

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



**FAMILY AND
CHILDREN'S
SERVICES**

of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville

Together for Our Kids

RAISING AWARENESS THIS YEAR



Vision

Safe, healthy, resilient kids growing up in their families within their communities...where FCSLLG is part of a social system that promotes equitable outcomes for all children and families.

Mission

FCSLLG is committed to engaging families and the community in the safety, permanency and well-being of our children and youth.





Mike Andrews, Board President



Erin Lee Marcotte, Executive Director

RAISING AWARENESS THIS YEAR

It is difficult to report on the accomplishments of the organization this year without addressing the challenges in the child welfare sector provincially. These include a provincial placement crisis, accumulating deficits in many children's aid societies including our own, new regulatory requirements, and complex service challenges. Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville has continued to deliver services in alignment with our Mission and Vision, in partnership with our community.

Advocacy and Awareness Raising with Municipalities

Sectoral challenges have been a topic of conversation on the provincial child welfare agenda over the course of the fiscal year. Much communication has occurred between FCSLLG and our Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, yet thus far, no changes to the funding formula or concrete solutions to address the placement crisis have emerged.

Agencies have been largely left to manage crises on their own and we are proud of how FCSLLG has pulled together to cope with so much uncertainty and precariousness within the sector. As a recommended strategy from our provincial Association, we engaged with Municipalities in our service area to raise awareness about the Agency and the compounding financial challenges and placement crisis, driven by declining funding and the increasing complex needs of many youths in our community.

Delegations to Joint Services of the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville, Lanark County Council, and the Eastern Ontario Mayors Caucus were a few of our advocacy efforts, and we were pleased with the interest and support from so many local mayors and municipal leaders across our region. There was good traction and a request for a delegation by the tri-counties with Minister Parsa that was ultimately denied in August.

We continued the advocacy conversation with our Members of Provincial Parliament, John Jordan and Steve Clark, into the fall, making efforts to tell the story of our organization in the broader context of child welfare. At the same time, many other organizations across the province have been struggling with similar issues, leading to several stories in the media. In the fall 2024, the provincial government announced that there would be a third-party child welfare audit to examine how the sector is operating, focusing on several financial and service delivery components. This third-party review, set to commence early in 2025, was delayed due to the provincial election and will begin in the 2025–26 fiscal year.

Against this backdrop, the Agency has continued to take steps to reduce operating costs. The 8 Herriott Street, Perth office was sold in August 2024, which reduces our footprint and monthly maintenance costs. We were able to maintain one service team in Perth in the same building by renting space from the new owners and completed some leasehold improvements to fit the space for our needs. The remaining

15 staff re-located to our Smiths Falls office, most of them into newly renovated space, making more efficient use of the building's square footage. Selling 8 Herriott Street, a building with a rich legacy in Lanark County and the town of Perth, was not an easy transition for our employees, however, the business case coupled with our financial state compelled the Agency to make this move. We are proud of our employees for managing the change with grace.

The Agency's deficit—the excess of expenses over revenues—, continues to grow substantially as you will see in our audited financial statements. A key driver of the increasing deficit is the cost of care for youth with significant complex mental health needs. The Agency spent approximately 1.8 million dollars on purchased and/or unlicensed care for about 10 different youths over the course of the fiscal year because family-based settings were not successful in stabilizing these young people, and/or their profiles were such that homes within our own foster network could not be secured. The issue of lack of placements is a provincial one, as demonstrated by the Ombudsman announcing in September 2024 an investigation into the practice of placing youth in care into hotels, motels, and trailers.

Efforts to manage and mitigate the negative impact on youth because of the placement crisis have included FCSLLG renting a home in a residential neighborhood in Brockville to use as an emergency placement setting, instead of Air-BnBs or hotels/motels. We have also been working over the course of the year on a partnership agreement with our two mental health agencies, which we expect to commence early in fiscal year 2025–2026. The partnership will involve FCSLLG funding two full-time Counselling Therapists to provide clinical assessment, and intervention supports specifically for children and youth in care, with the goal to stabilize placements and support foster parents in meeting the needs of some of our most complex children and youth.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As we review our 2020–2025 strategic plan and enter a new cycle of planning in the coming months, we take stock of the work we have achieved over time. The placement challenges highlight, once again, the importance of doing everything possible to create safety and stability within children's families. This means that our Protection services must be robust, equity-centered, timely, and collaborative. We are proud of our employees' efforts and accomplishments, working within communities to promote

safety, well-being and permanency. When we look at our legal data, the percentage of families before the Superior court for protection applications decreased from 27% of our ongoing open cases in March 2024 to 23% in March 2025, suggesting that our collaborative approach is working to engage families in a less intrusive manner.

We also want to recognize the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa for the opportunity to purchase legal leadership services. In April 2024, we extended our agreement for two years (April 2024 to April 2026) whereby we have the benefit of a Chief Counsel and a Legal Services coordinator on a part-time basis to lead our department. Some of the key successes were; hiring a new lawyer to replace one of our long-time inside Counsel, achieving more collaborative and less intrusive outcomes with our families, smoothing out inefficient processes within the department, building a positive team culture, extending legal consultation services beyond the day to day Child, Youth, and Family Services Act matters, and positioning our Counsel as trusted legal advisors to our child protection teams.

Truth and Reconciliation Work at FCSLLG

In April 2024, the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan enacted their own child well-being law, Nigig Nibi Ki-Win. Since then, we have been working on a joint protocol with them and have had several positive experiences transferring and sharing files. We have also been asked to participate in the development of a joint protocol with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte to ensure that our child welfare services are delivered in partnership with Mohawk Family Services in a manner that is culturally appropriate for their members.



Reconciliation rocks prepared by LLG staff to be placed on legacy trail – Mādahòki Farm

President & Executive Director's Report



LLG staff participate in a Feel the Heartbeat Workshop – Mādahōkī Farm



FCSLLG partnered with local schools in Walk for Wenjack in honour of Indigenous Peoples Day 2024

Honouring our commitments to truth and reconciliation has not been an easy pathway, and we continue to have an overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care. However, monitoring our data, engaging in critically reflective practice, meaningful and ongoing consultations with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities, ongoing training and learning, such as our full staff day at Mādahōkī Farm in May 2024, are all actions that we believe are helping us to make steady progress over time. A youth on a Ready, Set, Go agreement interviewed in September 2024 related that he was very pleased at how Family and Children's Services had helped him to reconnect with his heritage and encourage his involvement in Indigenous cultural activities. We have far to go, but by this young person's account, we are moving in the right direction.

Licensing and Extended Society Care Review

As you will read below, we had two successful reviews in 2024, which was significant for us given so many of the regulatory changes and increased expectations around

compliance. Our employees deserve an abundance of credit, as learning new standards, managing the training expectations and documentation changes, and still engaging in a meaningful way with their children and youth in care or on voluntary agreements has not been an easy feat. However, our results suggest that our implementation of the new Quality Standards Framework and licensing requirements is on track.

Youth Graduation

One of the most rewarding events each year is celebrating our youth in care who graduate from grade 8, grade 12, College, and University. Last June 2024, we had 31 youth graduate secondary school and three college/university graduates! Our educational liaison program and the Joint Protocol for Student Achievement play a key role in setting students up for success. We know education is a critical key to youth opportunity and fulfillment, and our Agency is proud of the investment we make in promoting positive outcomes.

WITH GRATITUDE

Operating under a heavy regulatory framework and increasing financial constraint has taken a toll on our staff, foster parents, volunteers, and Board members. Yet, the organization is pleased with how we have coped with the demands upon us, and we are grateful to our entire FCSLLG community for their tireless commitment and passion for serving our community.

Additionally, community partnership is the essential ingredient to effectively delivering child welfare services, and we wish to thank all of our community partner agencies in working with us, engaging in creative solutions, extending offers of support when possible, and committing to improving the experiences and outcomes of children, youth, and their families.



A blue ink signature of Mike Andrews.

Mike Andrews,
Board President

A blue ink signature of Erin Lee Marcotte.

Erin Lee Marcotte,
Executive Director

Key Developments

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INITIATIVES

Our Holiday campaign was a huge success this year, largely in part to our continued partnerships in the community and the outpouring of support from our staff and volunteers.

The Lanark OPP took the lead, with the help of a local youth hockey team, to tie and distribute 1000 Angel Tree tags. An additional 400 tags were distributed in Leeds-Grenville and all toys and donations were successfully distributed to families working with FCSLLG and to other community

partner agencies also working with families in our area.

Our communities generously donated \$16,638 in cash and gift cards to our agency over the holiday period and we couldn't be more thankful.

The Preparation for Independence team were able to provide 121 gift cards to our youth who are living independently as extra holiday support.

Snowsuit Campaign

- Approximately 550 Snowsuits were distributed through our community distribution and internally via our frontline staff.
- Thank you to our internal staff volunteers who came together to distribute snowsuits during the community distribution day.
- Fundraised \$4,260 for the snowsuit campaign.

Summer Camp

- 75 children/youth from LLG were able to go to camp funded by our summer camp funding with an additional 4 families receiving summer activity funding.

Volunteer Drive Program

- 7 Active volunteer drivers
- 371,816 kilometers driven
- 5,212 hours driven

Holiday Campaign:

- 1400 Angel Tree gifts and gift cards were distributed in partnership with Lanark OPP.
- Thank you to All Purpose Towing for their generous toy drive contributions.
- 121 youth living independently were provided with gift cards over the holidays.
- We appreciate the support from our 20+ community volunteers, hockey players and hockey parents for assistance in sorting gifts for the community.
- Over \$12,608 (\$3,828 in monetary) of monetary and in-kind donations received to support families in LLG.



Key Developments

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION FOR THE EARLY YEARS

From February 2024 to December 2024, FCSLLG and Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit (now the Southeast Health Unit) entered into a partnership with residual funding from the Lanark County Best Start Working Group. The goal of the partnership was to foster a cooperative and comprehensive approach to address the various needs of families involved with FCSLLG, with children between the ages of 0 and 6 living in Lanark County. The role of the Public Health Nurse within FCSLLG was to address service disparities and enhance the well-being of vulnerable families. In keeping with Best Starts vision and mission, having a dedicated public health nurse working closely with child protection workers achieved the following outcomes:

1. Early intervention and prevention
2. Holistic approach to service delivery
3. Collaboration and coordination
4. Improved health outcomes

Benefits of the partnership included:

1. Knowledge and information sharing
2. Client engagement
3. Increased understanding of roles
4. Better access to health resources
5. Improved referral processes to public health
6. Enhanced support for clients

Recommendations following the partnership:

1. Establish a more structured joint visiting process between Public Health and FCSLLG
2. Continuation of established working group
3. Consider barriers to joint service delivery including rurality, transportation, informed consent, etc.
4. Availability of an electronic resource package from Southeast Health Unit of relevant health topics for the 0–6-year-old population

Employee Service Awards

Later this year FCSLLG will celebrate its employees for their years of service and honour all staff for their dedicated services and commitment to the agency and those we serve. The event will recognize 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and one 40-year service award recipients – amazing! A total of 26 awards will be presented. As we celebrate all employees for their many contributions and efforts to support child and family well-being, we are also appreciative of their continuous advocacy for change and an enhanced child welfare practice that addresses and delivers equitable outcomes for children, youth and families. Congratulations to all our recipients this year!

Congratulations!



LLG staff participate in 2024 PRIDE parade – Brockville

Licensing Review

On July 7, 2024, we were advised by the Ministry that we had been issued a full License to provide Residential Care. This shows how hard our staff and managers worked this past year to really dig in and understand the Quality Standards Framework (QSF) and Ready, Set, Go (RSG) regulations and embed them in their work. Huge congratulations have been extended to all front-line, administrative staff and managers in the Out-of-Home Services Department for a job well done!

We did have some areas of non-compliance that the managers had to address and respond to before the end of July 2024, and those responses were completed on time. There were no child safety issues noted in the review; the non-compliance areas were largely related to administrative tasks that needed to be completed. The managers also developed a training plan, and mandatory training of staff and foster parents was completed in September 2024 on specific topics regarding foster care placements.

Children in Extended Society Care Review (CESCR)

On July 5, 2024, managers and staff were able to meet with the Children in Extended Society Care review team, for an overview of our agency results. We were very pleased to see that the results in many areas of the review had increased from the year prior. This was encouraging given the hurdles of the previous 12 months, including the introduction of the Quality Standards Framework which changed the way that we document many things in our Child in Care files.

Specific quotes that we heard from the review team were that “The child’s voice was very evident throughout the files” and “It was apparent that children were connected to relevant family and community supports and services”. This shows not only increased compliance with the administrative tasks that the Ministry reviewed, but the amazing quality of service that each of our Out of Home Services staff provides to these children and youth. Our administrative team was also commended for their support and organizational skills both prior to and during the review.

As with Licensing, there were some areas where we received feedback/directives for some changes and improvements. These included overall recommendations made about



how to ensure that we integrate QSF and RSG standards and language into our documentation moving forward, so updated guidance documents were created by the managers to assist staff in maintaining compliance in the future.

Bill 188 – The Supporting Children’s Futures Act, 2024

In June 2024, Bill 188, the Supporting Children’s Futures Act 2024, received Royal Assent. This Act amends the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, introducing new sections and amendments related to offences, rights of children in care, licensing, and compliance orders.

Recent changes that were already in effect are:

- **RSG regulations** – require agencies to notify youth participating in RSG of mandatory data collection specific to education and employment, reporting to the Office of the Coroner, and obtain consent for identity and housing data. A new RSG agreement template was provided to support this change.
- **Rights and Information Sharing re: Ombudsman** – states that a child in care must be informed of their right to contact the Ombudsman’s office and sets out the timeline of when that information needs to be provided.

Some of the changes that came into effect on January 1, 2025, are:

- **Police Record Checks** – There is now a requirement for all foster, kinship and adoptive caregivers, as well as some staff and volunteers, to obtain a Broad Record Check, which is a more comprehensive police record check than the Vulnerable Sector Check. This check

Key Developments

discloses information beyond what is generally available in a Vulnerable Sector Check, including details about contact with police, information related to the Mental Health Act, and a list of pardoned offenses. Broad Record Checks need to be provided every three years.

- **Adoption Placement Settings** – requires agencies to conduct safety assessments, create safety plans and develop plans of care for children in adoption placements. This aligns with requirements for children in care.
- **Placement by Society outside of jurisdiction and Information sharing** – requires information sharing between agencies and requires an Interagency Service Agreement be completed and signed within 30 days of the child's placement in the local jurisdiction.
- **Increased Visits by Societies** – requires agencies to visit a child at minimum, at least once within 7 days of placement, an additional visit within 30 days of placement, and then at least once every 30 days thereafter.
- **Prohibited practices** – sets out a list of prohibited practices (including some forms of discipline, withholding family visits, removing access to personal property, the use of racist language directed at children or used in their presence), which apply to all licensees and any person employed or otherwise engaged by the licensee, including foster parents. Licensees will need to maintain policies and procedures respecting these proposed new provisions on prohibited practices.
- **Financial reporting** – provides the Ministry authority to request detailed information about what payments have been received for a child/youth, from who, and how it has been spent.

Future Focus Areas – Regulations and Directives in Development:

- Adoption Standards
- Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, and Children's Data Protections
- Enhanced Privacy protections for former children/youth in care
- Child Abuse Registry

Although our organization has experienced some barriers in achieving full compliance with the new regulations, we are pleased with the progress that has been made, and we are keeping our Ministry Regional office informed of any delays in compliance and our plans to mitigate them. This has been a significant change management project for staff, managers and care providers, and they should all be commended for their hard work in this regard.

Celebrating our Youth's Success!

Our youth programs were very busy last year with many activities, workshops, and events planned for our youth.

Child and Youth in Care Day 2024 – Last May 14th, we hosted former youth in care, Seth Falk who turned his passion for animals into a thriving business in 2011. Children, youth, foster parents, and staff were all enthralled with his presentation of exotic animals, and we even had one special guest (a very large tortoise) make his rounds of the downstairs offices. Afterwards, everyone was invited to share in a lovely BBQ to celebrate this important day.

Educational Programming: In June we celebrated the **graduation** of 40 youth, a combination of grade 8, 12, and post-secondary! It was a large celebration that took place at the Station Theatre in Smiths Falls. We were lucky to have

*May your graduation
be the beginning of
many more wonderful
achievements in your life.*

Congratulations



Class
OF 2024

Amanda Rose as a guest speaker for our youth who inspired us with her own success story. Afterwards we enjoyed a lovely meal from a local caterer.

We also hosted an **OSAP workshop** in June for 6 youth who were planning on attending post-secondary school in the fall. In November, we partnered with Renfrew CAS to take a few youth to Canadore College for a tour of their programs in North Bay and in February, we participated in a **Trades Day** event at Algonquin College where 20-25 youth had a chance to experience a variety of different trades. We also recently hosted a First Aid certification course with 15 youth successfully completing the program. Most of these educational events were financially supported through our local OECT (Ontario Education Championship Team) committee.

POD: This year we had 6 teacher candidates from the University of Ottawa supporting our youth through virtual tutoring. We had 20 youth actively participating in the program (8 elementary, 6 high school, and 6 post-secondary). 150 hrs of support were provided by the POD teachers, totalling an extra 18 full days of school.

Cultural programming: Starting last September, we began offering monthly **drumming circles** at the Rideau Community Health Services building in Smiths Falls, with Francine Dejadins and Theo Paradis who led each session. We regularly had 2-4 youth attend each month. We are currently working with Francine to try to increase our participation in these events and re-vamp some of our

indigenous programming. We also had 15 youth participate in the **Makatew workshop** in late March, which included the creation of an indigenous medicine bag.

Independent living workshops: The team facilitated **Financial literacy** groups last year in May and October with 15 youth completing the program. We also offered monthly **independent living workshops** that included a partnership with The Table in Perth, who provided cooking instruction for youth. Each workshop also offered a learning /wellness component such as yoga, and guest speakers from community organizations.

A little bit of Fun!

Our summer events were a hit with youth. Eight youth had the opportunity to participate in a trip to the **Aquarium and CN tower** in Toronto last July (many of whom had never had the opportunity to leave this area before), and 16 youth participated in our annual trip to **Calypso Waterpark**. In the fall, we were able to take 10 youth to **Saunders Farm** for a scary Halloween adventure, and in February, 6 youth had a chance to skate on the Rideau canal and experience **Winterlude** in Ottawa.

Our **Holiday Youth dinner** was successful again last December, and we had upwards of 35-40 youth attend. We hosted the dinner at a local church in Brockville where several of our staff worked tirelessly to cook and serve a delicious holiday meal for our youth who are living independently in the community.

Our People

Human Resources

Employees.....	111
Foster Families.....	44
Volunteers.....	7

Board of Directors 2024–2025

OFFICERS:
Mike Andrews, President
Frank Onasanya, Vice-President
David Lintaman, Treasurer
Erin Lee Marcotte (ex-officio),
Secretary

DIRECTORS:
Al Howard
Steve Vaughan
Isabelle Sauve
Jane Hess



Elizabeth Dorrington
Emily Wimpenny
Jennifer McMaster
Sonya Jodoin

Snapshot of Service Delivery 2024/2025

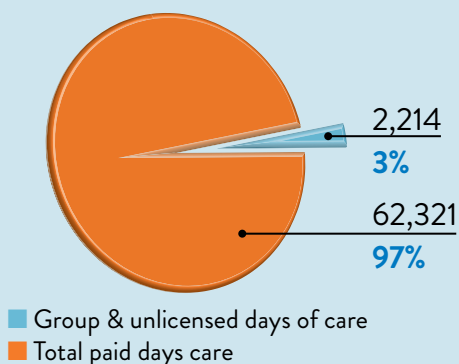
Request for record check and disclosure	428
Inquiries	198
Reports received not investigated	673
Community links	352
Investigations completed (total)	1287
Transfers to ongoing	168
Ongoing service cases at year end	175
Children in kinship service placements at year end	54
Children in care at year end (total) (17 children in care placed from outside of Ontario)	76
Children in care at year-end (excluding children placed from out of province)	59
RSGs at year end	104
VYSAs at year end	18
Total Paid Days Care	62,321
Adoption Probation children at year end	3
Adoptions completed	1
Families receiving post-adoption services	58
Number of foster families at year end	44
New approved foster homes during the year	4
Number of families completed PRIDE	10
Families before the court Mar 31 2025	40
Children/youth in group or unlicensed care Mar 31 2025	8



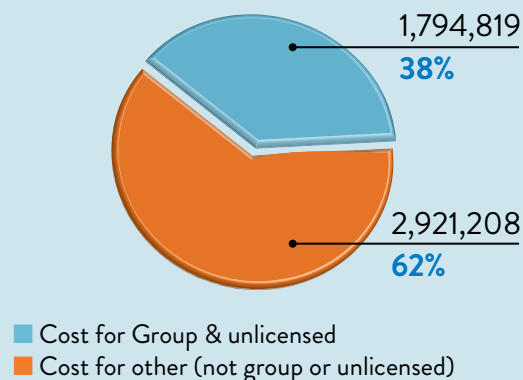
**Working
Together
to Make
a Difference**



**Percentage of Paid Days of Care
Number of Days**



**Percentage of Paid Days of Care
Cost**



Information Systems at FCSLLG

Building a cyber security culture, completion of projects to replace outdated servers and switches and a focus on multiyear budget planning and cost reduction have been the main goals of the IT department during this past fiscal year. The departure of the IT Manager in the spring of 2024 provided an opportunity to review the team structure and make changes that would strengthen the team. Under a new team structure and with a new team member the department has worked to provide streamlined service. The selection of

a new Help Desk ticket system was completed and will be launched this spring. An improved cyber security training platform was implemented in the fall and a consistent focus on this both within the team and across the Agency has been a priority. Reducing costs while maintaining and often improving technology has also been a key deliverable. Decommissioning and reconfiguring office sites were also major projects of this past year.

FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31st, 2025

REVENUES

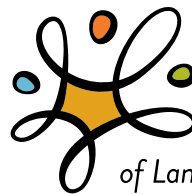
Fiscal Year 2024/2025

	Province of Ontario	\$ 19,404,794
	One Time Assistance	\$ 0
	Recoveries	\$ 1,777,727
	Total	\$ 21,182,521

Donation Revenue: \$ 354,291
(\$30,000 was from United Way programs)
This amount is included in Recoveries above

EXPENSES

	Direct Service Costs	\$ 6,871,990
	Salaries and Benefits	\$ 12,423,408
	Travel and Training	\$ 861,790
	Administration	\$ 2,238,865
	Amortization	\$ 157,623
	Total	\$ 22,553,676
	Excess (Deficiency)	(\$ 1,371,155)
	Loss on Sale of Assets	(\$ 253,216)
	Excess (Deficiency)	(\$ 1,624,371)



FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville

"When I first started working with FCSLLG, I was worried about their involvement. Initially I did not think it was going well and I had some very tough moments with my worker, Dana. I appreciated that she always took the time to explain things and treated me with kindness when I was in a rough place. She helped me get into programs and advocated for me to be accepted into a housing program. It was through this program that I found stability and support. I also appreciated the volunteer drive program as it helped me in being able to see my children consistently. I would encourage people who are starting to work with FCSLLG to be honest about the help they need as asking for help, while difficult, is not a bad thing."

JW – Mom of Five

"Having the opportunity to partner with FCSLLG really helped build a stronger foundation for collaboration. Expanding on the work we already did in serving families in Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, gave us the opportunity to learn more about each other's strengths and ways to support the communities served. With plans for cross agency orientation and ongoing education sessions we are set up to close service divides and gain a better understanding of the unique challenges and resources each agency brings to the table".

Melanie Barker, Public Health Nurse

One of my campers is a 10-year-old boy who got to experience camp for the first time. He was nervous never having left his mom for more than a couple of nights before. With some gentle encouragement he went to camp for a week and absolutely loved it. It's been six-months since he attended camp, and he still talks about how much fun he had. For one whole week he got to just be a kid. He made friends and played sports and games. It gave him positive childhood memories to carry forward with him. While this might seem like a small thing to most people for a child who has experienced more bad things than good it can have a big and lasting positive impact.

Camp Counsellor

Thank you for helping our relationship. We found that we have been able to communicate more, and we are not fighting with each other as much and I've learned to take a break and walk away when things get heated. You have really helped us with this, and we really appreciate it thank you.

Family Counselling Participant

"In the summer of 2022, we learned our 11-month-old niece was in foster care. From the start, we knew adoption—not just custody—was the best way to give her lasting stability and a loving home. She came to us through kinship care, then foster care, and was eventually adopted. The process brought many challenges, especially with the home agency, and there were times we felt overwhelmed and frustrated. Through it all, KLM, RW, and AR from FCSLLG provided patient, compassionate support. Their guidance helped us navigate a complex system and stay focused on giving our daughter the secure and bright future she deserves. We're deeply grateful for the care they showed our family every step of the way."

JS and AS, Adoptive parents

Office Locations

Corporate Office /Mailing Address:

Brockville

438 Laurier Blvd., BROCKVILLE, Ontario K6V 6C5

**Note: mail to this address only*

Other office locations:

Smiths Falls

Perth

Carleton Place



Member Agency

To reach any of our offices toll free call 1-855-667-2726

www.fcsllg.ca