



All Kids Belong Updates November 2018

So far in 2018 our Resource Consultants have served over 550 children (unique client count) in London-Middlesex, and caseloads continue to grow steadily. On an ongoing basis, our Resource Consultants facilitate the development of Family Service Plans, and provide strategies to Classroom Educators to help them to build their capacity to include children with special needs in their programs. In order to strengthen our ability to complete these tasks, the Resource Consultants recently participated in Solution Focused Coaching training. Solution Focused Coaching is used by many children's treatment centres in Ontario. This approach is family-centred, goal-oriented and focused on the positive. We believe this approach will be a great addition to how we work with centres and families.

Our Resource Consultants continue to provide workshops to individual child care programs on request; so far this year over 20 different topics related to the special needs of children have been presented. We have been building our expertise in the areas of Circle of Security (promoting strong attachments and relationships) and Mindfulness (which can assist with development of self-regulation.) With funding from the City of London, and in partnership with Strive, we were recently able to present a full day community workshop, "Tool Time," that provided practical strategies and ideas based in play therapy that attracted over 100 participants. In addition to being a wonderful opportunity for the community, it was also the first time we have formally partnered with Strive. We have continued our discussions about how AKB and Strive can work together to share expertise and serve our community, and look forward to continued collaboration.

All Kids Belong has placed a special focus on "hands on" in-classroom supports (commonly known as Program Assistant hours) this year as we know this type of support is a high priority for the community. We were able to devote resources to more fully understanding the needs of community child care programs, and to investigating program models utilized by other special needs resource providing programs. We have learned that the needs related to in-classroom supports are complex. Programs feel the need for additional staff in the classroom, but sometimes even with the availability of funding to provide Program Assistant hours, challenges related to recruitment and retention prevent centres from being able to effectively use funding. We learned that other communities are facing similar challenges, and none have found an ideal model. As we continue to pursue answers, and to work with community committees on system-wide issues such as the ECE shortage, we are improving our processes to create efficiencies and to enable centres to more easily communicate their needs to us, and to formalize some processes to ensure that available Program Assistant funding is allocated in a consistent and equitable way.

Respectfully submitted by Lee-Anne Cross, Program Manager All Kids Belong