



Resources
for Exceptional Children and Youth

Strategic Plan

2025-2028



Prepared By:

 People Minded Business

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A Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair

At Resources, our mission has always been centred on partnering with individuals, families, child care centres and community organizations to create pathways towards stability, belonging and hope. As we launch this new Strategic Plan, we're excited to share a vision that builds on our strengths, responds to what families and child care centres have told us they need, and positions us to make an even greater impact in the years ahead.

It is important to highlight the joint effort of Resources' employees – shout out to the strategic planning advisory committee – and the Board of Directors for their careful consideration, collaboration and shared vision for success in the development of this plan. A huge thank you goes out to the many families, child care centre staff and community partners who provided input into the development of this plan and were such an important voice in shaping our future.

This plan comes at a time of both opportunity and urgency. Families continue to face growing demands, systems are more complex and resources more stretched than ever, and the need for responsive, accessible support has never been clearer. That's why this plan is rooted in four key priorities:

- **Innovate and Optimize Services Using Data and Co-Design** to respond effectively to family needs, reduce caregiver stress and wait times, and do more with limited resources.
- **Foster a Resilient, Mission-Driven Organization** to further nurture a strong internal culture, maintain sustainability, and ensure the organization is equipped for the future.
- **Strengthening Partnerships and Community Awareness** to expand reach, build trust and ensure that families, partners and the public understand and can access Resources' services.
- **Championing Positive Change in System Navigation** to individuals, families, and partners move through complex systems with more ease, equity, and dignity.

A Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair

We invite you to be part of this journey.

This strategic plan is not just a roadmap – it is a shared commitment to the children, youth, families and child care centres we serve. Its success is made possible by the passion and dedication of our skilled and caring staff, the guidance of our strong leadership team, and the strength of our trusted community relationships and reputation. Together, we have built a foundation of excellence – now, we have the opportunity to shape what comes next . We're excited to see that this plan will spark meaningful organizational change, and we encourage everyone to take part, share ideas and help bring our collective vision to life.

Together—with your trust, partnership, and shared commitment—we're ready to move forward with clarity, compassion, and determination. Thank you for being part of this journey.

With gratitude,

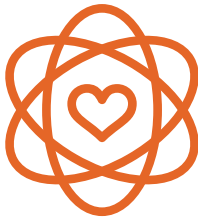
Shona Casola
Executive Director

Sheryl Swerbrick
President, Board of Directors



Our Mission

Resources partners with individuals, families, child care centres and community organizations to create pathways towards stability, belonging and hope.



Our Values

Respectful Partnerships | We work alongside families, educators and communities by listening deeply and building trust through meaningful collaboration. We show up with integrity, centring those we serve as the experts in their own lives.

Inclusive & Individualized Support | We believe every child and youth belongs. We honour their strengths, identities, stories and cultures, and tailor support to reflect each person's unique needs and priorities. We work to reduce barriers and foster participation in all aspects of life – at home, in school and/or child care and in the community.

Hope & Possibility | We hold space for growth, resilience and the belief in what's possible. Through collaborative interactions, we foster a future shaped by inclusion, opportunity, and lasting impact.

The Strategic Planning Process

Beginning in January 2025, Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth – Durham Region (Resources), with the support of People Minded Business (PMB), embarked on an inclusive strategic planning process, as depicted below. The purpose of this process and the resulting strategic plan is to establish clear priorities and objectives that will guide Resources’ decisions and actions over the next three years—driving momentum and enabling meaningful, positive change.



PMB researched the environment in which Resources operates, including local, regional, and provincial trends. Using an inclusive process of consultation, collaboration, and co-creation, Resources learned first-hand about what matters most to **182** people representing all the key constituent groups. **NOTE:** Prior to the strategic planning process, 47 Resources employees had completed an internal survey, which the Advisory Team deemed a recent and sufficient source of employee input for strategic planning purposes.





Words from Families Supported by Resources

Resources exists to support families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health, and/or complex needs - so it's only fitting that their families have the first word.

Families who responded to the online survey spoke highly of the organization's caring, knowledgeable staff and the sense of stability and support they have found. One parent shared, "Without them, I'm lost—they've been my kids' and my lifesaver." Others noted how helpful it was to have someone guide them through complex systems, with one saying, "They helped me coordinate everything to get the most benefit from what was available."

Families also offered thoughtful suggestions, including longer-term services, more teen-focused programming, and increased presence in under-served areas. Across the board, families expressed a strong desire for more of what they already value most—hands-on support, trusted relationships, and a service that truly listens.

Top Trends and Considerations

In April 2025, the Board President, a board member, the Executive Director, and eleven additional Resources employees reviewed the Situational Analysis report prepared by PMB and identified which 10 of the 35 Trends and Considerations noted were most critical to inform the organization's strategic priorities and objectives. Through a collaborative activity, the group identified the following, which are not ranked in order:

1. Sector Funding Constraints
2. Rising Complexity of Needs – The children and families
3. Mental Health & Family Stress
4. Region of Durham Trends – The region is experiencing steady population growth and becoming increasingly diverse in its cultures, identities, and lived experiences.
5. Supporting Staff Wellness
6. Staffing Pressures & Workforce Challenges
7. Lengthy Waitlists – At the agency and across the broader community
8. Coordination of Various Services
9. Impact of Affordable & Available Housing on Families
10. School Board Programs

Assets

Each organization has a unique ability to act on the future, build on the resources, assets, and strengths (e.g., people and culture, finances, technology, operations, services, etc.) it can deploy against the challenges it is currently facing and the opportunities it is being presented with. Below are frequently mentioned assets and strengths that surfaced via constituent input. They are central to the ongoing advancement and sustainability of Resources.

- Skilled, Caring and Supportive Staff
- Strong, Supportive Leadership
- Commitment to Mission-Driven, Family-Centred Work
- Trusted Relationships and Positive Reputation
- Value of On-Site, Face-to-Face Support
- Navigation Support
- Flexibility and Work-Life Balance
- Professional Development Opportunities Offered
- Sector Leadership

Resources' Strategic Priorities

1: Innovate and Optimize Services Using Data and Co-Design

Why: To respond effectively to family needs, reduce caregiver stress and wait times, and do more with limited resources.

Strategic Objectives:

- a) Use Resources' knowledge and tools to share strategies with families, partners, and child care centers.
- b) Leverage staff capacity and feedback to identify service gaps and strengthen models.
- c) Use data to create areas of focus, improve decision-making, assess complexity, and demonstrate outcomes in family-friendly ways.
- d) Co-design service models and evaluation strategies with families, child care centers and communities.

2: Foster a Resilient, Mission-Driven Organization

Why: To further nurture a strong internal culture, maintain sustainability, and ensure the organization is equipped for the future.

Strategic Objectives:

- a) Build a thriving workplace culture rooted in belonging, reflection, and learning.
- b) Modernize supervision and evaluation practices to support growth and engagement.
- c) Expand professional development and structured employee feedback.
- d) Diversify funding streams through grants, donor cultivation and social enterprise exploration.





3: Strengthen Partnerships and Community Awareness

Why: To expand reach, build trust, and ensure that families, partners, and the public understand and can access Resources' services.

Strategic Objectives:

- Improve external communications by enhancing website usability, streamlining service information, and increasing social media presence.
- Increase transparency about services and funding to build trust and credibility.
- Deepen engagement with strategic community partners, including government, other child/youth focused agencies, newcomer organizations, paraprofessionals, schools, media, and other institutions.
- Expand awareness and use of the Resources Family Fund and other key services.

4: Championing Positive Change in System Navigation

Why: To help individuals, families, and partners move through complex systems with more ease, equity, and dignity.

Strategic Objectives:

- Support system education efforts for both service users (childcare centers and families) and service providers.
- Be intentionally present at local and regional planning tables to advocate and lead.
- Collect and share meaningful community feedback to guide improvements and track impact.
- Establish clear, connected pathways to service through documented need, partnerships, and shared resources.