



Report to the Community

2024

Step by Step Early Intervention Society is situated on Treaty 7 territory – the ancestral and traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani), the Tsuut’ina, the Îlethka Nakoda Wîcastabi Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney), and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government (Districts 5 and 6). We acknowledge and respect the histories, oral practices, and diverse cultures of the First Nations, Métis, and all people who have taken care of this land and made their homes here in the City of Calgary.



Message from the Board Chair

As I write my final report as Board Chair, I am proud to reflect on an incredible period for Step by Step Early Intervention Society and the significant changes that have shaped our community over the past four years. Together, we have navigated major challenges, including shifts in government funding and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, while also seizing opportunities to strengthen our organization. From streamlining our transportation strategy to moving into our exceptional new facility, we have laid a solid foundation for growth and innovation.

Step by Step remains steadfast in its mission to deliver exceptional services and make a meaningful difference for children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. This past year has been particularly stabilizing as we focused on ensuring sustainable, repeatable success. With strong community relationships, generous support from donors and partners, a dedicated and talented team, and finalizing our strategic legacy partnership with Cause and Effect Foundation, I am confident Step by Step is well-positioned to thrive as it embarks on its next decade of service.

It has been a privilege to be part of this journey, and I am deeply grateful for the collective efforts of the board, staff, and administration. I am excited to welcome incoming board members who will help guide Step by Step into the future and look forward to supporting the organization in a new capacity. I invite you to join us on this journey, as together we continue to make a profound impact on the lives of children and families in our community.

Sincerely,

John Cherewko
Board Chair 2020-2024

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Bernice Wong	Vice Chair
Jennifer Jobson	Treasurer
Craig Andrews	Secretary
Matt Goulden	Director
Jennifer Santry	Director
Andrea Urquhart	Director

A Note from Our Leader

Passion. Joy. Determination. Neurodivergent Affirming. Family.

These words capture the heart of Step by Step. This year was a momentous chapter, made possible by the unwavering dedication of our staff, families, and supporters.

A defining milestone was merging with Cause and Effect Foundation – a legacy partnership that expands resources, strengthens professional collaboration, and provides opportunity to support more families than ever before in the upcoming years.

The year also marked our second successful school cycle at our new location. As we experienced our space with increased enrolment numbers, we carefully assessed what enhancements would be beneficial for the future with continued growth and implemented key changes during the summer break.

We also continued to prioritize family wellness which we believe is key to ensuring educational and therapeutic strategies are effective for children. We're proud to offer a range of support through our Family Programs that equip and empower families to help their children thrive.

In an ever-changing world, one constant that sustains me is the strength of this community. Your generosity and belief in our mission ensures every child at Step by Step has an opportunity to grow, learn, and shine. For that, we are deeply grateful.

In community,

Lori Niosi
Executive Director

Leadership Team

Brynn Havinga
Program Director

Kelsey Schieman
Operations Director

Lauren Ferris
Family Services Manager


Lyndsay Smith
Principal



Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Step by Step Early Intervention Society is a charitable organization providing exceptional early childhood education, therapeutic and family supports for developmentally delayed and disabled children and their families.

We envision a future where young children, regardless of developmental delay or disability, have opportunities to develop their full potential.



Inclusion: We foster an environment where all people and abilities are valued.

Acceptance: We acknowledge each journey is unique and support every family with empathy and compassion.

Integrity: We build our community on the foundations of respect, honesty and accountability.

Expertise: We engage accredited professionals to infuse industry best practices and experience into all aspects of our programming.

Heart: We provide services with care, considering the needs of the whole family as we walk alongside.

A Look Inside Our Programs

Centre-based programs include First Steps which provides early intervention to toddlers before a diagnosis or funding is available, and Preschool & Kindergarten for children receiving Program Unit Funding (PUF) through Alberta Education. Our early intervention team embraces a collaborative approach, bringing together certified teachers, developmental aides, behaviour strategists and therapists. Together they deliver intentional, goal-oriented support to each child that establishes a strong foundation for growth and development.

First Steps



Toddlers aged 19 months and up attend a two, three, or five day program option.



Developmental aides and volunteers provide direct support.



Speech-language pathologist interacts with children, introduces communication tools, and communicates successful strategies to families.



Conductive education therapist integrates physical, social, and cognitive skills during regular movement sessions.



Music therapist engages children weekly to explore sound, movement, socialization, and creativity.



Preschool & Kindergarten



A teacher, classroom lead, and developmental aides ensure individual attention focused on growth and progress towards goals.



Our therapy team including speech, occupational, physio, behaviour, music, and conductive education builds skills through play.



53

children attended centre-based preschool or kindergarten in 2023-2024.



Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)

Some children registered in our programs have additional in-home support contracts with Family Support for Children with Disabilities through the province. We believe continuity of therapeutic approach and integration of strategies as children move between their classroom and home environments is beneficial for both children and families. This simplifies service coordination for parents, giving them more time and freedom to focus on learning effective strategies to support their child.



"Such an exceptional place, with exceptional people, offering hope to families in very challenging circumstances."

"I really appreciate these programs being offered so we can improve our, and our family's, quality of life."

"It's so meaningful to speak with someone who is either walking the same journey you are or is maybe a few years ahead and has some advice to share."

Family Programs

We prioritize family wellness and provide support groups, parenting courses, family events, and individualized support to help parents and caregivers gain skills, strengthen resiliency, and build community in the early stages of their journey raising a child with developmental delays or disabilities.

Circle of Security™

Conducted twice, with full enrolment of 16 parents, participants reported gaining valuable knowledge and strategies to better support their child's needs and enhance their parenting effectiveness.

Caring for the Caregiver

Participants meeting a precondition of completing Circle of Security™ engaged in a two-day course focusing on strategies for caregiver wellbeing.

Step Together

One quarter of families engaged in opportunities to come together in a relaxed environment to discuss the joys and challenges they experience on their journey with special needs.

Highlights from the Year

Happy Families, Stronger Futures

End-of-year surveys showed that 100% of respondents were satisfied with their child's program with more than three quarters expressing they were "very satisfied". Parents reported their children:

- ✓ Gained confidence
- ✓ Improved speech and motor skills
- ✓ Enhanced emotional regulation
- ✓ Learned social skills
- ✓ Built relationships
- ✓ Were happier and more independent



Bringing Together Two Trusted Early Intervention Providers

In the spring of 2024, it was announced Cause and Effect Foundation (CEF) would merge with Step by Step Early Intervention Society. Our common values, commitment to a family-centred approach, program model, proven excellence, and shared passion for serving children highlighted Step by Step as the preferred organization to steward CEF's programs and resources into the future as they ceased operations and dissolved the foundation. Cause and Effect Foundation proudly provided programming for children receiving Program Unit Funding (PUF) and Mild/Moderate (MM) funding for 30 years.

The merger, completed on July 31, 2024, consolidated our expertise, resources, and passion under the umbrella of Step by Step. We have proudly welcomed CEF's children, families, staff, and partners into our community. We now have greater opportunity for program enhancement and strategic expansion in the coming years as we strive to continue providing exceptional programs for exceptional children.

Building Renovations

The summer break provided the perfect opportunity to complete renovations for improved function and flow within the centre ahead of classes resuming in September.

- We modified amenities and added a stall in the children's bathroom to better accommodate increased enrolment.
- We made room for a new classroom by removing one wall and combining two smaller spaces.
- We added three new doors to improve access and flow throughout the building.
- We installed a security system with carded access on our exterior doors to enhance safety by preventing unauthorized entry and exit.



Generous Community Support

Contributions from our donors and community partners supported essential elements of Step by Step's programs including transport vehicles, enhanced therapy, specialized equipment, family services, classroom tools, and outdoor play improvements. Your support makes all the difference - thank you for being an invaluable part of our community!



Circle time is hard when all your energy is going into holding your body upright to stay in your chair. This adaptive seat allows children to focus on songs and stories instead.

Our team approach ensures therapeutic goals like building upper body strength and increasing time standing are incorporated into activities throughout the day.



Classrooms can be loud and overwhelming. Wearing headphones helps children overcome noise sensitivities and be able to stay with peers and continue playing.



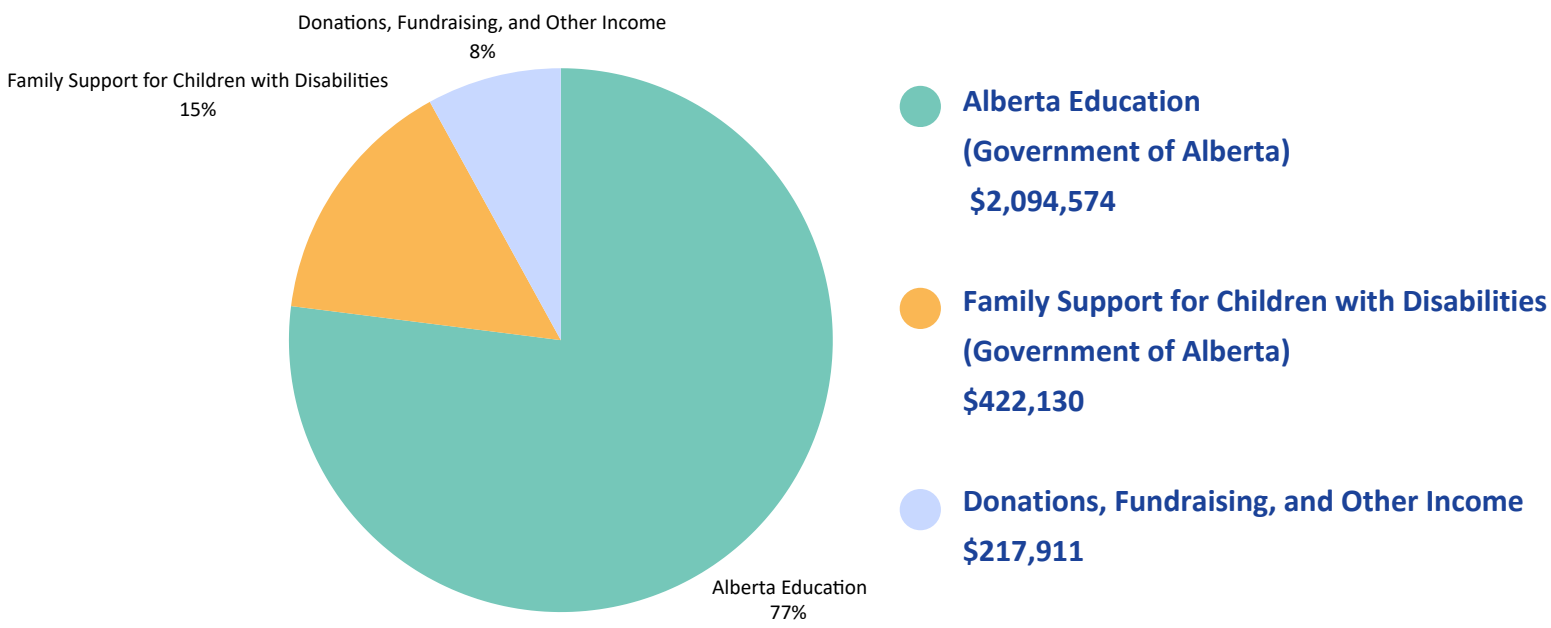
Swings are the overwhelming favourite outside activity among this age group and therapists alike. Swinging helps children gain strength and coordination while also providing beneficial vestibular input.

Thank You!

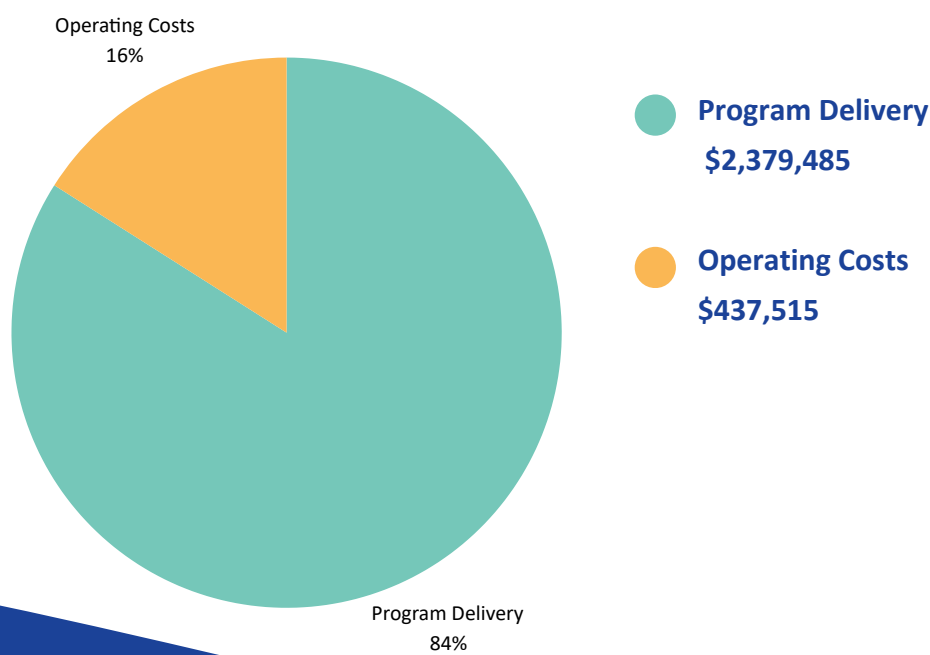


Financial Information

Revenue



Expenses



Year ended August 31, 2024

For audited financials, please contact accounting@stepbysteip.ca



Visit stepbystepyy.com to learn how
you can get involved and be sure to
follow us @stepbystepyy on socials.



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