



ANNUAL REPORT



2021-2022

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1.0 Message from the Chair

The pandemic has continued to impact families and those who support them and this last year has been a year of perseverance and change. As family support centres and those they assist across Canada face and overcome unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, Families Canada (FC) has continued to respond with help from our members and partners. Not only have we expanded our COVID-19 programs and resources, but we have intensified efforts to hear from, understand, and meet the needs of families and family support practitioners across Canada. We have strengthened digital access for our members through establishing an online store and creating more e-modules and other digital resources.

During the past year, the modernization of our digital infrastructure has been a major priority as the pandemic has forever changed the way FC members support families. In the beginning of 2022, we successfully launched our long-awaited online store where we offer resources in easily accessible print and digital formats. Soon after, we set up our online training portal that offers a variety of e-modules to provide training and support for our members. During the year, with partners and members, we developed many new resources such as additional *Why Play?* pamphlets, a podcast for parents, food and nutrition pamphlets, infographics about trauma and violence-informed approaches to family support, and more.

Our digital transformation has been well received by our members and stakeholders and we are eager to continue along this path. We are pleased that in the near future, our membership management system will also go online with many changes that will make it easier for members to sign up and to access their benefits.

As we continue to develop our digital presence, we are also mindful that digital access continues to be a major barrier for many communities and families. Therefore, we also plan to provide hybrid options where possible, printable or printed resources, and in-person interactions.

We are excited and ready to take on more challenges and deliver on our commitment to help our members and those they assist across Canada. We have many more science-based resources, professional development and peer learning opportunities in the pipeline, so please stay tuned!

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Roumeliotis
Chair, Board of Directors

2.0 Our Team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr. Paul Roumeliotis

Maria Khoushnood

Randy St. Louis

Sherry Zhao

René Ramirez Aguilar

Marg Romanow

FORMER STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

We would like to thank all our past staff and volunteers who have contributed their efforts in the previous year: Mitzie Constant, Rym Bousenane, Sydney Walter, Sue-Anne (Xuan) Yu, Lea (Lingyuan) Zhou, Jade Proulx, Angel Monks

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS



Zindu Salih

President and CEO

Rebecca Balcerzak

Director of Operations

Clare Pama

CFO

Zoe Chen

Bookkeeper

Latona Nicholson

Membership and
Administration Officer

Hilary Allen

Program Manager

Winnie Peng

Communications and
Technology Officer

Bushra Rahman

Project Officer

Emily Kenny

Project Officer

Robert Brown

Project Officer

Kelly Stone

Strategic Advisor

Mahesha Bandara

Volunteer

Kristi Carey

Volunteer

Grace Cao

Volunteer

3.0 Vision and Mission Statement

VISION



A Canada committed to
building **strong families.**



MISSION STATEMENT



To champion the priorities, policies and programs that **build the strength** of Canada's families.



4.0 Initiatives



4.1 Financial Literacy

Increasing Financial Literacy Opportunities for Women Living on Low Incomes: An Action Plan for Change

April 2018 – March 2022 – Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada

Like all Canadians, women living on low incomes need basic financial literacy knowledge, skills and confidence to improve their quality of life. Through national research, this project identified gender-specific barriers that prevent women living on low incomes from accessing financial literacy programs. It also identified recommendations for improving program delivery.

FC has wrapped up this successful multi-year project. Significant achievements this past year include:

- Released the ground-breaking report “Financial Empowerment for Women Living on Low Incomes: An Action Plan”
- Published a video promoting the Action Plan report
- Published the e-module “Empowering Women and Communities Through Financial Literacy” which provides family support practitioners with an overview of the *Each One, Teach One* financial literacy program and how hosting this program can empower women to reach their financial goals

Thank you to our funder Women and Gender Equality Canada and partners—the Canadian Credit Union Association and Vancity—for supporting this work.

SAFE Women (Safety and Financial Empowerment for Women)

April 2021 – March 2023 – Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada

Building on our previous financial literacy work, this project will address the need for Trauma and Violence-Informed Approaches (TVIA) in financial literacy programming by developing a toolkit of TVIA resources and learning opportunities for financial literacy educators.

This year, Families Canada made progress developing resources for the TVIA toolkit. When this project is completed, FC will have developed:

- 4 live webinars
- 4 training videos
- 4 infographics on TVIA and financial literacy education
- 1 interactive e-learning module
- 1 social media toolkit

These resources will equip financial literacy educators with tools to apply a trauma and violence-informed approach to financial literacy education.

We look forward to meeting this pressing need in conjunction with stakeholders and moving the dial for women’s financial empowerment.



4.0 Initiatives, CONT.



4.2 Intergenerational Programming

New Connections: Increasing Service Provider Capacity to Support Seniors' Digital Literacy
March 2022 – March 2023 – Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada

All Canadians rely on technology to connect with loved ones and access government services, entertainment, news, and art. However, the pandemic has shown that some age groups have struggled to use digital devices as activities shifted online. This is especially true of seniors—many of whom experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness during the pandemic.

To address this issue, Families Canada partnered with Connected Canadians to provide training to staff of family support centres. Connected Canadians is a non-profit that promotes digital literacy skills to seniors and older adults.

FC will:

- recruit staff of member organizations to take free training hosted by Connected Canadians where staff will learn how to grow seniors' digital literacy skills
- support member organizations as they host fun online events for seniors
- host a webinar for family support centres across Canada on the benefits Connected Canadians' digital literacy training program

This project will create new connections between staff members of family support centres and older Canadians.

Engage at Every Age

Nov 2021 - Oct 2025 – Funded by a Private Trust

Families Canada is collaborating on a ground-breaking project in Ottawa titled Engage at Every Age. Led by Andrew Fleck Children's Services and project partner Council on Aging of Ottawa, the project aims to develop demonstration sites of best practices for intergenerational programming as a part of licensed early learning and care in 3 unique settings: on-campus beside an age-in-place residence, neighborhood based in collaboration with a church congregation and co-located as part of a senior's village including long-term care. The project is focused on providing quality intergenerational programming that recognizes the rights and dignity of children and senior participants and share our lessons learned broadly.

While the concept of intergenerational programming has been offered for years, the project explores what would happen if we went beyond mostly planned moments and embed opportunities for children and seniors to connect naturally through caring, responsive interactions that are part of a daily routine.

Additional Activities

Families Canada continued to share the benefits of intergenerational programming between seniors and young children. This comes after the recent completion of Families Canada's Intergenerational Volunteering pilot program where 8 family support centres connected newcomer seniors with young children.

Through our newsletters, we promoted our:

- report on the Intergenerational Volunteering pilot program, including lessons learned
- 2 webinars highlighting the benefits of intergenerational programming
- intergenerational programming guides

Families Canada will continue to promote the benefits of intergenerational programming to our expansive network of family support centres.

4.0 Initiatives, CONT.



4.3 Children's Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child informs all of Families Canada's work. This year, Families Canada has continued to work with the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights to turn timely and thought-provoking articles from the *Canadian Journal of Children's Rights* into accessible blog posts, published on our website.

In support of children's right to play, Families Canada launched the new *Why Play? Growing at My Own Pace* series which suggests play activities for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The series also suggests ways to adapt everyday activities to encourage inclusion of all children, regardless of their abilities. Take a look at the resources section of our website for more pamphlets and activity cards that support children's right to play!

We continue to champion the *Nobody's Perfect* and the *Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting* programs, which are founded on a rights-based approach. This last year, we helped community-based organizations in Ontario adapt their *Nobody's Perfect* parent groups for online delivery, allowing parents to better support their children's rights during the pandemic.

4.4 Nutrition & Food Safety

Promoting Health and Inclusion of Senior Newcomers Through Food

March 2021 – March 2022 – Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada

COVID-19 caused an increase in food insecurity, especially for isolated populations. This project, extended due to the pandemic, aimed to support the healthy aging of newcomer seniors in Ottawa by identifying and addressing challenges they face in accessing services, resources, and information on food safety and nutrition. Last year, Families Canada engaged newcomer seniors in a series of interactive workshops, offered in six different languages, to identify these challenges. Based on these workshops and through consultations with community partners and newcomer seniors, we developed multilingual pamphlets on food safety among newcomer seniors. Visit the resource section of our website for more information. While the project focused on Ottawa, these new resources are useful to a much wider population. Families Canada will continue to promote the benefits of intergenerational programming to our expansive network of family support centres.

4.5 Social Inclusion of Newcomers

Engaging Newcomer Seniors in Programs

June 2021 – May 2022 – Funded by Ottawa Community Foundation

Each year, family support centres across Canada play an important role in welcoming newcomers and helping them get acquainted with their community. Newcomer seniors face a number of common challenges that have been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the role of organizations that support newcomer seniors has become more important, as has the need for better engagement strategies to help newcomer seniors cope with unfavourable circumstances.

This year, with inputs from several community organisations, Families Canada published a resource guide "Five Strategies For Engaging Newcomer Seniors". This new resource outlines five useful strategies for engaging newcomer seniors in programming.



**Five Strategies
for Engaging
Newcomer
Seniors**

4.0 Initiatives, CONT.



4.6 Parenting

Supported Parents: Supportive Parenting

April 2018 – October, 2022 – Funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation

Families Canada is supporting minority-speaking language communities in Ontario by increasing parents and caregivers' parenting skills through the Nobody's Perfect parenting program. This program is designed to meet the needs of parents with children aged 0-5 who may be facing multiple barriers. Whether they are young, single, living on low incomes, socially or geographically isolated or have limited formal education, the Nobody's Perfect parenting program supports them on their journey of parenthood.

Ongoing evaluations show that Nobody's Perfect effectively promotes positive parenting, improves understanding of children's health, safety and behaviour, and helps prevent family violence. Evidence also indicates that effective parenting programs reduce social and mental health challenges experienced by children later in life.

When COVID-19 started, Nobody's Perfect in-person parent groups pivoted to being virtual. Families Canada supported this drastic change by providing more facilitator support events and including refresher trainings, "Introduction to *Nobody's Perfect* for Parents" facilitator trainings and support group sessions.

Throughout this project, Families Canada has:

- Translated the *Nobody's Perfect* parent kits into Arabic, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese and Spanish
- Trained 40 new bilingual program facilitators
- Partnered with 29 family support centers across Ontario to deliver the program to minority language speaking parents
- Supported bilingual facilitators by organizing various virtual *Nobody's Perfect* events, including 2 refresher trainings, 3 "Introduction to *Nobody's Perfect* for Parents" facilitator trainings and numerous facilitator support sessions
- Continued to distribute *Nobody's Perfect* parent kits in Arabic, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish to Ontario agencies

Families Canada has received positive feedback from parents, caregivers and facilitators who have participated in this project.

Testimonials from Parents:

- "The *Nobody's Perfect* sessions were interactive and amazing. Through it, I learned how to be a better parent."
- "Excellent I loved it as it is in our language—easier to understand."
- "As a newcomer to Canada, the information that I have learned from the group is very helpful. Sharing parenting experiences in this group has helped a lot. Thank you all!"
- "I became more involved with my children as a result of *Nobody's Perfect* sessions."



4.0 Initiatives, CONT.



4.7 Play

Early Childhood Development Science to Practice: Knowledge Mobilization Project

March 2018 – May 2021– Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada

In partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, we wrapped up our *Early Childhood Development Science to Practice: Knowledge Mobilization Project*, funded by Employment and Social Development Canada.

This year Families Canada and partners produced a number of evidence-based resources on early childhood development. These resources make the latest science and information in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development accessible to vulnerable families, community-level organizations, and service providers working directly with parents and children. The resources include:

- A number of additional pamphlets under our flagship *Why Play?* series including pamphlets for parents of children with intellectual disabilities and First Nations parents and caregivers.
- The *Why Play? Spotlight* series was also launched with four new pamphlets on language development, emotional expression, self-regulation, and pro-social behaviour
- A new set of 24 *Why Play? Activity Cards* contain attractive illustrations and science-based examples of play activities that support essential competencies and skills in early childhood
- The *Supporting Families* podcast, hosted by renowned pediatrician, Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, CEO of Eastern Ontario Health Unit and Families Canada's new and esteemed Board Chair. The podcast engages expert speakers on various early childhood development topics
- Two e-modules on Brain Development and Play. These were developed with support from the Science of Early Childhood Development, Red River College. These modules are released on our training portal at <https://training.familiescanada.ca/>



4.0 Initiatives, CONT.



4.8 Trauma and Violence-Informed Approaches (TVIA)

Adequately supporting those impacted by trauma and domestic/family violence is crucial, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. We continued to build upon our project *Incorporating Trauma and Violence-Informed Approaches in Ottawa Family Support Programs*, which was funded by the Ottawa Community Foundation.

This year we promoted our:

- TVIA foundations course, hosted on our YouTube channel
- TVIA infographics hosted on our online store



Testimonials on the TVIA Foundations Course:

- "It was very helpful, eye-opening and inspiring."
- "This was probably one of the best webinars that I have participated in since the onset of Covid. I thoroughly enjoyed the well-planned, organized and positive-based material that was put forth. I work in the military environment and often that is the only perspective that I am exposed to however, in this group, I was exposed to many other social sectors, eg. Immigration, single fathers, women's support, etc. It was a presentation that was different than most and I would love to attend more in the future."
- "Hearts and souls were put into this session and lots of life experience. It has helped me better understand myself and I will pass the skills I've learnt today to my clients. Many thanks!"

4.0 Initiatives, CONT.



4.9 Additional COVID-19 Support to Members and Families

Increasing Vaccine Confidence through Enhancing Capacity of Family Support Service Providers

July 2021 – March 2023– Funded by Public Health Agency of Canada

Through the Increasing Vaccine Confidence project, Families Canada, in partnership with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, aims to increase the capacity of service providers in family support centres to promote COVID-19 vaccination, thereby improving demand for and access to COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines among vulnerable families they serve. By holding community consultations, hosting webinars, and sharing valuable resources, Families Canada will:

1) Educate service providers who have trusted relationships with vulnerable families, in order to improve their vaccine literacy so they can address vaccine hesitancy, build vaccine confidence and address barriers to access to vaccines among service providers and families.

2) Develop and disseminate tailored and culturally appropriate resources that improve vaccine literacy and promote positive messaging about COVID-19 vaccination to families

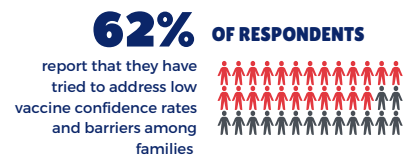
In the first year of this project, FC has:

- Hosted 2 “Let’s Talk” virtual community consultation sessions. During these sessions family support service providers from across the country discussed concerns and barriers to vaccination faced by families in their communities, and strategies being used to increase vaccine confidence.
- Conducted a national survey on barriers and strategies to address vaccine challenges, and developed a series of infographics summarizing these findings
- Hosted 2 webinars for service providers focusing on “Building Vaccine Confidence through Knowledge”. These webinars provided information addressing the most pressing vaccine concerns, including vaccine safety, efficacy, and the vaccination of children and pregnant people



STRATEGIES ADDRESSING CONCERNS AND BARRIERS TO COVID-19 VACCINATION

Based on our consultations with family support centres, many report having tried a variety of strategies to improve rates of vaccination within their communities.



23% REPORT THAT setting up transportation and vaccine appointments for families are very effective strategies in increasing vaccination rates in their communities



62% REPORT THAT in person discussions are currently the best format for reaching families

- SOME STRATEGIES USED INCLUDE:**
- Covering transportation costs
 - Providing meals
 - Pop up vaccination clinics
 - Q&A sessions with health practitioners in various languages



5.0 Funders and Partners

Funders:



Partners:



6.0 New and Upcoming Resources



New Resources



Pamphlet: Food Safety for Newcomer Seniors

In collaboration with seniors, Families Canada created the *Eating Well? Pamphlet for Newcomer Seniors*. This pamphlet empowers newcomer seniors with information and tools to navigate the Canadian food system to make healthy food choices. Available at shop.familiescanada.ca



Guide: Social Inclusion of Newcomer Seniors

Families Canada produced the resource guide *Five Strategies for Engaging Newcomer Seniors*. Available at shop.familiescanada.ca



Five Strategies for Engaging Newcomer Seniors



Podcast: It's About Time: How Moms and Dads Can Share the Care

It's About Time: How moms and dads can share the care is a podcast developed by a team at the University of Victoria in partnership with Families Canada. The three-part series discusses how mother-father couples can make changes towards greater gender equality in their relationships. This podcast is available on our website as well as on Spotify!



Pamphlets: Why Play? For First Nations Parents and Caregivers

The *Why Play? for First Nations Parents and Caregivers* series suggest play activities for First Nations children in the following age groups: babies (0 – 1 year), toddlers (1 – 2.5 years), and preschoolers (2.5 – 5 years). The series is based on the content of

- the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development
- and was created in partnership with the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. All partners are thankful for the valued contributions of the First Nations parents and family support practitioners who reviewed the series. Available at shop.familiescanada.ca





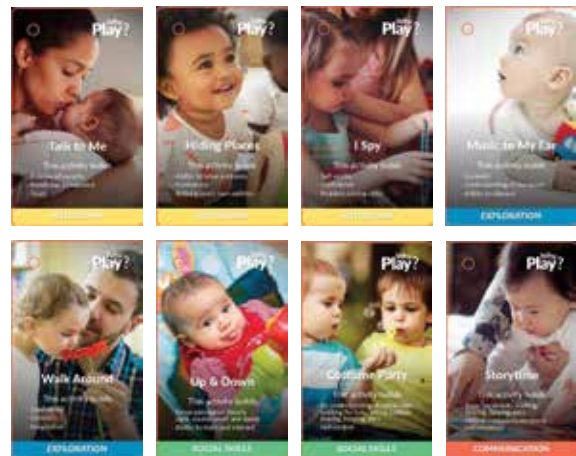
Pamphlets: Why Play? Spotlight Series

Why Play? Spotlight series includes play activities that help develop specific skills and competencies in early childhood such as language, emotional expression, self-regulation and pro-social behaviour. Available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Punjabi, and Simplified Chinese. Created in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Available at shop.families.ca

Activity Cards: Why Play?

The *Why Play? Activity Cards* complement the *Why Play?* pamphlets. Each box contains a user guide and 24 activity cards that offer a variety of simple and short activities to enjoy with young children on a day-to-day basis. The activities foster competencies such as autonomy, communication, and exploration. These cards can be used by anybody who wants to play with a child aged 0-5 such as parents, caregivers, and service providers.

Available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Punjabi, and Simplified Chinese at shop.familiescanada.ca



E-modules: Play and Brain Development

The Play and Brain Development e-learning modules are micro-lessons with brief videos, readings, and interactive activities. The modules contain content from the Science of Early Child Development and the Encyclopedia for Early Childhood Development. These are available in English and French at training.familiescanada.ca.

E-module: Empowering Women and Communities Through Financial Literacy

This e-learning module introduces family support practitioners to the *Each One, Teach One* financial literacy program, provides an overview of the program’s benefits for women living on low incomes, and demonstrates how to reach out and build a sustainable partnership with their local *Each One, Teach One* representative. This e-module is available in [English](#) and [French](#) at training.familiescanada.ca.



COMING SOON

Webinars

Families Canada will host a webinar as part of the *New Connections: Increasing Service Provider Capacity to Support Seniors’ Digital Literacy* project. This webinar will explore lessons learned from the project and how family support practitioners can best support seniors’ digital literacy.

In partnership with a team from the University of Victoria, Families Canada will host a webinar for staff working in family support centres on how moms and dads can share the parental load.

Listening Guide for the podcast “It’s About Time: How Moms and Dads Can Share the Care”

The team from the University of Victoria that developed the podcast *It’s About Time: How Moms and Dads Can Share the Care* is currently creating a listening guide that will pose questions, provide additional research, and propose strategies that couples can use to share the workload.

7.0 Financial Report

These statements are an extract from the complete audited financial statements of Families Canada for the year ended March 31, 2022.

The auditor, Andrews & Co., has provided Families Canada with a clean audit opinion on the 2021-2022 Financial Statements.



Contingency Fund

This fund has been established to ensure the continued operation of the Association in the event of a disruption in its core funding or a deterioration in its operations. This fund can only be used towards operations with the approval of the Board. As operations allow, the fund will be increased to an amount equal to three months of core expenses.

Project Funding and Government Contributions

Project Funding and Government Contributions have decreased in 2022 over 2021 by \$365,390 due to reduced funding and contributions from various sources. During this fiscal year Families Canada received government assistance in the form of COVID-19 relief programs,



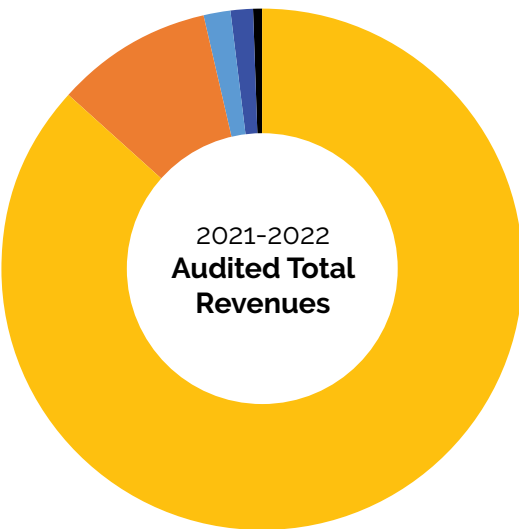
such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy program, and the Canada Recovery Hiring Program.

Expenditures

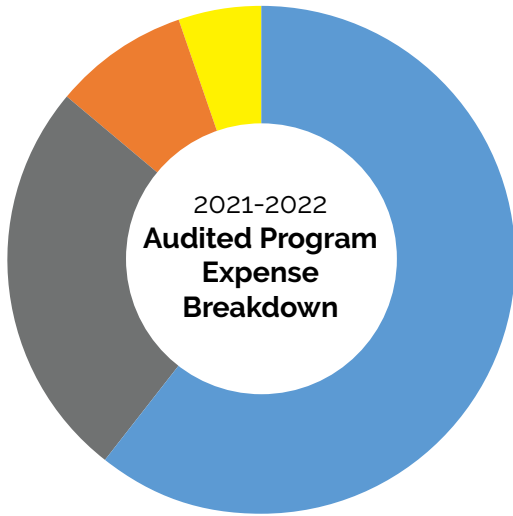
Expenditures have decreased in 2022 compared to 2021 by \$344K, which is a direct reflection of project funding decrease and measures by FC to reduce costs and expenses. Even as project funding decreased, FC made the decision not to lay off staff, resulting in a larger than normal proportion of expenses attributable to salaries and benefits. Key areas of expenditure control included travel and overheads such as office supplies and utilities wherever possible.



Financial Information



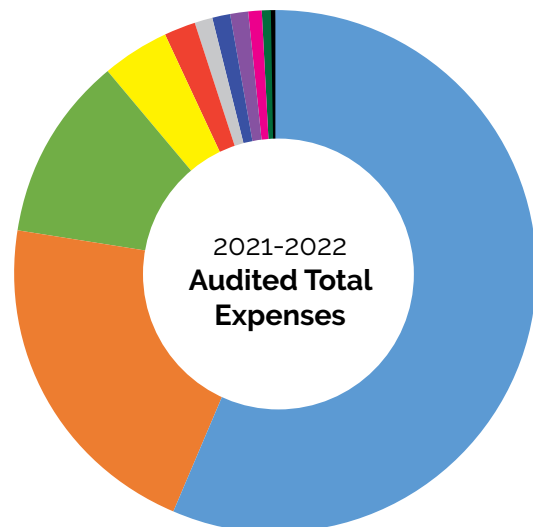
- **86.7%** Project funding and government contributions
- **9.6%** Publications
- **1.7%** Donations and sponsorships
- **1.5%** Memberships
- **0.4%** Other



- **60.7%** Program expenses
- **25.6%** Support services
- **8.4%** Publications, products, services
- **5.2%** Admin and overheads

Expenditures have decreased in 2022 compared to 2021 due to decreased project funding and measures by FC to reduce costs and expenses

- **56.9%** Salaries and related benefits
- **21.2%** Consultants and contracts
- **11.3%** Publications
- **4.1%** Rent
- **1.9%** Professional fees
- **1.2%** Telephone and utilities
- **1.2%** Translation
- **1.1%** Office
- **0.9%** Travel
- **0.4%** Insurance
- **0.2%** Amortization





List of Donors

We are thankful for the generous support of the following 2021-2022 donors:

- United Way of Greater Toronto
- CanadaHelps
- Margaret Romano
- Active for Life
- Zachary Gaunce
- Ben O'Bright
- Abdul Siddiqui

We also thank the donors who wish to remain anonymous.



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Online Store: shop.familiescanada.ca

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