

Strides Toronto

Operational Plan

2025/26

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
INTRODUCTION.....	3
Purpose and Scope	3
Development.....	3
Commitment to IDEA	3
Current Environment.....	3
Implementation and Evaluation	5
Moving Forward Together.....	5
ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW	6
Strides Profile.....	6
Strides Role as Lead Agency	6
Strides Toronto at a Glance.....	6
Realizing Strides Toronto's Vision and Mission.....	7
OPERATIONAL PLAN ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES.....	8
Outreach, Visibility and Equity	8
Accessible Services and Connected Pathways.....	10
System Leadership and Advocacy	12
Empowered Learning Organization	14
Efficient, Technology-Enabled Organization	16

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope

Strides Toronto's operational plan for the 2025/26 fiscal year provides a roadmap for achieving the organization's strategic priorities, with an intentional focus on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA). It covers all operational areas and outlines key activities and deliverables for the fiscal year.

Development

A comprehensive consultation process involving surveys, team meetings, and focus groups informed the development of the 2025/26 operational plan. Key findings from this process included:

- Staff insights highlighted challenges and opportunities from the viewpoint of the individuals who are in direct contact with clients and/or support day to day operations.
- Feedback indicated a strong desire to ensure that staffing, services and outreach strategies are tailored to the diverse communities of Toronto.
- There is a growing demand for plans to address a changing client base such as transitional-aged youth and individuals with complex needs.

Commitment to IDEA

Strides Toronto is deeply committed to embedding IDEA principles in all aspects of its operations. The 2025/26 operational plan reflects this commitment through expanding the organization's ability to provide culturally adapted and multilingual services, the development of an Anti-Black Racism Toolkit, and continuing with implementation of the recommendations of the [HOPE Strategy](#) (Honouring Our Promise: Ending Anti-Black Racism).

Current Environment

The 2025/26 fiscal year will see Strides Toronto engage in many large-scale activities that will have a lasting impact on the organization. In the development of the 2025/26 operational plan, the organization was mindful to create a streamlined catalogue of projects that are feasible and reflect the current capacity of staff, management and the organization as a whole.

[Strides Toronto Strategic Plan \(FY2021 – FY2026\)](#)

Strides Toronto's inaugural strategic plan 2021-2026 is built around five interconnected priorities aimed at fostering equity, accessibility, and systemic change.

- **Outreach, Visibility, and Equity** focuses on increasing Strides Toronto's presence in underserved communities, enhancing accessibility, and embedding anti-racism principles into programs and policies.
- **Accessible Services and Connected Pathways** ensures seamless and integrated service access for clients by streamlining waitlist management and exploring expansion of service scheduling.

- **System Leadership and Advocacy** focuses on Strides Toronto's role in system planning, influencing government policy and addressing systemic inequities, particularly in infant, child and youth mental health.
- **Empowering Learning Organization** aims to create a culture of continuous improvement, leadership development, and staff empowerment to enhance service delivery and operations.
- **Efficient, Technology-Enabled Organization** seeks to modernize the organization's infrastructure, implementing digital tools and IT strategies to improve client experience and operational efficiency.

Collectively, these priorities ensure that Strides Toronto remains adaptable and effective in meeting the evolving needs of the communities it serves.

ICYMH Three-Year Action Plan (FY2023 – FY2025)

On behalf of Toronto Core Service Providers, and in the capacity of Lead Agency for Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health (ICYMH) in Toronto, Strides Toronto submitted the service area's ICYMH Three-Year Action Plan in January 2024. The Three-Year Plan contains nine initiatives that, once achieved, will support the vision where

“Every infant, child, youth and family in Toronto has access to an ecosystem of identity-inclusive and evidence-based supports that address their mental health and holistic health goals.”

- ICYMH Three-Year Action Plan Vision Statement

As we approach the final year of the plan (2025/26), Strides Toronto remains committed to leading the successful implementation of all activities. Importantly, several key projects, including the HOPE Strategy, enhanced collaboration with allied sectors, and advocacy to address the Health Human Resources challenges with the sector, will continue beyond the plan's conclusion on 31 March 31, 2026, reflecting the need for sustained change in Toronto.

Accreditation

2025/26 marks an important milestone for Strides as the organization participates in an accreditation review with the Canadian Centre for Accreditation. In recognition of the rigorous [standards and extensive preparation required](#), Strides has prioritized the development and execution of comprehensive compliance strategies. The operational plan dedicates significant resources to ensure all programs, processes, and documentation meet or exceed the accreditation criteria. This proactive approach is designed not only to secure continued accreditation but also to strengthen Strides institutional excellence and accountability.

Quality Improvement Plan

As part of Strides Quality Framework, the annual quality improvement plan (QIP) will spotlight a select group of key operational deliverables as targeted quality improvement initiatives. These initiatives will be aligned with Strides strategic objectives and designed to drive measurable enhancements in performance and service delivery. Through focused evaluation, process refinement, and stakeholder engagement, we will ensure that these initiatives deliver substantial

and sustainable improvements, reinforcing the organization's dedication to excellence and innovation.

Risk Register

Strides Toronto has established an annual risk register to identify, assess, and track potential risks to the organization. The risk register serves as a centralized location for documenting and prioritizing risks based on their likelihood and impact, enabling proactive mitigation strategies where needed. For 2025/26, the risk register includes 42 risks defined by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, as well as two risks defined by Strides employees.

Implementation and Evaluation

The 2025/26 operational plan, encompassing a wide range of activities and deliverables, is the result of a collaborative planning process led, informed, and executed by the dedicated staff of Strides Toronto, fostering a strong sense of ownership and accountability. Progress will be monitored regularly through established metrics, and the plan will be evaluated quarterly to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. A final report on the organizations activities and accomplishments in 2025/26 will be published in the Spring of 2026.

Moving Forward Together

Ensuring Many Voices and Perspectives Shape Strides Toronto's Future

Strides values the voices and perspectives of clients, staff and partners in its planning processes and work. Youth Advisory and Family Advisory Councils ensure that Strides work is informed by the lived experiences and expertise of the communities served. Many staff were engaged in operational planning with insights from service and operations informing the final result. Partners were engaged in planning processes to develop the Three Year ICYMH plan, with system transformation initiatives from that plan embedded within Strides operational plan.

These insights as well as the collaboration required to implement this plan are very much appreciated.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Strides Profile

Strides Toronto is a multi-service organization addressing the needs of infants, children, youth, their parents/caregivers and families. Strides is located in eastern Toronto with services predominately provided in the communities of East York and Scarborough as well as programs and roles that are regional and provincial.

Strides Toronto provides a wide range of exceptional programs and services to help young people and their families achieve optimal health and well-being. The organization supports individuals from the prenatal stage to age 29 and their families. Strides Toronto's work helps strengthen their social and emotional well-being, move forward through adversity and develop their abilities and skills to reach their full potential.

Vision	Thriving children, youth, families and communities
Mission	We build strength and resilience with infants, children, youth and families, through equitable, accessible, client-driven services, system leadership and advocacy
Values	Excellence, Collaboration, Respect, Courage

Strides Role as Lead Agency

As Toronto's Lead Agency for Infant, Child, and Youth Mental Health, Strides Toronto spearheads efforts, alongside 23 core service providers, to design and implement improvements to mental health services. Strides continues to build upon [Help Ahead](#) (centralized access to ICYMH services in Toronto), [One Stop Talk/Parlons Maintenance](#) (provincial virtual brief service that Strides Hosts on behalf of the Lead Agency Consortium) and the [HOPE Strategy](#) (Toronto's ICYMH anti-Black racism strategy) to bring transformational change to ICYMH services, ensuring young people and their families have access to high quality, equitable and culturally responsive mental health services. These initiatives are guided by the increasing importance of data-informed decision making and in response to the growing number of clients with complex needs. As such, the Lead Agency intends to strengthen collaboration with allied sectors for the betterment of children, youth and their families.

Strides Toronto at a Glance

- **Employees:** 368 dedicated professionals
- **Languages Spoken:** 38, ensuring culturally responsive service
- **Funding:** \$43 million in operational resources
- **Program Areas:** Mental health services, autism and developmental services, anti-human trafficking programs, Youth Wellness Hubs, Youth Outreach Worker programs, capacity building and family support initiatives.

Realizing Strides Toronto's Vision and Mission

Through strategic partnerships, targeted advocacy, service innovation and system transformation, Strides Toronto is creating meaningful change in the lives of young people, families, communities and systems. By aligning Strides operational priorities with the needs of young people, communities and systems, Strides works to ensure that every infant, child, youth, and family has the opportunity to thrive.

OPERATIONAL PLAN ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Outreach, Visibility and Equity

Ensuring equitable access to services is at the heart of Strides Toronto's mission. In alignment with the organization's values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, this section outlines the plan for enhancing outreach, visibility, and participation for staff, clients, and community members.

For the 2025/26 fiscal year, the organization will launch a two-pronged approach: first, refining marketing and outreach to better connect with diverse and underserved populations. This includes applying an IDEA lens to develop targeted strategies for programs in Autism and Developmental Services, the What's Up Walk-in and One Stop Talk/Parlons Maintenant. Rather than develop a uniform outreach strategy for the organization, particular care will be given to the unique attributes of the wide range of programs and services offered.

Second, Strides aims to dismantle systemic barriers and foster inclusion through concrete actions. This includes exploring culturally adapted and multilingual services, translating essential materials, and ensuring Strides staffing reflects the diversity of the clients and communities served. Toronto is a multicultural city with a diverse range of languages, cultures and peoples. In acknowledgement of this diversity, Strides will evolve its service offerings and communications to reflect the demographics of the communities served.

As the organization strives to create an equitable, inclusive environment for clients and staff, the HOPE Strategy and its accompanying recommendations will provide a roadmap for meaningful change. The strategy reflects Strides Toronto's, and the broader sector's, commitment to raise awareness of and address anti-Black racism, and its impact on Black infants, children, youth and families. Throughout the 2025/26 operational plan and beyond, Strides will lead with transparency and accountability to take collective action to address anti-Black racism both within and outside of the organization.

Importantly, and in the spirit of including diverse feedback, Strides will engage in focus groups designed to receive an informed assessment of the organization's progress in relation to IDEA.

Goal: All infants, children, youth and families have equitable access to the culturally safe services they need to thrive.		
Activity	Deliverables	Lead
1. Grow and evolve marketing and outreach strategies tailored to diverse and underserved communities. 2. Foster inclusion and equity by delivering diverse, needs-responsive services and dismantling systemic barriers through dedicated anti-Black racism and anti-oppression efforts.	1.1 Develop and implement strategic marketing plans to enhance visibility and engagement for Autism Services, WUWI, and OST/PM, with an IDEA lens.	Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications
	2.1 Explore expansion of culturally adapted and multilingual services for clients.	VP, Service Excellence
	2.2 Translate intake forms and marketing materials into multiple languages.	Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications
	2.3 Review achievements and update the implementation plan to address the five strategic priorities from the HOPE Strategy.	Director, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility
	2.4 Evaluate alignment of the staff complement with the diversity of the community.	Director, Human Resources
	2.5 Facilitate focus groups with management and staff to gather input on Strides progress related to IDEA.	Director, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility
	2.6 Develop a toolkit to identify and implement best practices around allyship with equity deserving communities including Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+ and racialized communities.	
	2.7 Review and evolve policies and practices to ensure that issues pertinent to equity-deserving communities are addressed proactively.	

Accessible Services and Connected Pathways

Removing barriers to access and ensuring timely support are critical to the well-being of the young people and families Strides serves. The organization is committed to expanding program accessibility and enhancing services. Families have expressed challenges related to service availability outside of traditional organizational hours. Therefore, Strides will explore the feasibility of providing services in new locations and expanding hours of service (more after school, evenings, and weekends service availability). Through these efforts, the organization will provide additional options for young people and families to receive support where and when they need it.

A significant new program is the development of the residential treatment program for girls who have been sex trafficked that is scheduled to open in Fall of 2025. The only program of its type in Toronto, this initiative brings together Strides expertise in gender-based violence and residential treatment. A property has been located, and work is underway to renovate and develop the program model.

Strides continues to learn and adjust its strategies to transition successfully to the fee-for-service environment In Autism and Developmental Services. Continuing to refine the organization's approach will be critical in the year ahead.

There is a growing number of clients attending services with a high level of complexity and/or experiencing co-morbid conditions. The organization has actively taken steps to support clients in these situations, and there is a desire to explore additional strategies to support these young people and their families. Strides recognizes the need to establish innovative waitlist management solutions, where possible, to increase the efficiency and timeliness of service delivery.

Goal: Every client feels fully supported from the moment they come through the doors, and has clear, connected pathways, both inside and outside of Strides Toronto, for all the services they need, from infancy through young adulthood.		
Activity	Deliverables	Lead
3. Increase program accessibility, bridging gaps and removing barriers for those in need.	3.1 Explore offering services at new locations and expanding hours of service (more after school, evening and weekend services).	VP, Service Excellence
	3.2 Implement the new anti-human trafficking residential treatment program including the operational framework, staffing model, service delivery approach, and key partnerships.	Director, Community Services
	3.3 Develop strategies and capacities to offer the most effective, cost-efficient and sustainable fee-for-service offerings.	Director, Autism and Developmental Services
4. Enrich existing services to better meet the diverse needs of the communities served.	4.1 Evaluate strategies to better meet the needs of children with complex mental health concerns and their parents/caregivers.	Director, Mental Health Services
5. Create innovative waitlist management solutions that ensure timely support for every individual.	5.1 Review and enhance existing wait list management processes to better support timely access to service.	VP, Service Excellence

System Leadership and Advocacy

To enhance service accessibility and address the social determinants of health, Strides Toronto will continue to focus on system planning, partnerships, policy influence, and expertise sharing.

The [BI Solution](#) (BI), the central repository of the ICYMH Data, enables a comprehensive view of the clients that are served, the services that they receive and their outcomes. There are critical gaps in BI data currently that must be addressed. Across the sector, approximately 70% of clients do not have demographic/identity data entered and 40% of clients do not have recorded needs assessments. The absence of these data elements prevents Strides in its Lead Agency role, and the broader sector, from engaging in data-informed decision-making

- The sector lacks information on the communities that are, and more importantly, are not receiving service. This is particularly important as the sector aims to implement the HOPE Strategy and other efforts to provide culturally responsive services.
- To support effective service planning, the sector requires a strong understanding of the experiences of clients and the community.
- In the role of Lead Agency, key deliverables will include standardizing data collection (e.g., demographic, needs assessment data) to identify potential service gaps and enable more targeted interventions.

Through the sector's Advocacy Committee, Strides Toronto plays a key role in addressing the recruitment and retention concerns that are being experienced across ICYMH service providers. Staff represent a key resource in the execution of all programs and services and Strides is committed to strongly advocating for comparable compensation and supports to align with that of allied sectors.

Furthermore, Strides will continue to implement activities within the Three-Year Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health Service Plan, specifically focusing on completing transformational projects within Help Ahead, One Stop Talk/Parlons Maintenant, the HOPE Strategy, and the implementation of the Intensive Services Review recommendations.

Goal: Improve accessibility of services and address social determinants of health through system planning, partnerships, influencing policy and sharing our expertise.		
Activity	Deliverables	Lead
6. Champion sector-wide knowledge sharing and support networks, igniting a culture of continuous improvement.	6.1 Standardize data collection (e.g., demographic/identity data, needs assessment data) to identify potential service gaps.	Director, Strategy and Quality
7. Advocate boldly for increased funding to address systemic inequities and create sustainable solutions to support critical human health resources.	7.1 Lead and support advocacy efforts to address systemic inequities and address human resource challenges.	President and CEO
8. Drive transformative change through collaboration to deliver on our commitments as Toronto's Lead Agency for Child and Youth Mental Health.	8.1 Continue to implement activities identified within the Three-Year ICYMH Service Plan related to the completion of transformational projects (e.g., implement Help Ahead Phase Two; expand utilization of and participation in One Stop Talk/Parlons maintenant; implement priorities from the HOPE Strategy and from the Intensive Services Review).	VP, Strategy

Empowered Learning Organization

Strides Toronto is invested in continuous improvement, professional development, and meaningful work. Ongoing quality improvement ensures services evolve and meet changing needs of young people and their families. Learning and development opportunities empower staff to excel professionally. This fosters a culture where employees feel supported, engaged, and inspired by the positive impact of their contributions, leading to enhanced service quality, improved organizational performance, and greater ability to adapt to internal and external changes.

For FY25/26, the organization will cultivate a culture of innovation and accountability through a concerted effort to develop a quality improvement framework and program evaluation plans. These efforts will enable systematic evaluation, feedback loops and data-driven improvements to programs and services, all for the benefit of clients served. This will be further supported by developing logic models and theories of change for each program, ensuring clear pathways to desired outcomes.

Operational excellence will be pursued within the Finance Department through initiatives identified through an external review. Strengthening inter-departmental connections will be achieved through regular knowledge sharing sessions, including staff-led Lunch and Learn sessions and all-staff meetings.

In the engagements with staff, a highly requested technological improvement was a central repository for documents, policies, templates, and other resources which could be realized through the development of an intranet. Through an intranet, Strides can make meaningful steps towards enhanced internal communication and collaboration leading to a more connected workforce and improved operational efficiencies.

Finally, fostering professional excellence and a thriving workplace will be prioritized through the further enhancement of the staff well-being program and calendar, communicating the availability of mental health resources, and the creation of a succession planning framework, ensuring both immediate staff support and long-term organizational stability.

Goal:

Everyone in the organization is engaged in ongoing quality improvement, learning and development, empowered and supported to work at their best, and feels inspired by the impact of their work

Activity	Deliverables	Lead
9. Cultivate a culture of innovation and accountability through an organization-wide quality improvement framework and evaluation plans that drive meaningful change	9.1 Develop the annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the organization.	Director, Strategy and Quality
	9.2 Implement strategies to address feedback received from the staff engagement survey.	Director, Human Resources
	9.3 Develop logic models and theories of change for services.	Director, Strategy and Quality
10. Strengthened inter-departmental connections through knowledge sharing sessions and accessible resources.	10.1 Develop and implement a calendar of Lunch and Learn sessions and all-staff meetings.	Director, Human Resources
	10.2 Develop an intranet for securely sharing company resources among employees.	Director, Information Technology
11. Foster professional excellence and a thriving workplace through targeted development opportunities and a supportive, inclusive culture.	11.1 Review and assess employee goal setting, training and development, performance evaluation, and succession planning processes.	Director, Human Resources

Efficient, Technology-Enabled Organization

Strides Toronto is striving to build a strong technological backbone that elevates client experiences and maximizes resource efficiency. To achieve this, the organization will refine data visualization and reporting, creating dashboards that offer clear, actionable insights into human resource metrics and program performance. This empowers data-driven decisions, ensuring resources are strategically allocated and services are continuously improved, leading to better client outcomes.

At the same time, Strides Toronto will pursue technological innovation by integrating systems for efficient workflows and future-proof operations. Integrating platforms like TREAT with SAGE and an e-referral platform. This integrated approach will create a more efficient and responsive technological environment, allowing staff to focus on delivering high-quality services. To guarantee operational consistency and reliability, Strides Toronto will standardize processes, streamline workflows, and enhance reporting across corporate functions.

These initiatives will create a technologically advanced and operationally efficient organization, well-prepared to address the evolving needs of its clients, staff and stakeholders. By prioritizing data-driven insights, system integration, and operational standardization, Strides Toronto will strength its ability to deliver effective services and provide the resources that staff require.

Goal:

Our robust technology, processes and infrastructure support high-quality client experiences and efficient use of resources.

Activity	Deliverables	Lead
12. Enhance data visualization and reporting to support program and service optimization.	12.1 Develop and implement a human resource dashboard to enable data-driven decision making to improve workforce strategies and employee experience.	VP, Corporate Services
	12.2 Create dashboards that display KPIs for at least one key program per service department.	Director, Strategy and Quality
13. Drive technology innovation by integrating systems to unify workflows, improve connectivity, and ensure future ready operations.	13.1 Explore feasibility of integrating TREAT with SAGE as well as SAGE with ADP.	Director, Finance and Administration
	13.2 Explore feasibility of integrating TREAT with an e-referral platform.	Director, Mental Health Systems
14. Strengthen operational consistency and reliability by standardizing processes, streamlining workflows, and enhancing reporting across essential corporate functions.	14.1 Implement efficient processes and automation initiatives within the Finance Department in support of operational excellence.	Director, Finance and Administration