

# 2025


## Impact Report



**Capitalize  
for KIDS**

**Fuelling Meaningful Change**

Making Canada's mental health system  
work for kids and families



*“Our partnership with Capitalize for Kids has had a profound impact on the lives of the children and families we serve, bringing structure, accountability, and measurable outcomes to a sector that often struggles with limited resources.”*

*—Normandie Wragg, CEO, Maltby Centre*



**In a time of crisis, your generosity is igniting change.**

**Every day, your generosity helps create a mental health system that works better for children, youth, and families across Canada. We can't thank you enough.**

The need is great. Community child and youth mental health agencies are in crisis, plagued by critical issues that are preventing children and youth from accessing the care they need, when they need it most.

It's a crisis that threatens the well-being of generations of young people and the very future of this country. **By investing in Capitalize for Kids, you are helping to solve it.**

Your support fuels our impact as a system solutions leader catalyzing transformative change for young people nationwide. With our donors and partners by our side, we are leveraging our unique role as an expert advisor, innovator, and funder for child and youth mental health agencies, addressing some of the toughest challenges facing the sector.

In the following pages, we are honoured to share highlights of your generosity in action in 2025. Whether you are a donor, partner, volunteer, or supporter of the C4K Investors Conference or Bay Street Games, you are helping to build a stronger mental health system in Canada. A system that creates a better future for children and youth—and provides a brighter future for us all.

**We are deeply grateful to you for making it all possible. Thank you.**



*Ted Garrard*

Ted Garrard, C.M.  
Board Chair,  
Capitalize for Kids



*Angela Simo Brown*

Angela Simo Brown  
President & CEO,  
Capitalize for Kids

## Kids in Canada are in Crisis

---

Canada's children and youth are enduring unprecedented mental health challenges.

Faced with the combined impacts of social media, climate change anxiety, growing food, housing, and employment insecurity, worries about emerging issues like conflict and artificial intelligence, and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>1</sup> **20%** of children and youth are experiencing a serious mental health concern—yet just **one in five** can access the mental health support they so urgently need.<sup>2</sup>

### **Why? Because Canada's child and youth mental health system is in crisis.**

Plagued by underfunding, staffing shortages, fragmentation, poor coordination, and increasing complexity of cases, provincial and territorial networks of community agencies cannot keep up with surging demand for care. This is especially true for community organizations delivering publicly funded services for the most vulnerable and marginalized children and families.

In Ontario alone, close to **30,000** kids are waiting for mental health support<sup>3</sup>—a failure of the system that is putting the lives and potential of generations of young people at risk.

1. Abacus Data 2025, Raising Canada, and The World Happiness Report

2. Canadian Mental Health Association 2021

3. Children's Mental Health Ontario 2020

## Together, We're Tackling This Crisis

---

With the support of our donors and partners, Capitalize for Kids plays a completely unique role in the landscape of child and youth mental health services in Canada: **We partner with agencies to identify and close the critical gaps preventing them from doing their best possible work.**

Creating impact at both the agency level and the system level, we're improving data-driven care coordination, accelerating innovation, and breaking down barriers so that children, youth, and families across Canada can thrive.

Agencies may not have the capacity and funding to create the solutions they need. **But we do.**

**This work is only possible with your generous support. Thank you.**

## Driving Transformative Impact in 2025

Fuelled by your generosity, Capitalize for Kids achieved unprecedented impact for children, youth, and families in 2025.



Partnered with over **50** community child and youth mental health agencies, helping more than **200,000** children, youth, and families access the right care at the right time.



Led **34** projects focused on improving access to care, designing innovative new programs, and leveraging the power of technology and data to drive tangible change for children and families.



Provided over **13,000** impact consulting hours to support agency partners, with almost **500** hours donated by top-tier management consulting firms.

## Our Four Areas of Focus

**Making Care Possible:** We improve efficiencies and remove barriers to help our agency partners maximize access to care.

**Improving Care with Data:** We work with agencies to harness the power of data to improve care for children, youth, and families.

**Opening Doors to Care:** We help agencies and the system overcome fragmentation and disorganization to help kids access the care they need sooner.

**Reimagining Care:** We help agencies reimagine how care is designed and delivered to keep pace with the constantly evolving needs of young people.

## Our Key Collaborators

We work closely with child and youth mental health agencies across Canada. In Ontario, we also work with provincial organizations with a mandate to improve the community child and youth mental health sector.



Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth  
Mental Health and Addictions  
Institut du savoir sur la santé mentale et les  
dépendances chez les enfants et les jeunes



## Transforming Lives with Measurement-Based Care

---

In 2025, the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario released a report on the state of community mental health services for children and youth. Its key findings included a critical lack of standardization in patient outcomes and assessments—a gap that’s preventing young people from receiving the best possible care.

Measurement-based care (MBC) is a powerful approach designed to address this gap. Allowing clinicians to track clients’ symptoms and progress in real time, adjust treatment as needed, and identify challenges early on, **MBC has demonstrated incredible benefits—including faster improvement of symptoms and increased engagement with treatment.**<sup>4</sup>



Yet despite its incredible potential, child and youth mental health agencies face significant barriers to adopting MBC.

**To address this gap, Capitalize for Kids launched the five-year MBC Accelerator Project in 2025 to implement MBC across the sector.**

This transformative and deeply collaborative project has started with seven agencies across Ontario, with support and guidance from the Krembil Centre for Neuroinformatics at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Sunnybrook Research Institute, young people province-wide, and other academic and sector partners.

4. Parikh et. al. 2020, Ehrenreich-May et. al. 2025, de Jong et. al. 2021

“My grandson has been getting mental health treatment for the past 10 years but neither of us know if he is actually getting any better. There is no evidence that anything is actually working and we are both tired. It would be so good if there were a way to measure his progress and keep him engaged in treatment.”

—Phyllis, Caregiver

Together, we are making critical progress toward the uptake of MBC across the child and youth mental health system—including by building the digital and research infrastructure needed to support it over the long term.

Ultimately, we aim to create a strong base of evidence for MBC in Ontario that will lead to permanent provincial funding for this critical model of care—transforming the system and improving the lives of children, youth, and families across Ontario.

**“By embedding MBC into our practice, we aim to reduce barriers for the children and youth we serve, providing them with greater autonomy to share information and access their progress in real time.”**

*—Zoe Campbell, Mental Health Clinical Manager, FIREFLY*

## Our MBC Accelerator Project Partners



## Looking Towards the Future with MBC

In 2026, the MBC Accelerator Project will provide training and implementation support to **137** clinicians across our **7** partner agencies, reaching an estimated **1,500** children and youth with MBC.

We will also engage an additional **13+** agencies province-wide to participate in this project over the next two years.

## The Right Care at the Right Time with Coordinated Access

---

Right now, when a young person needs mental health support, it's not always obvious how to access it. Families often find themselves calling around to multiple organizations, sitting on multiple waitlists for months at a time, and being referred to services that may not offer the level of care needed.

The solution to this fragmentation? A system of coordinated access within geographic regions across the province.

In 2025, Capitalize for Kids spearheaded several major projects to advance coordinated access in Ontario—a system that will ultimately enable children and families to use a centralized point of access within their region and be referred directly to the right service.



We worked with the Lead Agency Consortium, a group of 31 lead agencies representing 33 regions across Ontario that serve as the backbone of system planning, to identify key recommendations for the future of coordinated access in the province and lay the foundation for system-wide change. Using these recommendations, we are now working directly with two lead agencies, Strides Toronto and Keystone Child, Youth & Family Services (Grey and Bruce Counties) to significantly improve access in their regions.

**Our partnership with Strides Toronto includes implementing and expanding Help Ahead, a centralized intake and navigation system bringing together 22 Toronto-based agencies that previously struggled with a lack of coordination.**

This partnership has already helped streamline access to 14 agencies represented by Help Ahead and provide intensive services for complex kids, including major hospitals and health systems like the Garry Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health at SickKids, North York General Hospital, and Scarborough Health Network.

We anticipate the full launch of a comprehensive system of coordinated access in Toronto later this year, supported by our work with Strides Toronto.

## The Power of Coordinated Access: Sarah's Story\*

Coordinated access matters for every child and family—but it's especially impactful for the most complex cases.

In 2025, as the first phase of implementation continued, Help Ahead Toronto began to see the impact of its new system of coordinated access come into focus through the experiences of a mother and two children—a teenager and a younger child—experiencing profound mental health challenges.

Having endured the death of their father during the pandemic, Sarah's children were struggling to cope with anxiety, depression, and behavioural challenges. Sarah sought help for her kids, but they resisted treatment from a number of community-based services, which were primarily offering parental support.

Through Help Ahead's new coordinated access model, a service navigator was able to work closely with the family and successfully encourage the kids to access support. Eventually, both kids entered a day treatment program and began to stabilize. And when Sarah herself experienced a mental health crisis and had to be hospitalized, Help Ahead was able to quickly place her kids in a live-in treatment program close to home.

Today, both siblings are continuing to receive treatment and the whole family is doing well—a powerful demonstration of the role coordinated access plays in managing complex cases and helping children, youth, and families thrive.

*\*Name changed to protect identity*

**“Children and youth often refuse services; it takes the effort of a knowledgeable clinician or service navigator to be persistent so they can receive the support they need. A centralized system allows this to happen, ensuring young people can be connected with the right services and receive ongoing advocacy and support.”**

*—Sabrina Samsudeen, Director,  
Mental Health Systems, Strides Toronto*

### Coordinated Access Partners



## Filling a Gap for Youth with Complex Mental Health Needs



Young people with complex mental health challenges can struggle to find rapid access to the psychiatric care they so urgently need. One of the biggest roadblocks is a lack of community-based psychiatrists, which prevents primary care providers from easily referring young people for psychiatric consultations—a reality that can lead to a crisis requiring emergency care.

To help address this major gap, Capitalize for Kids worked with Youthdale Treatment Centres—a Toronto-based mental health agency helping children, youth, and families with complex needs—to design and implement a model for community-based psychiatric consultation and outpatient support.

As a major service provider for youth with complex needs, Youthdale has an experienced team of psychiatrists already working within its programs, but there was no clear referral pathway available to community-based primary care providers.



Through the Youthdale Outpatient Psychiatry Project, Capitalize for Kids and Youthdale established partnerships with family health teams in underserved neighbourhoods across Toronto. **Together, we designed a service model that allows family doctors to quickly and easily refer patients for a consultation with a Youthdale psychiatrist.**

The program fully launched in 2025, representing a major step forward for young people, their families, and the child and youth mental health system in Toronto. It's a powerful example of a solution that bridges system gaps by providing tailored support along the continuum of care, helping to ensure youth receive the right level of support at the right time. It also holds the potential to be replicated by other organizations serving youth with complex needs, extending its impact beyond Youthdale and the communities it serves.

“I have been deeply passionate about the health and well-being of children and youth for over 25 years. And for the past decade, my husband David and I have invested in mental health research to help protect the future of kids who are struggling.

But we know that research takes time, and help can't wait. That's why we decided to invest in Capitalize for Kids—because we want to make a difference for children, youth, and families right now.

We have 10 grandchildren, and we know that anyone can be impacted by mental health challenges. We're proud that our donations are driving solutions that help young people access support in their own communities, when and how they need it most.”

—Gail O'Brien, Donor

## Coming Up in 2026: Intensive Outpatient Program with Stella's Place



This year, we are partnering with Stella's Place to design a new intensive outpatient mental health program for young people with severe and complex mental health challenges.

The program will provide the structured, intensive daily support their recovery actually requires, without removing them from their communities, families, and routines. Addressing a critical gap in care options for youth with complex needs between weekly therapy and hospitalization, this program aims to reduce costs to the mental health system and establish a scalable model of care that can be replicated across the province.

## Bringing the Healing Power of Nature to Kids Across Ontario



**TAKE A HIKE**  
FOUNDATION

Take a Hike Foundation is a Vancouver-based charity that supports young people struggling with the impacts of trauma, instability, disengagement from school, and other challenges.

Through partnerships with local school boards, Take a Hike engages young people with mental health programming and land-based learning—empowering them with the skills they need to graduate from high school and pursue their dreams.

Take a Hike had grown to the point where it wanted to bring its transformative approach and impact to help young people in Ontario while protecting the quality of its programming.



This is where Capitalize for Kids came in. Working closely with the Take a Hike team, we conducted a comprehensive operational review and developed a three-year roadmap to empower the organization’s sustainable growth and expansion in the years ahead.

In the fall of 2025, Capitalize for Kids supported Take a Hike’s successful launch in Ontario through its new partnership with the Simcoe County District School Board—**bringing impactful nature-based healing to young people in Ontario.**

**“Capitalize for Kids stimulated deep discussion with our organization as we worked together to develop a three-year roadmap for the future. The team listened non-judgmentally, offered unique perspectives, provided guidance, and walked alongside us throughout the entire process. Their expertise and caring approach shone brightly and played a crucial role in our ability to successfully expand into Ontario.”**

*—Gordon Matchett, CEO, Take a Hike Foundation*

## Leveraging AI to Improve Access to Care

---



Without the funding and resources to invest in technology, many community agencies are forced to operate with outdated systems that take up far too much of their clinicians' time—time that could be spent caring for children and youth. As demand for mental health services continues to rise, this enormous administrative burden is leading to even longer delays to care.

To address this critical gap, Capitalize for Kids is working with agency partners to empower the responsible and impactful adoption of AI tools across the sector. AI holds tremendous potential to reduce administrative burdens and free up hundreds of hours for clinical care.

In 2025, we partnered with the George Hull Centre for Children and Families to test the use of an AI writing tool shown to **reduce time spent on documentation by up to 70%, freeing up roughly 230 clinician hours per year and significantly improving access to care for young people.** Currently in the pilot stage, we anticipate the full implementation of this tool in 2026.

In the year ahead, we'll continue to work closely with agency partners, sector leaders, and AI experts to pilot AI tools with early adopters and pave the way for broader scaling across Ontario and beyond.

## Our Partners in AI Innovation and Adoption

---





## Thank You

---

None of this work would be possible without the enduring generosity of our community of donors, partners, and champions. In the years ahead, your support will remain more critical than ever as we pursue unprecedented growth and impact for children and youth right across Canada—uplifting the potential of generations of young people.

**To everyone involved with Capitalize for Kids: thank you. Our gratitude knows no bounds.**

If you would like to learn more about the work of Capitalize for Kids or get involved as a partner, donor, or volunteer, please visit [capitalizforkids.org](https://capitalizforkids.org) or contact us at:

Capitalize for Kids  
1 St. Clair. Ave. W., Suite 300  
Toronto, ON M4V 1K6  
[info@capitalizforkids.com](mailto:info@capitalizforkids.com)

Charitable Registration # 815601760RR0001

**Follow us:**



@CapitalizeforKids

*“Capitalize for Kids plays a critical role implementing transformative improvements to the community child and youth mental health sector.*

*They have supported the George Hull Centre for Children and Families with valuable efficiencies and innovations over many years. An appointment reminder system helped reduce waitlists by 80%, and an AI scribe pilot is ongoing to support our clinicians and therapists to spend less time on documentation and more time treating children.*

*The George Hull Centre and our children and families are so grateful for Capitalize for Kids!”*

*—Susan Chamberlain, Executive Director,  
George Hull Centre for Children and Families*





# 2025 Impact Report

## Fuelling Meaningful Change

### Our Purpose

Capitalize for Kids is a charitable organization dedicated to improving Canada's community mental health system, so all children, youth, and families can thrive.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to solve complex problems to improve the child and youth mental health sector through community collaboration, powerful partnerships, expert advisory services, and innovative funding.

### Our Vision

Our vision is to create a world-leading child and youth mental health system driven by excellence, efficiency, equitable access, and meaningful outcomes.