

## **Who We Are**

The Cambridge Family Early Years Centre is a non-profit, non-denominational registered charitable organization, incorporated under a volunteer Board of Directors elected from our surrounding community members. Participation is open to all interested parents and caregivers and their children in the Cambridge and surrounding areas.

## **Our Mission Statement**

Dedicated to enriching family and community life by providing accessible social and educational programs, resources and services for parents/caregivers and their children (prenatal to six years).

## **History**

Janice Mononen, an active community leader, had the original idea for a Resource Centre and passed it on to Monica Heide, a community worker at Lutherwood, who set the ball rolling. The first planning meeting was held in June 1984. By January 1985, we were in operation at Avenue Road Church and went by the name P.C.A.C. (Parent/Child Activity Centre). We started out with \$35.00 in the bank, collected from the steering committee who, at that moment of payment, became the first P.C.A.C. members. Each of the steering committee members was asked to donate a toy to get our collection started. We had one paid child care worker (who was never sure that she would get paid), Roberta Priebe.

Shortly after start-up, we had to move to another church because Country Corners Nursery School took over Avenue Rd. The church we moved to was St. David's on Pollock St. During that period, we had the name game where we had a competition to think of a name. PLAYCARE, was submitted by Mary Poweska, and stood for Parents Learning and Young Children Are Running Everywhere! The name won, but the acronym was changed to Parents Learning and Young Children Are Receiving Enrichment!!

In September 1985, we moved to St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Grand Avenue N.. The Ministry of Community and Social Services had supported us to varying degrees with funding.

In 1988, a committee was formed to begin a Toy Lending Library. With one-time funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, we were able to open this additional service in 1989. It was at this time that we combined the books and toys into one area and hired someone to set up the library. We now have well over 250 books about parenting and many related topics, and numerous toys and videos that are periodically updated.

Our membership continued to grow as people became more aware of our services, and our space requirements obviously changed as well. In 1990, the stage was removed and folding doors were installed, financed by one-time funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This provided the centre with classrooms for the junior and senior pre-schoolers. In more recent years, we shared the costs of renovations with the church, to expand the nursery and toddler areas, complete with running water in each room. It was shortly after these events, that we set attendance limits on each childcare room, to avoid overcrowding.

In the early years there was no office - a vacant chair sufficed. The first office was the tiny room on the third floor at the top of the stairs, but we were later moved to the basement corner where, after updating little by little through Bingo funds, we then operated a very busy, adequately-equipped office.

In the spring of 1993, we changed our name to the Cambridge Family Resource Centre, to better reflect our role in the community (and avoid being mistaken for a day care centre). We were run by a volunteer Board of Directors who employed 9 part time staff. Our membership had grown to a high of 145 families in 1993.

In 2002, we were awarded the privilege of running an Early Years Centre for the Ontario government. Our budget was increased to \$500,000 a year and Silverheights Resource Centre and Langs Farm Resource Centre were allotted as our satellites. We also took on 2 existing programs, one in St. John's On The Hill Church and one in Calvary Church previously run by Cambridge Preschool Services. We had since added programs at Cornerstone Church, Greenway/Chaplin Neighbourhood and St Andrews Church (Southwood Neighbourhood), Preston Heights, Christopher/Champlain Neighbourhood and Monica Ainslie in Cambridge. Our hours switched to full days, 2 evenings and Saturday mornings. We changed our name to The Cambridge Family Early Years Centre and moved to 149 Ainslie Street N.

In January 2018 we became an EarlyON Child and Family Centre site with mobile sites as well through funding with the Ministry of Education. As of June 2018 we are planning to move to 73 Water Street N.