



# Strategic Plan 2020-23

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This strategic plan is the result from a series of synchronous and asynchronous activities between May 22, 2020 and June 26, 2020. In total, 20 staff and 12 directors participated.

**Message from the Board Chairperson**

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome.”

Our last strategic plan was developed two and a half years ago, and in that time we have reacquired our COA certification; a massive undertaking of collaboration between our staff, board and COA facilitators, as well as built and maintained community partnerships that benefit the families of Southwestern Alberta. We have also faced great adversity and uncertainty, due to a global pandemic that forced us to close our physical doors, and reduced government funding. Due to these circumstances we pushed forward our strategic planning by about 6 months to better deal with the ever changing world we currently live in.

This new strategic plan is not a great shift away from our previous organizational goals, however, it does sharpen the focus of some of our older goals to bring a more clear and concise future vision going forward.

Whatever the next 3 years brings, I have the utmost confidence in the abilities of the board, staff, and volunteers of the organization to continually rise to the challenges that we may face going forward, both known and unknown. We look forward to continuing to find new ways to serve our amazing community!

Jared Warren  
Family Centre Board Chairperson

## Vision

Family Centre's vision is:

**Healthy Children! Healthy Families! Healthy Communities!**

## Mission

Family Centre's mission is:

**Family Centre empowers children and families through programs, resources, and connections.**

Family Centre understands family to be a social unit where participating individuals, often from more than one generation, provide mutual care and support, in particular families provide environments where children grow up. Families come in a variety of shapes and forms and legal arrangements and involve individuals who are related through blood or choice.

Family Centre is incorporated as a Society in the province of Alberta and is a registered charity operating under registration number 119157394 RR0001.

## Values

Family Centre's core values build RESIL'ience:

**Relationships** are foundational to the connections among our families and communities.

**Empowerment** gives us the freedom to discover what works best for us through a strength-based approach.

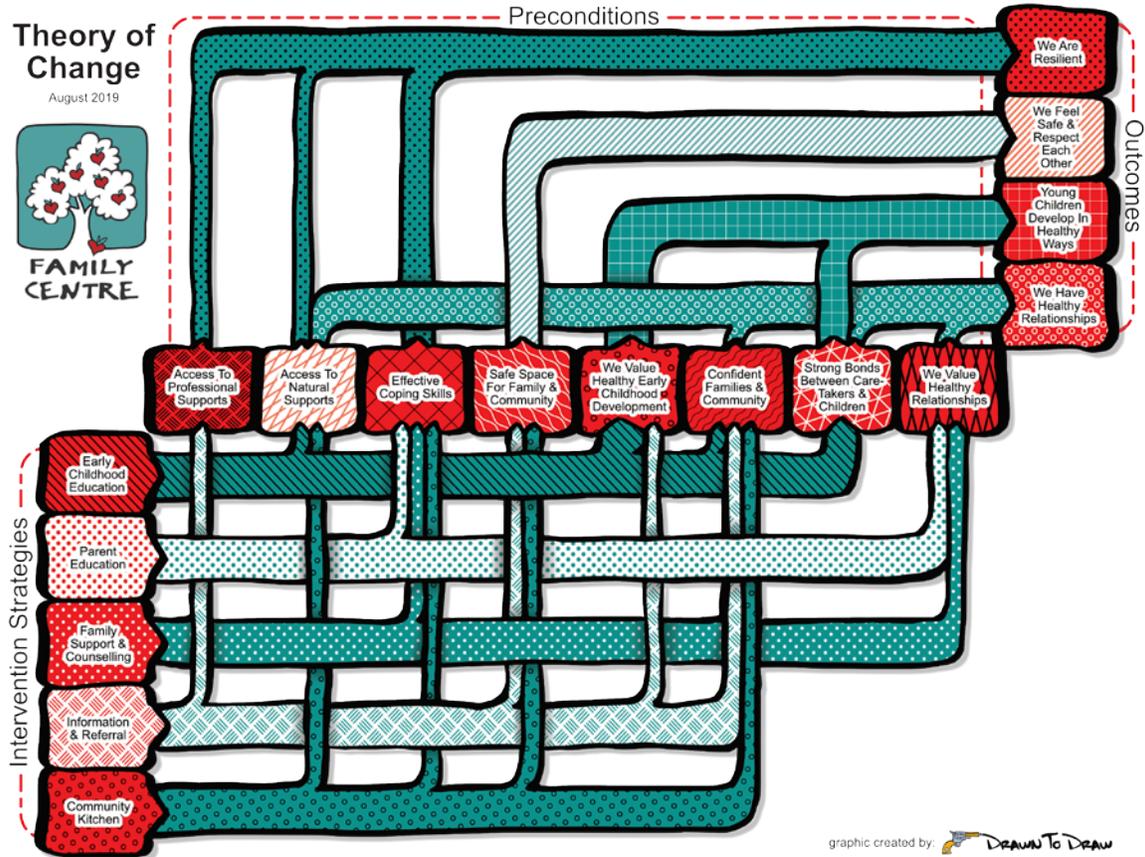
**Support** strengthens positive and flexible relationships that empower individuals and families.

**Integrity** makes sure that what we do is in line with our mission.

**Leadership** guides us through inclusion, understanding, and kindness to create change.

# Theory of Change

Family Centre's Theory of Change describes how we believe that our activities create pre-conditions that will lead to the desired outcomes that will make Family Centre's vision reality:



## Core Services

Family Centre offers a spectrum of prevention and early intervention services to children and families:

1. Information and Referral
2. Early Childhood Development
3. Parent Education
4. Family Support, including Counselling

## Core Audiences

The [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) study](#) and many subsequent studies demonstrate plainly that it is most effective to support children that are experiencing traumatic life events such as abuse, neglect, and household challenges (i.e. domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, separation and divorce, and incarceration of a household member). A variety of useful summaries of the ACEs study are available online, e.g. at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The key levers for empowering children and families are, according to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2017) "[Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families](#)", are:

1. Reduce sources of stress if possible
2. Strengthen resiliency, self-regulation, and executive functioning skills
3. Create supportive environments to develop supportive caregiver/child relationships

In line with these insights, Family Centre prioritizes building the capacity of individuals who care for children that are in the process of accumulating ACEs. While we are committed to allocating resources to where they are particularly effective to counter-act ACEs, we are also committed to continuing to offer preventive programming that meet the needs of all families. These programs serve to prevent the development of ACEs. Family Centre will allocate a clear majority of its resources to early intervention programming. A smaller amount of resources will be allocated to preventive family programming. It is important to note that all of Family Centre's services can be brought to audiences that are experiencing ACEs, e.g. a parent and child play group for families at the women's shelter.

## Organizational Structure

### 1) Board Governance

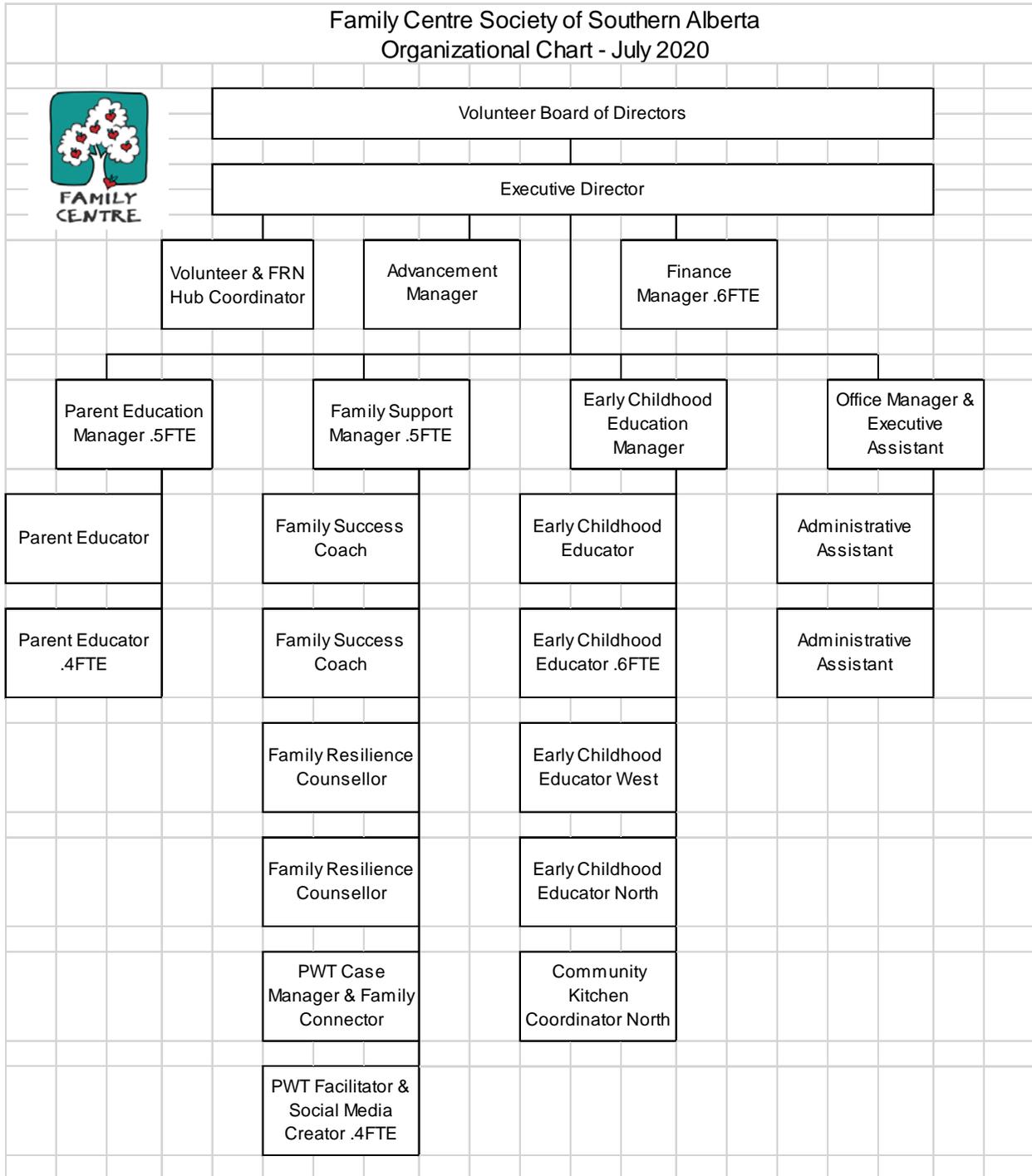
Family Centre operates under a Board of Directors, a governance board with the following responsibilities (as specified in Family Centre's Policy 2.01 Board of Directors):

- Provide oversight of the operations of Family Centre including finances, human resources practices, and legal compliance through Board and operational policies and monitoring organizational performance.
- Hire, monitor the performance of, and set remuneration for the Executive Director, and where necessary replace him or her.
- Research and develop advocacy positions and perform advocacy work on behalf of Family Centre.
- Engage in and support fund-raising activities.
- Represent the diverse interests of Family Centre's stakeholders.
- Set direction for Family Centre and approve the budget and business plan.

Directors do not involve themselves in decisions regarding management or day-to-day operations.

## 2) Organizational Chart

Family Centre is accountable to clients and funders in a structure that identifies three layers: Executive Director, Management, and Direct Service Delivery. The volunteer Board of Directors provides direction and oversight for the professional administration of the society.



**Figure 1: Organizational Chart of Family Centre (as of July 2020)**

### 3) Service Locations

Family Centre operates three locations to offer direct client services: It's main facility in downtown, a branch on the North side and a branch on the West side.

Family Centre Downtown is located in Melcor Centre. Here, Family Centre provides comprehensive services to clients in an accessible location and backbone services for the whole organization, such as finance and payroll, IT, volunteer coordination, leadership, and advancement.

Family Centre North pursues the following objectives:

- a) A Community Kitchen for individuals to learn how to prepare inexpensive, nutritious meals.
- b) Serve the clients of Interfaith Food Bank.
- c) Support clients to strengthen their family resources.

Family Centre and Interfaith Food Bank provide community kitchen services through a long-standing and deep partnership. The Interfaith Chinook Country Kitchen is located on the same site as the Interfaith Food Bank on the North side of Lethbridge.



Family Centre West is located inside the Coalbanks Elementary School of the Lethbridge Public School District No. 51 with a long term lease agreement, covering 25 years from 2017 until 2042. This branch pursues the following objectives:

- a) Provide resources predominantly to families who live west of the Oldman river.
- b) Function as a community hub in the Copperwood neighborhood, provide professional supports and strengthen natural supports for those caring for young children in this community.
- c) Work closely with the staff in the Coalbanks Elementary school to provide supports for the students of that school and their families.
- d) Offer services that create appreciative and respectful conversations between individuals who self-identify as Indigenous and those who do not self-identify as Indigenous.



## Top Issues and Opportunities

Family Centre identified five areas that seem particularly relevant for Family Centre:

- a) COVID and how it has changed service delivery: How do we integrate in-person programs with online programming? How do we respond to the changing needs of the community? How do we support brain development through a two-dimensional medium? How to effectively evaluate online programming?
- b) Government funding: Challenge to find long-term funding sources that allow Family Centre to pursue its vision and mission.
- c) Fundraising: Established fundraising mechanisms have become unavailable due to COVID. The economic downturn (even pre-COVID) makes fundraising more challenging.

- d) Overhead / fixed costs / operating space: Paying for fixed costs reduces the ability to hire front line staff. We need to ask the question what it means to strike the right balance between fixed and staffing costs.
- e) Long term impact of economic downturn: Community needs will rise due to additional barriers to employment and financial security. The ability and willingness of governments to fund for social services may decrease.

## Strategic Directions

Family Centre will focus its efforts on the following strategic areas over the course of the next three years:

Evidence-based, resource-smart programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on ACEs and brain science</li> <li>• Customer-focused programming</li> <li>• Eliminate things that are undersubscribed, over-cancelled, or lower impact. Free up resources for more impactful programs.</li> <li>• Develop robust performance metrics on program outcomes, not program attendance. Then focus on high impact programs.</li> <li>• Challenge each other to split activities into: We do this because it is evidence-based, and We do this because we have always done it</li> </ul>
Innovative, responsive programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain web-based programs that serve the client</li> <li>• What can be developed and hosted online in perpetuity? What needs to be "live"?</li> </ul>
Partnership / collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No duplication - no silos</li> <li>• Highlight our strengths &amp; do not jeopardize reputation</li> <li>• Identify creative partnerships with organizations that can assist with/support aspects of our operations</li> <li>• What does our role in the FRN "Hub and Spoke" model entail? How will that shape what we do? How can it become a strategic advantage?</li> </ul>
Shared understanding of audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can no longer afford scope creep and need to focus on "bang for buck", cf. ACEs. Staff are the experts in what this means in practice</li> <li>• Families with children experiencing ACEs</li> </ul>
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community activities could be an innovative way to deliver traditional and/or online programming</li> <li>• Community activities need to support the other priorities rather than be stand-alone?</li> </ul>
Staff Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be the place where people want to work</li> <li>• Engage staff in developing 1. programs for the year, 2. space needed to deliver, 3. how program effectiveness will be measured</li> </ul>
Operating space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable and accessible</li> <li>• Review needs for programming space. If Family Centre did not exist, and considering the programs we plan to offer, what would the space need to look like</li> <li>• Be flexible with space: engage staff in space planning and optimization to minimize underutilization</li> </ul>
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Security - pursue long-term sustainable funding and be strategic about pursuing project based grants.</li> <li>• Maximize funding to front line delivery</li> <li>• Step 1: build a high-impact program plan with essential, targeted activities (with staff)</li> <li>• Step 2: determine what the space needs would be to deliver the program plan, explicitly review space utilization</li> <li>• Step 3: find a more affordable space.</li> <li>• Monetize content and programming, online or in-person - by donation.</li> </ul>

Family Centre will report on progress towards these strategic directions on a quarterly basis to the Board of Directors and on an annual basis to all stakeholders. Family Centre will articulate specific annual goals for the strategic areas in its annual Operating Plan. Family Centre may choose to adjust its planning cycles during the more volatiles environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.