



Getting Ready for Inclusion Today

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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WHO WE ARE



Getting Ready for **Inclusion Today** (G.R.I.T.) is a long-standing program of excellence, meeting the diverse needs of preschool children with developmental disabilities in and around the Calgary area. Our Alberta Education funded program provides specialized and individualized home, community and school based education. A team of experienced professionals work in collaboration with parents to provide an effective and dynamic education experience for the children we serve!

OUR MISSION

Empowering the lives of children and families.



WE BELIEVE...

that a positive and successful transition into the school system requires support and advocacy from a highly experienced education/therapy team working together with the families.

that you, the parents, need to be provided with flexible program options that cater to your child's individual needs including time in home, in the community, and access to specialized programs.

that your child will benefit from the Consultative Model, which involves consistent therapy and education provided by a Child Development Specialist. They work as part of a team with teachers and therapists who establish, model, and monitor these strategies for the Child Development Specialist and your family.



OUR VISION

**Every child deserves
the right to achieve
their full potential.**

We provide an early
education program
that is tailored to a
child's individual needs
with opportunities to
experience inclusion
and full participation in
their home, school, and
community setting.



a letter from **Executive Director** Paula Carby

As I reflect back to the 2023–2024 school year at G.R.I.T. Calgary Society, I am reminded how fortunate we are to be able to work with so many incredible children, families, professionals and communities. It is amazing what can be accomplished when we all work together to achieve a common goal. That is providing our children with the tools and strategies to achieve their fullest potential. Every day we learn new life lessons from these children, and they teach us what is important in life.

G.R.I.T. Calgary Society had a very fulfilling year both educationally and administratively. Our Junior Kindergarten Program has continued to grow and develop by focusing on language and literacy including expanding our home reading program and working with each individual child where they are at with literacy. We increased their involvement in the community by adding field trips and having guest speakers come into the classroom to provide new experiences and opportunities for our children. We continue to provide programs at our facility to include all children working on their individual goals in a group setting with their peers to ensure they are getting positive social opportunities. We have continued to develop our partnerships in the community with other preschools and educators. The goal of these partnerships is to promote education and ongoing learning.

This year, two new professionals joined our Board. A professional Petroleum Engineer and a Chartered Professional Accountant. We feel our board is stronger than it has ever been with the addition of these two new board members. We are so thankful for our board and their continuous support and guidance.

We would like to thank our government and community for making our work possible and seeing how important our children and families are to us. I would like to thank all our staff at G.R.I.T. Calgary Society for being so committed and dedicated to what we do. Your loyalty to your work is greatly appreciated and recognized. Without all of you our program wouldn't be who we are today.

Thank you for such a wonderful year and I look forward to another school year ahead.

Kind regards,
Paula Carby, Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Michael Barrett

Vice President

Michele Monteith

Secretary/Treasurer

Carolyn Olson

Directors

Lana Barrett

Richard Lefebvre

Jim Chisholm

Katrina McCallum

Board President **Michael Barrett**

Dear G.R.I.T. Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible progress and achievements of our organization.

This year has been marked by significant milestones and the continued dedication of our team, board members, and community partners.

New Board Members

We are thrilled to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors: Katrina McCallum, CPA, and Jim Chisholm, P. Eng. Both Katrina and Jim bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our board, and their contributions have already proven invaluable. Their diverse backgrounds and professional experiences will undoubtedly enhance our governance and strategic direction.

Community Partnerships

GRIT continues to foster and develop our partnerships within the community, collaborating with pre-schools, daycares, and other community members and educators. These partnerships are crucial in promoting education and ongoing learning within a child's community, ultimately increasing their independence and preparing them for future success.

Commitment to Quality

At GRIT, we remain steadfast in our philosophy of "quality over quantity." We are committed to ensuring that every child in our program receives a highly individualized program tailored to their unique goals and needs. Families and children are our passion and our priority, and we strive to create an environment where each child can thrive.

Specialized Programs

Our specialized programs, including Junior Kindergarten, STEP (Social Therapy Education Program), and IET (Integrated Educational Therapy), continue to yield remarkable results. The children in our programs are thriving, and we are proud of the meaningful progress they are making in their educational journeys.

Recognition and Gratitude

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and express our heartfelt gratitude to our funders, Alberta Education, our community partners, donors, and our dedicated staff and volunteers. Your unwavering support and generosity make it possible for us to continue providing high-quality, individualized educational programming to the children we serve.

There are many incredible people who make GRIT such an amazing organization. I would like to take this opportunity to specifically mention two of them: Paula Carby and Annette Eckel. Year after year, I remain incredibly grateful to work alongside such hard working, caring and committed individuals. We are very lucky to have them within our organization.

On behalf of the Board, I am incredibly proud of what GRIT has accomplished this year and am excited for what lies ahead. Together, we will continue to build a brighter future for the children and families we serve.

Sincerely,
Michael Barrett

COMMUNITY IMPACT



1  **CHILDREN
ENROLLED**

**SUPPORTED
IN 53
HOMES**



**AND 24
PRESCHOOLS
AND DAYCARES**

THE CHILD'S TEAM

Each child in our program is assigned a team of qualified professionals that create and implement goals designed to help them reach their full potential. These teams are specifically tailored to each child's individual needs and work to ensure they have the opportunity to be fully included in their homes, schools, and communities!

CERTIFICATED TEACHER

Responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the child's Individual Program Plan. They provide consultation to the child, family and Child Development Specialist in the areas of cognition, socialization and behavior. The Certificated Teacher facilitates contact with external organizations or individuals involved with the child as needed.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

Provides direct support for the child in the home, at preschool and in the community. They work collaboratively with the child's family and the G.R.I.T. Education and Therapy Team to implement the child's Individual Program Plan (IPP).

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

Provides direct therapy for the child as well as consultation to the family and child development specialists in the areas of speech and augmentative alternative communication (AAC). They supply equipment, strategies and modifications to maximize the child's ability to communicate their wants, needs and ideas.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Provides direct therapy for the child as well as consultation to the family and the Child Development Specialist in the areas of self help skills and fine motor development. They provide strategies, equipment and modifications of environment to support the child in their home and classroom settings.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Provides direct therapy for the child as well as consultation to the family and the child development specialist in the area of gross motor development. They provide equipment, strategies and modifications to maximize the child's mobility, strength and balance.

VISION FACILITATOR

Helps provide modifications to environment, equipment and learning materials to support needs unique to vision loss. They are experienced in cortical vision impairment and are able to provide instruction in early braille literacy to the child, parent and child development specialist.

OUR PROGRAMS

INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND THERAPY (IET)



Offers sensory-focused activities (visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory) for children needing increased sensory focus or gradual exposure. It provides a variety of adapted crafts, opportunities for exploration, life skills practice, and fun for children and their CDs. A key component of this program is TAC PAC, developed in the UK, which combines sensory input and music to promote communication, social interaction, and sensory, neurological, and emotional development.

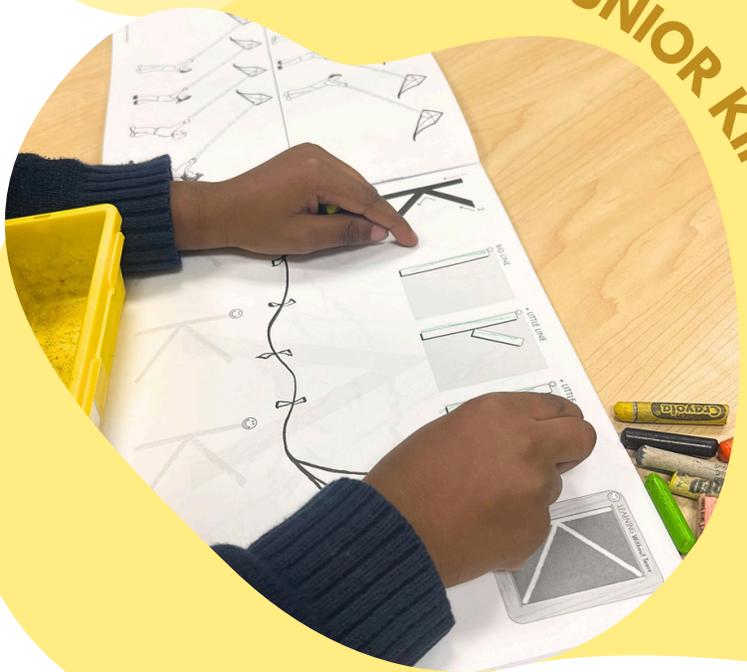
Offers children a chance to be exposed to a classroom environment. The focus of this group is to promote social communication as well as develop independence with classroom routines and daily tasks. Themed crafts, circle time and sensory exploration allow the students to engage with each other in a structured environment to develop positive relationships.



SOCIAL THERAPY EDUCATION PROGRAM (STEP)

Fosters children's love of learning and curiosity, while building meaningful relationships. Led by a Certificated Teacher and supported by Child Development Specialists, this program features small class sizes for personalized learning. A Speech Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist visit regularly to support individualized goals. Children thrive in a nurturing environment, developing independence and preparing for future educational success.

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN



OUR PROGRAMS

By renting out the basement of Woodcliff United Church, we are able to provide children in our program with a large space where they can explore and interact with their peers! This group is especially beneficial for children with busy bodies or those who are trialing new, large equipment like walkers or electric wheelchairs.

WOODCLIFF PLAY GROUP



GROSS MOTOR GROUP



Instructed by our physical therapists, this group provides an opportunity for children to participate with peers in activities that promote muscle strengthening, balance, coordination, and turn taking in a fun and safe environment.

WORDS FROM OUR FAMILIES

“We have been with GRIT for all 3 years of PUF with my son Owen. From the very beginning they have been nothing but supportive and accommodating. Our first year of PUF with GRIT, Owen had to spend the day at the hospital 3 times a week for dialysis and GRIT was patient with all the schedule changes that comes with being put on emergency hemodialysis. They came to the hospital for the whole year to support Owen while he was getting his treatments. I fully believe that they were instrumental in Owen’s success in not only his treatments (because he was so well supported), but his continued improvement developmentally. We started GRIT with only 30 words and 1-2 years old developmentally at age 3 and now Owen is talking in full sentences and almost caught up to his peers developmentally!! I know I can go to them with any challenge or concern we are having with Owen and I will have the full team putting their heads together to find a strategy that works for him – they really listen to each and every concern you have. From hospital visits to giving him lots of space and time to transition during their sessions, they take cues from Owen and go at his pace, really tailoring their approach to HIM. I’ve never felt like they were just trying to check a box to achieve a goal. I cannot put into words to express the full impact of GRIT on my family. Now, we are in our last year of GRIT and Owen has grown so much in their care. He comes home and tells me the new things he learned that day, I can really see how much he is learning and growing with them. I am sad to be graduating from GRIT as they have become part of the family.”

"We have been sending our daughter Eleanora to GRIT for over a year now. Nora was born at 25 weeks gestation and under a pound at birth, she had complex medical conditions resulting in the need for a tracheostomy, oxygen support and severe speech language delay.

Paula and her excellent teams of educators including Stacey Vammen, a certified teacher, and the brilliant and engaged team of CDSs, SLPs, OTs and PTs all of whom have made a huge impact on our daughter's education. The team has been so honed and specific to Nora's individual skills and needs, she has truly thrived at GRIT!

This past September Nora began attending the innovative and thoughtfully designed Junior Kindergarten program at GRIT, and we have been able to monitor her personal and educational growth with bi-weekly updates sent to via an online app. We have been so impressed with Nora's development and are forever grateful to the whole GRIT team for making it possible for Nora to overcome a difficult start to her life and help her successfully navigate her educational future."

FINANCIALS

2023/2024

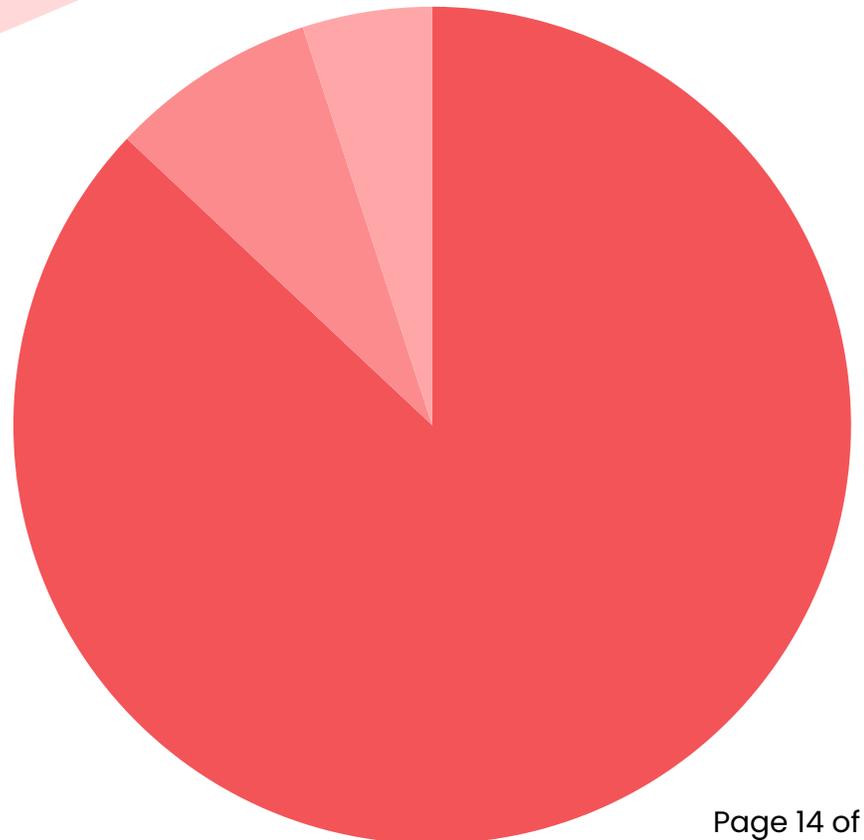


Revenue

- 95%** Alberta Education Grants
- 5%** Fundraising & Donations

Expenses

- 87%** Program Delivery
- 8%** Administration Costs
- 5%** Building & Operations



FUNDRAISING ANNUAL GALA

OVER \$34,000 RAISED!

Our annual fundraising gala was a **GREAT SUCCESS!** We shared amazing food and even better company as we celebrated, shared stories, and raised money for the incredible community we serve!



MORE FUNDRAISERS

Growing Smiles



New Fundraiser!

Milk Jar Candle Co.

Giving Tuesday

OVER \$17,000
IN ADDITIONAL
FUNDRAISING &
DONATIONS!

SUPPORTERS

Telsec

Milk Jar Candle Co.

Corus: Global Calgary & QR Calgary

Occasional Notes

Chair Flair

J&L Supply

The Peplinski Family

Monteith Houle Real-estate

Dakota Sensory Solutions

Riverwest Therapy Collective

S.M.I.L.E. Therapy for Kids

Village Icecream

Carlene & Dan Harland

Michelle & Dave Holkestad

Friends and Family of G.R.I.T.



THANKYOU

CONTACT

US



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