth through 2024 and beyond.

I am proud to say the energy and positivity within our organization are unmatched; entering our Horizon and Midnapore Hubs, you can feel something magical happens in these spaces.

I am honoured and excited to be part of this important community. I invite you to follow along our journey of change and impact together.

Thank you to the Board for their engagement, to the staff for their unwavering commitment and infectious energy, and to the community for your ongoing support and trust. Together, we can build resilient, safe, and creative communities where children and families thrive today and for future generations to come.

With gratitude,

Carla Marsh

Chair, Families Matter Society

Thank you to our 2023 Board of Directors:

Chad Johnson - Chair
Emily Zhang - Vice Chair
Carla Marsh - Treasurer
Jessica Brown - Secretary
Lindsay Hogan - Director
Kelly Siemens - Director
Jordie Fraser - Director
Alyson Jenkins - Director
Allison Smith - Director
Jennifer Hammer - Director
Lesley Hayes - Director



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FAMILIES MATTER

As we commemorate our 20th anniversary, we reaffirm our core values:

- *Respect*: Recognizing the intrinsic worth, dignity, and rights of all individuals.
- *Collaboration*: Cultivating meaningful relationships, fostering strong teams, and collaborating to build a connected community.
- *Playfulness*: Integrating “play” as a uniquely effective approach to facilitate learning and unlearning.
- *Resilience*: Supporting families to adapt successfully to challenging or changing life circumstances.
- *Self-Awareness*: Understanding our individual contributions to the collective team.

Families Matter has a rich history of supporting families with young children in preventive efforts. Delving into the critical first six years of life, encompassing

**2,190 days,
52,560 hours,
3,153,600 minutes,
189,216,000 seconds,**

revealing the staggering potential for over a million new neural connections per second. This highlights the vast opportunities for children and their families during this pivotal developmental period.

“What started as a practicum placement, led me to 17 years with the organization in various capacities. What has stood out to me is our unwavering ability to adapt to the needs of the community and the families we serve, even in the face of transitions, unexpected setbacks and the forever changing political and funding landscape. We have often touted ourselves as a small and mighty team doing great work. It is the culture of connection that has sustained me in my time with the agency. Not only are we genuine in the care we provide to our families, but we are genuine in the care we provide to each other as a team.”



I firmly believe that we set the gold standard in the support and programs we provide through our various portfolios. We are constantly evolving and finding new, meaningful, and innovative ways to deliver services. I am proud to stand behind the vision and mission of Families Matter and am excited to the legacy that will be left in the community in the years to come."

-Michael, Manager of Program Innovation

Over the course of the past 20 years, Families Matter has operated out of 13 different sites, (including our original location, pictured), as our agency has grown, shifted, and adapted to the community's needs.

Twenty years ago, we started with:

- Family Life Education (FLE)
- Parents and Children Together (PACT)
- Parent Child Mother Goose (PCMG)
- Post Partum Support
- Families Matter Resource Centres (Keeler Elementary, Bowness Parent Link, Ranchlands Parent Link)
- In Home Support (Healthy Families)
- Parents as Teachers
- Moving Forward (early version of SYP)

Did you know?

We still offer versions of these programs today!



"It has been a very fulfilling and gratifying experience to grow alongside and with an organization where truly, all families matter."

-Amanda, Manager of Family and Community Programs



BY THE NUMBERS

2023 was not just our twentieth year in operation, but it was one with incredible impact. Here's just a small snippet of the great work that happened in our programs this year.

1063

intake calls
completed
with parents,
caregivers
and referral
agencies.

2368

families served
agency-wide

883

people engaged in
Family Life Education



Promoting optimal childhood development and building confidence in parenting skills and relationships.

221

Youth served in Frontrunners
Programming



Promoting social connections, physical literacy, problem-solving, emotional regulation and leadership skills to youth 8-14 years old.

1773

home visits
completed
agency-wide

Offering families parenting education and support to understand their child's developmental stages, increase caregiver capacity, and strengthen social connections in the community.



EARLY CHILDHOOD & LITERACY

In 2023, we experienced a **70%** increase in those accessing our Family Centres.

Meeting the emerging needs of young families.

Need for connection

As we grapple with a post-pandemic world, we continue to see the effects that prolonged isolation had on our community. With an increase of 70% of families attending our Centres in 2023, we can clearly see the desire and need for connection. Our Family Centres are a safe, inviting, and accessible way for families to build social connections.



“

This program taught me to step back, enjoy play, and appreciate the moment. I learned a lot about my child's emotions and how to pay more attention. Thank you so much! Not only have I gained valuable skills, but I have also found a sense of belonging and support that I didn't know I was missing.”

– Keys to Resilience Client

The Value of Early Screening

Early detection of developmental delays is key for supporting young children in their growth and development. Families Matter offers screening to children under the age of 5 in all of our programming that serves young children. Developmental screenings ensure children are developing on track, and when they aren't, relevant strategies, tools and supports are provided to those families.



862 developmental screenings completed in 2023.

MEET

PRIYA

Priya is both a new mother to a 5-month-old daughter, and a newcomer to Canada, experiencing significant life changes and feeling isolated without the comfort of her community.

Priya noticed her daughter, Alexis, was not cooing, babbling, or communicating like others her age. Priya arrived at our Baby Drop-In program at Families Matter, desperately seeking a connection and answers to support her daughter.

Priya found more than just a program; she discovered a connection in the caring embrace of our staff and other new parents. They encouraged her to continue attending the program and helped her learn about early childhood development by completing Ages and Stages Questionnaires. Priya took the information she learned about developmental milestones and immersed herself in communication activities, both at the Centre and at home, to support her daughter's communication delay.

Priya's support network expanded with newfound connections and friendships. Alexis, once silent and withdrawn, now flourished, responding to activities with smiles and coos, eagerly exploring the world around her.



“

I have made a lot of friends since I've started this program! I feel more confident as a parent, and I know a lot of resources and strategies to engage with my daughter.”

70%

Increase

in families served in our Family Centres.

97%

Feel more connected

to their communities after attending Connect & Play

180

Dads & children

attended Papa Bears in 2023.



PARENTAL

RESILIENCE

Doug's Story

Doug reached out to Families Matter after the birth of his first child. He expressed that being a first-time father had stirred up feelings of stress and being overwhelmed. Doug was able to recognize his past unhealthy ways of coping when stressed and wanted to do better now that he was a dad. This led him to seek out support and new strategies around his self-regulation to better respond to his baby's needs.

Together with his Fathering Coach, they delved into the complex world of child development, focusing initially on meeting the immediate needs of his newborn. The Fathering Coach guided him toward recognizing his cues and stressors, particularly during moments of overwhelm when the baby needed soothing the most.

Doug and his Fathering Coach developed a safety plan to ensure Doug had the strategies and support he needed to show up for his newborn as a calm and responsive parent.

The bond between Doug and his baby deepened, nurtured by the learning gained during their weekly visits with their Fathering Coach. Doug eagerly absorbed insights on the different ages and stages of Sam's growing needs and adjusted his expectations along the way.

Doug participated in other Families Matter offerings, expanding his parental resilience and knowledge. Through programs like the Circle of Security for Dads, he honed his skills in understanding his baby's cues and responding with love and patience.

Additionally, Doug and Sam's mother, Michelle, recognized how their relationship impacted their parenting and participated in the Date Night program. In this program, Doug and Michelle embarked on a journey of respect, improved communication, and strengthened their bond along the way.

Through Doug's dedicated work, he gained self-regulation skills to meet Sam's needs. **Doug increased his parental capacity and confidence by learning about what to expect from Sam in his growth and development as a baby and adjusting his expectations to meet Sam where he was at.** Doug successfully met his personal goal of learning how to foster attachment and connection to his child. He is forever grateful to Families Matter for the support and guidance that he received.

94% of male caregivers report feeling more positive about parenting after completing one-to-one support.

85% of parents report feeling more confident as a caregiver after finishing the Home Visitation program.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Tracey reached out to our intake line seeking support shortly after becoming a new mom. She bravely shared her struggles with anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Enrolling in our Perinatal Mental Health Program marked a turning point for Tracey, offering connection during a dark time.

Tracey's mental health was crumbling as she felt disconnected from her child; and while she believed that parenthood was a team effort between herself and her partner, she felt like a failure, feeling that she couldn't contribute to her share of the parenting load.

She was assigned to a Perinatal Mental Health Support worker, where she embarked on a path of learning and healing. For a year, she accessed individual home visitation with staff before transitioning to group sessions. Through the program's guidance, she learned the tools to strengthen her mind and gain confidence in her parental abilities. As Tracey worked on her mental health, she was able to connect and bond with her baby.

In the embrace of support groups, she found support among fellow mothers, discovering a new connection that blossomed into a community of natural support. Together with her partner, Ryan, they joined the Couple's Night program, learning tools to strengthen their relationship and navigate parenthood together.

Since joining our program, Tracey's progress has been remarkable. Her Edinburgh Postnatal Depression score decreased by 46%, indicating a significant reduction in postnatal depression and anxiety.

While she and Ryan reflect on those challenging days, they focus on the brighter moments ahead, knowing they are stronger for it.

"I honestly don't know where I'd be without support from Families Matter. I believe I am alive because of Families Matter. I've never had mental health struggles in the past, so I had no idea what was happening and why I wanted to end my life. My worker helped me understand and gave me concrete things I could do to help myself to feel better. My family and I are so grateful to have had this service available."





MENTAL HEALTH

BY THE NUMBERS

The Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) Programs support new parents through their journey which can include challenges with depression, anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, guilt, isolation, and the stigma associated with struggling with mental health.

689

Male caregivers served agency-wide.

302

Perinatal Mental Health Clients supported.

394

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Screenings completed last year.

97%

reduction in thoughts of self harm in Perinatal Mental Health clients at closing.

83%

feel confident and optimistic about achieving their goals at the end of their in-home support.

76%

improvement - highest reduction in Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale score at closing.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION



We are dedicated to spearheading change, fostering collaborations, and nurturing internal capabilities to sustain and magnify our impact within the community.

At Families Matter, we are committed to evolving into a dynamic learning organization, firmly rooted in a family-centered approach. This vision pushes us towards a strategic vision of data-driven decision-making, fostering innovation, and advocating inclusive practices.

We prioritize targeted partnerships and collaborative endeavors essential for maximizing our influence, tackling intricate challenges, and promoting sustainability in our community-based initiatives. Through collective effort, we harness our combined strengths to effect positive change for individuals, families, and our community at large.

Reflecting on our 20-year journey, we extend our gratitude to our partners in 2023. We have embarked on a journey of learning and in our collective partnerships. Serving as a Family Resource Network Hub in both the Northeast and Southeast, we cherish the evolving relationships with our spoke agencies, including Kindred, Carya, Hull, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. The utilization of space at the Children's Cottage for our Family Life Education Spoke has been instrumental in connecting with families in the Northwest.

Our shared space partnership with Trellis holds profound value across the city, affording Families Matter the opportunity to extend our programs across all quadrants, serving all families.

*“Meaningful change happens when people come together for a common purpose and begin that journey by investing in their relationships. When we travel at the speed of trust and lead with our hearts amazing things can happen. This is exactly what Families Matter, Kindred and Miskanawah have chosen to do as we explore alternative ways of supporting our families and our community.
Hiy Hiy”*

- Kirby Redwood - CEO, Miskanewah & Jessica Cope Williams - CEO, Kindred



OUR

DONORS & VOLUNTEERS

"Having the opportunity to give my time each week in a playful and purposeful way is an incredibly rewarding experience. As a former client of Families Matter, I take pride in knowing that this dedicated time in which I have a ton of fun, has a positive impact on the community."

Your donation has supported our mission of empowering families, enabling caregivers and children to build resilience and thrive.

With your contributions, we can continue to make strides in our programming by:

Learn: Enables us to provide learning opportunities in parenting workshops, educational resources, with the knowledge and tools they need to nurture their children's growth and development.

Play: Essential for healthy development, fostering creativity, imagination, and social skills. All our programs and activities include elements of play as we know through play, families not only bond but also learn and grow together.

Love: Providing a safe and nurturing environment where families/caregivers can receive the care and guidance they need to navigate life's obstacles with love and resilience.

Gift in kind donations, monetary gifts, and volunteering has created positive change in our work and communities. As we reflect on the impact of the past year, we are filled with gratitude and your commitment to making a difference.

All donation types directly support our efforts, ensuring that families receive the holistic support they need to thrive.

We are filled with gratitude to those who contributed to the late Mitchell Purdy fund. His legacy lives on by providing meals and support funds to continue the great work of the Be A Great Dad program.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by the continued support and remain committed to empowering families, and strengthening communities.

Thank you for your continued support!

AT A GLANCE

929

volunteer hours
contributed to Family
Matters programming in
2023.

2368

families supported by
Families Matter in 2023.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of December 31, 2023	2023	2022
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 921,861	\$ 304,982
Short term investments	454,407	300,207
Accounts receivable and accrued receivable	5,849	16,217
Goods and services tax recoverable	16,670	7,088
Prepaid expenses and prepaid deposits	49,072	48,621
	1,447,859	677,115
Long term investments	444,000	444,000
Property and equipment	101,197	109,875
	\$ 1,993,056	\$ 1,230,990
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accruals	\$ 108,609	\$ 86,908
Deposits received	8,280	-
Deferred income	807,674	387,851
	924,563	474,759
Deferred capital contributions	3,414	4,904
	927,977	479,663
NET ASSETS		
Operating Fund	621,079	307,327
Internally Restricted Fund	444,000	444,000
	1,065,079	751,327
	\$ 1,993,056	\$ 1,230,990



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	As of December 31, 2023	2023	2022
REVENUE			
Funding	\$	3,405,043	\$ 3,004,977
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments		45,361	(37,174)
Interest income		16,863	-
Dividend income		15,998	22,358
Amortization of deferred capital contribution		1,490	1,569
Realized loss on sale of investments		(1,094)	(3,786)
		3,483,661	2,987,944
EXPENSES			
Salaries and related expenses		2,334,370	2,258,035
Occupancy and equipment		448,584	404,211
Program operations		127,055	121,573
Administration		84,382	35,735
Contracted services		61,578	62,345
Staff and volunteers		46,555	46,736
Marketing and fundraising		36,794	34,704
Amortization		17,940	16,636
Other		12,651	11,694
		3,169,909	2,991,669
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$	313,752	\$ (3,725)



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