

Services à l'enfance
Andrew Fleck
Children's Services

Physically Distancing
but Still Supporting

**ANNUAL
REPORT 2020**

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CORE VALUES

EXCELLENCE • INTEGRITY • RESPONSIVENESS • INCLUSIVENESS • ACCOUNTABILITY • LEADERSHIP

AFCS is committed to these values and principles in all its services and practices

Message from the Executive Director

2020 will always be known as the year of COVID, and while it's been a year of uncertainty it has also been a year where we dug deep, did our best and figured out a way to thrive. First, we started the year with 3 new programs – Capital, Colonel By and Riverside Park Nursery School joined us at the very end of 2019 - and we felt we were just getting to know them well and then COVID caused a pause.

When I clicked send on that March 15th email to all staff announcing that we were to remain home, as recommended by Dr. Etches, to do our part, I legitimately thought this would be a 3-week adventure; a unique experience in 2020 that we could embrace as an opportunity for collective professional learning and growth – oh my. With no previous global pandemic experience the leadership team and I were trusting our instincts and I am proud to say that in hindsight there is very little that I would change in terms of our AFCS response. We started by identifying our overall guiding principles of what was important to us in the short and long term – and these became our general benchmark for the countless decisions that needed to come fast and furious in the next few weeks and months (by the end of April I was saying that we had made more decisions in the past 6-weeks than in the previous year or more).

Our principles were relatively simple: *keep connected with children, families, staff; to implement local public health advice as directed; and be able to hold our heads up high when this*

was over knowing we had done our best.

Fortunately, our foundation was and is strong. We had already embraced technology and decentralized many of our practices, this allowed us to, for the most part, seamlessly adapt to working from home without the risk of missing any important deadlines (like payroll) and enabled staff in front-facing positions to pivot to offering virtual supports. We were also in a secure enough financial position to not have to make immediate decisions – an important message to staff was they could be confident that their employer had their back, that they could depend on us – even when some of our revenue sources, like parent fees, needed to cease. Having an existing Health and Safety Committee in place was also a key to success, being able to lean on them added confidence as we navigated the changing (and sometimes conflicting) information.

By early April we had settled in to accepting that this was a marathon not a sprint – even our *bonhommes* became physically distant, we found ourselves adjusting to the rhythm of being connected through Zoom, email, Teams, OneDrive, Dayforce, StoryPark and more – even those that were initially technology hesitant found themselves becoming comfortable with this strange new world of virtual connecting.



And the creativity shone through! What a collective sense of humour! People hit their stride – not to dismiss that this was not hard – definitely it was, but the importance of remaining connected was evident and the ability to support each other was our strength. As I think back over the last year the one word that appropriately sums up the role of AFCS as an agency, made up of individuals is ANCHOR. It is not a word (or feeling) that I was aware would be the appropriate descriptor of this experience, way back in March 2020 when we were at the beginning, but now it feels like the right word to sum up what we were trying to achieve.

What is most impressive is AFCS has not only survived during these unprecedented times but thrived! As we think ahead to a post-COVID-19 future my hope is that we can retain what we've learned and focus on re-envisioning services for children and families.

I've never been more thankful to our community partners and our connection with the City of Ottawa Children's Services team, who've not only been a funder but a key partner and advocate during this year of COVID – it's been a roller coaster to say the least. My heartfelt thanks to each and every AFCS staff for all they've done for children, families, the community and each other: **Thanks for being the anchors of AFCS, without you we would have been adrift.**

Kim Hiscott, RECE
Executive Director

Message from the Board President

The Andrew Fleck Children's Services is a big family. It includes early childhood educators, program and administrative assistants, cooks and cleaners, supply educators, members of the leadership team and all others who, on a daily basis, engage and work with children and their families. Board members play a different role but are also very much a part of this large family.

During the pandemic, all members of the family have had to find new or different ways of doing their work. And like most families they have become more flexible, they have discovered and applied new secret talents, developed treasures of

creativity and cleverness in order to continue to provide our services to children and families, in person or virtually.

AFCS has shown itself again as a top-notch organisation and given to all an example of what can be done even during a pandemic, with significant restrictions to usual activities. On behalf of the Board, a huge thank you to all members of the family as well as to those, like the home child care providers, who help us make this an even better and diversified organisation.

Michèle René de Cotret
President and Chair of the Board

French Language Services

Two of Andrew Fleck Children's Services have a French Language Services designation: Children Inclusion Support Services (CISS) and the EarlyOn Child and Family Centre - Central South. This designation, obtained over two decades ago, ensures the daily provision of services in French by francophone employees.

AFCS is committed to its francophone clients. Last year more than a quarter (26%) of the Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS) workshops were presented in French to 21% of the total number of participants overall. The CISS newsletter is published in French and English. While the City of Ottawa no longer funds our EarlyOn programming from the francophone stream, AFCS continues to offer EarlyOn services in French. In 2020, we offered 28 francophone playgroups/virtual activities and more than 150 take home kits for francophone families. In both these programs, CISS and EarlyOn, our FTE bilingual positions far exceed the official requirements of 25% and 15% respectively.



Socially Distanced Leadership Retreat for Directors



Take home art kits from the EarlyOn

Historical Information

Did you know that this pandemic is not the first one our organization has been a part of? Our historybook, written in 2011 to celebrate our 100th anniversary, describes the situation in 1918:

If there is one constant in the history of the Andrew Fleck Child Care Services, it is change. The Centre has always striven to improve its services – and add new ones – to respond to the needs of the community and its families and to meet operational challenges. One major challenge occurred in 1918, when the worldwide influenza pandemic struck Ottawa in late September. At the height of the pandemic, over 10,000 Ottawans were stricken and, during a three-week period, 520 succumbed to influenza and pneumonia.

In an attempt to halt the spread of the virulent virus, Mayor Harold Fisher banned public meetings, closed the city's schools, churches, pool halls, theatres, and laundries, and instructed stores and offices to shut their doors at four o'clock. So serious was the shortage of hospital beds and so desperate the need for nursing care that George Foster, Canada's acting prime minister, asked the deputy minister of the Department of Justice that October to appeal to his female clerks to volunteer a few days of home nursing.

Among the privately run institutions that came to the rescue was the Ottawa

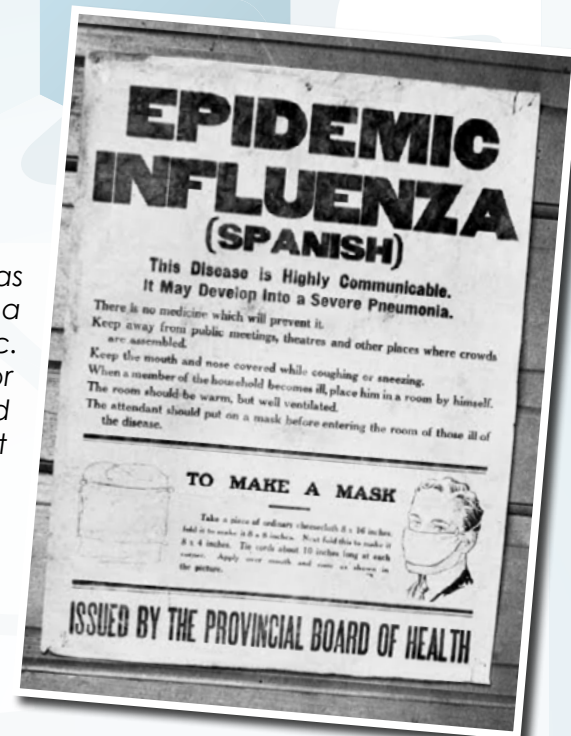
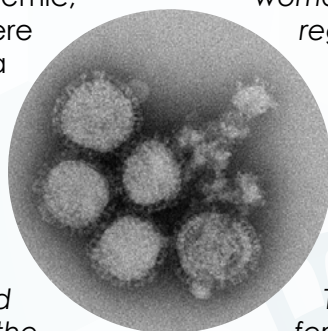
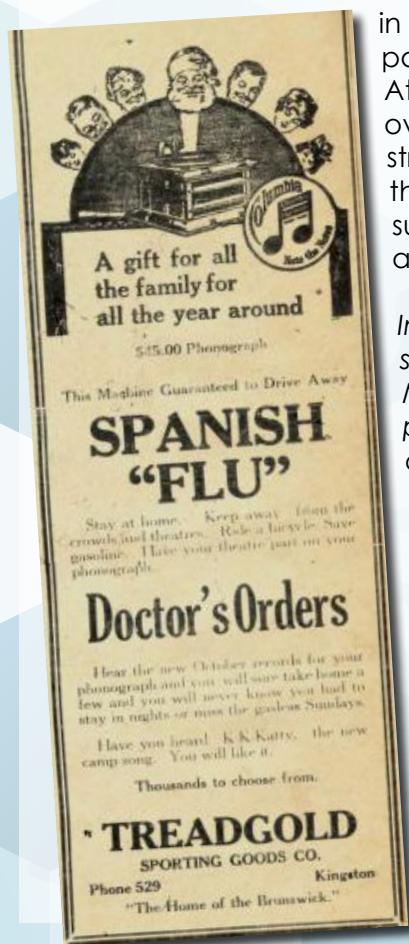
Day Nursery, which was converted into a hospital for a month during the pandemic. During this time, it cared for thirty-eight child patients and eight healthy children, and it had only two fatalities.

Despite the Nursery being closed for a month, its year-end report noted that 812 women had been on its register in 1918, an increase of 117 over the previous year.

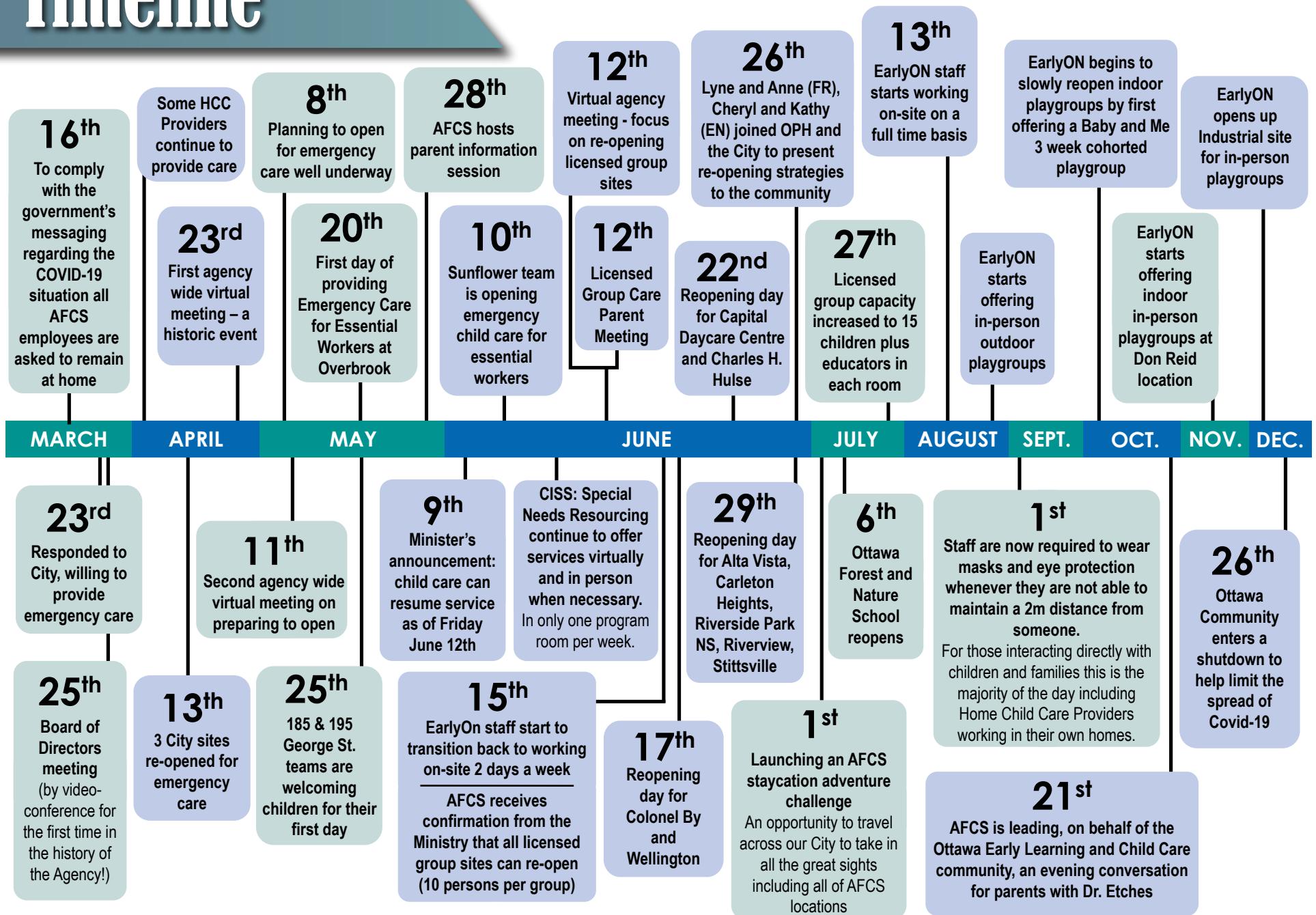
And the report continued with evident pride and gratification: "We had during the year 9,976 children and the earnings of the mothers for 1918 [were] \$9,476.00, an increase of \$83.10 over 1917. The money paid by the mothers for the care of their children was \$750.35, an increase of \$144.74 over last year."

Our agency was called Ottawa Day Nursery back then and the building that was converted to a hospital was likely at 87 Albert St – the building no longer exists. Our George St building was built in 1932.

If you are curious to read more, our history book is on our website: www.afchildrensservices.ca/about-us/100-years-of-history/



Timeline



A Year in Review

Provided
CARE & SERVICES
to
5,174
children

Provided
SUPPORT & SERVICES
to
3,319
families

Sent
233
NEWSLETTERS
to
15,723
subscribers

Supported
264
PROGRAMS & ORGANIZATIONS
(57 of those kindergarten & school age programs)

Organized
293
PLAYGROUPS

HR

Total Hires = 108
Total employees = 290
Full time positions = 173
Part-time positions = 117
(includes supply educators)
Employees with 10+ years at AFCS = 48

ZOOM EXPERTS!

While we couldn't meet in person for the year, we certainly became experts at Zoom calls!

Totalling a total of 3,319 meetings and 1,202,203 minutes in 1 year.

We made the best of connecting virtually!

Presented
203 WORKSHOPS
to
2,347
participants

Offered
160
LIVE VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
to
1,388 & **1,179**
children adults

Created
133
 **VIDEOS**
with
12,937
views

Organized
83
SPECIAL EVENTS

Loaned more than
2,216
TOYS, EQUIPMENT & RESOURCES

*Most program and services were offered both virtually and in person (Jan-March)

Emergency Care

Emergency Care May 19th to June 12th 2020

Opening the first AFCS emergency care site was quite the adventure. It gave me the opportunity to meet people from other centres as well as reconnect with some of my fellow coworkers after 2 months of lockdown. It amazed me how quickly we started working as a team, learning how to interact but keep social distancing, which for ECE's is not normal. We took each day as a learning experience, adapting when needed but always with a smile. The children who came were amazing, especially the little ones. Entering an unknown building without their parents and us in full PPE must have been scary, but they seemed so happy to see other children even from a distance. We quickly formed a tight bubble of cohorts. Temperature checks became routine. It certainly will be a memory that I will remember with joy.

Lynne Richardson, RECE



HCC Emergency Care

**Provided
services to:
33 children
22 families
in both home and
group sites**



A Special Thank You to the Emergency Care Staff

While it does not seem like enough, we gave each of those who worked in Emergency Child Care the Royal Canadian Mint 2020 recognition medal – *“this special medal pays tribute to the tremendous contributions of essential workers in all fields across Canada, as well as Canadians who are keeping people safe, healthy and connected as we face the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

This was given as an extra thank you for stepping up and out during these unprecedented times – in the words of our Home Child Care Providers, after receiving her medal: *“Thank you for the appreciation medal! I felt so blessed to be able to help essential workers by opening my daycare!”*

*I'm proud to be a part of the
Andrew Fleck family!”*

We Continue to Grow



**Garderie
Tunney's Daycare**



**New Forest Program
at Wesley Clover Parks**



**Mooney's Bay
Child Care Centre**



My Pandemic Story

On March 16th, the lockdown came upon us, “We’ll need to stay home”, we all said in chorus!

We were asked to stay home,
We were asked not to roam,
We were asked to stay safe.
The world around us, had become unsafe.

Who would have thought we would witness such a pandemic?
Who would have known that we’d wear masks in public?
Physical distancing and group cohorting,
PPE and proper hand washing,
Would become our new reality.
Front-line workers would take care of humanity.

The pandemic meant a general lockdown,
But AFCS did not slow down.
Our daily interactions were surely kept,
As we all knew, that we had to connect
With our beautiful families and our dear colleagues too.
We learned to use Teams.
We learned to use Zoom.
We became pros at working from our living room.
Communication was the key to everything,
We all had to be, kind and understanding.


We remained employed from the comfort of our homes,
From webinars to workshops,
Our dining rooms as our backdrops.
From all our PD, we learned so much,
Thanks to our wonderful employer, we all kept in touch.
From HR to Finance to CISS,
From Group Care, HCC, and our Early ON Services,
Everyone pulled their weight and worked so hard,
Everyone worked straight from the heart.

To all the employees, daily emails were sent,
Words of wisdom were a daily event.
Encouraging words from our dear ED Kim,
Were truly a godsend to our entire team.
“I wish I had a magic wand!”, she’d say or “We’ve got this!”
She made sure that we did not lose our fizz.
She kept us informed and kept us engaged,
With tons of fun games and creative Wordles!
Indeed, she helped us overcome all of the hurdles.
“And then it snowed”!

Not everything was smooth
This is the honest truth.
Some days were very good and some were bad,
Some were very happy and some were sad.
AF staff had its share of sorrow and grief,
Which of course at times, would shatter our belief
Especially when we lost our Angel Sheri
Forever in our hearts, her memories we will carry.

I am grateful for my staff and for the management team,
Their support is appreciated and makes me not scream.
Blessed for the merger,
Blessed for my team.
Blessed for the directors
and all of the PCs.
All employees of this great organization,
Truly deserve a standing ovation.

By Tina Moledina



Andrew Fleck Children's Services is Ottawa's leading family-oriented, charitable, multi-service, early learning and family support organization since 1911. The agency support children and their families through high quality, inclusive services that meet their diverse developmental, early learning and child care needs. Operating 17 programs in various locations across the City of Ottawa, it provides a continuum of child care, information, support and early years services to over 4,522 children each year. This century old agency has proven its adaptability and viability through its longevity.

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