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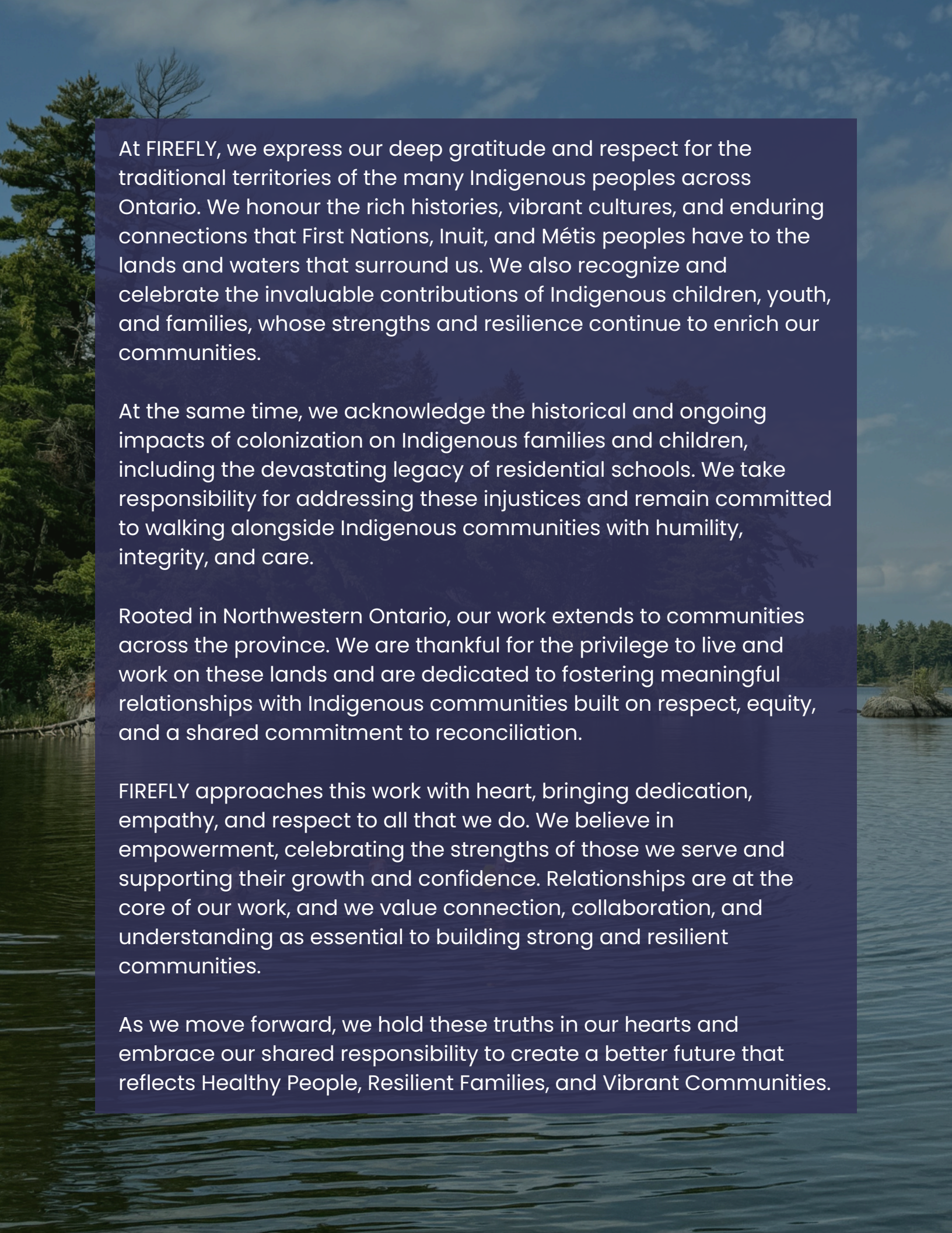
Animal related events are always a hit with my kiddo! The facilitator was amazing! Her enthusiasm and patience with kids is very admirable! A small group and calm environment is where my child thrives, so thank you! ❤️ – Caregiver

”



FIREFLY

Annual Report 2025-26



At FIREFLY, we express our deep gratitude and respect for the traditional territories of the many Indigenous peoples across Ontario. We honour the rich histories, vibrant cultures, and enduring connections that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have to the lands and waters that surround us. We also recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of Indigenous children, youth, and families, whose strengths and resilience continue to enrich our communities.

At the same time, we acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous families and children, including the devastating legacy of residential schools. We take responsibility for addressing these injustices and remain committed to walking alongside Indigenous communities with humility, integrity, and care.

Rooted in Northwestern Ontario, our work extends to communities across the province. We are thankful for the privilege to live and work on these lands and are dedicated to fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities built on respect, equity, and a shared commitment to reconciliation.

FIREFLY approaches this work with heart, bringing dedication, empathy, and respect to all that we do. We believe in empowerment, celebrating the strengths of those we serve and supporting their growth and confidence. Relationships are at the core of our work, and we value connection, collaboration, and understanding as essential to building strong and resilient communities.

As we move forward, we hold these truths in our hearts and embrace our shared responsibility to create a better future that reflects Healthy People, Resilient Families, and Vibrant Communities.

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This past year at FIREFLY has been one of reflection, renewal, and refocus.

When we chose Refocus as our theme, it wasn't just about structural change, but also something deeper. It was about pausing with intention, listening carefully, and asking ourselves who we are now and what we must do to ensure FIREFLY is strong in the future.

For me personally, stepping in as CEO, this year has been one of meaningful learning. I made it a priority to spend time with the people who bring FIREFLY to life every day. I met with staff across the organization to hear directly from them about what they value most about FIREFLY, what gives them pride in their work, and where they believe we have opportunities to improve. I asked where we might refocus our attention and what changes would help them better serve the individuals and families who rely on us.

What I heard was both affirming and motivating. There is deep commitment to our mission. There is compassion, professionalism, and resilience. There is also a clear desire to strengthen how we operate, clarify our direction, and ensure we are positioned to meet the growing and changing needs of our communities.

Refocus has therefore become more than an operational initiative. It has become a mindset that is shaping how we lead and how we plan.



Darcia Curtis
Chief Executive Officer, FIREFLY



Sarah-lynn Klassen
Board Chair, FIREFLY

It is also strengthening our commitment to intentionally listen to and incorporate the voices of children, youth, and families in how we design and deliver our services.

Over the past year, we made important structural changes designed to strengthen accountability, clarify roles, and improve collaboration across the organization. These decisions were made thoughtfully and with the long-term health of FIREFLY in mind. At the same time, we have begun exploring strategic alliances with partners to enhance service delivery and contribute to broader system transformation efforts. Our goal has been to build a stronger foundation that supports both our staff and the people we serve.

This year also marked transitions within the Board executive and membership. With new leadership comes a natural opportunity for a fresh perspective and renewed energy. Together, we have begun a comprehensive strategy and impact planning process that will help define our priorities, focus our resources, and guide our decisions in the years ahead. This work is grounded in the voices of our staff, informed by the experiences of the families we serve, and strengthened through a growing commitment to strategic partnerships and system-level collaboration to address challenges and improve how services are delivered.

As Board Chair and CEO, we are united in our commitment to stewardship, transparency, and thoughtful growth.

“
**FIREFLY’s strength
has always been
its people.**
”

We are proud of the progress made this year and grateful for the dedication of our teams who continue to show up with professionalism and care.

FIREFLY’s strength has always been its people. It is reflected in the compassion of our staff, the steady governance of our Board, the trust of our partners, and the courage of the individuals and families we serve.

Refocus does not mean changing who we are. It means recommitting to our purpose and ensuring our energy and resources are aligned with the impact we seek to make. It means listening carefully, acting responsibly, and planning deliberately for the future.

Thank you to our staff for your honesty and dedication. Thank you to our Board for your guidance and support. And thank you to our community for your continued trust in FIREFLY.

Together, refocused and renewed, we are ready for the future.



Darcia Curtis



Sarah-lynn Klassen

Our Mission

Making a positive difference in the wellbeing and life journey of children, young people and families.

Our Vision:

Healthy People. Resilient Families. Vibrant Communities.

Our Values:

Reaching Beyond

We are future focused, driven by what is possible, and gracefully navigate change for the better.



Artwork by Grade 6 student, Rylie, École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys, Kenora

Heart

This value is about how we do our work; with heart, dedication and with good reason. It's how we approach our work; with empathy, passion, caring, respect and sensitivity.



Artwork by Grade 6 student, Laura, École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys, Kenora

Sharing & Playing Together

Relationships are the foundation of everything we do. We believe in joining, connecting and collaborating.



Artwork by Grade 6 student, Maggie, École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys, Kenora

Empowerment

We believe in everyone's strength and capacity and we support their development in the work we do. We cheer and praise, build confidence and celebrate the strengths of our clients.



Artwork by Grade 6 student, Maddyn, École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys, Kenora

Accountability

We are dependable and take responsibility for our work, our interactions, our relationships, and our results.



Artwork by Grade 2 student, Kierron, Open Roads School, Dryden

Our Commitments:

- We honour diversity and affirm the identities and lived experiences of those we serve.
- We strive to be exceptional in the services we provide.
- We are passionate advocates for equity, social justice and reconciliation.
- We work to reduce barriers and promote inclusion.
- We work continuously at being the best we can be as staff and as an organization.
- We are committed to physical, emotional, developmental and cultural safety.

2023–2026 Strategic Plan

Champion

for children, families and communities.

- Elevate the voice of the families for change.
- Promote health equity and system integration.
- Facilitate and act on Calls to Action and service alignment with Indigenous communities.
- Create and grow with communities and partners for greater impact.

Listen

empower and inspire each other.

- Sustain an aligned culture of inclusion, pride and teamwork where staff voice matters.
- Increase staff retention and recruitment – Employer of Choice.
- Invest in our people for service excellence and planning for change.
- Foster an environment where staff, student and volunteers share and continuously grow.
- Provide a healthy and safe work environment.

Transform

experiences and outcomes.

- Integrate voice of families as experts and partners for service excellence.
- Remove barriers to timely and equitable access to services.
- Adopt creative approaches and outreach for underserved and those who are marginalized in our communities.
- Lead in regional best practices to deliver specialized services for those with complex needs.
- Incorporate cultural competency and client safety practices in all we do.

Innovate

for quality and success.

- Grow as a centre of excellence for research, innovation, and education.
- Drive evidence-based practice with enhanced capacity and efficient use of data.
- Build greater capacity and focus on external communications.
- Plan and develop facilities for staff and service requirements.



From left, FIREFLY's Zoé and RoxAnne pose for a photo beside Angie Hamson of the Knowledge Institute after her presentation at the All Staff In-person Conference in May 2025.

In 2025, FIREFLY renewed its focus on family engagement through the launch of both internal and external events and initiatives aimed at better understanding what meaningful family engagement could look like at FIREFLY, both across the organization as a whole and in frontline interactions.

With support from an Engagement Grant from the Knowledge Institute, FIREFLY hosted three "Care for the Caregiver" events in Kenora (21 participants, May 2025), Fort Frances (8 participants, November 2025), and Dryden (4 participants, November 2025). Open to caregivers across the region, these half-day events provided opportunities for caregivers to focus on their own well-being, connect with one another, and engage with FIREFLY.

These events helped FIREFLY connect with caregivers who were interested in ongoing involvement and learning from them how they would like to engage moving forward. Participants who expressed interest in continued engagement were also later invited to join a caregiver focus group as part of this year's strategic planning process.

Also in 2025, FIREFLY joined the 2025/26 Quest Cohort with the Knowledge Institute to work through Family Engagement within the organization. With the core team consisting of both front and back of house staff, the aim is to look specifically at how to create a culture of family engagement at FIREFLY where all staff feel prepared, understand expectations, and feel more confident in their approach.

While the work is still being completed, one thing is very clear, Family Engagement is more than a box to be checked off. It must be woven into the very fabric of FIREFLY's work across the region, and it must be easily understood by every employee in regards to both their own actions as well as those of the organization as a whole.

Feedback from Care for the Caregiver

My favourite part of this event is FIREFLY's openness and willingness to take ownership and be a part of supporting parents and families. This is a very important responsibility and privilege.”

“ My take-away from this event is that Family Engagement and caregiver peer support is extremely important for organizations, services, community, and for me personally. It has value. None of us are alone in the journey.”

What's new at FIREFLY

Accessible Kitchen Renovations

FIREFLY completed Phase 2 of the Kenora Head Office renovation plan with the opening of the new Accessible Kitchen in December, followed by a grand opening celebration on January 15. Kitchen equipment and supplies were generously funded through the support of Enbridge Gas.

The new homestyle kitchen introduces a therapy space unlike anything currently available in the region. Designed specifically for children and families, the space transforms pediatric feeding and swallowing assessments from a traditional clinical setting into a warm, welcoming mealtime environment that feels natural and comfortable.

The kitchen is fully accessible for children and youth who use mobility devices, creating opportunities to build adaptive cooking skills and greater independence in the kitchen. Careful consideration was also given to sensory and visual accessibility as well as communication access to ensure the space is welcoming for all users.

More than just a treatment space, the kitchen serves as a gathering place for clients and caregivers, using cooking and shared meals as part of the therapeutic experience. The space also supports group meetings, events, and treatment and assessment activities in a warm and functional environment.



What's new at FIREFLY continued

New Orthotics Clinic

In partnership with the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, FIREFLY launched a new Orthotics Clinic provided by Thunder Bay Orthopaedic in October 2025. The clinic is offered four times per year, with 2026 clinic dates scheduled for January, April, June, and October.

The clinic provides specialized orthotic services, including spinal, upper-limb, and complex lower-limb bracing. Offering these services locally is helping bridge gaps in healthcare while reducing the need for families to travel outside the region for care.

This partnership is another important step in bringing specialized services closer to home for children and families living in Northwestern Ontario.



Alex Tempelman

Certified Orthotist at Thunder Bay Orthopaedic working with FIREFLY at the new Orthotics Clinic.

Problem Feeder Pathway Redesign

FIREFLY's Problem Feeder Program has been redesigned to create a more flexible and family-centred experience for caregivers and children.

The updated pathway removes previous scheduling barriers and allows families to access support when they need it and at times that fit their schedules. Through a series of pre-recorded sessions, caregivers can move through the program at a pace that works best for them, with six months or more to complete the pathway if needed.

Families can also book appointments with their feeding team member whenever questions or challenges arise, without the need for unnecessary scheduled appointments when support is not required. Appointments are easily booked through a self-booking link. To make the program even easier to navigate, all resources, materials, and program information are housed within the Problem Feeder Padlet, giving caregivers one simple link or QR code to access everything they need throughout the program.

Centralized Intake

- Ocean eReferral
- Self-referral available through phone, online form, and email
- SmartStart Hub Services

Developmental and Family Services

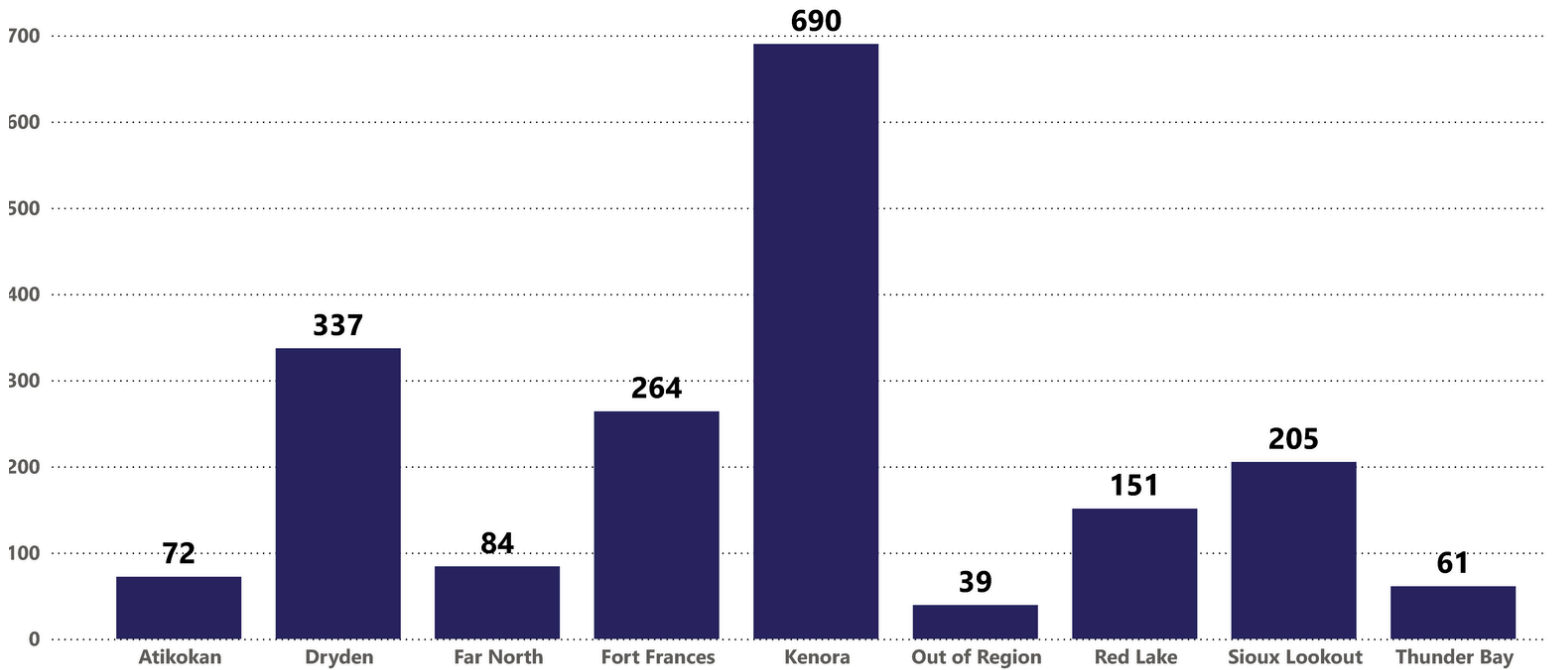
- Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention
- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program
- Caregiver-Mediated Early Years (OAP)
- Community Action for Prenatal and Child Health Program
- Core Clinical Services (OAP)
- Coordinated Service Planning
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Entry to School (OAP)
- Foundational Family Services (OAP)
- Indigenous Professional Learning Opportunities
- Infant and Child Development Program
- School Support Services (OAP)
- Urgent Response Services (OAP)
- Respite Services

Clinical Services

- Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication Clinic
- Autism Diagnostic Hub
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services
- Circle of Security Parenting Program
- Community Based Rehabilitation Services
- Complex Feeding and Swallowing Clinic
- Eating Disorders
- Family and Caregiver Services
- Northwestern Ontario Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Clinic
- Mental Health Counselling & Therapy
- One Stop Talk
- Occupational Therapy
- Parenting Mental Health Support
- Pediatric Clinic
- Physiotherapy
- School Based Rehabilitation Services
- Seating and Mobility Clinic
- SNAP (Stop Now and Plan)
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Tele-psychiatry (SickKids)
- Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)
- Youth Justice



Clients Referred by Site



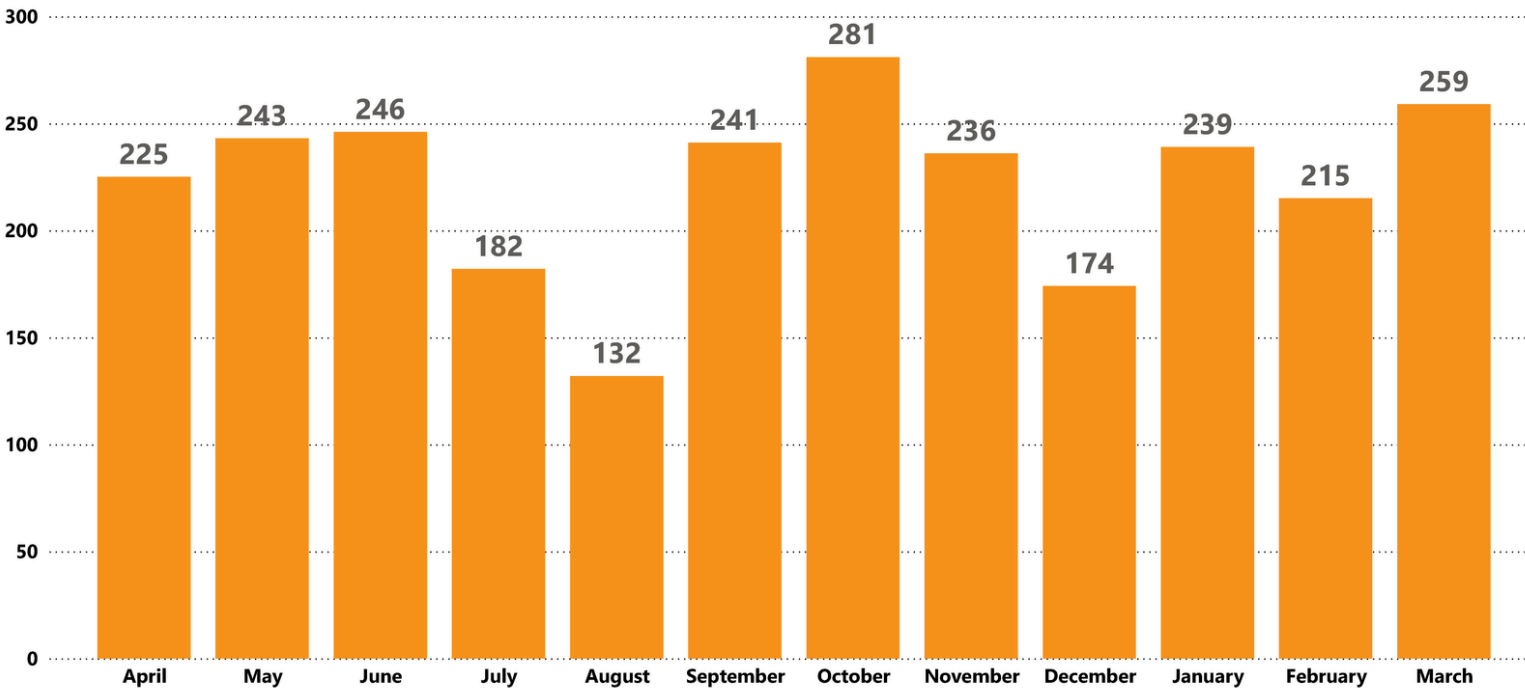
Offering SmartStart Hub Services

SmartStart Hubs are an entry point to children's special needs services that support the early identification of children's and families' strengths, goals, and needs, and help children and families get the help they need sooner. SmartStart Hubs are not the only way to access children's services, nor do families have to go through the Hub to access other programs and services.

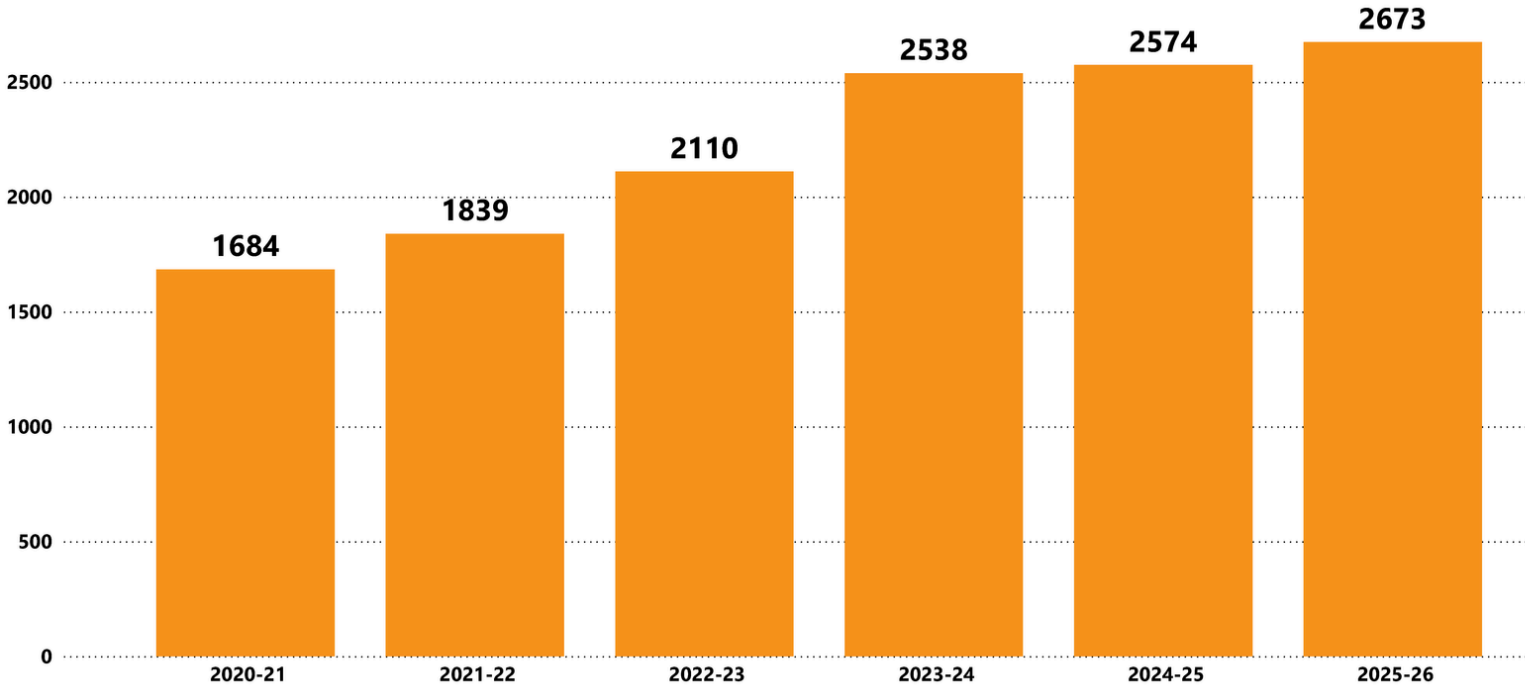
Our Centralized Intake is in Partnership with:



2025/26 Referrals to FIREFLY by Month

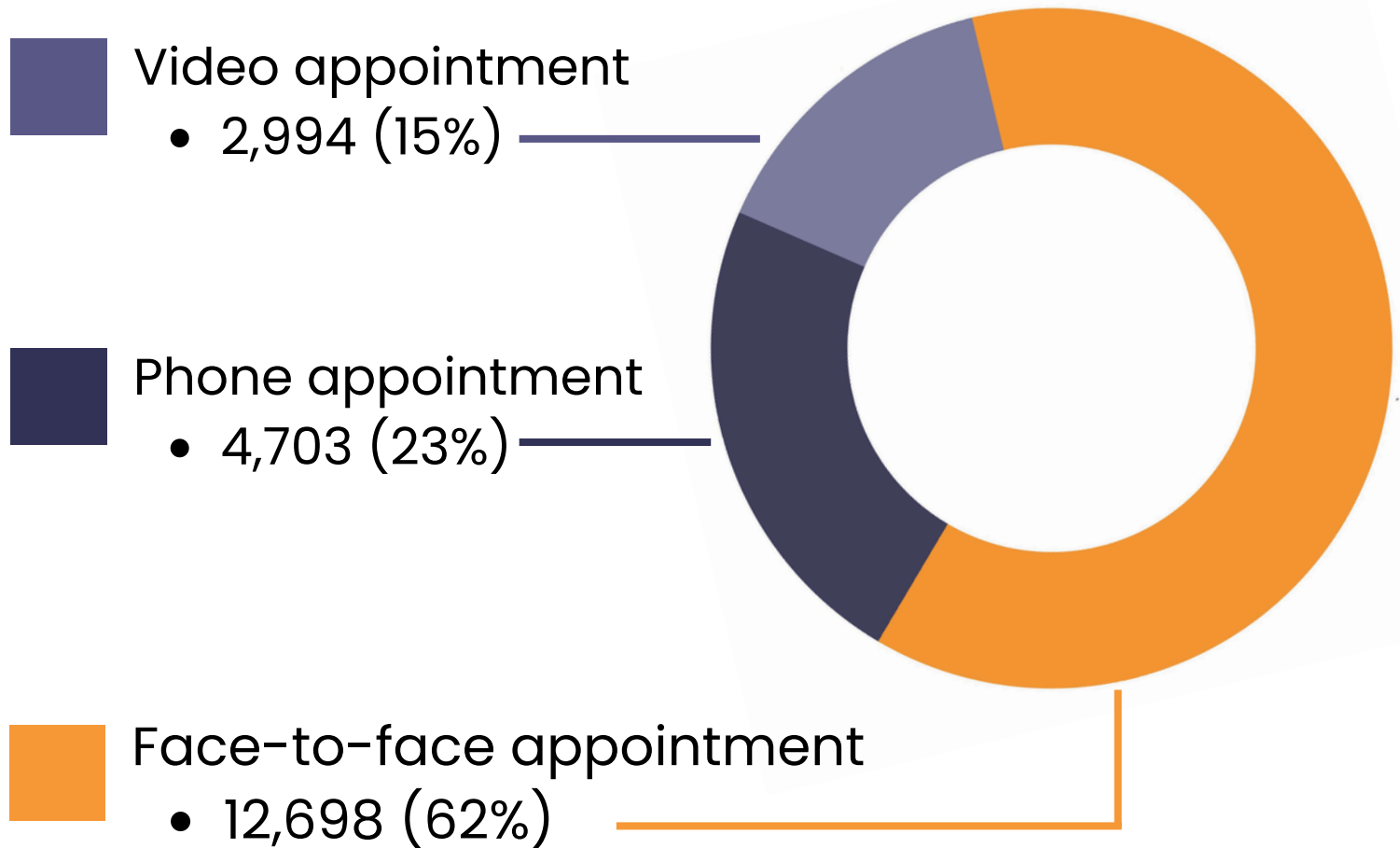


Yearly Referrals to FIREFLY Since 2020



Referral numbers dropped at the onset of the pandemic but have been steadily increasing year over year and have now exceeded pre-pandemic referral numbers.

Service Hours by Method 2025/26

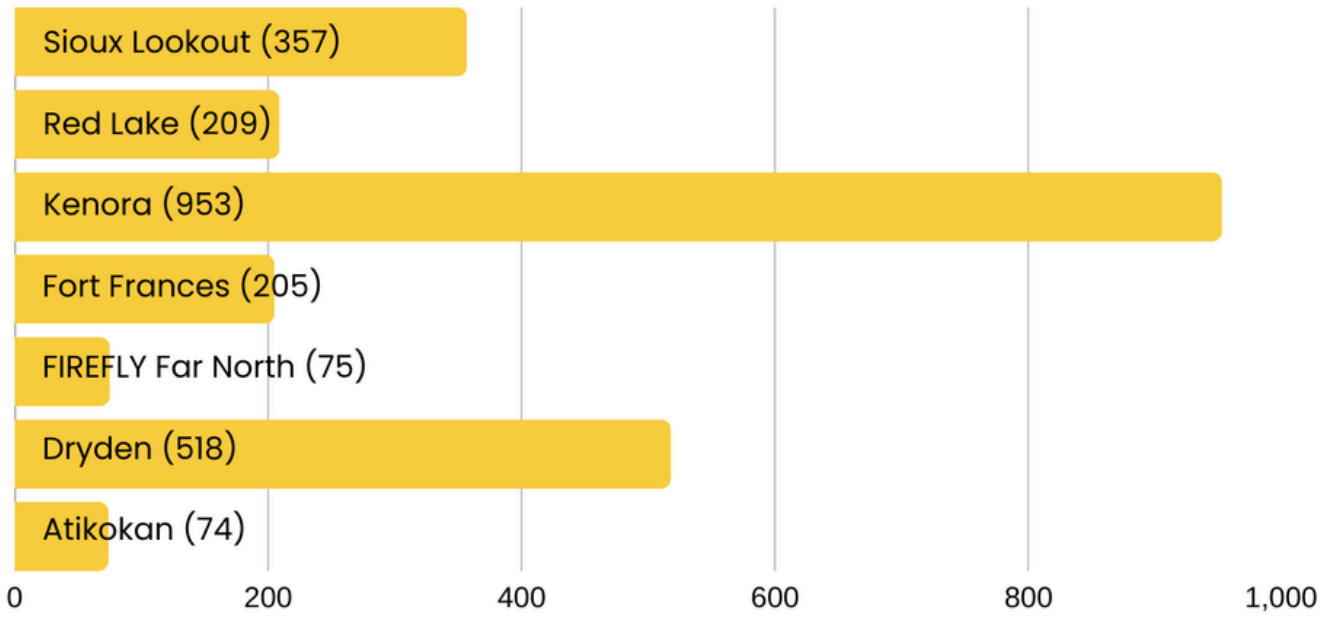


Service by Delivery Type

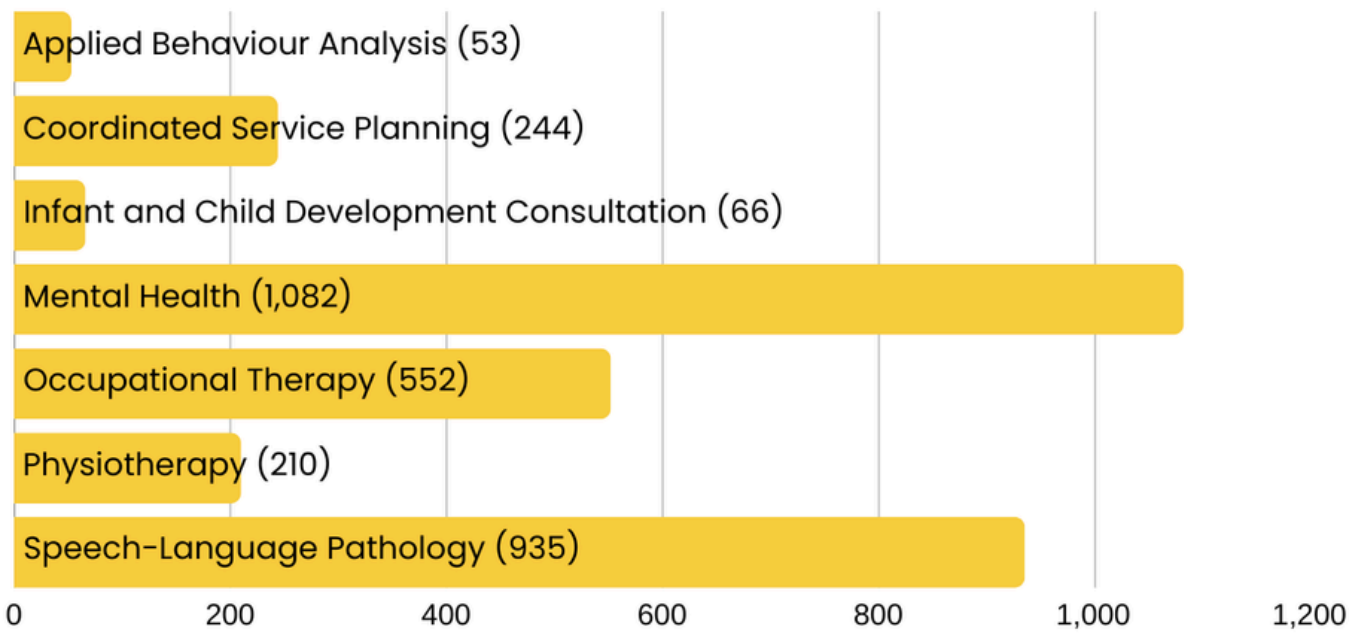
FIREFLY staff work to provide services in creative, safe, and barrier-free ways based on the preferences of our clients and their families.

The graphic above demonstrates the ways clients receive services.

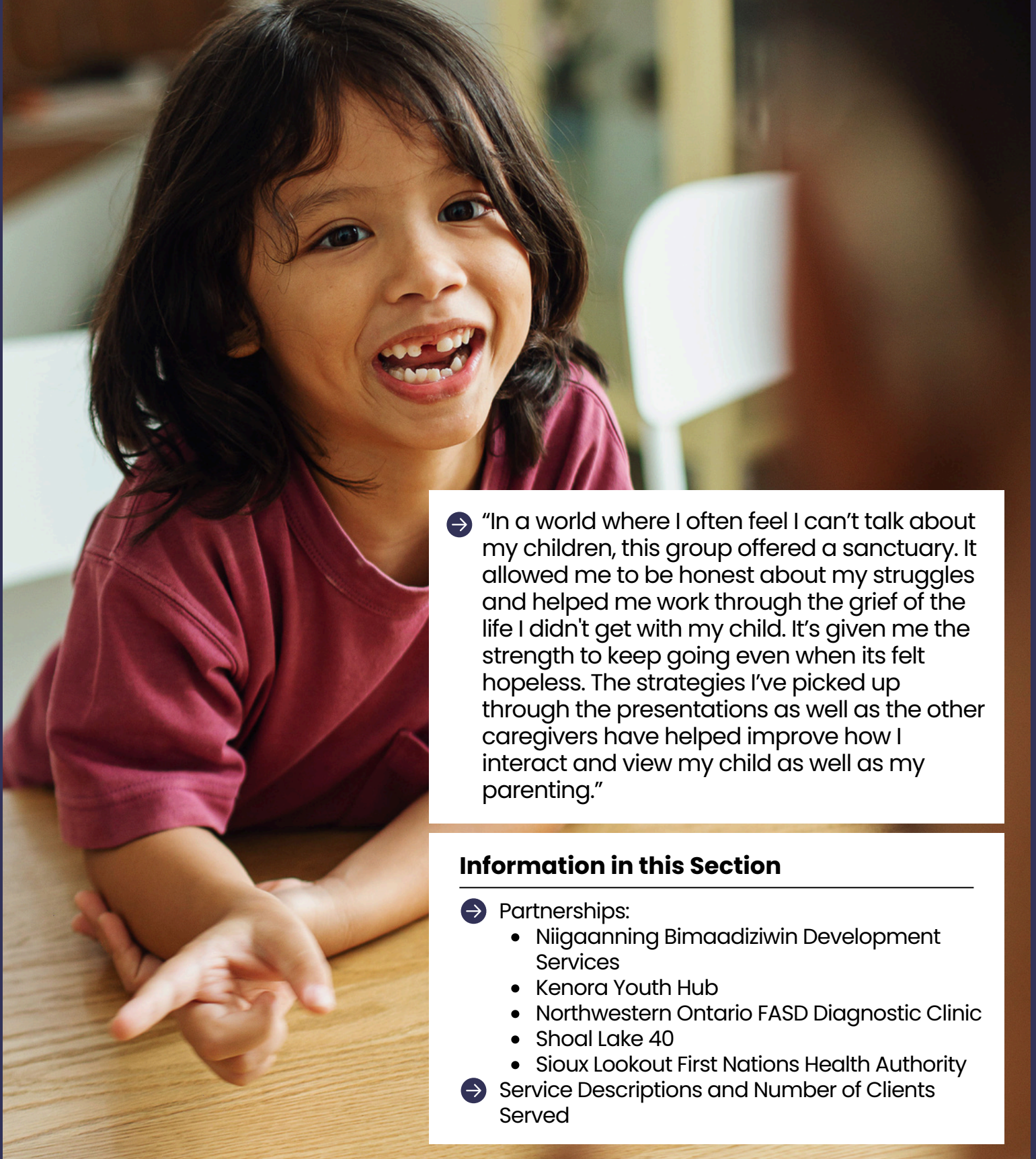
Clients Receiving Services by FIREFLY Site



Clients Receiving Services by Discipline



FIREFLY Clinical Services



→ “In a world where I often feel I can’t talk about my children, this group offered a sanctuary. It allowed me to be honest about my struggles and helped me work through the grief of the life I didn’t get with my child. It’s given me the strength to keep going even when it felt hopeless. The strategies I’ve picked up through the presentations as well as the other caregivers have helped improve how I interact and view my child as well as my parenting.”

Information in this Section

- Partnerships:
 - Niigaanning Bimaadiziwin Development Services
 - Kenora Youth Hub
 - Northwestern Ontario FASD Diagnostic Clinic
 - Shoal Lake 40
 - Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority
- Service Descriptions and Number of Clients Served

Niigaanning Bimaadiziwin Development Services (NBDS)



35

Physiotherapy
Clients Served

122

Occupational
Clients Served

294

Speech-Language
Pathology
Clients Served

420

Physiotherapy
Encounters*

898

Occupational
Clients
Encounters*

3416

Speech-Language
Pathology
Encounters*

* Encounters: This number includes all modes of service provided to each client, i.e. in-person visit, phone call, attempted contact, no show, virtual visit, etc.

Kenora Youth Hub

462

Youth Encounters



The Kenora Youth Wellness Hub provides youth aged 12–25 with timely access to mental health, substance use, primary care, and community support services. FIREFLY partners with Kenora Chiefs Advisory to deliver on-site mental health counselling within the hub. Over the past year, FIREFLY counsellors engaged with youth 462 times, averaging interactions with about 9 youth per day. These consistent, relationship-based interactions help build trust and make youth more likely to seek formal counselling support when needed. FIREFLY staff attended the hub weekly, contributing to a reliable and accessible presence for young people.

Northwestern Ontario Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Clinic

26

Clients served 0-18

3

Clients served 18+



- Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services
- Kenora Association for Community Living
- Kenora Chiefs Advisory
- Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services
- Lake of the Woods District Hospital
- Northwestern Health Unit
- Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority
- Meno Ya Win Health Centre
- Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig
- William W Creighton Youth Services

FIREFLY is one of 11 partners that offers the Northwestern Ontario FASD Diagnostic Clinic including:

FIREFLY's Northwestern Ontario FASD Diagnostic Clinic is an interprofessional, team that may include physician, psychology, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, cultural support and coordination roles. The program is regionally coordinated and provides trauma-informed and culturally safe diagnostic services for individuals with confirmed prenatal alcohol exposure.

Shoal Lake 40

60

Students had access to FIREFLY counsellors

14

Students received one-on-one counselling

6

Continued with virtual services



Over the past year, FIREFLY staff delivered in-school mental health services in Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, including individual counselling, drop-ins, classroom groups, and support for educators. This work reflected a strong partnership focused on improving mental wellness outcomes in a way that respected community values and leadership. A registered counsellor provided direct therapy and contributed to capacity-building and community workshops for children, families, and caregivers. In total, 14 students received individual counselling, with 6 choosing to continue services virtually or in Kenora after the contract ended. However, due to changes in Jordan's Principle funding and the inability to secure alternative resources, FIREFLY will not be able to continue in-person, in-school services in the community next year.

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA)



9

Number of Far North Communities Served

17

Physiotherapy Clients Served

22

Physiotherapy Encounters*

1

Physiotherapy Group Sessions

274

Speech-Language Pathology Clients Served

3757

Speech-Language Pathology Encounters*

89

Speech-Language Pathology Group Sessions

* Encounters: This number includes all modes of service provided to each client, i.e. in-person visit, phone call, attempted contact, no show, virtual visit, etc.

Behind the numbers:

- SLFNHA was successful in hiring Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist reducing their FIREFLY contract needs in 2025/26.
- Some community visits were increased, allowing more frequent visits which increased the number of overall encounters.
- Changes to Jordan's Principle funding at the community level had a significant impact on service delivery across the Far North, requiring frequent pivots in service delivery.

Diagnostic Services

Autism Diagnostic Hub

The Northwestern Ontario Autism Diagnostic Hub is a collaborative partnership established to meet the immediate need of autism diagnostic services in Northwestern Ontario with funding transferred from Child and Community Resources (CCR) to accomplish this. The Autism Diagnostic Hub is a partnership between FIREFLY and Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services, Kenora Association for Community Living, Kenora Chiefs Advisory, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, and Kenora-Rainy River Child & Family Services.

137

Number of children referred

65

Number of assessments completed

84%

Percentage of children and youth that received a diagnosis of ASD

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services (CAPS)



179

Clients Served

The CAPS program is a interprofessional outpatient service for children and youth (ages 0-17) in Northwestern Ontario who require psychiatry services to address complex mental health needs.

The FIREFLY CAPS team connects clients with existing psychiatric service providers that offer assessment, consultation, diagnosis, and intervention. The CAPS team coordinates and supports this psychiatric service provision by providing intake, triage, screening, assessment, case management, follow-up, and discharge planning.

Future Plans: Collaboration with a newly onboarded Psychiatrist, expanding the program's capacity to maintain in-person and expand to also offer virtual specialized mental health services.

Diagnostic Services cont.

Pediatric Clinic



62
Clients Served

The clinic saw a shift in the areas of focus as Dr. Coombs, transitioned out of clinic, following the recruitment of local pediatricians by Lake of the Woods District Hospital and Kenora Chiefs Advisory. FIREFLY welcomed Dr. Kayla Edison and Dr. Amy Lam to FIREFLY to see clients and children from the region for developmental assessments.

Future Plans: Continue to engage and collaborate with local pediatricians to build coordinated care and support for clients with complex medical needs and/or medical fragility.



Augmentative & Alternative Communication Clinic (AAC)



176
Clients Served

This clinic is a certified General Level AAC Clinic through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP). An interprofessional team of Occupational Therapists and Speech Language Pathologists work together to identify, recommend, and assist in securing funding for tools that support spoken and written communication for children and youth who may be:

- Nonspeaking
- Have limited spoken communication
- Have severe speech errors, making it difficult for others to understand them
- Physically unable to produce written communication that is functional for their day-to-day needs and desires.

Future Plans: Increase collaboration with Indigenous Health Authorities within the FIREFLY specialty clinic region to ensure all children, including those in fly-in communities, have equal access to AAC services.

Complex Feeding & Swallowing Clinic

This multidisciplinary clinic, composed of occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, and registered dietitian services, is for non-emergency, complex feeding and swallowing concerns related to:

- Oral motor difficulties
- Risk of failure to thrive in infants
- G-tube feeding needs
- Problem Feeding

To better meet the needs of families and clients dealing with feeding challenges, the clinic redesigned the Problem Feeder program to combine sessions with a feeding coach and self-guided videos that provide education and demonstrate home practice activities. All materials required for the program are accessed through a single link or QR code to allow families easy access.

The clinic partners with Lake of the Woods District Hospital to support clients at risk of aspiration. Since April 1, 2025, 5 clients have received a local videofluoroscopic swallow study at the hospital with the clinic's support.

Future Plans: Continue to develop and reevaluate current programming to ensure client needs are met throughout region.



93
Clients Served



52

Clients Served

Eating Disorders

FIREFLY offers Eating Disorders services upon receiving a referral where body image and/or disordered eating concerns are present, mental health services and dietitian services are offered to children, youth, and families. The Registered Dietitian works in partnership with the Counsellor to provide assessment and intervention to clients. The Registered Dietitian is available for in-house consultation when clinicians have queries regarding clients with body image and/or disordered eating concerns.

One Stop Talk

Services are provided through an integrated network of infant, child, and youth mental health agencies across Ontario.

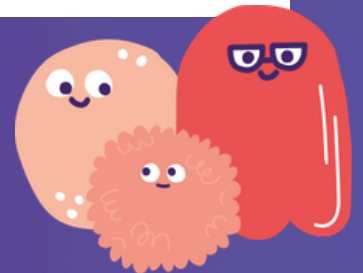
FIREFLY is a One Stop Talk service provider. One Stop Talk offers children, youth, and their families immediate access to free virtual mental health supports when and how they need them. The program provides single-session counselling support and ensures direct referral to additional services when needed.

One Stop Talk



34

Clients Served



Community Partners:



Parenting Mental Health Support Worker

RoxAnne Daignault works as the Parenting Mental Health Support Worker at FIREFLY. Through this partnership program she offers one-on-one as well as group sessions that focus on connecting all parents and caregivers in Northwestern Ontario to be able to share, feel heard, feel seen, and feel supported while caring for loved ones struggling with mental health.

40

Group Sessions

93

One-on-one

I am incredibly grateful for this group. Connecting with other families facing similar circumstances helps me feel less alone. The Wednesday night support group provides a safe, informative space to learn, share experiences, and recharge. Often, the focus is understandably on the needs of the child or care recipient, so it is meaningful to have a group dedicated to supporting caregivers, who may not always feel seen or appreciated. This group offers valuable resources and connects families with important community supports.



This support group helps me in so many ways, the feeling of belonging and being with like-minded people, never being judged always supported and cheered on by Roxanne and the other members. I look forward to this meeting every week.



Seating and Mobility Clinic

The Seating and Mobility Clinic offers children and youth unique ways to participate in daily life at home, school or in the community by prescribing custom and off-the-shelf equipment, including:

- Supportive seating systems
- Specialized stroller systems
- Manual wheelchairs
- Power wheelchairs

Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists assess your child and work with local vendors to determine the most appropriate equipment.

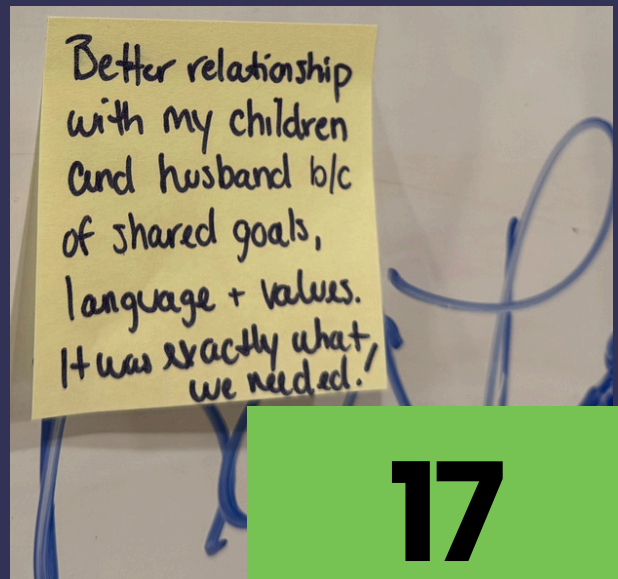
14

Clients Served



SNAP[®] (Stop Now And Plan)

SNAP[®], which stands for Stop Now and Plan, is an evidence-based cognitive-behavioural model that teaches children struggling with behavioural issues, and their caregivers, how to manage their emotions and behaviour by getting them to stop, think, and plan positive alternatives before acting impulsively.



17
Clients Served



52
Clients Served

Tele-Mental Health

Tele-Mental Health is a Telepsychiatry program that allows for the provision of virtual psychiatric consultations from SickKids Hospital.

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)

Triple P is a parenting program that provides parents and caregivers with a toolbox for parenting, allowing parents and caregivers the opportunity to choose the strategies they need.

Triple P is an evidence-based program built around knowledge of child psychology and best practice.



23
Clients Served

Youth Justice

Youth Justice Services are for youth who are aged twelve to seventeen years at the time they were involved in a crime. Services include a variety of cognitive-based behavioural interventions provided on an individual, family, and/or group basis.

FIREFLY operates the Youth Mental Health Court Worker Program in Kenora and Dryden. This is a mental health diversion program which assists youth who are considered appropriate for diversion to access mental health services and support. FIREFLY also operates the Youth Justice Committee program in Dryden. This program offers an alternative to the formal court processes for young people, using a restorative justice approach stressing accountability and responsibility.

A Section 34 assessment is a court-ordered psychological or psychiatric evaluation conducted under the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). Within Ontario's youth justice system, it is used to assess a young person's mental health, cognitive functioning, personal circumstances, and potential risk factors. The resulting report helps inform judicial decisions related to sentencing, bail conditions, treatment needs, and rehabilitation planning.

19

**Youth Justice
Committee**

9

**Youth Justice
Counselling**

14

**Youth Mental Health
Court Worker and
Section 34 Assessments**

FIREFLY Developmental & Family Services



- "The kids and I have appreciated all the opportunities offered to us through FIREFLY, from painting kits and crafts to equine to book clubs, etc."
- "[The FASD Groups] like this are great for my child to experience new things without me needing to worry about judgment."

Information in this Section

- Service Descriptions and Number of Clients Served

Autism Services

FIREFLY offers professional assessment, intervention, and treatment services for children and youth under 18 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through the Ontario Autism Program (OAP), FIREFLY also provides a wide range of programs and services designed to meet the diverse needs of children and their families.

Core Clinical Services

FIREFLY supported clients with core clinical budgets in the following needs areas:

- Applied Behavior Analysis - 10 clients served
- Mental Health Services (counselling and psychotherapy) are now also available.

Entry to School



The Entry to School Program helps children develop school-readiness skills and provides transition supports as they enter kindergarten or Grade 1 for the first time. The group-based program is delivered by multi-disciplinary staff with expertise in:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Early Childhood Development

23

Clients Served

Direct Intervention

Up to 15 hours per week skill-building program, focused on helping children develop school-readiness skills in six areas: communication, play, social interactions, functional routines, behavioural self-management, and pre-academics, learning and attention.

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)

Through the CAPC, FIREFLY supports families with young children who face challenges such as poverty, isolation, family violence, and substance use. CAPC programming promotes healthy child development through parent-child activities, parenting support, health and wellness initiatives, community referrals, and opportunities for connection. By providing culturally responsive services and fostering strong community partnerships, the program strengthens family well-being, reduces isolation, and improves access to supports for children from birth to age six and their caregivers. This program is offered in Kenora, Red Lake, and Ear Falls.

1094
Clients Served



Complex Special Needs

Complex Special Needs funding provides additional service(s) that fall within the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services' mandate to eligible children and youth whose complexity of need is beyond the capacity of the family and local services. This program aims to decrease health and safety risks of children and youth.

9
Clients Served

Coordinated Service Planning

Coordinated Service Planning supports families with children and youth with multiple or complex special needs. Coordinated Service Planning links families to services and ensures that all the professionals involved with the family are working together as a team.

174
Clients Served



597
Clients Served

Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program helps improve the health of pregnant people, new parents and their babies who face challenges that put their health at risk in Kenora, Red Lake and Ear Falls.

EarlyON

EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer high quality, free drop-in and scheduled programs for young children and their families where they can learn, grow, connect with others, and learn about supports in the community. FIREFLY operates two sites in Kenora and one in Sioux Lookout.



Kenora - Harbourfront

Child Visits

4,979

Caregiver Visits

3,881

Kenora - Minto

Child Visits

5,269

Caregiver Visits

4,986

Sioux Lookout

Child Visits

921

Caregiver Visits

812



Indigenous Professional Learning Opportunities & First Nation Resource & Support Programs

The Indigenous Professional Learning Opportunities Program (IPLO) provides learning experiences and resources to early childhood educators and leadership working in early learning programs located on reserve in Ontario.

The First Nation Resource & Support Program helps with program start up, meeting licensing requirements and facilitating regional networks for early learning programs located on reserve in the FIREFLY and Thunder Bay regions.

Highlights

- This year, IPLO undertook the development of a new logo and visual identity to better reflect its values and commitment First Nation communities.
- The logo was designed by Jacinda Brisson is a settler-Indigenous Cree artist from Red Lake, ON with roots in Constance Lake First Nation. "The turtle inspired me for this logo. I've always heard that turtles are teachers, they move slowly through the world and hold wisdom to help guide us. Connected to the turtle is flowing water to represent nourishment and moving forward. The trees in the centre of the turtle symbolize the inner growth that comes from learning and gaining new skills and knowledge."
- Building on this work, IPLO also updated its website to improve accessibility, enhance user experience, and make it easier for community members, partners, and stakeholders to access information and services.



Indigenous Professional Learning Opportunities Program:

396

Clients served

37,000

Number of First Nation Early Learning Website views

First Nation Resource & Support Program:

168

Clients served

57

Number of programs served

Respite

Respite is a periodic, short-term break to relieve a family of the responsibility of daily care of a family member with a physical and/or developmental disability. Respite creates greater opportunities for all family members to live actively and participate in community activities and allows parents/caregivers time for themselves.



33

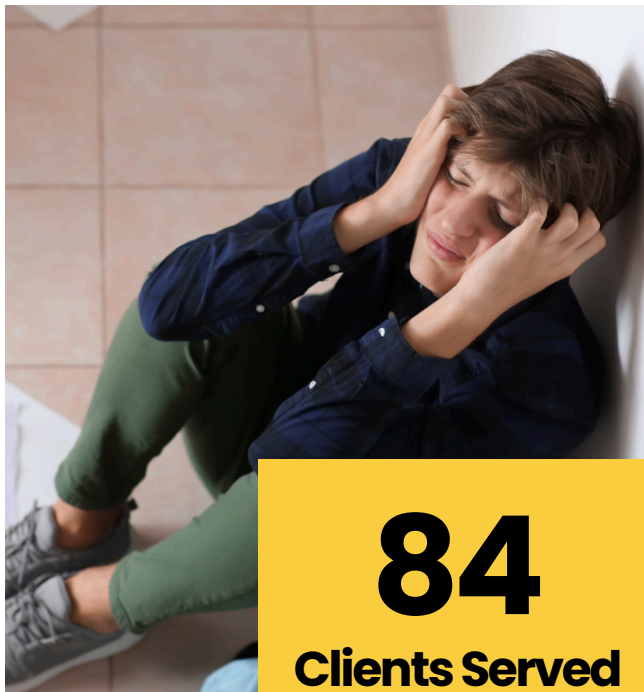
**In-home Respite
Clients Served**

237

**Enhanced Autism
Spectrum Disorder
Respite Clients Served**

101

**Out-of-home Respite
Clients Served**



84

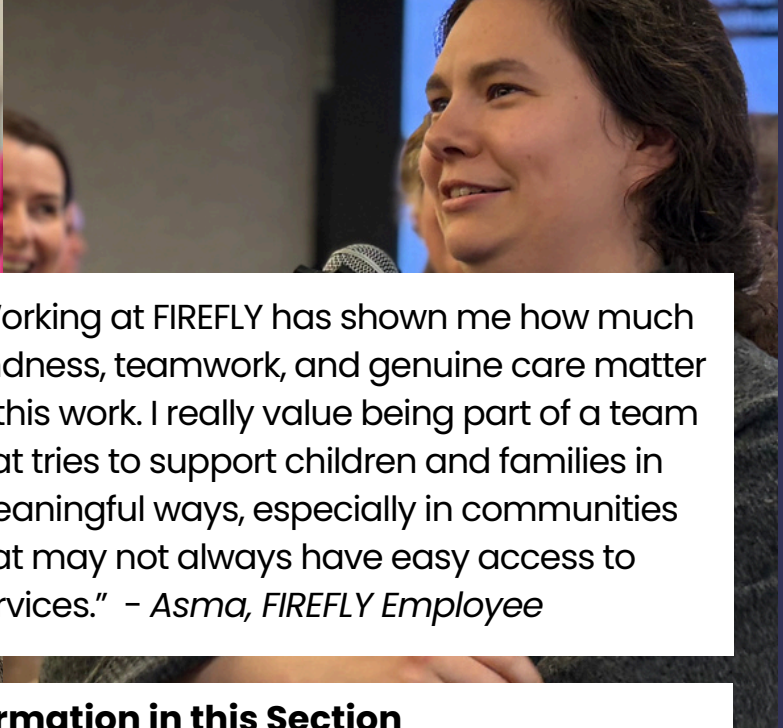
Clients Served

Urgent Response Services

Urgent Response Service is a time-limited, rapid service response for children and youth with Autism, registered with the Ontario Autism Program (OAP). Eligible families can receive up to 12 weeks of services and support which are specifically designed to address a behaviour of concern.

This service is intended to address one specific high-risk behaviour need with a focus on preventing further escalation of risk of harm to self, others, and/or property.

FIREFLY Human Resources



→ “Working at FIREFLY has shown me how much kindness, teamwork, and genuine care matter in this work. I really value being part of a team that tries to support children and families in meaningful ways, especially in communities that may not always have easy access to services.” - Asma, FIREFLY Employee

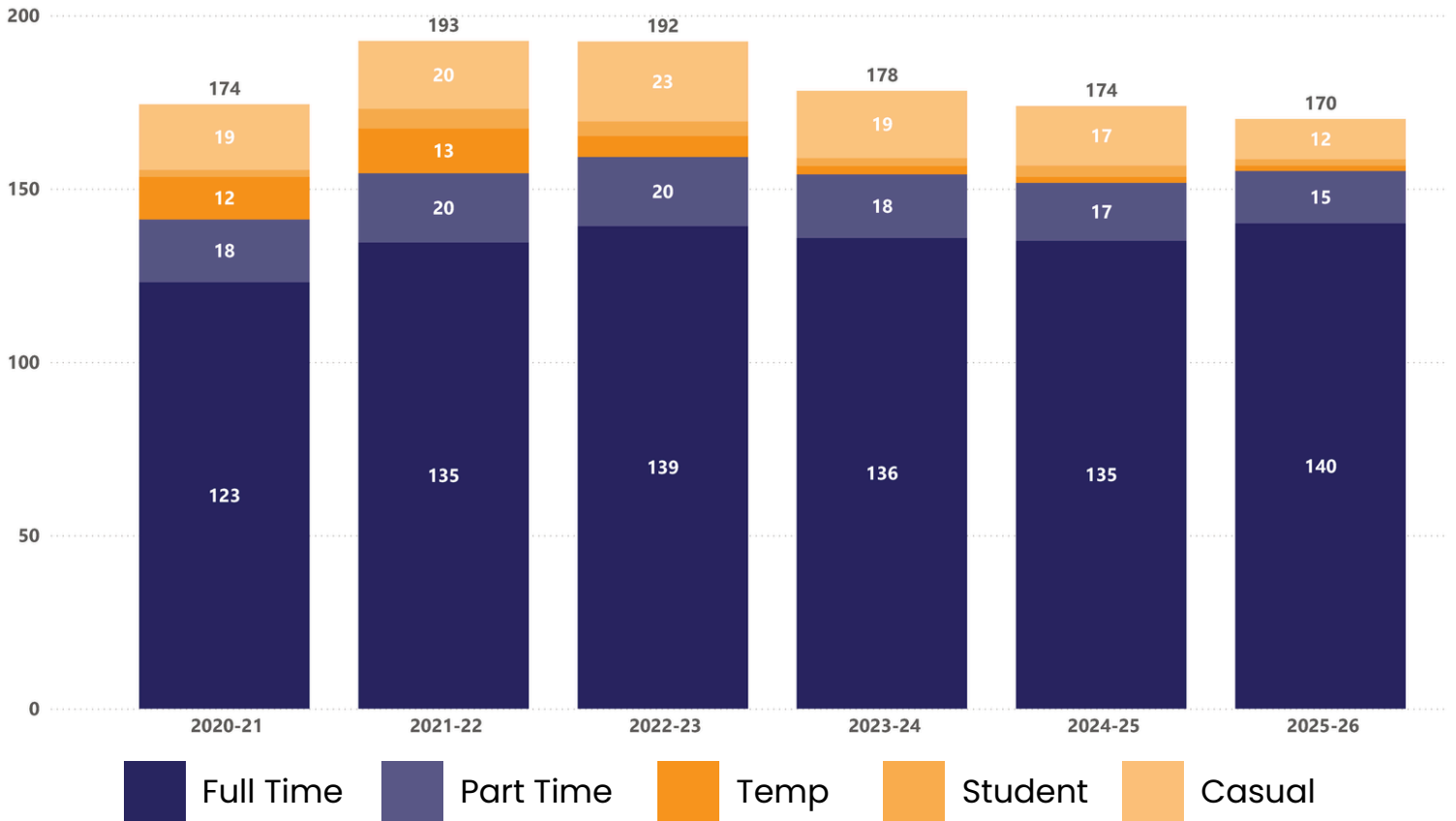
Information in this Section

- Employment Statistics
- Service Awards
- FIREFLY in the Community
- Client Experiences
- Community Partners and Funders
- FIREFLY Offices

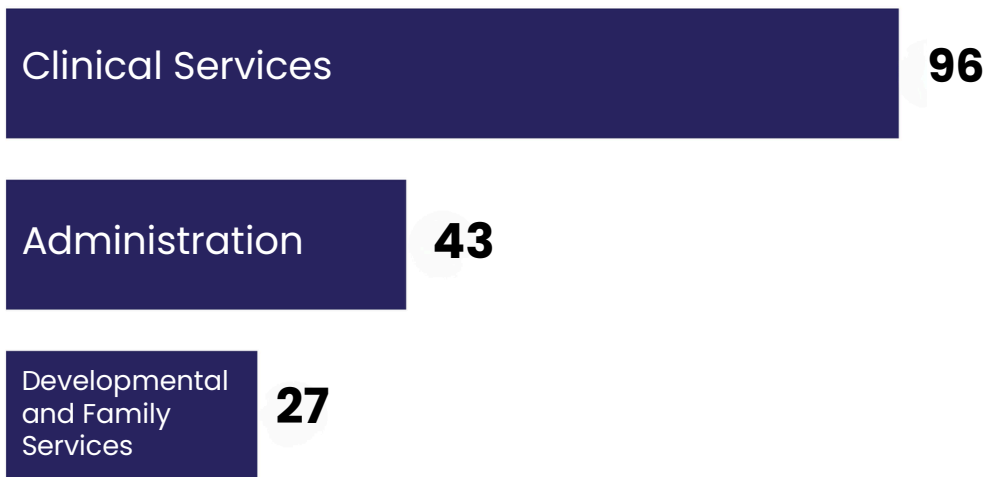


Staff Employment Statistics

Average Monthly Staff by Employment Status



Staff by Department



Recruitment



Years of Service



5 Years

Tammy Cowles
CPNP Coordinator

Sherri Herr
Senior Clinician

Crystal Grimwood
Administrative Assistant

10 Years

Cindy Engstrom
Youth Justice Committee Coordinator

Michelle Gaudet
Director of Human Resources

Kelly Jaeger
Clinical Manager

Patrick Lessard
Counsellor

Jenn Marquis
Director of Systems and Performance
Management

Stephanie Runtz
Senior Clinician

Kaitlin Sanders
Speech-Language Pathologist



FIREFLY's Jenn read a book to a class at St. John Paul II School in Kenora on Autism Acceptance Day in April of 2025.



FIREFLY staff Cindy and Caitlin had a blast handing out candy at the Dryden Trunk or Treat on Halloween.



FIREFLY Speech-Language Pathologist Tanner speaks at a Lunch n Learn hosted by Kenora's St. Thomas Aquinas High School for kids to learn about career pathways.



FIREFLY Red Lake staff Courtney, Cindy, Emily and Virginia had a great time at the Golden Learning Centre in Balmertown for a Family BBQ night in June 2025.



FIREFLY Fort Frances staff Krista, Devon, and Meagan are decked out in tie-dye for Autism Acceptance Month.



FIREFLY Sioux Lookout staff Krista, Kirti, Sam, and Vishnu wear pink on Anti-Bullying Day, widely known as Pink Shirt Day, in February 2026.

We really enjoyed the weekly meeting or even monthly to keep building on the relationships the youth formed. Those relationships were really solidified when they met weekly for the Lego group. ”

“NEVER imagined it could go this well, ever! ♥ ”

“So nice to have in person meet and greets!”

“This support group helps me in so many ways ,the feeling of belonging and being with like-minded people, never being judged always supported and cheered on by Roxanne and the other members. I look forward to this meeting every week.”

“ Groups like this are great for my child to experience new things without me needing to worry about judgment. ”

“ I have a better relationship with my children and husband because of shared goals, language, and values. [SNAP] was exactly what we needed. ”

Community Partners and Funders

Community Partners and Funders

- All Nations Health Partnership Ontario Health Team
- Assistive Devices Program
- Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services
- Behaviour Innovations
- Bimose Tribal Council
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Capitalize for Kids
- Chad Clower, Speech-Language Pathologist
- Child & Community Resources
- Child Development Institute
- Children's Center Thunder Bay
- Children's Mental Health Ontario
- City of Kenora
- Community Counselling and Addictions Services, Red Lake
- Community Living Atikokan
- Community Living Dryden-Sioux Lookout
- Community Living Fort Frances and District
- Community Support Centre NW
- Confederation College
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales
- Contact Niagara
- Creative Therapy Associates
- Creighton Youth Services
- Dearborn Therapy
- Dryden Native Friendship Centre
- Dryden Regional Health Centre
- Dryden Regional Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Eamon Wilson Psychology Professional Corporation
- Engage Learning & Behaviour Supports
- Enbridge Gas
- Empowered Kids Ontario
- George Jeffrey Children's Centre
- Giishkaandago 'Ikwe Health Services
- Government of Canada - Jordan's Principle
- HAEPI SLP Therapy Services
- Harmony Centre for Community Living
- Hoshizaki House, Dryden
- Keewatin Patricia District School Board
- Kenora & Lake of the Woods Regional Community Foundation
- Kenora Association for Community Living
- Kenora Catholic District School Board
- Kenora Chiefs Advisory
- Kenora District Services Board
- Kenora Public Library
- Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services
- Kenora Youth Wellness Hub
- Kiiwetinoong Healing Waters Ontario Health Team
- Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions
- Lake of the Woods District Hospital
- M. Keightley Psychology Professional Corporation
- Mary Berglund Community Health Centre
- Meno Ya Win Health Centre
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- NeChee Friendship Centre
- New Starts Women's Shelter
- Nigonikaapawitang Nanadaamowin Program
- Nishnawbe Gamik Friendship Centre
- Nodin Child & Family Intervention Services
- Northwestern Health Unit
- Northwest Catholic District School Board
- NorWest Community Health Centre
- Northern Ontario Psychology Internship Consortium
- Northern Ontario School of Medicine University
- Ontario Telehealth Network
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Parents for Children's Mental Health
- Partners for Planning
- PRO KIDS (Positive Recreation Opportunities for Kids)
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Rainy River District Best Start Network
- Rainy River District School Board
- Rainy River District Ontario Health Team
- Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
- Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital
- Saakaate House
- Shoal Lake 40 First Nation
- SickKids Hospital
- Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority
- Sioux Lookout Ontario Health Team
- St. Joseph's Care Group
- Sunshine Minds
- Surrey Place
- Therapeutic Paws of Canada
- Thunder Bay Regional Hospital
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services
- Treaty 3 Police Service
- United Native Friendship Centre
- Waasegiizhig Nanaaudaweyewigamig
- Weechi-it-te-win Family Services
- Wesway

FIREFLY Offices

Atikokan

211 Main Street
Atikokan, ON POT 1CO
807-597-4528

Dryden

75C Van Horne Avenue
Dryden, ON P8N 2B2
807-223-8550

Ear Falls

5 Spruce Street
Ear Falls, ON POV 1T0
807-222-2257

Fort Frances

281 2nd Street East, Unit G
Fort Frances, ON P9A 1M6
807-274-9251

Kenora

820A Lakeview Drive
Kenora, ON P9N 3P7
807-467-5437

Red Lake

201 Howey Street
Red Lake, ON POV 2MO
807-727-9064

Sioux Lookout

86-A Third Avenue N
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1L2
807-737-2086

Thunder Bay

717 John Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1Z7
807-627-0883

EarlyON Centres

Kenora - Harbourfront

24 Main St S
Kenora, ON P9N 1S7
807-467-5530

Kenora - Minto

1181 Minto Ave, Unit 26
Kenora, ON P9N 3K1
807-468-3161

Sioux Lookout

89 First Ave N
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1B5
807-737-2086



FIREFLY