



FACS FOUNDATION

Supporting Families. Enriching Community.

2024-2025 Case for Support

facfoundation.org



WHO WE ARE

The Foundation is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to keeping children with their families in their communities.

Donations to the Foundation help to address the systemic inequities and root causes of harm, which have profound effects on family welfare, and ultimately on our community.

We do this by supporting programs and services delivered by Family & Children's Services, grassroots organizations, and community partners.

Together we are helping children and their families stay together and thrive!



THE PROBLEMS ARE COMPLEX

Research tells us that many factors contribute to family stress. These stressors can increase the risk of child abuse and neglect. **Often these risks result from system inequalities not individual choices or behaviours.**

RISK FACTORS INCLUDE:



Social isolation

Many families have limited support through family or community connections

Lack of income

Poverty amplifies many of the challenges children, youth, and families already face



Intergenerational Trauma

that remains unhealed due to a lack of money for treatment or cultural appropriate options

Safe and affordable housing

The lack of housing for families and youth is a crisis in this region.



Barriers to post-secondary education

Education is a key to interrupting cycles of poverty and abuse.

Limited access to the support families need.

Lack of transportation or financial resources are barriers to services.



Parenting children with complex needs

The stress of supporting children with little help.

THE SOLUTION? IT'S INTERCONNECTED.

Trying to solve systemic inequities with individual solutions doesn't make sense. Instead, we need to address the factors that increase the risks for child abuse and neglect.

Together we can have an impact that will transform individuals, organizations, and communities.



HOW WE DO IT:

The four pillars that guide our work



Addressing the impacts of poverty on children, youth, and families.



Building individual and community resilience



Centering equity in our funding and in our fundraising practices



Embracing innovation in social service program delivery and in philanthropy

Pillar One: Addressing the impacts of poverty on children, youth, and families.

Financial hardship and worry can make caring for yourself and others a real challenge. The emergency financial supports we provide help relieve some of the stress. These include the following:

Emergency Support for Families

Help is available when families need it most. This includes things like supplies to set-up a new home, a crib so a new parent can care safely for their baby, rent support, and counselling after a traumatic incident.



Emergency Support for Youth

When youth reach a certain age, they must leave the care and supports of child-welfare. Most will be starting out on their own, without a network to support them. This fund provides essentials for these youth. It is the safety net for the unexpected or when their limited resources don't cover their basic needs.



While focusing on the essentials that families, children, and youth need to remain safe and build resilience, it's important to also bring smiles as well!

Holiday Support:

We offer gift card support for families to purchase gifts or meals to celebrate a special holiday like Hanukkah, Ramadan, Eid, Christmas, Diwali, New Years and other festivities.

Smile Maker

This fund exists to make the wish of a child come true through the funding of a special "kid thing" like a school trip, a bike, or the perfect outfit for a special occasion.

GROWING UP, LEAVING CARE: SUPPORTING YOUTH INDEPENDENCE

Each year, as Youth reach a certain age, they must leave the care and supports of child-welfare and settle into independence. Most will be starting out on their own, without a support network, leaving them vulnerable. Almost 50% of these youth will experience homelessness, and most will face food insecurity. Supporting youth with essentials acts as a safety net when they encounter the unexpected or when their limited resources don't cover their basic needs. It is proof their community cares and they are not alone.

*"Celebrating your birthday should be filled with fun and good times. As the years go by and you get older, you watch your peers dream of university and college, think about part-time jobs, or travel and going out with friends... But for a young person aging out of Care, reaching these milestones means a whole different journey. Your dreams turn to worries and fears about "how will I pay for my apartment?" or "will I have a place to live?" and "how will I afford enough food to eat and how many jobs will I have to work just to make it by?" The family you have known – that has supported you your entire life – slowly slips away, as you reach what was supposed to be a magical age. **Because of the support youth receive, turning 21 is now something that I am not dreading.**"*



Vanessa



Pillar Two: Building individual and community resilience

Child and youth focused programming is the foundation of resilience-building opportunities. These programs aid children and youth to develop essential skills and participate in lifelong learning. This encourages personal growth and self-advocacy while allowing youth and children to thrive.

Educational Supports

Education is the most effective way to alleviate poverty. Our Book Worm Program and research project provides early literacy and numeracy skills to children in care. For older youth, the Foundation provides access to scholarships to help cover the costs of a post-secondary education at university or college or apprenticeship/trade programs.

Summer Camp - Letting kids just be kids

Camp offers kids an opportunity to just be kids and provides a meaningful break for their families. They can step outside of their everyday lives and stressors and experience new adventures and possibilities, build positive relationships, learn valuable leadership skills, and make memories that can last a lifetime! .

Better Futures

Outside of summer camp, the Better Futures Fund supports year-round recreational opportunities. It gives kids an opportunity to try a new activity and uncover a new passion, or to reach the next level in their chosen art, sport or recreational activity. Exposure to these activities builds confidence, improves interpersonal skills, and develops a strong sense of self-worth.

The Resilience Project

The Resilience Project is a collaborative initiative among 14 partner organizations. It focuses on cultivating collective resilience to support healing, build social connections, and prevent child maltreatment. The Foundation supports the development and organizational resilience of grassroots, community led organizations in the project. The goal is to shift the focus from “child protection” to moving resources into the community and “prevention.”

KIDS BEING KIDS: THE IMPACT OF SUMMER CAMP

"The pandemic was hard on our family, especially Simon. He was stuck at home and bored, and we were struggling with his challenging behaviour. Having the opportunity to send him to summer camp was such a help. This new experience, thanks to generous donors, meant Simon could attend a local horse camp. He learned how to take care of and ride the horses which really helped his confidence. He loved his horse, Queen, and the barn cats, too. The relationships he built with the animals were so special, and he even made a new friend his age. Going to camp turned our summer into a positive and fun time for our family."

Simon's mom



In 2023, generous community support provided summer camp opportunities for 159 children and youth at 51 different summer camps!

The average cost for sending one child to camp for a week has increased from \$325 to \$350. Additionally, with current economic conditions, we anticipate the need for assistance to be even greater.

in 2024-2025, we need to raise funds for 300 kids to go to camp!



Pillar Three:

Centering equity in our funding and in our fundraising practices

FACS Foundation provides grants and seeks funding for grassroots and emerging community organizations in Waterloo Region that are frequently led by racialized and marginalized groups. These groups are addressing issues within their own communities and the broader communities. The Foundation also provides grant writing support for organizations and programs that are tackling root cause issues of child abuse and neglect.

Community Support Fund

As part of the Foundation's commitment to addressing inequities in our community and in funding, we partner with grassroots organizations to write or sponsor grants that fund programs and services for equity deserving groups. This helps to reallocate resources and provide greater access to culturally relevant services that otherwise may not be available to organizations without charitable status.

Truth & Reconciliation Fund and the Out of Many, One People Fund

The Truth and Reconciliation and Out of Many, One People Funds support efforts aimed at addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black children, youth, and families in the child welfare system. The funds provide access to programs, services, training, and resources that promote personal growth for members of those groups. These funds encourage active participation and pride in their communities through opportunities to reconnect to their culture, language, and community, which are vital to healing the intergenerational trauma resulting from the residential school system and child welfare systems.

Interrupting Intergenerational Trauma

The Foundation funds a number of projects, like Trusting Loving Connections, Ujima, and the Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, aimed at addressing intergenerational, historical, and racial trauma. The purpose is to help parents heal and understand the impact their trauma has on their children and their parenting. As well, helping children heal prevents them from passing their trauma on to future generations.

HELPING FAMILIES FIND THEIR WAY: SYSTEM NAVIGATORS SUPPORT INCLUSION

Fadhwa Yusuf, a System Navigator with African Family Revival Organization (AFRO) had been supporting a grandmother and her four grandchildren for almost 5 years when, unexpectedly, the grandmother passed away. The four grandchildren aged 9, 13, 15, and 22 were suddenly left without a caregiver and were in imminent risk of losing their housing. AFRO was able to work with Family & Children's Services staff from the Harambee team to help advocate with Regional Housing to keep them from eviction. Thanks to Fadhwa's navigating of various systems including Housing and ODSP, the children were able to stay together and support their late Grandmother's sister to move into the house with two additional grandchildren she was raising. Now the family is together, and the kids did not have to lose their home on top of the loss of their grandma. We have more work to do to help their Great Aunt secure legal custody of the children and to help them re-gain their housing subsidy, but this felt like a huge success!



In addition to system navigation support, the Foundation funds grassroots organizations in Waterloo Region that are working directly with members of their community. Last year, we worked with 40 programs that addressed the impact of trauma in their communities while building resilience.

Pillar Four: Embracing innovation in social service program delivery and in philanthropy

Identifying gaps in services allows for the development of solutions that improve programming for children and families involved with child welfare. The Foundation funds research and development that prioritizes collaboration and creative thinking to create evidence-based solutions that make an impact.

Research and Evaluation

The Foundation supports research and evaluation conducted by the research department at Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region' (FACS Waterloo) and community and academic partners. The aim is to better understand the risk factors that bring families into the child welfare system and to find intervention programs and services that meet their needs.

The Foundation also looks for existing evidence-informed programs that appropriately address the gaps in service and when found, we fund the piloting of the program and ensure research or evaluation is conducted to assess whether the program meets the need and improves outcomes for children, youth and families.



RESEARCH IN ACTION: TRUSTING LOVING CONNECTIONS

When no appropriate program exists to meet the needs of the families we serve, we fund FACS Waterloo's research department and/or academic partners to develop a program that meets the service need. Once developed, we support the piloting of the program and the evaluation of the results to see if they meet the intended outcomes.

The Trusting Loving Connections (TLC) Program is the result of one of these partnerships. The program helps parents understand their own trauma history and its impact on their children. Moreover, the program assists with building their parenting skills, developing their strengths and creating more consistent connections and attuned responses during stressful interactions with their families, keeping their children safe and well.



Our research on TLC is the first to provide evidence for the effectiveness of a parenting program designed specifically to address the trauma and attachment needs of parents and children in the child welfare system.

Findings included:

- significant improvements in parenting capacity, parental behaviour and practices, and parental perceptions of their children's behaviour.
- parents reported that they felt more confident and competent parenting and found parenting more enjoyable.

PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND BUILDING COMMUNITY. WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

DONATE

Whether monthly, annually, in honour, or a gift of securities, your support will prevent child abuse and neglect, supporting families while building community. For more info email Jennifer.Utting@facswaterloo.org

FUNDRAISE

Host an event with friends, family, neighbours or classmates! We will give you everything you need to put the FUN in fundraising! Email Jullie.Pfeffer@facswaterloo.org and get started!

GIVE@WORK

Looking for a team-building opportunity or a way to support your CSR objectives? Hosting a wish list or gift card drive or setting up employee giving and a corporate match are just some of the ways you can make a difference. Contact Jullie.Pfeffer@facswaterloo.org for details.

VOLUNTEER

The gift of time is welcome. The Foundation has some seasonal volunteer opportunities but Family & Children's Services is often looking for drivers, mentors, and other roles. To learn more, email foundation@facswaterloo.org.



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