



Centennial  
Infant and  
Child Centre  
Foundation

# Annual Report

2024 - 2025



*Centennial Infant and Child Centre  
strengthens families and their young  
children with special needs to  
develop the confidence and skills for  
the best start in life.*





Centennial  
Infant and  
Child Centre  
Foundation

## VISION

**The creation of a diverse community of support that gives children with disabilities what they need to build a bright future.**

## MISSION

**Empowered by the generosity of our donors, The Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation advances a child's early development by investing in Centennial Infant and Child Centre's programs, services and capital needs.**

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**At Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation, we acknowledge that the land on which we work is the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. Our community is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and recognizes the enduring presence of Indigenous People on this land. We offer our gratitude to our First Nations for their care and teachings about our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.**



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CDO AND BOARD CHAIR

We have been in transition this past year at CICC Foundation. Throughout this transition, we remain dedicated to our mission to support Centennial Infant and Child Centre (CICC) and their specialized programming. Our partnership powers CICC's ongoing commitment to a measurable, meaningful, lifelong impact for CICC children and families.

This year, we took time to review our administrative needs as we refined our organizational strategy.

At the start of the year, we set out to raise awareness and mobilize our community by sharing impact stories of our team, volunteers, and families via social media and email campaigns. Thanks to the incredible dedication of everyone who chose to support us financially, donations increased by 70% this year – further closing the gap between our government funding and what we need to succeed.

## Through the support of CICC Foundation:

- Our Hospital to Home network was expanded to serve families at St. Michael's Hospital while continuing our unique program at Sunnybrook Hospital: Real Growth.
- A building assessment was completed and shared with both the Centre and Foundation Boards. The renovation and expansion of our existing building was recommended instead of relocation.
- Our Early Intervention team partnered with close to 400 families, providing customized programs and services to give families and their young children with special needs the best start in life.
- Our Integrated Preschool program supported 18 children to graduation, who are now ready to move forward steadily and on a successful trajectory to their next school.

We are grateful to each of our supporters. Thank you to our donors for believing in our mission and putting your trust in our work. Thank you to our CICC and CICC Foundation volunteers for giving of yourselves daily. Thank you to our funders and partners for working with us toward real solutions. Together, we are changing the lives of children with disabilities and their families.



*Melissa Syme*

Melissa Syme,  
Chief Development Officer



*Matthew Lee*

Matthew Lee,  
Board Chair



# FACTS AND FIGURES

## EARLY INTERVENTION: OUR REACH

389

Infants and Children  
Served (November  
2023-November 2024)

1729

Visits from our EI  
team (April 2024 –  
March 2025)

364

Referrals to Early  
Intervention  
(April 2024 – March  
2025)

40+

Referral Services

137

Children waiting for  
EI service

## INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL: OUR REACH

### 40 volunteers

in the classroom throughout the year providing 1:1 support to each child

### 43 children

with special needs currently enrolled in CICC's Integrated Preschool Program

### 18 children

graduated in June 2025

### 50+ placement students

in preschool including CDA and ECEs

**7 Path Forward  
Classroom Assistants**  
employment for adults with special needs



## EARLY INTERVENTION



The Early Intervention Program is a home-visiting service supporting families whose babies and young children are experiencing, or are at risk for, delays in two or more areas of development. These delays may be related to factors such as prenatal/perinatal complications, premature birth, genetic/chromosomal conditions, neurological/sensory differences, global delays, or prenatal exposure to harmful substances.

Designed for children before daycare, preschool, or kindergarten, the program brings expert support directly into the home. CICC's Early Childhood Interventionists and Occupational Therapy Consultants work alongside parents and caregivers, offering hands-on coaching, personalized strategies, and connections to community programs that strengthen all areas of development: gross and fine motor skills, social and emotional growth, language and cognitive abilities, and self-help skills.

**Highly regarded, the Early Intervention Program serves approximately 400 Toronto families each year. Home-based, family-led, and expert-supported, CICC's Early Intervention program equips parents and caregivers with the skills, confidence, and resources to optimize their child's developmental trajectory, helping them thrive from the start.**



# THROUGH A MOTHER'S EYES: Her journey with CICC's Early Intervention Program

Melissa and Manuel Castro were introduced to CICC when **Josh**, their son with special needs, was diagnosed with RSV.

**“ I was entirely overwhelmed. I did not know what to do...**

*The Early Intervention program had a huge impact on my life as a parent...it offered me not only resources, but even more importantly, a truly supportive team who guided us every step of the way. At first, my hope was pretty simple – I just wanted to understand what was going on with my child and to get help.*





*I was scared and overwhelmed, and honestly, I just wanted things to be 'normal' again. But as we went through Early Intervention, my perspective changed. I started celebrating progress in new ways — not comparing my child to others, but seeing their unique strengths. Now, my hopes and dreams are for my child to feel confident and included. I dream of a world where differences are accepted, and support is just a part of the journey, not a setback. And for myself, I've found a voice I didn't know I had — I want to keep advocating for my child and for others like them.*

”



ST. MICHAEL'S  
UNITY HEALTH TORONTO

**H2H  
EXPANSION**



Hospital-to-Home (H2H) is a groundbreaking earlier intervention model starting right in the NICU. CICC's Early Childhood Interventionists build trust with parents while their baby is still in the hospital, offering moral support, reassurance, and expert guidance in infant development. This continues after discharge, creating a relationship-based bridge so families know they're not alone and won't be.

With generous support from the Aubrey & Marla Dan Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we are expanding H2H from Sunnybrook to St. Michael's Hospital. This means we are reaching more families, expanding the population of infants we serve, and proving the power of earlier intervention; we're not just filling a gap, we're changing care and changing lives.

Over the past year, CICC has worked hand-in-hand with the St. Michael's NICU team to adapt the existing H2H model to the unique context of its Level 2 NICU and diverse patient population, paving the way for a late-2025 program expansion.



**“ It is both inspiring and a privilege to partner with H2H, in collaboration with Centennial Early Intervention and under the exceptional leadership of Lorraine, to develop a Hospital-to-Home program tailored to the unique needs of NICU families at Unity Health Toronto, St. Michael's.**

*As the program launches, we look forward with great anticipation to the positive impact it will have in supporting families through the transition home, fostering empowerment, care, and confidence. ,,*

Karen Carlyle, NP-Pediatrics, MN, NNP-BC  
NICU, Unity Health Toronto, St. Michael's  
Adjunct Lecturer, University of Toronto, Faculty of Nursing

# IMPACT GENOME 2024 – “VERY EXTENSIVE” FOR THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CONSECUTIVE YEAR!



The Impact Genome Registry™ is the world's leading evidence-based reporting platform used to standardize, verify, and benchmark social impact.

For a second consecutive year, the Impact Genome Registry™ awarded H2H the highest possible rating.

H2H remains among the exclusive 1% of IG programs within the same genome that achieved such a remarkable level of impact.

**2023 Very Extensive**

**2024 Very Extensive**

**IMPACT VERIFIED®**

**Impact Genome® Assessment:**  
Overall assessment, based on rigor, relevance, and validity of evidence provided

**Very Extensive (1%)**

Extensive (37%)

Moderate (61%)

Limited (1%)

Percentage of IG programs in the same genome

Rigor (4/5) Quality of data collection method

Relevance (5/5) Fit of measure(s) to the outcome

Validity (5/5) Quality of instruments used

**IMPACT GENOME REGISTRY**

**Centennial Infant and Child Centre**

**Sunnybrook**  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE  
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

**AUBREY & MARLA DAN FOUNDATION**



**“ I would absolutely recommend the H2H program to other parents and professionals. The support we received was exceptional. They provided not just information, but true emotional support, which made a huge difference during a very overwhelming time. Every family going through a similar journey should have access to this kind of care and guidance.**

**– H2H Parent**

**99**

# THE DAC FOUNDATION AND THE LEGACY OF CHRISTIE CASS

Since 2002, the CICC Foundation has been supported by the DAC Foundation for People with Special Needs. By investing time, energy, and money, the DAC Foundation and the Cass family have played an integral role in the growth and success of CICC programs, helping us fulfill our mission of "Building Futures, Changing Lives and Strengthening Families at CICC."



## The Spirit of Christie Cass

The foundation of this partnership is rooted in decades of personal commitment, exemplified by Christie Cass, a CICC community champion and disability advocate. Christie was one of our foundational volunteers for over 20 years, fully "embedded in all of the work at CICC." She provided one-to-one support at the Centre and served as a member of our Early Intervention team, supporting families in their own homes.

Christie's dedication led to the "warm hug" atmosphere at CICC and her presence is still recognized by long-term team members.

Jean Holme, another longtime CICC volunteer, recounts that "Christie was an active member of our CICC community and very involved in our Ladies' Golf Tournament, as well as a committee member, and I recall golfing with her in a foursome one year."

Christie was extremely reliable, supportive, involved and really a pillar of the school."

# THE DAC FOUNDATION cont.

## A CICC Community Trailblazer

The impact of the DAC Foundation extends into the current CICC community through David Cass, an alumnus and community trailblazer. From his early days as a preschooler in CICC's specialized program, David returned years later as a Classroom Assistant, bringing his signature joy and kindness into every space.



Lorraine Chiarotto, Manager of Infant and Child Development Programs at CICC, recalls the honour of teaching in David's classroom: "he kept the room tidy, the teachers supported, and the children smiling; greeting every child and adult with affection and presence. That sense of welcome — pure and unteachable — is David's gift."

## the Heartbeat of the Community

David's personal warmth extended into his community work, particularly as a member of the Down Syndrome Network. Lorraine first met David on his front step, where he greeted her with a warmth that "instantly melted away any uncertainty felt. 'Hi! What's your name? I'm so glad you're here. Come in, come in!' David beamed." His home became the heartbeat of the group's monthly gatherings, filled with friendship and connection. Living in a supported independent arrangement, "David's House" became more than a location — it was a symbol of independence, friendship, and belonging. Outside of CICC, David worked as an Equipment Assistant with the Toronto Argonauts, where former coach Michael "Pinball" Clemons nicknamed him "Dave the Wave."

## An Enduring Legacy

**In every part of his life, David radiated joy and purpose, with a quiet superpower: making others feel seen and celebrated. Lorraine summarizes: "Perhaps what stands out to me the most about David is his power to connect. He brought people together — in his home, in the classroom, on the football field, and in life." The Cass family's legacy is one of generosity, vision, and deep love. Through David and Christie, their profound impact lives on in every child, family, and friend who has felt the great joy of being welcomed into their world.**





# INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL



## What is the CICC preschool need?

We are seeing trends in the rise of children with multiple diagnoses and disabilities attending CICC. As a result, there is a significant need for more teachers trained to work with children with disabilities, driven by earlier diagnosis and a higher demand for specialized staff.

During our intake process, our educators and therapists develop personalized plans for each child, emphasizing inclusion and requiring staff skilled in adapting strategies. CICC aims to ensure a 1:1 ratio of attention beyond the ministry's requirement.

**CICC preschool:** At its fullest capacity, the program serves just under 60 children annually in a therapeutic environment, guided by a multi-disciplinary team of specially trained educators and therapists. Goals are customized in consultation with families, and teaching staff supports families during the child's transition out of preschool and into kindergarten.

# MEET A CICC TEAM MEMBER: SUE THATCHER

Preschool Teacher



Each year, we like to highlight a member of our team. Sue Thatcher has been a Preschool Teacher at Centennial Infant and Child Centre for 20 years.

Sue has taught countless children and advocated for their families. She was the recipient of the **2022 Prime Minister's Award for Early Childhood Education** and is an outstanding, dedicated teacher.

In her words: "I received my ECE diploma many years ago. I was introduced to CICC 20 years ago and started as a volunteer and fell in love! I soon started supply teaching and then offered the preschool teacher position. I have some mentor awards, one from George Brown College, one from TMU.

I have stayed on so long at CICC as this job is my gift in life and cannot imagine not being here. CICC is a magical place that supports parents and children. We are a soft place to land and are cheerleaders for these amazing children and their parents.

The most impactful aspect of my work is gaining the trust and respect of both the children and parents, which leads to so many positive things. A past parent contacted me last May to invite me to their child's grade 8 graduation. He gave it to me.

CICC is meaningful as it allows me to be an important part of these children's journey and their parents' journey. Every single child has changed my life in a positive way. I am so fortunate to have found CICC and am forever grateful to the person who introduced it to me!"



# MEET ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS: KATE LITTLER

***You are working with a child and that child does something that they have never done before... the preschool room stops, everyone is watching, it is celebrated. You, as a volunteer, see that you are making a real difference in this child's life.***

Kate Littler has been a long-time volunteer with CICC. 24 years ago, she learned about CICC through a friend. Her daughters, Emma, Charlotte, and Madeline all attended the Centre as integrated

## How has CICC made a mark in my life?

I started volunteering at CICC in 2001. The years I have spent at the centre have been the most rewarding in my life. Our dedicated volunteers have come together for a common goal: to help children with special needs. I have been privileged to witness children meet various milestones in their social, emotional, and physical development

## How has CICC changed Since COVID-19?

Since I am a Registered Early Childhood Educator, I was asked to supply teach at Centennial during COVID. The one aspect of CICC which did not change during the challenging COVID years was the dedicated care and attention of the staff to the developmental needs of the children. We witnessed numerous milestones that the kids accomplished while wearing masks and face shields. Today, CICC is a busy place bustling with students, staff, volunteers, and lots of kids. Now, I enjoy chatting with the parents and sharing special moments.

## Why Do You keep Coming Back?

Being a volunteer at Centennial is special because we all play an integral role in the development and growth of the children in our care. Attending the Riverdale Farm trip reminds me that I am privileged to be a part of this amazing and dedicated community. It's a place filled with laughter, smiles, and love.



# WHAT OUR FRIENDS SAY ABOUT US



Centennial  
Infant and  
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Foundation

**“ I am so grateful that our child's issues and strengths were seen and known by experts and we were given effective strategies to help them. Some of the issues I recognised and brought to the Early Childhood Interventionist and some they identified and told me about. I don't know where we would have gotten this level of support otherwise, and it was totally crucial for our child. It made such a huge difference in their physical and mental development. ”**

PARENT, H2H PROGRAM

**“ I'm so grateful to have been able to work with Magda and Lori. I truly felt that they cared about my daughter and our entire family. The appointments with them always left me feeling reinvigorated and able to maintain my focus on helping my daughter reach her goals. ”**

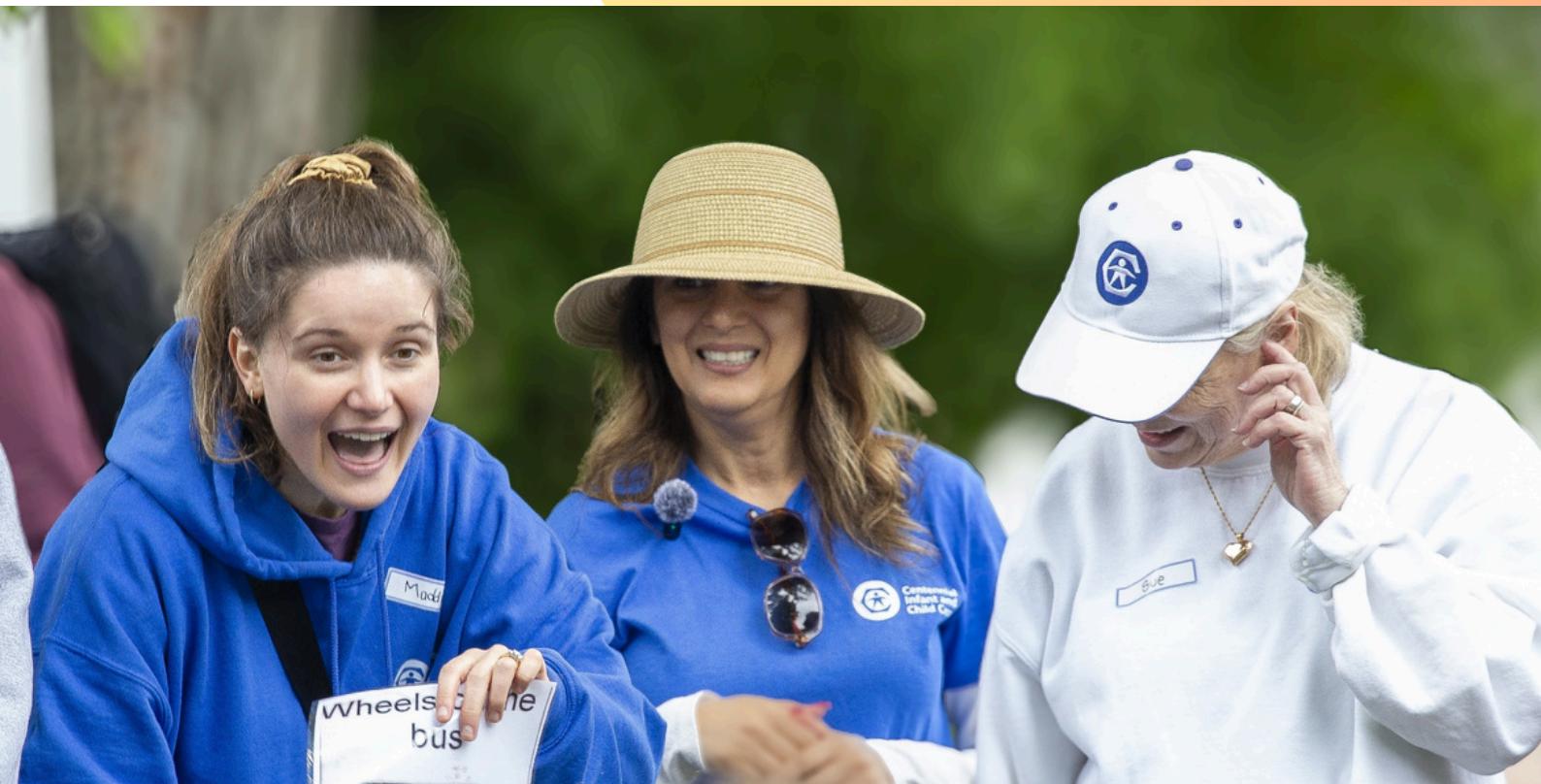
PARENT, EARLY INTERVENTION

**“ Thank you for this service. When our ECI first visited us, it was so hard for her to do anything because the children were not social and clinging to me. I must report that by her last visit, we had made a complete turn around. They were in the lead with everything and I owe this to CICC. Thank you very much for the difference you are making in the families. ”**

PARENT, EARLY INTERVENTION

# THANK YOU

**"Anyone who does anything to help a child is a hero to me."**  
- Fred Rogers



**thank you.** There are no greater words to express how much our work, and the impact of our work, are possible because of those who believe in the mission of CICC Foundation.

Together, the CICC Foundation's community nurtures growth, confidence and the lifelong potential of children with special needs.

**thank you to our volunteers.** Your dedication and commitment ensure that even more families have access to renowned, trailblazing, life-changing support that truly gives their children the best start in life.

**thank you to our donors, partners and supporters.** Because of you, our impact continues to grow, and CICC can continue to expand and evolve, leading the way to a brighter future for those we serve.

The partnership between our CICC Foundation community members remains the cornerstone in our journey to build futures, change lives and strengthen families.

# FOUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

**\$100,000+**

Aubrey & Marla Dan Foundation  
DAC Foundation for People with Special Needs  
COMART Foundation

**\$50,000-\$99,999**

Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Clark Family Foundation  
Capitalize for Kids (C4K)

**\$25,000-\$49,999**

Harry E. Foster Charitable Foundation  
The Alva Foundation  
Beutel Goodman Charitable Foundation  
CIBC Foundation  
Ray and Anne Richardson

**\$10,000-\$24,999**

TD Securities Underwriting Hope  
The Sherry & Sean Bourne Family Foundation  
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**\$5,000-\$9,999**

The Mariano Elia Foundation  
McLean Foundation  
Kathleen Christie  
Karen & William Barnett  
Sukrit Ganguly  
J.P. Bickell Foundation  
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Hilary Crowe  
Paviter Binning  
The Rotary Club of Toronto Charitable Foundation  
Benefaction Foundation  
F.K. Morrow Foundation  
St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation  
Foyston, Gordon & Payne Inc. (FGP)  
Craig Gibson  
Barbara Zvan-Watson

# FOUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

## \$1,000-\$4,999

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CKP Charitable Giving Fund  
Rand Kildare Foundation  
Gregory and Jennifer Thompson  
Nicholaos and Sarah Karkas  
Derek & Margo Ridout  
CNSX Markets Inc. ( Canadian Securities Exchange)  
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The St. George's Society of Toronto  
Francisca & Michael Quinn  
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Demetra Saldaris  
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Aleks Hristovski  
Sheldon Fine  
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Eddy Lim-Fook  
Matthew Lee  
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Puneet Goyal  
Steve Dewar  
Emily Lam  
Simon Yau  
Iris Kohn  
Deanna Dobrowsky  
Carol Jamieson  
Anonymous Donor

## In-Kind Contributions

Milton Winberg

We are deeply grateful to our founders and supporters. Your generosity and commitment make our work possible and help us create lasting impact for the children and families we serve.

# THANK YOU!

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY REVENUES 2024/2025

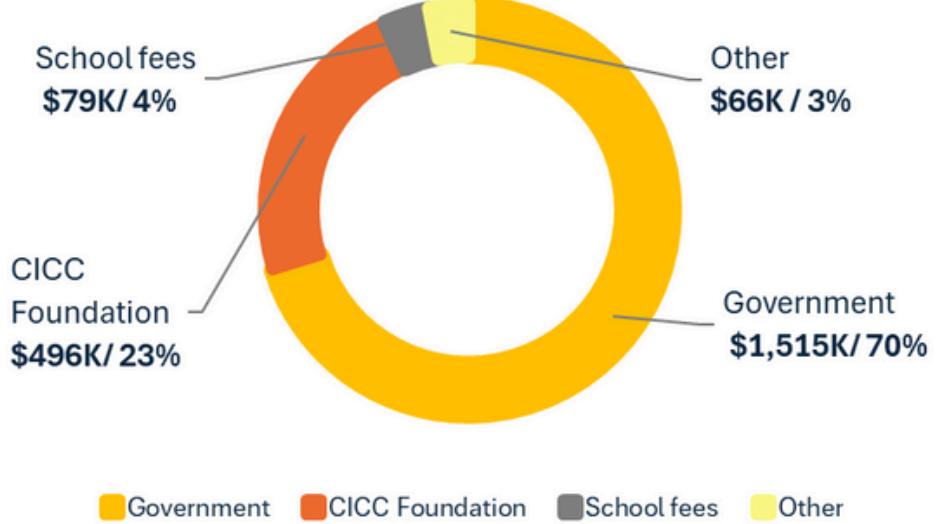
CICC and The CICC Foundation are committed to the highest standards of accountability and transparency.



**Centennial  
Infant and  
Child Centre**

**Total  
Revenues  
\$2,156,224**

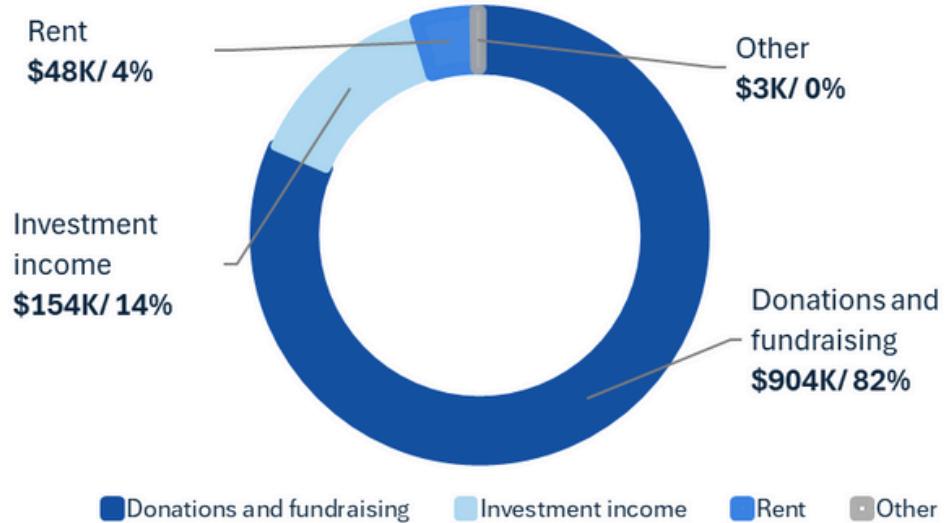
*Sources of Revenue*



**Centennial  
Infant and  
Child Centre  
Foundation**

**Total  
Revenues  
\$1,109,549**

*Sources of Revenue*



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY REVENUES 2024/2025

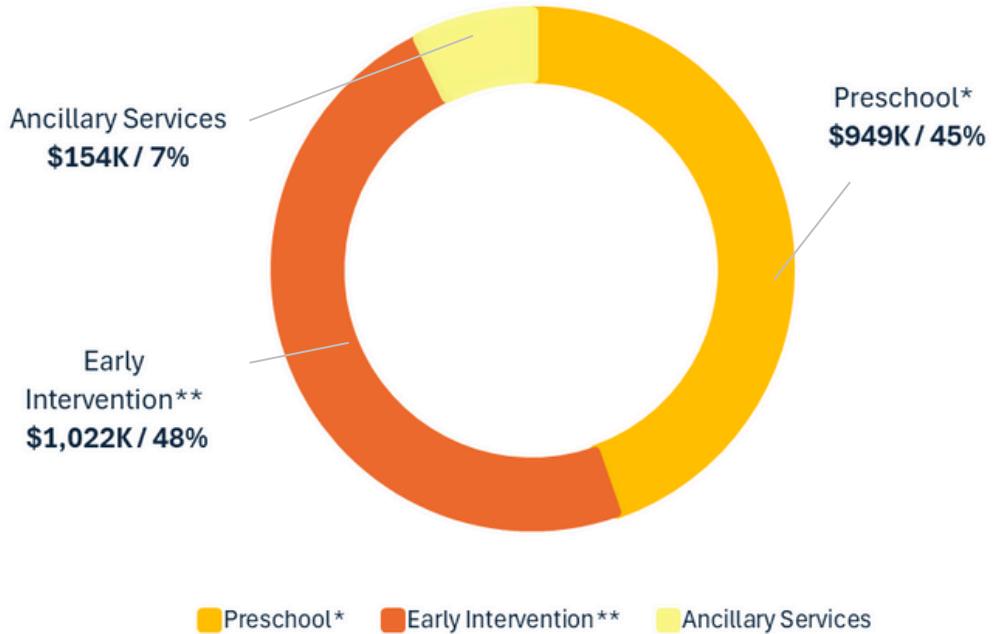
CICC and The CICC Foundation are committed to the highest standards of accountability and transparency.



**Centennial  
Infant and  
Child Centre**

**Total  
Expenses**  
**\$2,125,138**

*Sources of Expenses*



\* includes Every Child Belongs On-site program

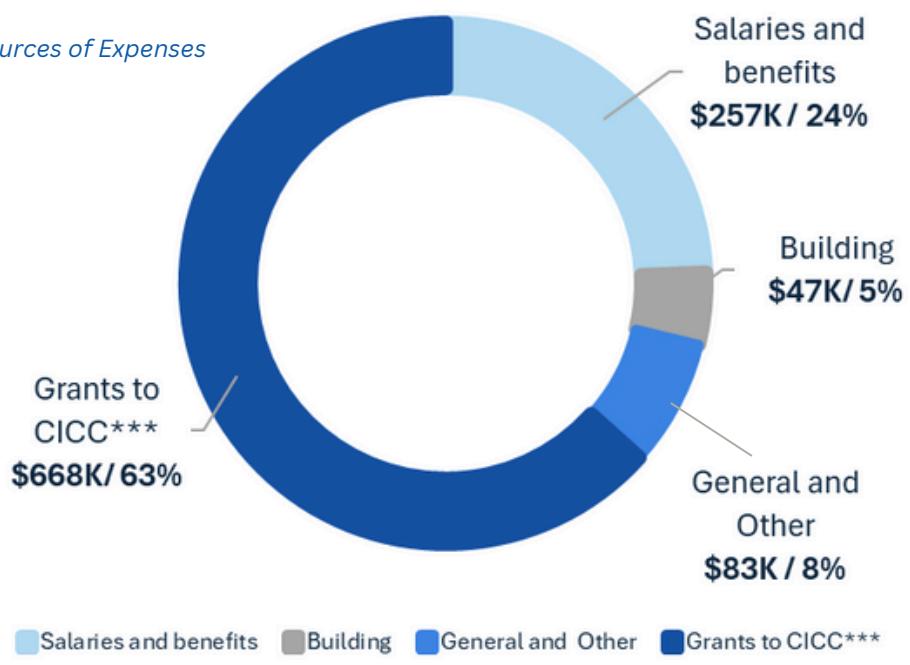
\*\* includes Hospital-to-Home (H2H) and partial Every Child Belongs Off-site program



**Centennial  
Infant and  
Child Centre  
Foundation**

**Total  
Expenses**  
**\$1,054,914**

*Sources of Expenses*



\*\*\* The difference between Foundation grant revenue to CICC and the corresponding grant expenses represents the unspent portion of grants (deferred revenue) as of March 31, 2025.

For further details, please see our audited financial statements on the [CICC website](#)



# Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation



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\*Some names throughout the annual report have been changed for privacy\*