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EMPOWERED KIDS  
ONTARIO

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ENFANTS AVENIR  
ONTARIO

Annual Report 2019-2020



Empowered Kids Ontario-Enfants Avenir Ontario is a business name used by the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services

Friends and Colleagues,

This is the time of year where we take a moment to look back at where we are, what we've accomplished, and what's ahead.

It's been a year of transition—for our association and our sector. EKO member organizations assumed responsibility for School-based Rehabilitation Services, a move toward a more seamless service for families and more efficient treatment for kids. As Ontario prepares to join jurisdictions around the world, introducing approaches to child development programs and services that emphasize family choice, we engaged the province's publicly supported providers in an 11-month program that is building capacity, and developing social entrepreneurship across our sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed the world, and disproportionately for kids with disabilities and their families. The health emergency transformed how kids with disabilities and their families experience treatment, diagnosis, support and care. With safety always the top priority, our sector did what it does best, stepping up to the challenges of this complex environment. That ability to quickly adapt was evident as we expanded adoption of digital solutions, updated clinical requirements and centre infrastructure to enable in-person services, developed new models of service, and executed plans to welcome kids and families back confidently as we evolve to the new normal. Together we continue to grow relationships, launch novel service models, and foster innovation to improve care so kids with disabilities and their families can live their best lives.

In the upcoming year a new strategic plan will guide us as we build on our achievements. We've made enormous advances in a short time: modernizing the association; updating our by-laws; setting the stage to expand our membership and unite more voices; and always driving service excellence, mobilizing data, and serving as a trusted advisor. We are ready to embrace the future.

Reflecting on everything that happened this past year and all we've learned, brings an enhanced appreciation for our members and partners. For all who have contributed to our successes this past year, we thank you: our volunteer board directors, our sector leaders, clinical and administrative professionals, partners in research and advocacy, and everyone who contributes their incredible skills and expertise to bear for Ontario's kids with disabilities and their families. Your collective efforts will extend well into the future.

Sincerely,



Penny Smiley  
Chair



Jennifer Churchill  
CEO



## Leadership

### Board of Directors

Penny Smiley, Chair

Tom Walters, Vice Chair

Elizabeth Haugh, Secretary

Lois A. Ouellette, Treasurer

Susan Adamson

Sacha Baharmand

Paul Cantin

Colleen Fotheringham-Anderson

Lucia (Lucy) Goldberg

Warren Kennedy

Christina (Tina) Langlois

Zoran Piljevic

Sara Pot

Susan Nall

Jennifer Churchill (Ex-Officio)

# Key Milestones

## EKO Membership Expansion

The commitment to including a broader representation of Ontario's child development and rehabilitation sector in EKO's membership is priority for the organization and supported by our members. We thank the committee members who led this transformative effort over the past year:

### EKO Membership Implementation Committee

Elizabeth Haugh, Board Director and Committee Chair

Susan Adamson, Board Director

Oksana Fisher, Niagara Children's Centre

Tina Langlois, Board Director

Susan Mendelsohn, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

Marie Rouleau, Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre

Tom Walters, Vice-Chair, EKO Board of Directors

## School-based Rehabilitation Services

On January 1, 2020, 20 EKO members assumed direct responsibility for School-based Rehabilitation Services across the province, first managing wait lists and later in many regions, providing service directly. Parents and school boards supported the transition and the timing, saying that this was less disruptive since this occurred during the school year when classrooms and school teams remained consistent and kids were already well-settled into their school routine.

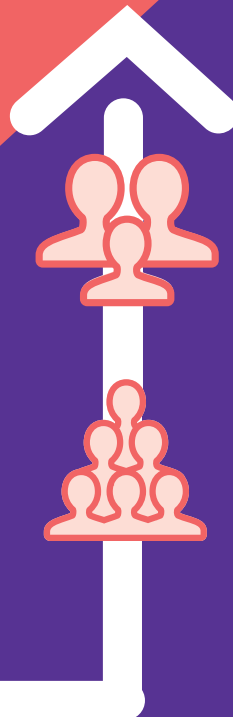


Since the transition:

**71,000**

kid s received occupational, physical and speech language therapy

**72** school boards



**Community Care**

**81,000**

kids and families served in communities

More than **30** participants services, clinics and programs provided in centres across Ontario

EKO members provide care in the community, in school, and at home. Community care can be in our member centres or through partner agencies.





## Virtual Care

As organizations assessed the virtual environment in the wake of COVID-19, EKO's comprehensive Virtual Care Guide presents information and resources, addressing questions from choosing a platform, to considerations for operations, engaging staff, and for some, supporting clients in new ways.



**257** unique registrants joined  
EKO's *Virtual Care Guide* webinar



**25** tools and templates are  
available in the *Virtual Care Guide*

The Guide set a standard in the not for profit sector, and has been shared with community partners as well as with the Ontario Nonprofit Network, representing Canada's largest nonprofit sector.

EKO also partnered with the Centre for Behaviour Health Sciences at Mackenzie Health to provide Telehealth training to develop staff competence and equip teams to make clinical decisions in this service model.



**2,280** clinical front-line staff  
participated in the training



**49** organizations from across Ontario  
were represented at the training

Participants reported a rise in comfort level with the video conference platform from 31% to 80%.

The Guide and accompanying Telehealth training proved to be game changers as organizations enable kids and families to stay connected with providers from a smartphone, tablet or laptop during the crisis and beyond.

## The New OAP

The new Ontario Autism Program will offer a range of services and interventions aligned with the Ontario Autism Program Advisory Panel recommendations, designed to respond to the individual needs of children and their families. In December Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, announced the Implementation Working Group, charged with providing to launch and operationalize the New OAP, and composed of research and clinical experts, service providers, self-advocates, and parents.

**6** of **13** Implementation Working Group members represent EKO member organizations

**3** of the **20** members of the Ontario Autism Program Advisory Panel represent EKO member organizations

## EKO Alumni

Our most senior volunteers carry a wealth of wisdom that benefits the association long after their service to the organization comes to an end and we hold them in high regard. This year we launched EKO Alumni, a vibrant community of former board directors, who have given their time to the association because of what our mission means to them. EKO Alumni are invited to continue their contribution through invitations to participate on committees, advisory groups, special projects, and as sounding boards.





## Building capacity

EKO offered a program to Ontario's publicly-supported children's service providers, designed to build sector capacity and engage a community of providers from across the province.



### Over the course of 11 months:

**47** publicly-supported organizations participated regularly in the program

**19** webinars and

**3** full day sessions

**62** hours of programming, provided guidance on legal matters, strategy, social entrepreneurship, communications, financial matters, governance, risk, and more and introduced:

**1,789** unique registrations

**66** tools and templates

We thank members of our Advisory Committee, who contributed to the development of this program:

Bob Burkholder, Kinark Child and Family Services

Andrea Telfer, Etobicoke Children's Centre

Darryl Nurse, Strides Toronto (formerly Aisling Discoveries)

Leona Olney, Geneva Centre for Autism

Jill Craven, Thames Valley Children's Centre

Karen Margallo, Ron Joyce Children's Centre, McMaster Children's Hospital

Sherry Fournier, Child & Community Resources

# Partnerships

EKO is a founding partner in this growing collective of children's health and social care providers, joined by:

- Ontario's 5 pediatric hospitals
  - McMaster Children's Hospital
  - Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
  - CHEO
  - SickKids
  - Children's Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre
- Children's Mental Health Ontario
- provincial and federal associations

The coalition's Kids in Crisis town hall galvanized attention, bringing together parents, patients, providers and decision-makers to share stories and talk about solutions, reaching key influencers, motivating concerned Ontarians, and drawing national attention to the issue.



**1,297** attendees



**12** news stories and 3 op-eds



**5 million**  
reached through social media



**4** points in the coalition's plan submitted to the Government of Ontario including:

**2-year** plan

**\$130 million/  
\$375 million**

earmarked for an additional 490,000 treatment visits in schools and in community centres, addressing the 80,000 kids and families waiting for care.





# Mobilizing Research and Best Practice

Globally, health systems are experiencing the challenges of improving the quality of care. The science and practice of knowledge translation – the process of putting knowledge into action – is essential if we are to reap the benefits of research, enhance our productivity, and improve the quality of life for kids with disabilities and their families.

EKO is regularly invited to support promising proposals by child development researchers from Ontario and across Canada seeking funding from Canada’s granting agencies. The association is pleased to support and engage in a range of successful research proposals, from the commercialization of a wearable technology approach to managing challenging behaviours in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, to exploring a multi-criterial decision analysis technique in health care delivery, to ENIVSAGE—an initiative that addresses the need to ensure patients, families and services providers work together toward treatment goals.

## Learning Conversations

EKO launched a pilot series, offering presentations by some of Ontario’s recognized experts in child development practice and research introducing front-line clinicians to the latest developments on topics from Early Detection of CP to Virtual Assessments for ASD.

**6** programs

**652** unique registrations



# Accolades

## EKO Scholars

This was a milestone year for the EKO Scholarship Program, the 10th year EKO is presenting awards to deserving youth from across the province, and the association presented its 51st scholarship. In their essays, our applicants describe routine, remarkable and sometimes challenging stories. Despite their different interests, academic pursuits and activities a consistent theme emerges: the strength and resilience of young Ontarians who establish personal goals, set high expectations and contribute positively to society.

Five honorees were selected for their demonstrated leadership, exceptional academic achievement, and engagement in their schools and in community activities. They are honour roll students, aspiring artists, sports fans mentors, musicians, and advocates who are changing people's perceptions about ability. Our 2020 EKO Scholars include an Easter Seals Ambassador, student council executives, a YouTube star and local badminton champion, a sledge hockey player who competed in the Durham Region Parasport Games, and the assistant captain of the championship-winning Ottawa Power Wheelchair Hockey League.

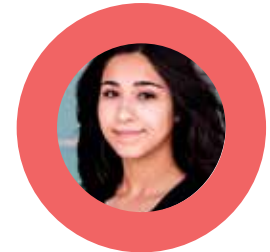
Each 2020 EKO Scholar serves their community, and Ontario, in the most outstanding manner.

All are attending college and university programs around the province, enrolled in programs for Public Relations & Strategic Communications, Human Resources Management, Art and Animation, Social Work, and Media Production.

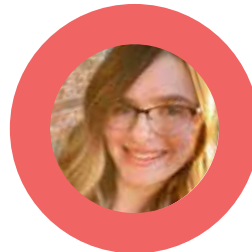
This year's EKO Scholars include:



Grace Kennedy, Caledon



Lina Elsaadi, Brantford



Hannah Walker, Whitby



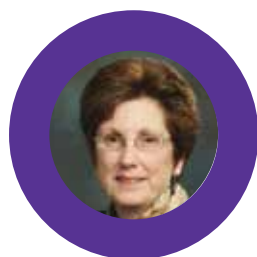
Kellen Schleyer, Ottawa

In addition to empowering Ontario youth who have benefitted from the services and supports provided by the province's child development and rehabilitation agencies, EKO hopes our scholarship program, which helps support higher education or career training, will decrease the unemployment bias for this demographic. We believe nothing should stand in the way of promising young people pursuing their higher education and career goals. We are honoured to recognize students with disabilities who have shown determination, self-advocacy, academic success and a commitment to their community, as they embark on this next phase of their lives.

## 2019 Tribute Award Recipients

Empowered Kids Ontario members play a vital role in advancing innovative best practices in service delivery for kids with disabilities and their families. This year EKO honours two individuals for outstanding and meaningful work that transformed system integration and family centred care.

The Tribute Awards, EKO's program of peer-nominated, board-selected awards have been recognizing achievement in child development and rehabilitation for almost a decade. The awards, announced at EKO's Annual General Meeting, are a way to learn from and aspire to best practices.



**Elaine Whitmore**  
**Tribute Award for Leadership**

Throughout Elaine's 17-years as CEO of John McGivney Children's Centre (JMCC), the centre responded to the needs of the Windsor-Essex community and significantly expanded its scope of services for a fast-growing number of children and families in a newly renovated, state-of-the-art, welcoming, fully accessible and family-friendly centre. Elaine has been a tireless advocate, ensuring families are at the centre of care, and Family Advisory Network members play an important role in centre decisions. JMCC achieved many milestones related to improved service delivery during Elaine's tenure, from its role as the provider of School-based Rehabilitation Services to expanding on-site clinics from London Health Sciences Centre to meet growing local needs for pediatric orthopedic, rheumatology and genetics expertise, and eliminating the need for families to travel outside Windsor-Essex for these services. Elaine is also a highly respected and involved member of the Windsor-Essex community, whose strong relationships with local system partners, decision-makers and influencers, including in the ever-growing technology sector, advance the sector, promote client independence, and improve quality of life and inclusion for kids with disabilities and their families.



**Adele Kirby**  
**Tribute Award for Partnership**

Collaboration is a way of life for Adele Kirby. Throughout her career at One Kids Place-La Place des Enfants (OKP) Adele practiced and nurtured partnerships with regional agencies and local providers, and with colleagues across Ontario. Her approach created interdisciplinary programs that are integral to the centre, inspirational to colleagues across the province, and that will impact communities for years to come. Adele founded the centre's office in Gravenhurst, and developed the strong programs for the communities of Muskoka and Parry Sound that are today the significant portion of OKP's services. Believing that partnership improves services for all, Adele worked with community organizations across Northern Ontario to create a family-centred service delivery system that benefits all kids with disabilities and their families, and enhances lives. She helped make OKP home for the Nipissing Association for Disabled Youth, the North Bay chapter of Autism Ontario, PLAYS, EarlyON, and the Section 23 Transition to School Program, and created unique models such as co-locating OKP's office with local service agencies, an approach that has been replicated by cities and towns across Ontario.

# Financial Performance

	2020	2019
<b>Restricted Contributions</b>		
Project Private Delivery	755,234	
Children's Rehab. Information Systems Project	588,598	515,762
IDRS Project	28,211	281,954
	<b>1,372,043</b>	<b>797,716</b>
<b>Restricted Expenses</b>		
Project Private Delivery	755,234	
Children's Rehab. Information Systems Project	588,598	515,762
IDRS Project	28,211	281,954
	<b>1,372,043</b>	<b>797,716</b>
<b>Excess restricted revenue over restricted expenses</b>	-	-
<b>Unrestricted Revenue</b>		
Membership Fees	574,596	529,018
EKO annual conference	707	143,098
Interest Income	22,346	14,654
Other revenue	13,095	684
Donations	810	-
	<b>611,554</b>	<b>687,454</b>
<b>Unrestricted Expenses</b>		
Salaries and benefits	262,894	351,997
EKO annual conference	26,935	159,624
Professional Fees	82,131	52,206
Marketing and Communications	25,250	41,519
Office	30,038	28,562
Travel	19,224	19,409
Committees	11,031	17,995
Board	20,524	16,403
Rent	11,397	11,397
Scholarship Awards	6,136	5,143
Professional Development	14,246	1,562
Amortization	227	350
Special Projects	-	-
	<b>510,105</b>	<b>706,467</b>
<b>(Deficiency) excess of unrestricted revenue over unrestricted expenses</b>	<b>101,449</b>	<b>(19,013)</b>
<b>Operating fund balance, beginning of year</b>	<b>596,726</b>	<b>615,739</b>
<b>Operating fund balance, end of year</b>	<b>698,175</b>	<b>\$596,726</b>



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