



**eko** **SPRING**  
**SYMPOSIUM**  
**2025**



# From Crisis to Care

A Case Study on Enhancing Support  
for Children with Complex Needs

**Vienna Carruthers**  
Service Planning Coordinator



**Jenna Francis**  
Director, Programs and Services



# What are Complex Needs?

Children with complex needs require support in more than one area of their development—such as learning, communication, physical health, behaviour, or emotional well-being.

These needs often happen at the same time and may change or grow over time. Because of this, children with complex needs may need help from several types of services, professionals, or programs to support their growth, learning, and everyday life.

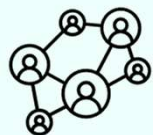
# Why Address Complex Needs?



**Long-Term Impact on Development and Well-Being:** Children with complex needs require individualized support to thrive.



**Family Stress:** Families face significant challenges. Coordinated services help to ease burdens, provide stability and reduce stress.



**Education and Social Inclusion:** Lack of integrated services can prevent children from fully participating in educational and social opportunities.



**Equity and Access:** Providing integrated and coordinated services can support all children, regardless of location or background, to receive the care and support they need, promoting equity and reducing disparities.



Fragmented  
services with  
Limited  
Integration



Lack of  
Coordinated  
Communication

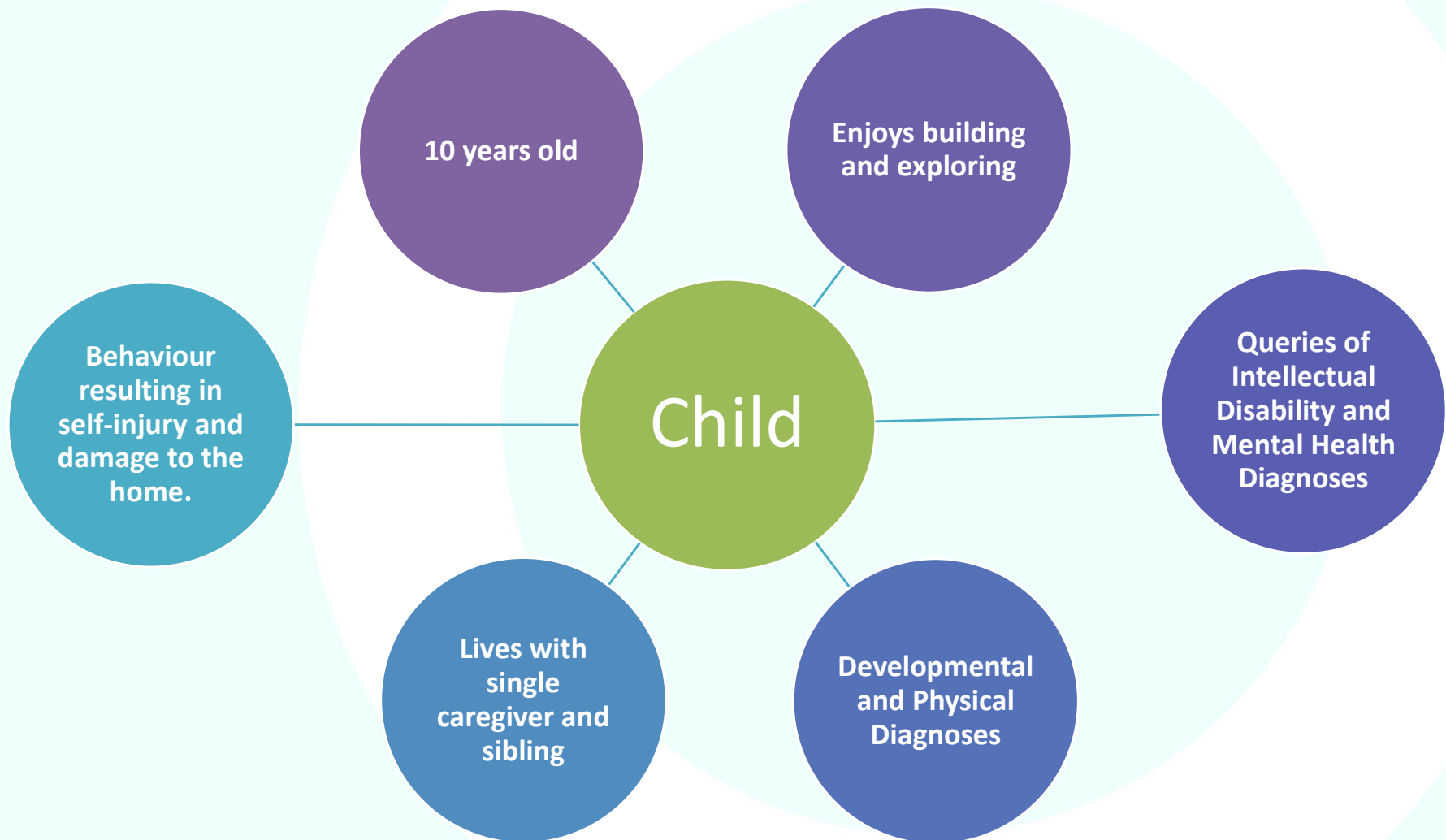


Inconsistent  
Access to  
Resources

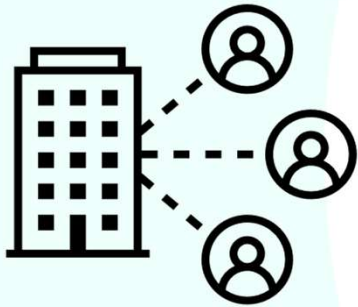


Reactive vs.  
Proactive  
Solutions

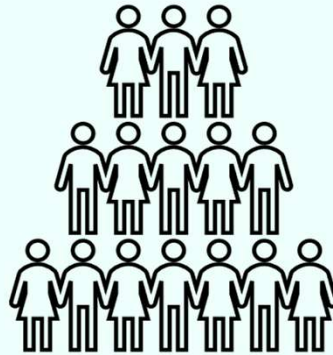
## Challenges for Families



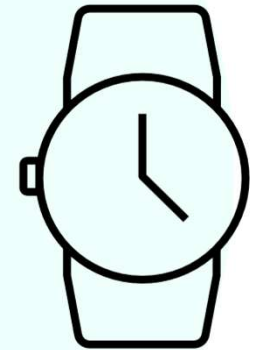
# The Family's Team



10  
Agencies

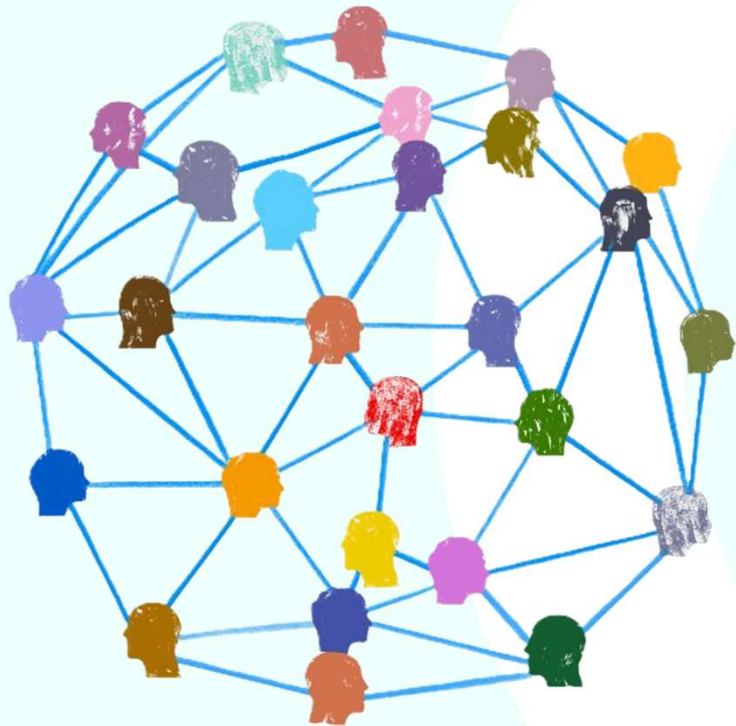


30+  
Providers



Over 15 Hours  
of Case  
Conferencing





**Truly coordinated** service **across sectors** and systems leads to...

- Decreased caregiver burnout
- Increased communication
- Additional services and supports

A decorative header featuring a horizontal row of light bulbs. Most are grey and unlit, but one bulb on the right side is glowing yellow with radiating lines, symbolizing an idea or key takeaway.

# Key Takeaways

- **Streamlining** access
  - Match the right services both internally and externally for families
  - Minimizing how many times families have to tell their story, and using the information and connections that we already have
- **Value of Perspective**
  - Importance of coordinators having a broad knowledge and understanding of community and larger systems that support children and youth with complex needs across sectors
  - Relying on community partners to provide need-specific services, supports and recommendations
- **Utilizing Relationships**
  - Using our agency's connections in the community across sectors (education, health, mental health, etc.)
  - Having partners make referrals and/or call our team in for help