



# 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan

THRIVE Child Development Centre

May 2022

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# 1. Strategic Context

## 1.1. How We've Grown & Changed

THRIVE Child Development Centre (THRIVE) began in 1952 as a joint project of the Rotary Club of Sault Ste. Marie and the Sault Ste. Marie Public Board of Education. In 1983, it was incorporated as a free-standing Children's Treatment Centre, and they took on their current name in 2016.

Over the past five years, THRIVE has experienced significant growth and change, with new programs and services, CEO transitions, new sites, navigation of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new organizational structure, and significant changes to service system and community supports. We've grown into a highly respected and valued organization, at the forefront of developmental services across the region.

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"An amazing group of people who work together to support both children and families. Very responsive and always positive and understanding." *(Parent/Caregiver, Online Survey)*

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### Where We Are Today

- 90 FTE staff members
- Operational budget of \$8.3 million
- 5 office sites across the Algoma District
- Offering a continuum of services.

# 2. Strategic Foundations

## 2.1. Mission

- *THRIVE empowers children and their families to reach beyond what is expected toward the extraordinary.*

## 2.2. Vision

- *A future of possibilities.*

## 2.3. Values & Beliefs

Our deeply held values and beliefs guide our approach to serving families, working with each other, and working with our community partners. We strive to emulate them in all our interactions.

**We believe in:**

- The voice of our children
- Interactions framed by respect and dignity
- Opportunity through fairness, equity, and inclusion
- Achieving excellence through innovation, curiosity, and optimism
- The power of teamwork and partnerships

# 3. Strategic Directions

An effective strategic plan sets the foundation for a clear and focused future, uniting the organization under a common purpose and strategy.

Our strategic plan is given shape by our strategic directions, which provide clear focus and direction while still allowing us to respond and adapt as circumstances evolve over the coming years.

At the base of all we do is a commitment to quality service in a welcoming, caring, and inclusive environment. We now offer several new services that support us in providing a continuum of care, and want to ensure that as we grow, we continue to enhance our family and child-centred model, high-quality care, and excellent client experience.

Each of our strategic directions include a corresponding set of tangible commitments.

Taken together, our strategic directions and commitments will provide a strong framework for developing annual operational plans with measurable goals and achievable objectives.

### 3.1. Overarching Goal

Through each of our strategic directions is a commitment to **advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion across our organization**. We will aim to provide equitable and accessible services, identify systemic issues that may present barriers, and help clients to feel welcome and safe. As we move forward, we will ensure that we consider equity, diversity, and inclusion in the implementation of each strategic direction.

### 3.2. Strategic Direction: Enhance Awareness and Collaboration

We value the strong relationships and connections we have with our partners and the trust they have in us. We recognize that there are opportunities post-pandemic to build closer ties with the community, strengthen connections, and invest in working together to best serve our clients. We are proud of the high-quality services we offer and want to ensure the community knows that they are available.

#### Related Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will **enhance awareness and collaboration** by ...*

- **Enhancing Our Community Profile:** Engaging our partners to enhance referral pathways to THRIVE and ensuring we are top-of-mind for our community.
- **Ensuring Internal Clarity:** Being clear internally and in our external communications as to our core strengths, breadth of services, and internal pathways to enhance the overall client and partner experience and clarify where we are best positioned to offer support.

- **Rooting Ourselves in Partnership:** Through collaboration, exploring and addressing systemic gaps, supporting smooth service transitions for families, reducing duplication, and sharing and leveraging limited resources.
- **Investing in Communications:** Ensuring the necessary investments are in place to support the development and implementation of a communications strategy.

### 3.3. **Strategic Direction:** Ensure a Quality Client Experience

Rooting ourselves in a strong foundation of family-centred care, we commit to being smart about growth. Within a culture of growth and continuous learning, our staff are committed to facilitating the best outcomes for children and families. We are working to ensure clients have a smooth experience transitioning into and across our services. Families come to THRIVE with their own unique set of circumstances, and we want to help ease their challenges by reducing the number of unknowns and ensuring they feel well prepared and supported.

#### Related Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will ensure a quality client experience by ...*

- **Navigating Pathways to Service:** Ensuring clients receive the right service at the right time, by establishing clear, well-defined service pathways and enhancing cross-team collaboration and communications.
- **Ensuring Equitable Access:** Across the vast geography we serve, supporting clients in having equitable access to services.

- **Empowering the Family:** Providing new families with a welcoming, wholistic onboarding to THRIVE that offers information, sets expectations, and establishes a clear understanding of the path ahead.
- **Prioritizing Quality Care:** Regularly collecting quality assurance data, by measuring client outcomes and gathering client feedback, to ensure consistently high-quality, effective care and client satisfaction.
- **Fostering Continuous Learning:** Supporting our skilled, dedicated staff in providing high quality care through ongoing training and professional development.

### 3.4. **Strategic Direction:** Invest in Culture and People

At THRIVE, we deliver the great work we do because of our skilled, empathetic, passionate staff. After several years of significant change and growth, we are focused on stabilizing and strengthening our staffing. Strong internal communications will continue to be a priority, ensuring staff feel heard, appreciated, and part of the team, and have a voice in everything that happens at THRIVE.

#### Related Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will **invest in culture and people** by ...*

- **Leading Effective Internal Change:** Leading effective change management practices. Continuing to prioritize clear, consistent, and transparent communications through change.
- **Fostering a Healthy Workplace Culture:** ensuring ongoing opportunities to continue to build a supportive, welcoming, collaborative team culture.



- **Recruiting and Retaining Great People:** Evolving our human resources strategies, including an exploration of innovative ideas, to attract and retain high-quality staff who are aligned with the purpose and vision of the organization.
- **Exploring Creative Total Compensation:** Identifying opportunities to increase the competitiveness of staff compensation packages i.e. benefits, incentive programs, salaries etc...

### 3.5. Strategic Direction: Strengthen Systems and Infrastructure

Over the past few years, THRIVE has experienced significant growth and change. We commit to strengthening our foundations and ensuring we have the right systems and infrastructure in place to ensure sustainability for many years to come. It is a priority that staff have the necessary resources and facilities to support them in being collaborative, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of children and families.

#### Related Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will **strengthen systems and infrastructure** by ...*

- **Investing in Technology:** Ensuring access to the necessary technological systems is seamless, with clear processes, onboarding, and policies.
- **Enhancing Data Collection:** Investing in our systems to support data management and strong record keeping and maintenance, as part of ensuring high-quality client care.
- **Assessing and Developing Facilities:** Ensuring THRIVE's facilities effectively support service delivery and human resources across the geography we serve, ensuring consistency, accessibility, and adequate amounts of space.

# 4. Appendix: Stakeholder Engagement

## 4.1. Why Engage?

### Leadership Through Genuine Engagement

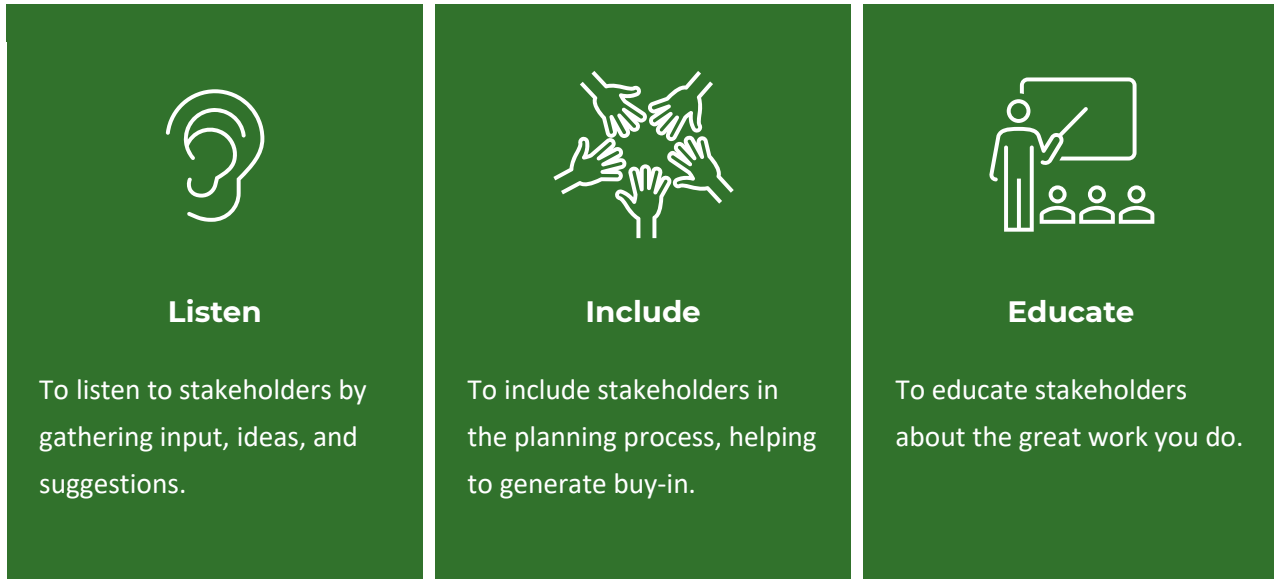
Strategic plans that provide meaningful direction over the course of their stated duration rely on an authentic engagement process, one that genuinely seeks input and allows for those invested in the success of an organization to provide ideas, input, and feedback.

Properly conducted, stakeholder engagement is in no way an abdication or devolution of leadership.

#### **It's the opposite.**

Leaders who reach out to and seek the input of the people delivering or receiving services every day are far more likely to craft future strategic directions that will resonate with those they affect, and those who must implement them.

## The Multiple Purposes of Engagement



## 4.2. Engagement Process

Engagement served as the foundation for the process, informing subsequent discussion, deliberation, and decision-making.

The engagement process, developed and facilitated by Laridae in February - March 2022, was designed to engage with and listen to the individuals who interact with THRIVE on a regular basis.

As a result of this engagement, our strategic plan is informed by experience, evidence, and the most broadly held perceptions of all those we serve.

## Audiences

During the engagement process, we engaged THRIVE’s primary stakeholders.

Staff (Frontline & Management)	Board Members	Clients	Family Members of Clients
Community Health Professionals	Partner Organizations	Funders	Community Members

## Stakeholder Participation

Participation during the engagement process was enthusiastic and honest.

 <p><b>Online Survey</b> 109 People</p>	 <p><b>5 Focus Groups</b> 31 People</p>
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## 4.3. Common Themes

The following themes capture some of the common sentiments we heard during the stakeholder engagement process.

### Perceived Areas of Strength

**Child and Family-Centred Care:** Appreciation was shared for THRIVE’s child-centric approach, with a focus on inclusion, collaboration, and the needs of the family as a whole. Participants noted that there is an opportunity for further clarity about what “family-centred” means to THRIVE, and to anchor themselves in it.

**Quality Services:** Appreciation for staff’s empathy, passion, and commitment. Participants noted that they are flexible and creative in meeting a family’s unique needs, responsive to changing needs and developments, and committed to working together to support the child.

Parents and caregivers shared that they have felt prepared and supported, respected, acknowledged, and prioritized. Appreciation was shared for the continuity of care, support through transitions, and ensuring their child is connected to the right services and programs.

**Internal Communications:** Appreciation was shared for the organization’s strong, effective, transparent, up-to-date internal communication (e.g., town halls, CEO updates) that helped manage expectations. It was noted that leadership is accepting of feedback.

**Workplace Culture:** Appreciation was shared for THRIVE having a culture of growth and continuous learning, including professional development, onboarding, and training. It was noted that the organization is supportive, employee-centred, and welcoming.

**Partnership and Collaboration:** THRIVE was identified as having strong relationships with partners, characterized by inclusion, leadership, collaboration, problem solving, and a willingness to share and leverage limited resources. They are well-perceived by schoolboards.

## Identified Challenges

**Accessibility:** It was identified that there are challenges in ensuring accessible services as it relates to:

- An equitable range of services across a vast geography
- Challenges with reaching remote communities (participants noted the importance of a district-centric approach to service delivery)
- French-language services
- Programming times
- In-person and virtual options

**Change and Growth:** There was appreciation that growth means THRIVE can serve more children and families and for taking on programs that might have otherwise been lost. Through change, it was identified that there are opportunities for stronger connections between departments and teams, and that this has been challenging through the organization's significant growth and COVID-19.

Caution was shared by stakeholders that bigger is not always better. They wanted to see THRIVE consider the following:

- Keeping the organizational culture, family-centred approach, & core values
- Adopting a business model that reflects their larger size
- Ensuring they're not losing details or people in the transitions

The importance of change management and continual learning and reflection was identified. Many see change management at THRIVE as a strength—others looking for more communications, connection, and support

**Program and Service Gaps:** Many program and service gaps were identified (e.g., transition supports, mental health, SLP for school-aged children, recreation therapy, crisis support, specialized developmental services (for ASD), creative expression programs).

Participants spoke to the increased complexity of youth at even younger ages, exacerbated by the pandemic.

Interest was shared in seeing more groups for clients and families post-COVID (e.g., parent support, social groups, skill development, summer camps). Some interest was shared in different approaches (e.g., more holistic approaches, neurodiverse affirming practices, innovative approaches, group treatment options).

**Recruitment and Retention:** Staff shared concerns about retention (THRIVE being seen as a steppingstone) and a need for additional staff. Recruitment challenges were discussed, through COVID and with low candidate pools and competition for certain positions.

**Waitlists:** Participants spoke to long waitlists and waitlist fatigue, and a desire to see them reduced—especially for younger children.

## Suggested Responses

**Invest in Teambuilding:** It was noted that there's an opportunity to rebuild and continue to build personal connections and familiarity between staff, teams, leadership, and families.

**Continue to Communicate:** Appreciation was shared by partners for communication through change, but opportunities exist for:

- Additional communications after referrals are made
- Information on services, prioritization of access, and who to contact
- Feedback and updates on status, results, etc.

It was noted that there's an opportunity to continue to increase awareness of THRIVE, and to continue to prioritize open, transparent communications with staff, including the systems and channels to support effective communication and accessible information flows.

**Facilities:** Increased capital needs were identified as a risk, considering the growth in programming, alongside interest in being together in one building in a central location.

**Strengthen Systems and Processes:** As the organization grows, that there's an opportunity to strengthen and refine the IT infrastructure and support, HR

systems and policies and software, and implement an improved file management system

Interest was shared in seeing more innovative approaches to technology, processes, and information flows.