

**eko**  
EMPOWERED KIDS  
ONTARIO

**eao**  
ENFANTS AVENIR  
ONTARIO

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



Dear Friends,

We're delighted to provide you with a snapshot of this year's activities and accomplishments, key deliverables, and Empowered Kids Ontario-Enfants Avenir Ontario's year-end review of our financial performance. In addition to marking the pivotal milestone of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this was the penultimate year for delivering on our strategic priorities to:

- Modernize the association so it can pursue its purpose and fulfill its potential
- Drive service quality, improvement and performance excellence
- Act as a collaborative, trusted advisor for partners and decision makers
- Bring together the people who can collectively improve and champion family-centred service
- Mobilize data, information and research into knowledge that is available to the sector

EKO's work engages many interdependent partners working together. For our Children's Treatment Centre members, and partners—government, child development and rehabilitation practitioners, community and healthcare organizations, researchers and leaders—EKO champions investments, policies and programs for kids with special needs and their families. This year we increased efforts to bring members, stakeholders and experts together to promote responsible, evidence-based system solutions.

The Board recently approved the budget for the coming year and EKO's operating plan for 2019/20 demonstrates our commitment to deliver on our strategic priorities, keeping pace with Ontario's transformation agenda while accelerating our actions to generate value and support our members. The modernization set out in our strategic plan outlines clear priorities and organizational mandates; EKO is a nimble organization and this allows us to engage with government in an ever-evolving environment, while also empowering members. As a member association, close collaboration is at the core of our success. We are committed to high value engagement with members, partners and stakeholders in every encounter.

We are proud of the association's accomplishments this year. In all that we do, we are committed to the responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. On behalf of our Board of Directors, we thank our members and our staff for their dedication to the delivery of high quality, timely and relevant services and resources. Building on our progress, we look forward to continuing to make a vital contribution so kids with disabilities and their families can live their best lives.

**Penny Smiley**  
Chair

**Jennifer Churchill**  
CEO

## READY FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

Dedicated to advancing the association's mission, Empowered Kids Ontario's strategic plan identifies activities to modernize the association. This year the association's membership ushered in a leaner, skills-based Board of Directors with a slate of both returning and new volunteers focused on effective governance of the association's operations, and achievement of its mission and vision.

EKO and its board took steps to create a culture that allows directors to work together to make the most effective decisions for the association and its members. Beginning with an orientation led by Rotman School of Management's Dr. Nouman Ashraf, an award-winning expert in Organizational Behaviour, directors focused on taking action to further the association's mission, helping the association and members adapt to changing circumstances, and identifying opportunities for growth.

### **EKO Board of Directors**

Chair: Penny Smiley  
Vice Chair: Tom Walters  
Secretary: Bridget Fewtrell  
Treasurer: Lois Oullette  
Leadership Council Chair: Susan Nall

### **Directors:**

Zoran Piljevic  
Susan Adamson  
Margaret van Beers  
Sacha Baharmand  
Elizabeth Haugh  
Paula Grail  
Colleen Fotheringham  
Paul Cantin  
Sara Pot

### **EKO Leadership Council**

Susan Mendelsohn, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario  
Donna Litwin-Makey, Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent  
Louise Paul, Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York  
Marie Rouleau, Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre  
Joanne Tramontini, Enfants NEO Kids Children's Treatment Centre, Health Sciences North  
Bridget Fewtrell, ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development  
Diane Pick, Five Counties Children's Centre  
Lorraine Sunstrum-Mann, Grandview Children's Centre  
Tina Bennett, George Jeffrey Children's Centre  
Lindsey Crawford, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital  
Elaine Whitmore, John McGivney Children's Centre  
Linda Kenny, KidsAbility Centre for Child Development  
Margaret Van Beers, KidsInclusive Centre for Child and Youth Development, Kingston Health Sciences Centre  
Rita-Marie Hadley, Lansdowne Children's Centre  
Oksana Fisher, Niagara Children's Centre  
Denis Filiatrault, One Kids Place/La place des enfants  
Jenny Greensmith, Pathways Health Centre for Children  
Margo Russell-Bird, Quinte Children's Treatment Centre  
Susan Nall, Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre  
Dr. John LaPorta/Jill Craven, Thames Valley Children's Treatment Centre  
Christianne Monico, THRIVE Child Development Centre

## **New Name, Same Dedication to Kids with Special Needs**

Marking our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the association introduced its new name and brand. Empowered Kids Ontario-Enfants Avenir Ontario speaks to who we are as a sector, what we do, and why this matters. The name was selected based on research that explored member, stakeholder, volunteer, parent and partner insights into the association, the key role our members play in child development and rehabilitation, and building on a culture of innovation that ensures ongoing exceptional service to kids with special needs and their families. The association and its members support the best in child development and rehabilitation through evidence-based and family-centred services that help kids with special needs and their families live their best lives. Our new name tells that story.



## Supporting policy development and system planning

### A Seamless System

Our relationships in the child development and rehabilitation sector are enhanced in part by communicating information that informs system planning. To support these efforts, EKO and its members develop approaches to ensure data provides complete analyses to influence good policy, assisting practitioners, system planners and sector stakeholders.

This year the government of Ontario took an important step toward seamless care for kids with disabilities by transitioning responsibility from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Transferring management of school-based rehabilitation service contracts from Local Health Integration Networks to Children's Treatment Centres is a step that removed delays in treatment and reduces costs to the health care system. With support from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, EKO offered a professional development and education program to assist all stakeholders through the transition.

EKO also worked with the Ministry of Labour to ensure refinements to the *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997* introduced with *Bill 100, Protecting What Matters Most (Budget Measures, 2019)*, enabled Children's Treatment Centres to continue implementing the government's direction without disruption. As a result, the new model is on time, effective for the start of the 2019/20 school year. This is an important first step in prioritizing, protecting and strengthening school rehabilitation services. This government decision is already realizing benefits for referral, discharge and billing processes, is giving direct service providers increased authority to make clinical decisions, and is maximizing public funds to best meet the goals of each child and family. With the transfer of management for these contracts, Ontario has already realized a cost-efficiency of \$10 million.

EKO is focused on our sector's capacity challenges and we are active in advocacy outreach with all three major parties. Our Government Relations Committee informs the advice we provide to advance a high-performing system and to shape EKO thought leadership in the longer term. Our pre-budget recommendations this year focus on system efficiencies. EKO's CEO met with ministry staff regarding the association's submission before presenting before the Pre-Budget consultations. Similarly, EKO's submissions to Ontario's Autism Advisory Panel focused on capacity building and cost-efficient service delivery while also addressing the challenging issue of wait lists for kids with autism and their families.

### Advocates for Kids & Families

Our advocacy strategies include centralized outreach at Queen's Park with government, opposition and critics as well as supporting our members at the local political level. This year we outlined an advocacy plan that includes engaging local community volunteers, parents, friends and partners. These approaches are tailored to reflect the interests of the new government, pressures faced by families, and opportunities to create efficiencies in the child development and rehabilitation sector.

EKO and several of the association's members are productive partners in proposals moving forward to create Ontario Health Teams. The association's relationships with partners in the healthcare sector emphasize system-wide solutions introduced with *Bill 74, the People's Health Care Act*, designed to deliver one of the most significant structural reforms for Ontario health service providers and partners.

### Protecting Health Information

As Health Information Custodians, the protection of personal health information and security of clients' records is paramount to our members. Unauthorized access to personal health information and cyber-attacks are growing concerns in health and community care. Over the past year, EKO has supported several members as they work towards improving information security and privacy protection practices. As we continue to identify opportunities to increase efficiencies and improve access to seamless services across the child development and rehabilitation system, the safeguarding of personal health information remains a priority.



## MOBILIZING INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Our comprehensive professional development and continuing education programs contribute to keeping Ontario's child development and rehabilitation workforce is up-to-date. EKO programs enable new evidence and changing practice by bringing the best of provincial and international researchers, clinicians and practitioners together—at our conference and other forums.

### 2018 Conference

Ontario's child development and rehabilitation workforce represents a multidisciplinary field spanning roles that include physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, audiologists, social workers, behaviour therapists, pediatricians, researchers, as well as other experts across the system. Sharing knowledge and skills development is essential to supporting and expanding front line staff and the sector. In our quest to contribute to this goal, EKO hosted its 2018 Conference, a two-day event that is considered the province's most comprehensive professional development program.

### We are grateful for support from the following sponsors of the 2018 Conference:

- Government of Ontario
- HMA The Benefits People, Platinum
- Miller Thomson, Gold
- Gluckstein Personal Injury Lawyers, Silver
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Bronze

The 2018 conference program drew more than 300 participants, 10 per cent of whom were parents and family members. The conference's program of presentations and workshops, kicked off with a keynote by bestselling author and CBC Radio Parenting Columnist Ann Douglas and closed with the panel, It's a Family Affair, exploring the experiences and challenges of fathers, mothers and siblings. The program allows for in-depth reflection, discussion, skill-building and networking, and attracted provincial government stakeholders, students, front-line allied health professionals, influencers, and child development executives.

### Collaboration

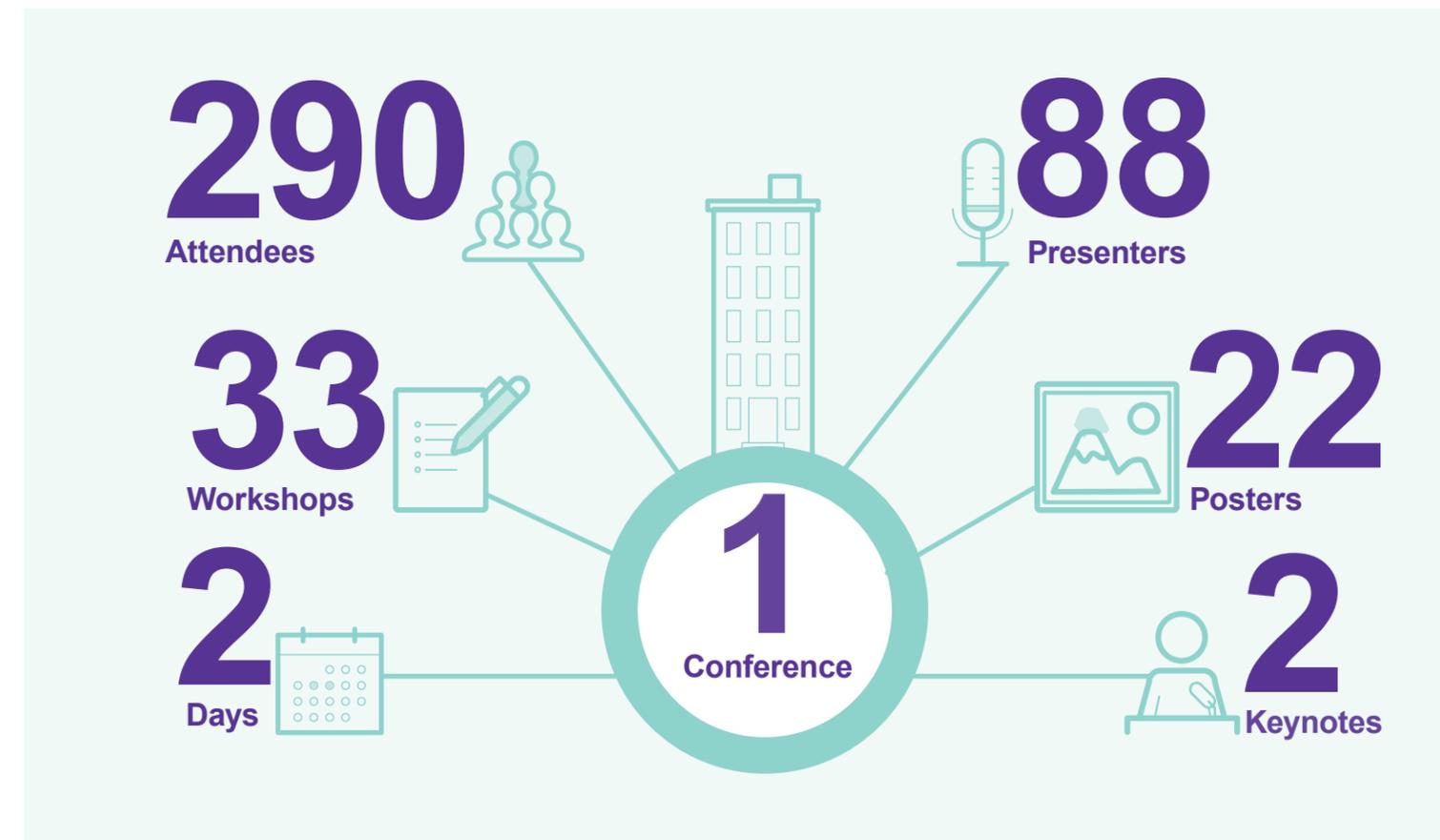
Opportunities for networking and collaboration across the province and the country are provided by EKO's Leadership Council—a forum of member organizations' CEOs that shares expertise and informs the association's outreach. Working groups including EKO's Clinical Services Network, Clinical Best Practice Group and Management Best Practice Group, collaborate and share information with the purpose of improving the quality, efficiency, consistency and effectiveness of care. In the past year, together with our members, EKO initiated communities of practice in the areas of Family-Centred Care and Solution-Focused Coaching. We look forward to the continued growth of these communities.

The association partners with provincial and national research and clinical networks, including Physicians in Ontario Neurodevelopmental Advocacy (PONDA), a volunteer network of physicians and psychologist advocating to optimize the well-

being of individuals with neurodevelopmental needs by promoting evidence-informed policy in systems of care; Solutions for Kids in Pain (SKIP), a national network to improve children's pain management; and CP-Net, a network of Cerebral Palsy organizations and researchers.

### Next Generation Learning Programs

EKO is reimagining next generation learning programs. This year EKO offered several new programs for sector leaders to support the building of system capacity.



In the fall of 2018, EKO welcomed members and their board representatives for the first of a two-part program on a vision for the future. A session led by EY Canada explored the firm's line-by-line review of government spending, *Managing Transformation – A Modernization Action Plan for Ontario*. This document is considered a roadmap for embracing innovation, and identifies a number of ways the government could transform programs and services to ensure sustainability and value for money.

A full-day session in the spring, led by KPMG partners, explored a vision for the future in a shifting operating environment that places the consumer at the centre of the system and changes the roles of the government and providers.

## SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION OF SCHOOL-BASED REHABILITATION



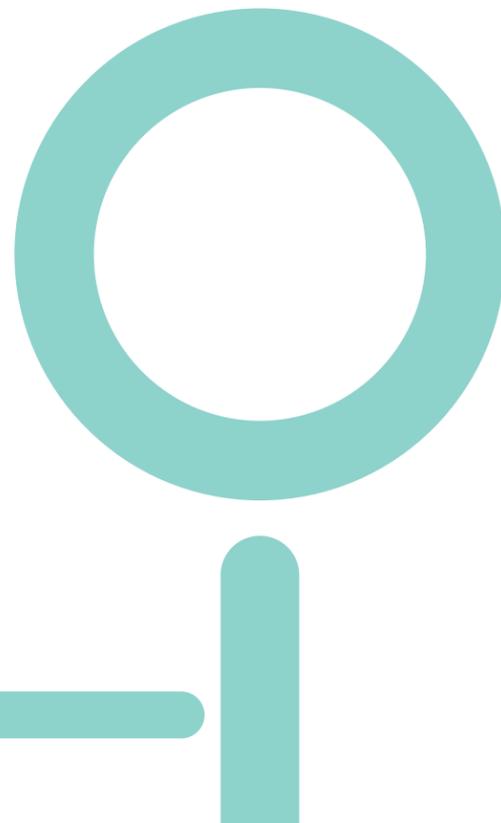
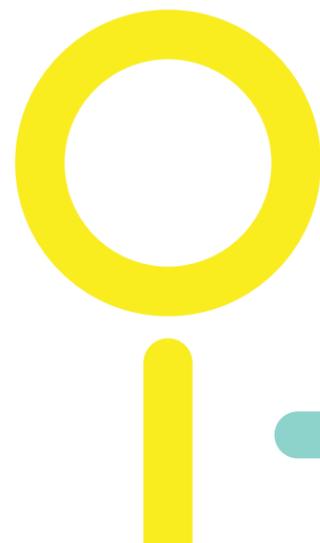
This fall, EKO launched a series of in-person and web-based programs on developing a socially-focused enterprise for EKO members and other publicly-supported children's service providers. This program addresses questions and new opportunities for agencies and their leaders to consider as the Ontario Autism Program moves to a more market-based system.

### Knowledge Generation

Research generates knowledge that has broad influence on practice, programs and policy to better serve Ontario kids with disabilities and their families. EKO supported CIHR grant proposals by scientists and research groups, including several Canada Research Chairs, at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, McMaster Children's Hospital, IWK Health Centre, SickKids, and McGill University. Through its membership,

EKO promoted opportunities for families to participate in studies, for example a study on the use of digital platforms by kids with disabilities being conducted by researchers at the University of Windsor.

The value of taking data and transforming it into meaningful and accessible information and knowledge is widely recognized. In the child development and rehabilitation sector, we aim to take this one step further to help us support evidence-based decisions.



### 2019 EKO Scholars

EKO awarded Empowered Kids Ontario Scholarship Awards to six students this year. The successful candidates, selected for their leadership skills, academic excellence and significant contributions to their communities are:



**Sydney Gillam**, Napanee. Sydney is studying Social Work at Algonquin College.



**Eric Morden**, Oakville. Eric is studying Biology at Carleton University.



**Bridget Steele**, Thunder Bay. Bridget is studying Office Administration at Confederation College.



**Brooke Connell**, London. Brooke is studying Business Management and Organizational Studies at King's University College.



**Julia Gaidychuk**, Whitby. Julia is studying English and Philosophy at McMaster University.



**Logan Wong**, Toronto. Logan is a fourth-year student in the Social Work Advanced Placement Stream at Ryerson University.

EKO typically awards five scholarships each year. This year a sixth award was funded by EKO members and staff as a tribute to sector leaders who have devoted their long careers to kids with special needs and their families. This award recognizes the many professional contributions of:

**Louise Paul**, Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe-York

**Jenny Greensmith**, Pathways Children's Health Centre, Sarnia

**Dr. John LaPorta**, Thames Valley Children's Centre, London

**Elaine Whitmore**, John McGivney Children's Centre, Windsor

### 2018 Tribute Awards

EKO Tribute Awards recognize colleagues who continually raise the bar for their clients, families and organizations, and shine a light on change makers who influence child development in Ontario. The awards acknowledge those who distinguish themselves at the very highest level, and who promote and enhance the sector through innovations and dedication to kids with special needs and their families.

#### 2018 Tribute Award of Excellence:

An internationally-recognized innovator and clinical authority, Dr. LaPorta nearly tripled Thames Valley Children's Centre's services in the region. Following the philosophy that clients and families are at the heart of all a Children's Treatment Centre does, under Dr. LaPorta's leadership Thames Valley Children's Centre was Ontario's first to establish a Client Advisory Committee.

#### 2018 Tribute Award: Partnership

Pathways Health Centre for Children, together with the Aamjiwnaang, Walpole Island, and Kettle & Stony Point First Nations worked to improve service delivery for children living in First Nations communities in Lambton County. With start-up funding from local industry partners Suncor Energy Inc., Esso Canada, Shell Canada Ltd., Nova Chemicals, and Arlanxeo, these partners successfully launched programs increasing access to community-driven developmental services, ensuring children and families receive service in appropriate settings, in their own language, and delivered with and by Indigenous therapists.

#### 2018 Tribute Award: Leadership

A co-founder of Waterloo Region Family Network and a driving force behind the many ways families are supported by the organization; Sue Simpson was instrumental in developing a community partnership model that connects directly to local agencies so families can receive the best direction and support possible. Under her leadership WRFN's family membership grew 60 per cent in just two years; the Network currently serves 1,600 families, connects with 115 community contacts and provides a range of valued programs and services. A mentor, parent, advisor and advocate, Sue is a resource and champion for parents in her community as well as for parent networks across the province.

#### 2018 Tribute Award: Advocacy

Job candidates with a disability often find they have to compete, and also educate employers about accommodations they may need. Kevin McShan has fought that fight himself and now he's doing the same for others, devoting his career to promoting equality and building awareness of the untapped market of skilled individuals with disabilities. Appointed by the province and by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce as an Ambassador for Access Talent in the Windsor-Essex region, he is rolling out the province's access talent strategy and the online DiscoverAbility network, a hub for employers seeking qualified job candidates. These initiatives aim to place candidates with disabilities in 56,000 jobs, reducing the unemployment rate for those with disabilities by 30 per cent in companies that have 20 or more employees.

#### 2018 Tribute Award: Advocacy

In the second year of a five-year campaign, Dear Everybody features young advocates taking a stand, letting the world know they are not defined by their disabilities. The campaign, an initiative of Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and its foundation, is a national movement in partnership with kids and youth, to raise awareness of disability stigma and designed to change perceptions, and more importantly get people to take action to create a more equitable society.

## THOUGHT LEADERS

When projects, policies and programs are put in place to support kids with disabilities and their families, EKO engages in efforts to answer questions about their efficiency and effectiveness so that those responsible for the programs can make informed decisions. The association often conducts assessments relating to the relevance, success and cost-effectiveness of programs, utilizing the most appropriate data-gathering tools and research methods, to strengthen the development of current and future programs. The association's engagement with the Ministry and with the Advisory Panel for the Ontario Autism Program is one example.

### Partnerships

As leaders in Ontario's child development and rehabilitation system, the association is often called on to collaborate both formally and informally with community and health partners including Children's Mental Health Ontario, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, and Home Care Ontario to name a few, as well as with government.

EKO is a partner with the Provincial Council for Maternal & Child Health (PCMCH), which provides leadership to ensure the best possible beginning for all. The Council works collaboratively to enhance access to, and the delivery and experience of secondary, tertiary and quaternary care for mothers and children in community and hospital settings, including responding to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Complex Care Kids Ontario is a PCMCH initiative in which EKO and several members are actively involved. This multi-year provincial strategy advances access to integrated medical care and coordination for children with the most complex chronic health needs and their families. Through this initiative, partnerships have been developed by the Children's Treatment Centre-Cochrane Temiskaming and CHEO, by McMaster Children's Hospital and Niagara Children's Centre, and by McMaster Children's Hospital and Lansdowne Children's Centre. These partnerships build capacity to support children with medical complexity in their communities, as close to home as possible, as well as support families navigating the health system, maximizing access to resources and services and proactively planning for and facilitating transitions including to adult services. A recent article in Longwoods Publishing's *Healthcare Quarterly* showcased this initiative and its hub-and-spoke model of inter-professional care.

### Building the Community of Care

The Ontario Paediatric Maternal-Child Think Tank is an informal group of leaders with responsibilities for primary and community care, home care, specialty acute and rehabilitation hospitals, child and youth mental health, and public health providers that convened for a limited time to collectively

discuss what the child-maternal health sector needs to do today and in the future to ensure services are optimally positioned and aligned to deliver the highest quality care. The think tank provided advice to Ministers of Health and Children, Community and Social Services regarding priorities within the government's new framework including recommendations regarding performance measures and key baseline needs to ensure progress during a time of change.

EKO CEO Jennifer Churchill is a partner, along with representatives of several member organizations, with the Nishnawbe Aski-Nation, working to develop a clinical mentorship initiative to support kids and families in their First Nations communities.

EKO also engages regularly with Children's Healthcare Canada, a national association that advances local improvements and system-wide change by building communities across the full continuum of care, accelerating excellence and innovation in health systems caring for children and youth.





### EKO's Digital Reach

EKO reactivated its social media platforms this year, affirming the new brand with a vision to connect and amplify the voices of leaders in child development and rehabilitation, and position the association as a thought leader and trusted source in this space. In the past year we have established:

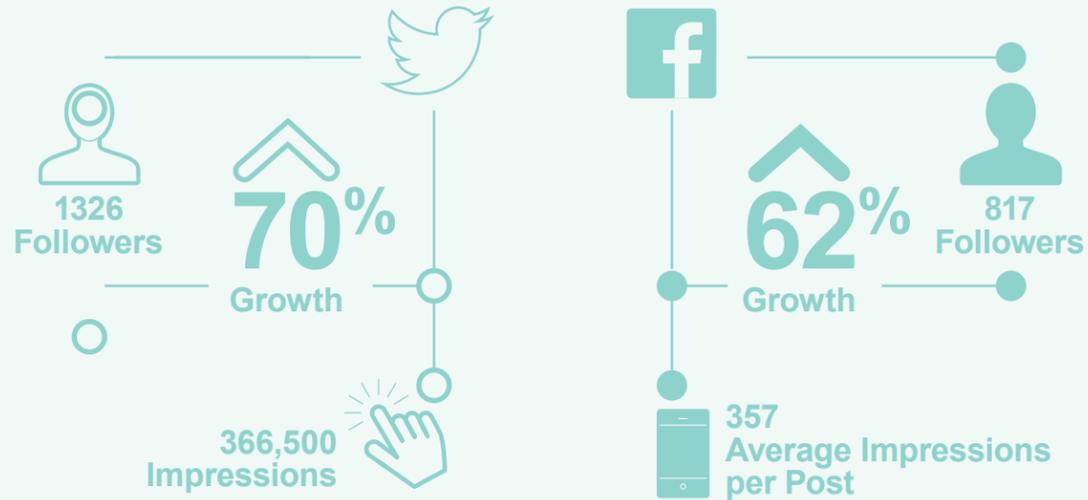
- A consistent voice, tone and reputation on our Twitter and Facebook platforms
- A social media daily practice, engaging/outreaching, sharing relevant and interesting content, and prioritizing and managing shareable content. Members frequently reach out to request or suggest content for EKO to share, and influencers engage with EKO and share our content.
- Steady month-over-month growth; Twitter followers grew by 70 per cent in less than 12 months achieving a total of 366,500 impressions, while Facebook page growth shows an increase of 62 per cent, with average posts reaching 357 viewers.

EKO's social followers engage most frequently with content regarding research, research partnerships and advancements in care and technology for those with disabilities; that showcases international human-interest stories; and with content that profiles kids with disabilities in Ontario and the member organizations that support their journeys.

Top followers are best grouped as health advocates and influencers, including physicians, practitioners, journalists, EKO members, and international health organizations and institutes; assistive technology developers; think tanks and government policy makers; and young adults with disabilities and their families.

### EKO SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE

#### Social channels

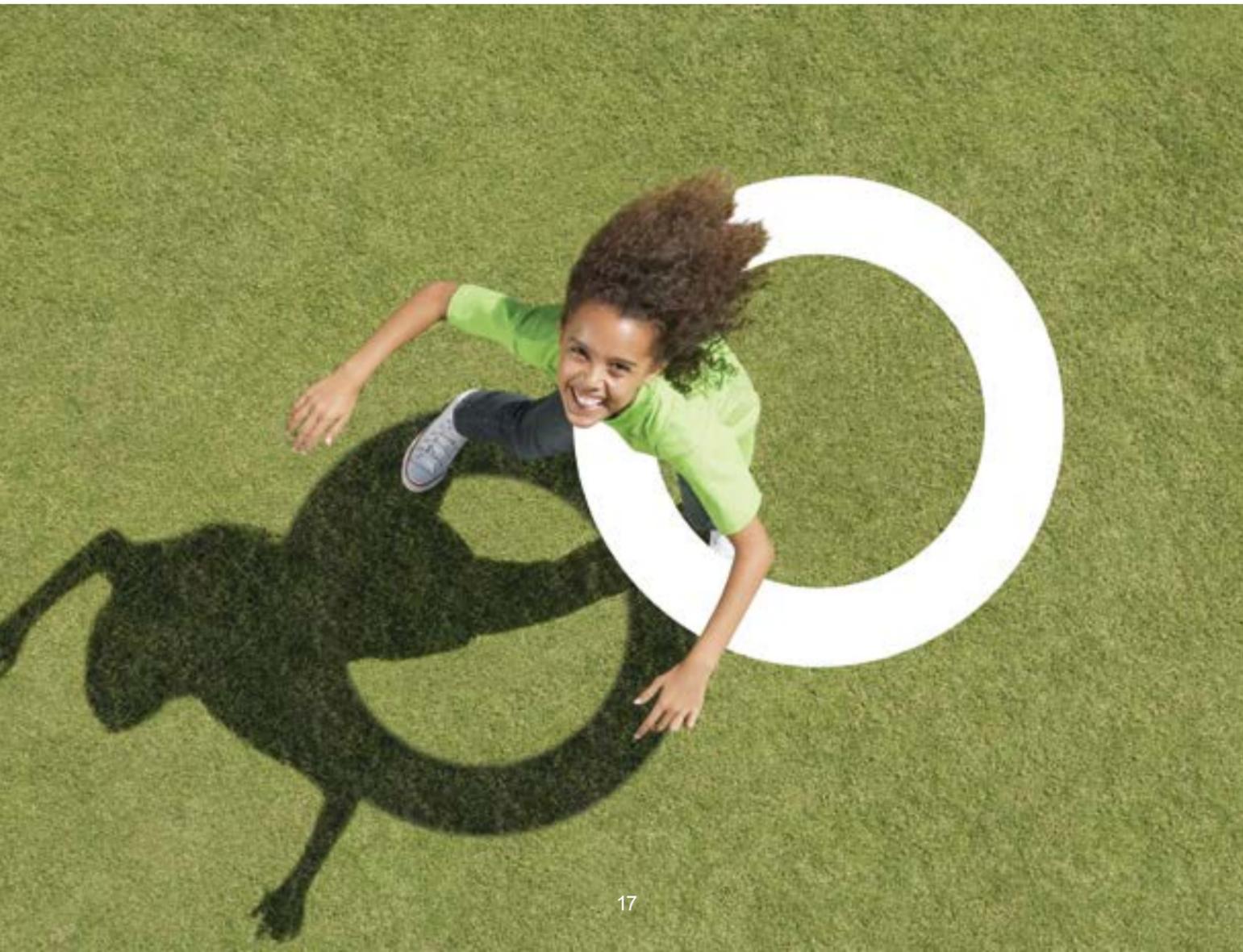


## AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

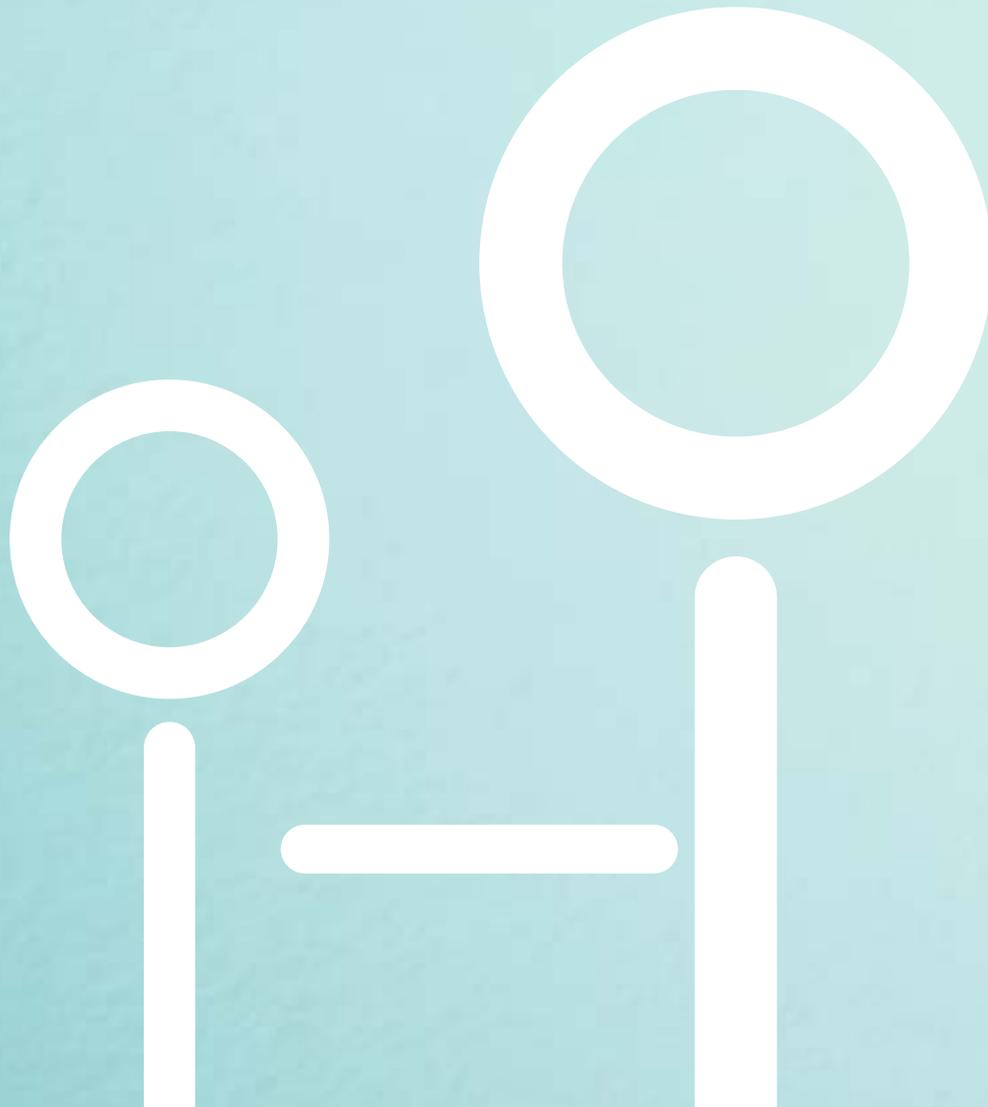
EKO has a responsibility to manage its resources in a prudent and careful manner. Funds provided by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services have allowed EKO to further develop programs in support of the sector.

EKO's Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its responsibility for financial reporting and internal control, and is ultimately responsible for reviewing and approving the financial

statements. The Board carries out this responsibility principally through its Finance Committee, which meets at least four times annually to review audited and unaudited financial information. Management acknowledges its responsibility to provide financial information that is representative of EKO operations, is consistent and reliable, and is relevant for the informed evaluation of EKO activities.



	2019	2018
<b>Restricted Contributions</b>		
Children's Rehab. Information Systems Project	\$515,762	\$530,074
IDRS Project	281,954	420,570
	<b>797,716</b>	950,644
<b>Restricted Expenses</b>		
Children's Rehab. Information Systems Project	515,762	530,074
IDRS Project	281,954	420,570
	<b>797,716</b>	950,644
<b>Excess restricted revenue over restricted expenses</b>	-	-
<b>Unrestricted Revenue</b>		
Membership Fees	529,018	399,944
EKO annual conference	143,098	153,527
Interest Income	14,654	8,299
Other revenue	684	442
Donations	-	290
	<b>687,454</b>	562,502
<b>Unrestricted Expenses</b>		
Salaries and benefits	351,997	180,036
EKO annual conference	159,624	156,487
Professional Fees	52,206	33,094
Marketing and Communications	41,519	17,643
Office	28,562	13,326
Travel	19,409	19,903
Committees	17,995	7,655
Board	16,403	1,473
Rent	11,397	11,350
Scholarship Awards	5,143	5,000
Professional Development	1,562	7,841
Amortization	350	582
Special Projects	-	64,468
	<b>706,467</b>	518,858
<b>(Deficiency) excess of unrestricted revenue over unrestricted expenses</b>	<b>(19,013)</b>	43,644
<b>Operating fund balance, beginning of year</b>	<b>615,739</b>	572,095
<b>Operating fund balance, end of year</b>	<b>\$596,726</b>	\$615,739



**eko**  
EMPOWERED KIDS  
ONTARIO

**eao**  
ENFANTS AVENIR  
ONTARIO

150 Kilgour Rd.  
Toronto, Ontario, M4G 1R8  
Phone: (416) 424-3864

