



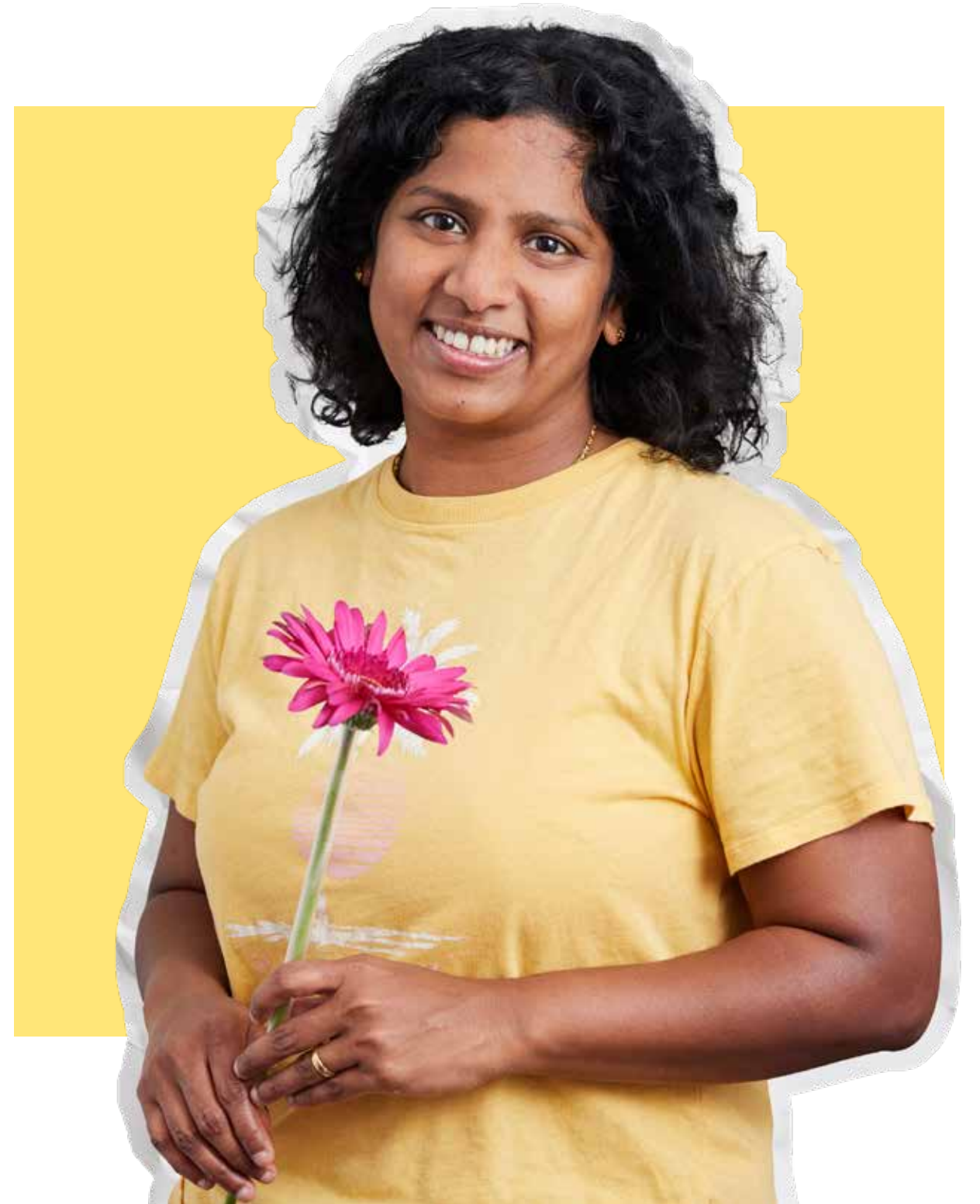
42nd Annual Report  
2023

I am an Educator

I am *a caregiver*



I am *a licensed home  
child care provider*





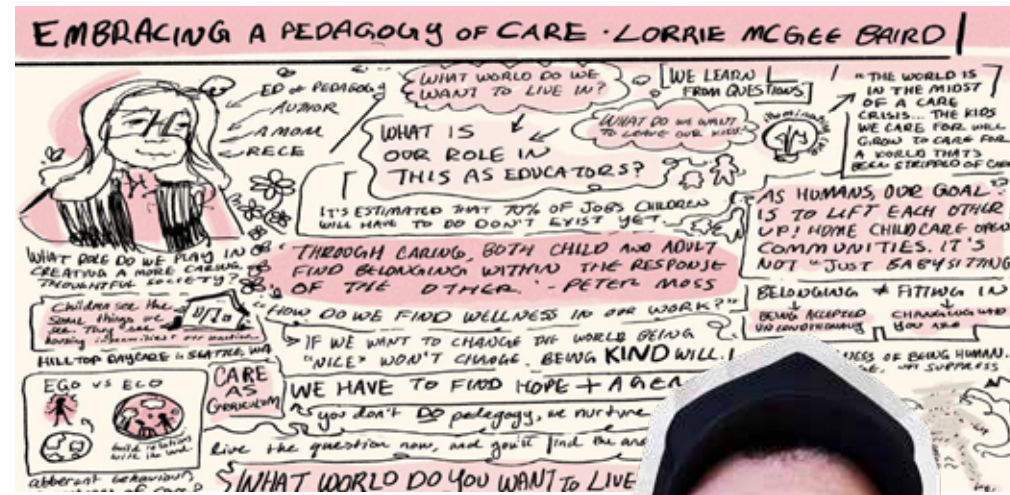
I am *a camp counsellor*



I am *an Early Childhood  
Educator*

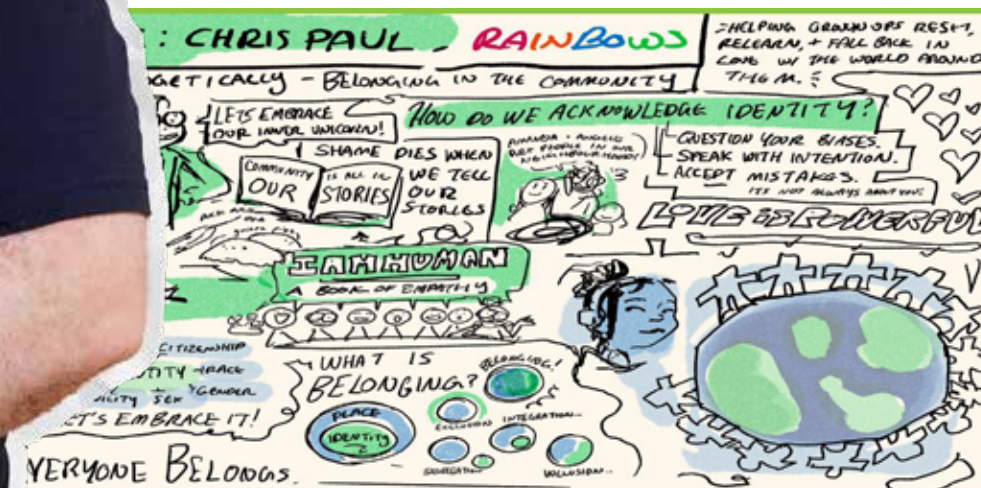






And I am

*always learning*







## Our Educators *are amazing!*

As much as our focus is on the **children** we serve, the success of Today's Family has always been – and will always be – based on the excellence of our Early **Childhood** Educators. As centre-based Early **Childhood** Educators, licensed home **child** care providers, before and after school educators, and EarlyON program facilitators, our early **childhood** educators are the roots of a flourishing tree.

They are the foundation on which Today's Family was built.

In this, our 2023 Annual Report, we honour and celebrate the great work of our Early **Childhood** Educators, our ECEs. Just as roots provide nourishment, stability, and support, our educators lay the groundwork for the growth and development of every **child**. Through their dedication and care, they help our **children** blossom into their full potential, creating a strong and vibrant community.

It is to these hard-working people that we offer our sincere thanks, profound admiration, and utmost respect.

We dedicate this report to them.







## Our Educators *are collaborators*

Early **Childhood** Educators must collaborate to create environments where learning can happen, not just with their fellow educators, but with the **children** themselves.

Learning is an exploration of interests, passions, and shared goals.

At Today's Family, each **child's** perspective and ability is valued, as each **child** is an independent thinker with unique lived experiences. Daily, it is the role of the Early **Childhood** Educator to encourage dialogue, to critique, compare, negotiate, hypothesize, and problem solve through play.

In all things, our educators ask, "How can we best support **children's** learning?"







**We collaborate**

...

On our own we can teach, help, and care for the **children** in our midst. Together, with other community partner organizations, we can help to make changes and chart new directions for all **children**.







## Our Educators *are caring*

Early **Childhood** Educators must care – about both themselves, and about the **children** in their midst. Learning and development are based on relationships, and it is by caring that these relationships best flourish and grow.

At Today's Family, our programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections.

We strive to create a sense of belonging amongst and between **children**, adults, and the world that surrounds us.

Through care, and through genuine enthusiasm and interest, we can most effectively create an environment where **children** are safe to grow and express themselves.





### We care

...

It is the essence of who we are. The basis of all our programs, pedagogy, and relationships is built on genuine desire to care for **children** and ensure that they have the best start possible.





## Our Educators *are innovative*

Early **Childhood** Educators must be innovative and constantly searching for new and better ways to engage with the **children** in their midst.

At Today's Family, we view each **child** as being infinitely capable, creative, and intelligent.

With the **child** at the centre of everything we think, say, and do, we respect them as curious explorers and active participants in their own learning journey.

The role of the Educator is to support these qualities and to challenge **children** and encourage their full development in mind, body and spirit.



## We innovate

...

Our educators ensure creativity and innovation are ever present. We embrace change and do things differently.







## Our Educators *are inclusive*

Today's Family is committed to all those who gather, play, and work here. Together, we work to achieve what's best for **children** and families; this is our commitment to you, each other, and to our shared future.

We believe in the importance of places to learn and play for all who gather at Today's Family. A place where no **child**, family, or member of our community experiences inequity.

We are proud to share and elevate the gifts of diversity that exist within our community. We are accountable to ensuring diversity is embraced at Today's Family in thoughtful and inclusive ways.

We know every **child** and family has a special story to tell. We hold ourselves accountable for the listening and learning needed to allow space for everyone to have the opportunity to share their own story.

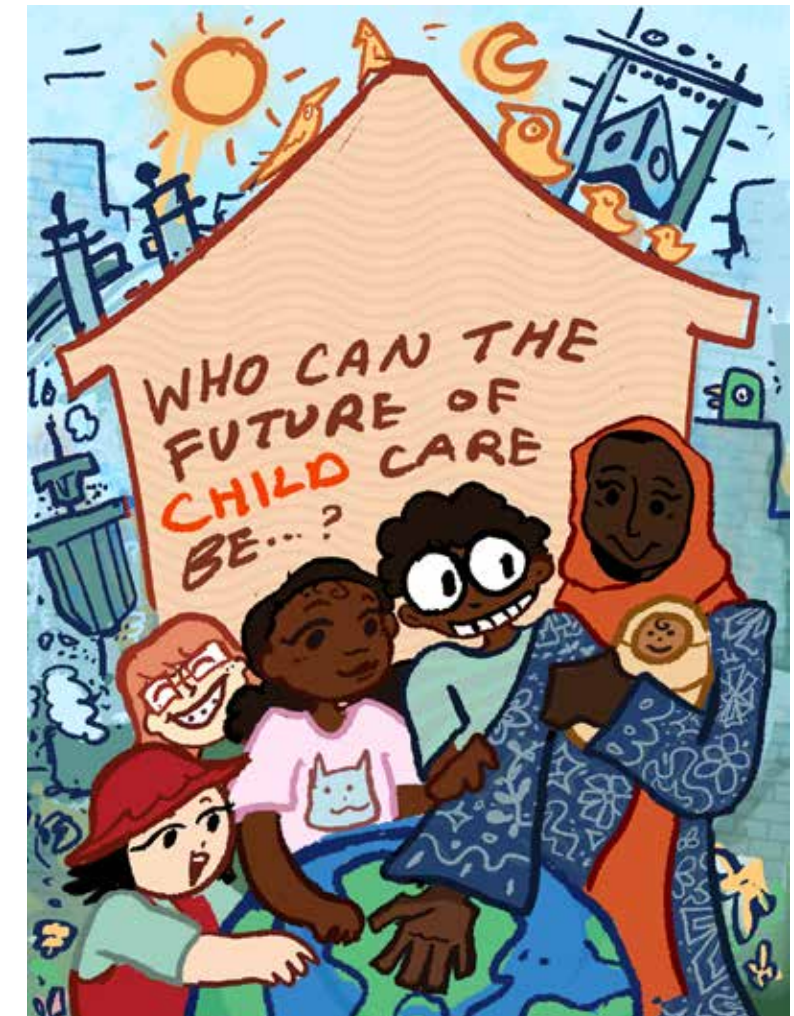
We acknowledge we will always have opportunities to learn more, more discussion and more work to do for everyone to belong.

### **We are inclusive**

...

By accepting and celebrating our differences, we are best preparing our **children** to meet the challenges of the world, while also elevating and respecting each **child**.





Meet Amina. She is one of 150 Today's Family home educators who operate a thriving community-based licensed home **child** care. Every day, Amina opens her door to **children** who speak any number of languages: Somalian, French, English and Italian, to name a few.

**But there's more to inclusivity than language.**

Amina operates her home **child** care during non-traditional hours, including evenings and

weekends, thereby supporting families who require flexible schedules. Her breakfasts, lunches, and dinners are also inspired by a wide variety of cultures and cuisines. She cares for **children** of every age who have many different passions and interests.

Above all, in the true spirit of inclusivity, Amina instills in **children** the importance for them to "live life with a happy heart," "to care for each other and everything," and "to belong to one another."



## Our Educators *are accountable*

Early **Childhood** Educators are accountable to the **children** and families we serve. It is their job to ensure **children** in our care are nurtured and respected.

At Today's Family, we are accountable to many families, **children**, as well as municipal, provincial and federal government bodies that ensure we provide safe and responsible program experiences for **children**.

It just so happens that the best way to be accountable is to offer the best and most comprehensive early learning and **child** care that we can for **children** – in this way, we can meet and exceed expectations at every stage.





### We are accountable

...

Our educators' commitment to accountability ensures a nurturing and respectful environment, where every **child's** needs are met.







## Our Educators *listen*

To listen is to learn.

At Today's Family, **children's** opinions are sought out and valued, and educators give attention to what **children** think, say, and do. This creates an environment of respect where **children** are encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, or change their minds according to the insights they gain every day.

By listening closely, educators focus their attention on wondering with **children** about what they experience, think, and feel. This encourages **children** to make sense of their world, to learn and explore.

Educators see themselves as observers, listeners, partners, and provocateurs.

To stimulate learning, our educators build on the prior knowledge and beliefs of **children** and provide the communicative and practical skills as well as the concepts and knowledge systems **children** need to pursue activities related to their interests.

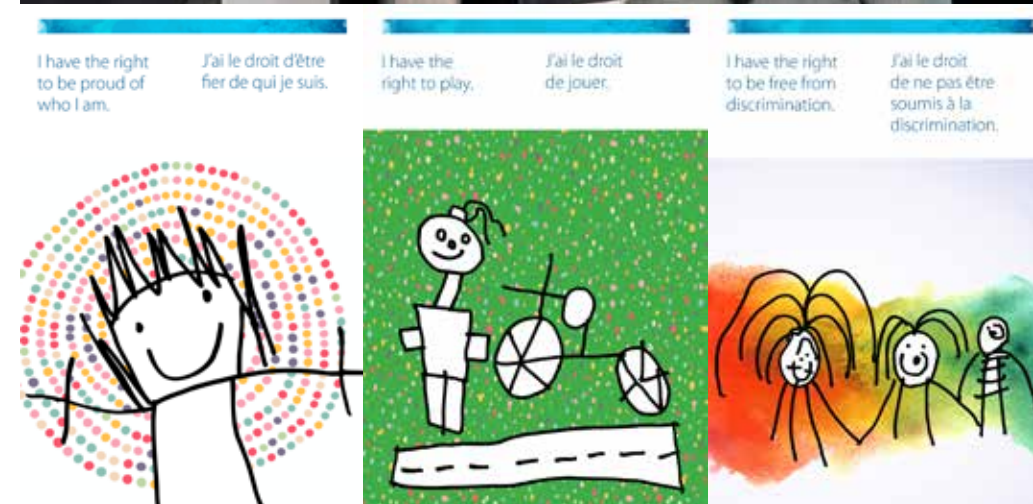


## Our Educators *even educate other Educators*

There's a special pride that one feels when your work as an educator is showcased and shared with others. Today's Family's Associate Director of Programs, Melissa Stenhouse, and Board Vice Chair and long-time community partner, Program Manager of Arts for All, Victoria Long, shared the value of bringing early arts integration into communities and conversation.

Melissa and Victoria reflected on many years community collaboration in integrating arts experiences and widening access of arts programming to **children**, youth, and families through the context of **children's** rights. In October 2023, they presented their findings at a provincial conference of the Home **Child** Care Association of Ontario, and in April 2024, presented at the World Forum Foundation's international conference on Early Learning and **Child** Care.

At Today's Family, we believe in the importance of sharing our collaborative model to build, strengthen, and shape our sector on an ongoing basis. What better way to commit to this practice than by bringing the voices of **children** and their families along with us every step of the way!







## Canada Summer Jobs 2023



**29 youth were hired** through Canada Summer Jobs program  
(17 returning / 12 new)



**7 constituencies served** by youth in Hamilton (Hamilton East, Hamilton Centre, Hamilton Mountain, Hamilton West/Ancaster/Dundas, Flamborough/Glanbrook); Halton (Oakville/North Burlington); and Haldimand-Norfolk.



After completing their Canada Summer Job placements,  
**10 youth accepted positions within the agency** ranging from casual supply to full-time based on their availability.

## What CSJ Youth did to augment our programs

**Camp Counsellors** worked alongside Today's Family Educators as they planned daily activities and games. Although often this is their first foray into employment, many of our camp counselors choose to make early **childhood** education a career path, continuing with us for years.

**Early Childhood Educators** supported our Early Learning & **Child** Care programs, EarlyON programs, and camp programs. Some of these youth are recent graduates who completed their field placements with Today's Family and have continued the path into full-time employment with us.

New to Today's Family, a **Digital Storyteller** captured the uniqueness of Licensed Home **Child** Care through a series of animated drawings of Amina which were featured earlier in this Report.

**Our Community Engagement Team** worked to enhance summer day camp programs and bolstered a number of community-led projects.

A **Nature Interpreter** took inspiration gained from their mornings at our Fieldcote EarlyON outdoor program and then transformed the community garden at our Greendale location.







## Message from Board Chair, Vice-Chair, and CEO

The role of a caring adult in the life of a **child** is significant. Many things are important during the earliest moments of a **child's** life: mastery, discovery, creativity, community, relationships, and opportunity to name a few.

It is the Early **Childhood** Educator who sets the stage for **children** to bring their most authentic, most full selves to the places of which they learn to play. Play is at the forefront of the unique partnership of an educator and a **child** – it is crafted with care, expanded, encouraged, adapted, and re-imagined during a **child's** early development.

**Play is not accidental;  
it does not occur by chance**

...

Access to meaningful opportunities for play helps to shape the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and language development of **children**.

Play acts as a vehicle for creativity and imagination to flourish that allows **children** to explore their interests, experiment with ideas, and invent new worlds of their very own. Facilitating and co-designing play with young **children** is an invaluable profession. It is through play that **children** learn about culture, community, and the world around them, motivated by world views and diversity that may not be their own.





Educators cultivate and strengthen empathy and contribute to kinder, more caring, inclusive, and welcoming places to be. It is the skills discovered and mastered in play that contribute toward a different, more vibrant and inclusive future for all.

By embracing and championing this degree of play, Early **Childhood** Educators enrich the lives of our **children**. In an emerging sector for early learning and **child** care, this gift given by educators is in great demand.

### **Our children need qualified, innovative, caring, and highly-skilled educators** • • •

Over the past year, we've been eager to advance the sector by professionalizing the educator workforce. We believe that our people are our greatest asset and without them we could not achieve our impact on the **children**, families, and communities we serve.

In 2020, our Board of Directors saw the then looming Canada-Wide Early Learning and **Child** Care Plan as an opportune time

in our history to invest in infrastructure and resources to best support the growth of our workforce – this was identified as the second key pillar in our current strategic plan “to invest in our people”. By investing in our people at the most strategic-level, meant that we could transform the reality experienced by our workforce and for the future of **children** who need them most. Whether advocating for better opportunities for educators, by working in meaningful partnership amongst all levels of government, or by sharing our collaborative model for system development, we have moved the mark to bring educators the opportunities and recognition that they deserve.

To us, it is about building a system that will bring positive benefits to all sectors, industries, families, and to those who commit to showing up with pride to call themselves an early **childhood** educator.

For our people across Today's Family, we've

committed to the growth of new roles and positions to better serve our organization – we've continued to grow our “Better Together” model by offering more full-time, continuous shift positions for our people. In alignment and support of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and **Child** Care Plan, as an organization we've committed to increasing compensation for staff in every position across the agency, because every one of our people play an important role in achieving our mission and vision for the future.

### **Raising the bar** • • •

With support from our municipal partners, we've committed to elevating the standard of professional learning for staff, educators, and home providers by devoting days for in-service learning focused on embracing the early years – these professional learning experiences bring educators and staff across





each of our municipalities together to share, learn, lead, and grow in new ways.

The investment in resources, professional learning, and compensation for our staff is not only a commitment to the well-being, attraction, and retention of qualified, highly-skilled educators to our sector and organization, but also increases the quality of experiences and opportunities for **children** to grow and thrive. There is a high return on this investment that can really only be best described and illustrated by the voices of **children** themselves.

On that note, 2023 saw the successful application of Today’s Family’s participation and presentation at the World Forum for Early Learning and **Child** Care in 2024 – an opportunity for Today’s Family and Arts For All to celebrate and share its long-standing efforts of partnership in integrating the arts into early **childhood** experiences through the context of neighbourhoods and **children’s** rights. This was an example of our model at work, co-designed in good partnership with the many voices of our **children**.

**Dream out LOUD**

• • •

Through our involvement with the Home **Child** Care Association of Ontario, we’ve begun to re-imagine what is needed to best support licensed home **child** care educators in offering unique, responsive, and flexible models of care to families during an emerging demand for care. In October 2023, we hosted over 250 home **child** care professionals and government partners to Hamilton to “Dream Out LOUD” for the future of home **child** care. Together with our partners, we’ve invested resources into bringing solutions to the table of funding conversations and decisions to better invest in a model for home **child** care that works for Ontario families but also for our licensed home educators who open their homes to play as independent contractors.

In 2023, we had the opportunity to work with Canada Summer Jobs youth to showcase the important and unique contributions of home educators with the illustration of “Meet Amina”. This series of illustrations captured the essence of care, flexibility, and diversity that is experienced within home **child** care – from home to home, each offering experiences that





are tailored to their environments, communities, and **children** and families in care. We believe that more people need to meet people like Amina to better understand the role and deep value of home **child** care.

**Advocating for licensed home **child** care**

• • •

Throughout 2023, Today's Family continued conversations with elected officials from all levels of government and invited them to participate in experiencing home **child** care through the eyes of the **children** and families of which they serve. We held the licensed model of care to the highest standard for early learning and **child** care and continue to ensure that it is at the centre of our advocacy efforts. It is licensed home **child** care providers who believe in achieving the very best for **children**.

**The year ahead**

• • •

The year that was does not compare to the year that is. If you've followed our journey or are joining us for the first time, you will know that we never stay in one place.

We are destined to chart the growth that is required by those who need us to always be becoming different. As we continue to grow in size (**child** care spaces), languages spoken, communities served, in experiences, in strategy, and in our vision for the future, our **children**, our families, and our people will remain as the very essence of our work.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team, we express gratitude to our partners, people, and families across Hamilton, Halton, Haldimand-Norfolk, and Oxford who believe in our purpose and who help us to build a system of early learning and **child** care for every **child**.

Andrew Welland  
Board Chair

Victoria Long  
Board Vice Chair

Brenda Ferguson  
Chief Executive Officer

**Child care for all**

At Today's Family, we believe that every family should have the option of safe, dependable, quality **child** care. We believe this not only for our own programs, but also for **child** care outside of our organization, all across Canada.

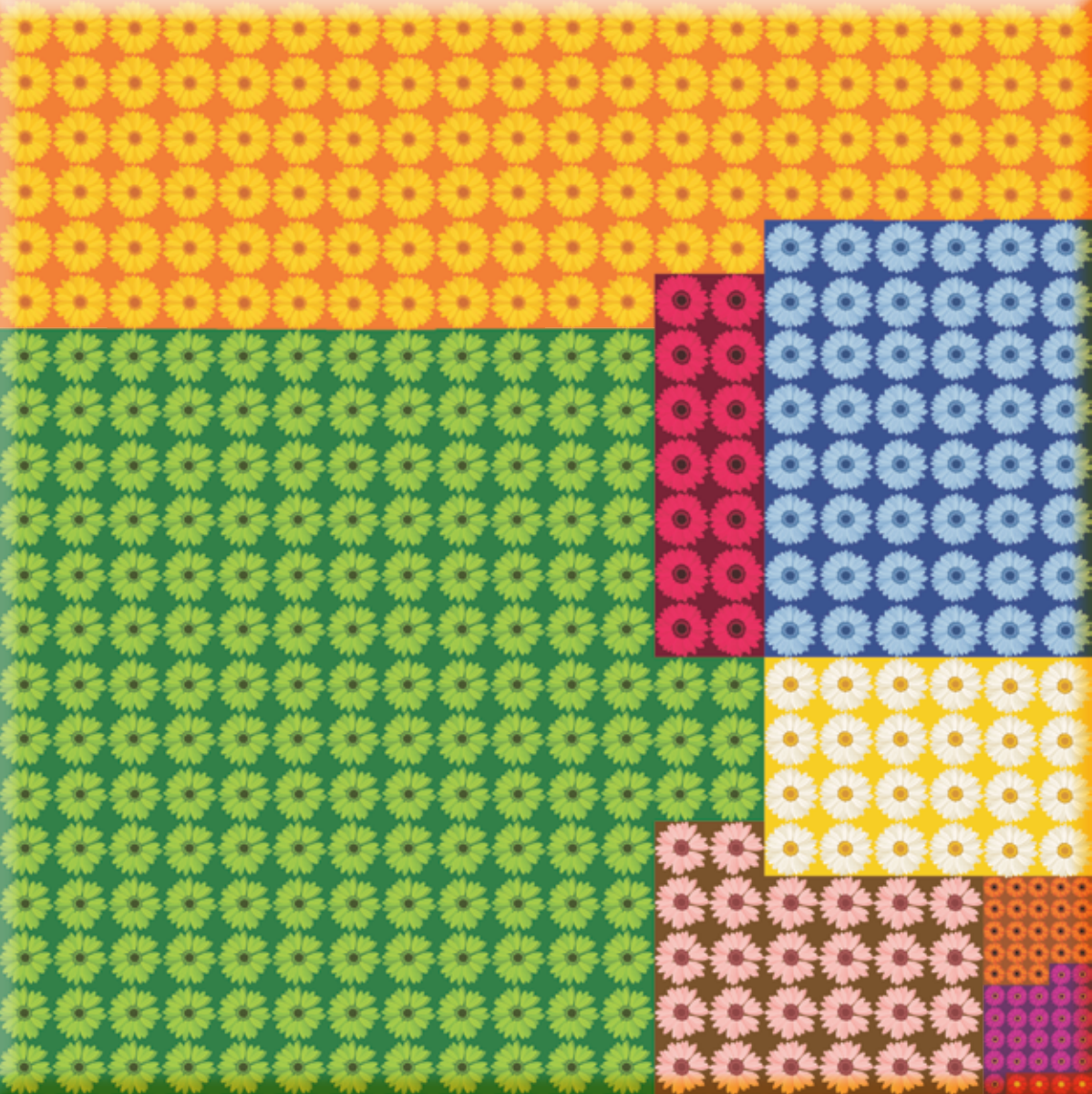
As Canadians, we take great pride in knowing that everyone has access to universal health care. Now imagine a Canada where every family has the right to accessible **child** care:

- Where we value and celebrate our Early **Childhood** Educators the way we applaud our health care providers.
- Where every **child** has the opportunity to benefit from early **childhood** education.
- Where **child** care is affordable for all, thereby empowering families the ability to make choices that are best for their **children**.

That is a Canada we are diligently working to create.
















# Financials

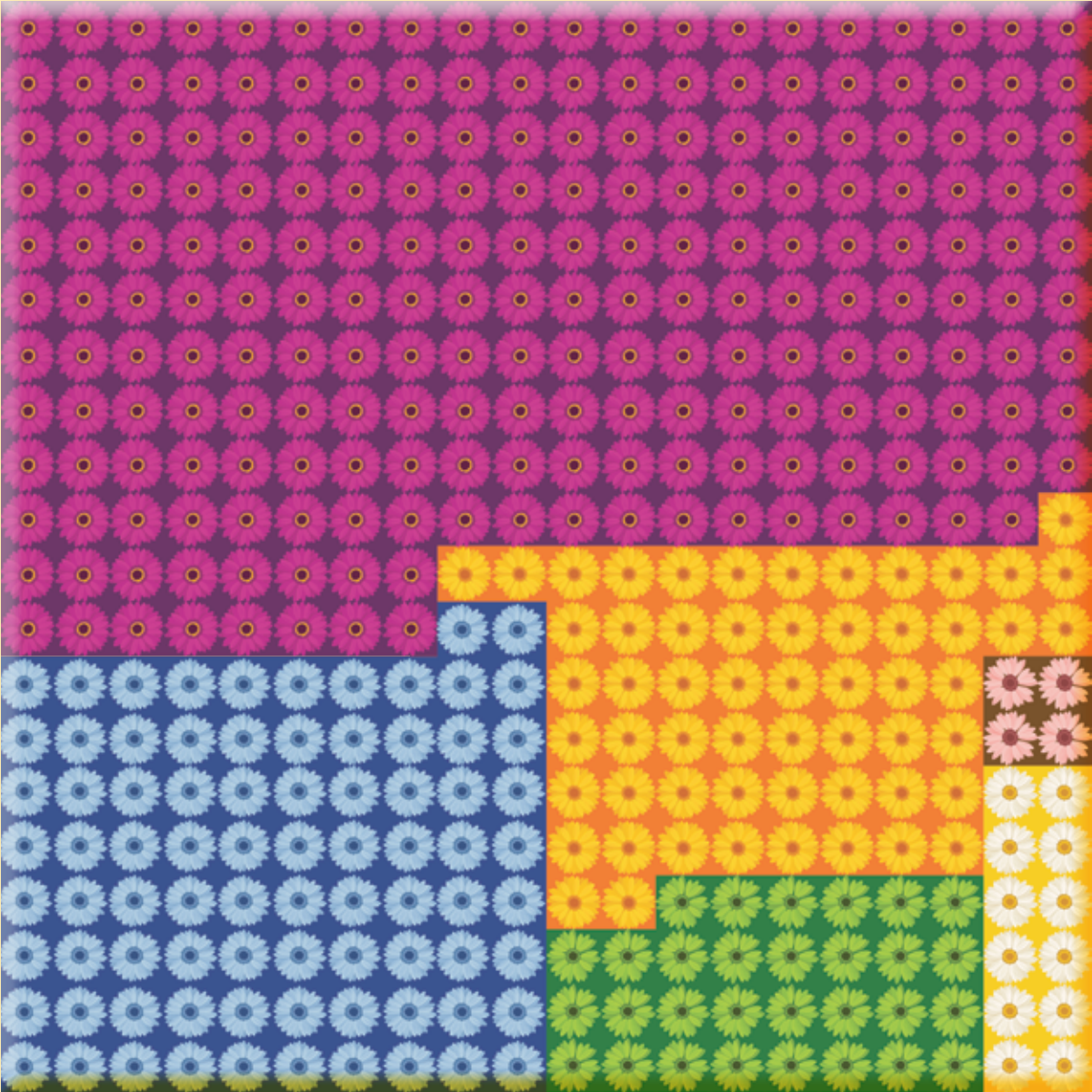
Year ended December 31, 2023  
Today's Family – Caring For Your **Child**

**Total Revenue of \$21,524,277**







**Sources:**

|   |                                     |                     |             |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
|    | A Subsidized <b>Child</b> Care Fees | \$ 5,672,731        | 26.36%      |
|    | B <b>Child</b> Care Fees            | 2,542,861           | 11.81%      |
|    | C City of Hamilton                  | 9,363,154           | 43.50%      |
|   | D Halton Region                     | 749,565             | 3.48%       |
|  | E Haldimand-Norfolk County          | 1,575,064           | 7.32%       |
|  | F Oxford County                     | 29,268              | 0.14%       |
|  | G EarlyON                           | 1,337,780           | 6.21%       |
|  | H Federal Government Assistance     | 127,167             | 0.59%       |
|  | I Other sources                     | 126,687             | 0.59%       |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>  |                                     | <b>\$21,524,277</b> | <b>100%</b> |





Uses:

|   |   |                     |             |
|---|---|---------------------|-------------|
|  | A Salaries and Benefits   | \$11,593,117        | 53.86%      |
|  | B Home <span style="color: orange;">Child</span> Care Providers | 4,414,209           | 20.51%      |
|  | C Program/Other costs   | 3,077,932           | 14.30%      |
|  | D Rent and Occupancy  | 608,349             | 2.83%       |
|  | E Amortization of Assets  | 218,299             | 1.01%       |
|  | F Surplus   | 1,612,371           | 7.49%       |
| <b>Total Uses</b>   |   | <b>\$21,524,277</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Copies of financial statements audited by Pettinelli, Mastroluisi LLP, Chartered Accountants are available through the Business Office of Today’s Family.

**Work and Family Connections**  
The Organization, which provides consultation in connection with family dependent care needs, was inactive throughout the year.









## Today's Family Early Learning and Child Care

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Hamilton: 905 574-9344

Halton: 289 288-0059

Haldimand-Norfolk: 1 844 574-9344

Oxford: 1 844 574-9344

**[todaysfamily.ca](http://todaysfamily.ca)**

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Charitable Registration Number: 0703553-01-14 April 1, 1985

**Writing, Design and Photography: WISHART by Banko Creative Studio**

Illustrations: Kento Cady, Today's Family Digital Storytelling and Community Engagement Facilitator

Many photos by Today's Family Early Childhood Educators, including: Kailey Bastarache, Cheyenne Deslaurier