Annual Report



2026

Alder Academy Early Learning Society



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Note from the Chair, Board members



This year, the Board focused on continuing to strengthen the foundation of Alder Academy to keep pace with our community. As our organization has evolved over the years, we recognized the importance of updating our structure to ensure long-term stability, support our leadership, and create more space for family involvement. To ensure our governance reflects the strength of our community, we updated our bylaws to create more room for parent volunteers—a crucial step in deepening parent engagement across the organization. We also expanded our board, welcoming board members and hiring a new Governance Coordinator to help guide our operations. In tandem with this, we updated the Executive Director job description to accurately reflect how the role has expanded alongside Alder Academy. Our community spirit was on full display at our casino fundraiser, where we were thrilled to see the highest number of parent volunteers in our history in support of a successful event! Looking ahead, our focus will turn to long-term sustainability for Alder Academy, with an emphasis on supporting Executive Director succession planning to support the continuity of Alder Academy for years to come.

A heartfelt thank-you to our staff, Executive Director, new and returning board members, and every parent who stepped up to volunteer this year. Your dedication and shared commitment are what make this community thrive.

With deepest appreciation,

Ashley Hughes
Chair, Board of Directors
Alder Academy

Note from the Executive Director



As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with deep gratitude for the resilience, generosity, and passion that drives our community forward. Thanks to you, Alder Academy has continued to fulfill its mission to provide and advocate for accessible and affordable, high-quality early childhood education programs and targeted wraparound services that support all children and builds healthy, successful families regardless of socio-economic status.

This past year brought both remarkable milestones and meaningful opportunities for growth. Working together, we provided young children with 2/3rds of their daily nutrition through serving over 2000 meals and snacks each day, and supported the growth and development of 662 children throughout the year.

None of this would be possible without your continued belief in our work. While we navigated rising operational costs and increased demand for our services this year, your unwavering support ensured that our doors remained open and our programs stayed strong.

Looking ahead to 2027, we are excited to focus on building a stronger, viable organization that will thrive for years to come..

On behalf of our staff, and the individuals we serve, thank you for walking this path with us.

With sincere appreciation,

Sue MacLean

Executive Director

Alder's Philosophy

Alder Academy Early Learning Society promotes children's experience of safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positively self identifies a sense of belonging. Children should have open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposely planned. Environments will reflect a sense of belonging where children feel nurtured and supported. Children's environments will be a place where their communicative practices, literacy, and literate identities are valued and supported.

Play is integral to children's learning and richly formative in their capacity for relationship. Alder Academy Early Learning Society believes that play must be accorded a key place in the lives of young children. Play is essential to quality of life in childhood and a primary means of understanding the world.

Alder Academy Early Learning Society believes that children are confident, active learners whose learning, growth, and development are profoundly influenced by the quality of their relationships with people and their interactions with places and things.

Plans for Next Year



We are committed to continuing to advocate for high quality, affordable, accessible childcare for all children.We will continue to provide our employees fair wages, great benefits, and a work environment that is safe and welcoming. We are confident that we will continue to go from strength to strength in the years ahead.



In 2027, we plan to focus on further growing our client base and delivering even more successful outcomes for children and families. We will also continue to invest in our team, with a focus on succession planning, training and development.



We are confident that we will continue to be a leading player in the field of early learning, and we look forward to another successful year in 2027.

Alder Half Day Head Start

Alder Half Day Head Start is an inclusive, classroom-based early learning program designed to support children turning 4 by December 31, and runs September to June. As a private Early Childhood Services (ECS) operator, we welcome children with diverse needs, including those with developmental delays.

Our holistic approach provides not only classroom-based learning but also access to our interdisciplinary team—including certificated teachers, educational assistants, speech and language pathologists, and behavioral specialists—who work together to support a wide range of learning needs.

Children receive classroom support tailored to their development, as well as personalized learning plans that extend beyond the classroom. We equip families with strategies and resources to reinforce their child's growth at home, ensuring a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Our support extends beyond the classroom. Our Community Outreach works with families to create meaningful connections and ensure they are involved in their child's learning journey, Through our Parent Groups and Hme Visitation these programs are designed to strengthen families, build confidence, and create supportive community connections. Outreach workers can provide many important resources to a new family throughout their time at Alder Half Day.

Alder Central

Alder Academy Main Site is a proud part of a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting children and their families within our diverse community. We believe that every child and family is unique, and that support should begin by meeting people where they are at—with understanding, compassion, respect, and without judgment. Whether we are helping a family with a subsidy application, finding them their first job in Canada, or simply listening to and promptly addressing their concerns. To all of our families we are part of the "village" that helps them raise their children while they attend school, work or learn English and make new friends in the community.

Our program is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where children feel valued, supported, and empowered to grow. We work alongside families to understand their individual needs, strengths, experiences, and goals, recognizing that every family's journey is different.
As part of a diverse community, we celebrate the many cultures, backgrounds, identities, and experiences that make our community strong. We strive to build meaningful connections and provide support that is accessible, respectful, and responsive to the children and families we serve.
At the heart of our work is the belief that every child deserves to feel seen, heard, safe, and supported—and every family deserves to know they are not alone.

Alder West

Wîpac Macîhta, our Indigenous-based Early Learning and Childcare Centre is more than just a place for children to learn, grow, and play. It is a safe, welcoming, and culturally rooted space where Indigenous children and families from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities can feel a sense of belonging, connection, identity, and pride in who they are. We recognize that every child matters, every family has a story, and every community deserves to have its culture, traditions, and teachings respected and honoured. Our program is built on the understanding that children thrive when they feel safe, valued, accepted, and connected to their roots.

An important part of our work is bringing Indigenous teachings, traditions, languages, values, and cultural knowledge back into early childhood education. For generations, many Indigenous children and families experienced the removal and suppression of their cultures, languages, identities, and traditional ways of learning through colonial systems, including residential schools. Today, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to help restore those connections by creating spaces where Indigenous knowledge is not only welcomed but celebrated. Through cultural teachings, storytelling, relationships with Elders and the Indigenous community, connections to the land, and sharing traditions, we help children develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. These teachings are essential to the healing, strength, and continued resilience of Indigenous communities.

Equally important is the environment we create for families. Our centre provides a place where Indigenous families can come as they are, feel welcomed without judgment, and build meaningful relationships with staff who understand the importance of culture, connection, and community. We recognize that families may carry experiences of intergenerational trauma, historical injustices, and ongoing systemic barriers. This is why having trauma-informed, compassionate, and culturally respectful staff is so important. We strive to approach every child and family with patience, empathy, understanding, and respect, recognizing that each family has unique strengths, experiences, and needs. By building trusting relationships and creating a sense of emotional and cultural safety, we can help families feel supported and know that they are not alone.

The importance of an Indigenous-based early learning program cannot be overstated. It is a place of learning, healing, cultural revitalization, relationship-building, and hope. It is a place where Indigenous children can see themselves reflected in their environment, where families can feel a sense of belonging, and where culture is woven into the foundation of care and education. The work we do makes a difference not only in the lives of the children who walk through our doors today, but also in the strength, well-being, and future of our communities. We have the privilege and responsibility of helping create a world where Indigenous children are celebrated for who they are, their voices are valued, their cultures are honoured, and every child truly matters.

Alder South

We pride ourselves on creating a warm, inclusive, and interconnected environment where children, families, and educators truly support one another, in this tight-knit community of Ritchie/Mill Creek.

This past year, our program provided a safe, nurturing, and play-based learning environment for 88 children (13 preschool, 15 kinder and 66 OSC) daily. Our goal is to provide high-quality, reliable care, for working families, while supporting each child's individual development through play.

This past year, our preschool program focused heavily on nature-based learning and inquiry-based play. Through sensory rich environments, social emotional development, problem solving skills, language acquisition and school readiness through interest based provocations. Throughout regular nature walks in the community, the Mill Creek Ravine, Tawatina LRT Bridge, Muttart Conservatory and nearby parks, preschoolers explored local ecosystems, developing their physical literacy, curiosity, and a deep respect for the environment. Bringing nature inside the classroom, we prioritized the use of natural resources and open-ended materials, which stimulated creative problem-solving, sensory exploration, and fine motor skills.

Our Out-of-School Care program provided a dynamic, safe environment where school-age youth explored new interests and expanded new life skills learned. This past year, our programming focused heavily on engaging, hands-on projects that balanced creativity with critical thinking. Two major highlights included our child lead interest of crochet/knitting and interactive science experiments. Children were incredibly patient, focused and enhanced their fine motor skills while crocheting/knitting several items. They extended this learning at home and created an online sales store. Social emotional skills were visible as children taught each other their crocheting and knitting techniques.
The interest on experiments sparked deep curiosity and teamwork. Their multiple predictions, reactions and team problem solving was a success!

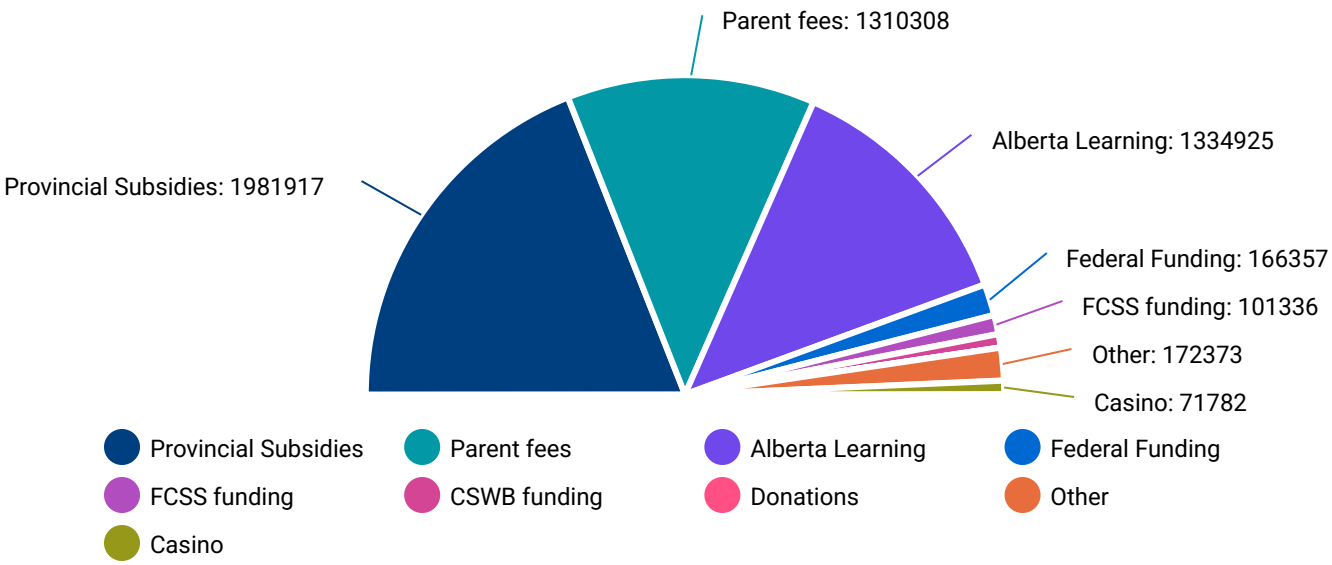
We are truly grateful to be a part of this community!

Highlights of 2026

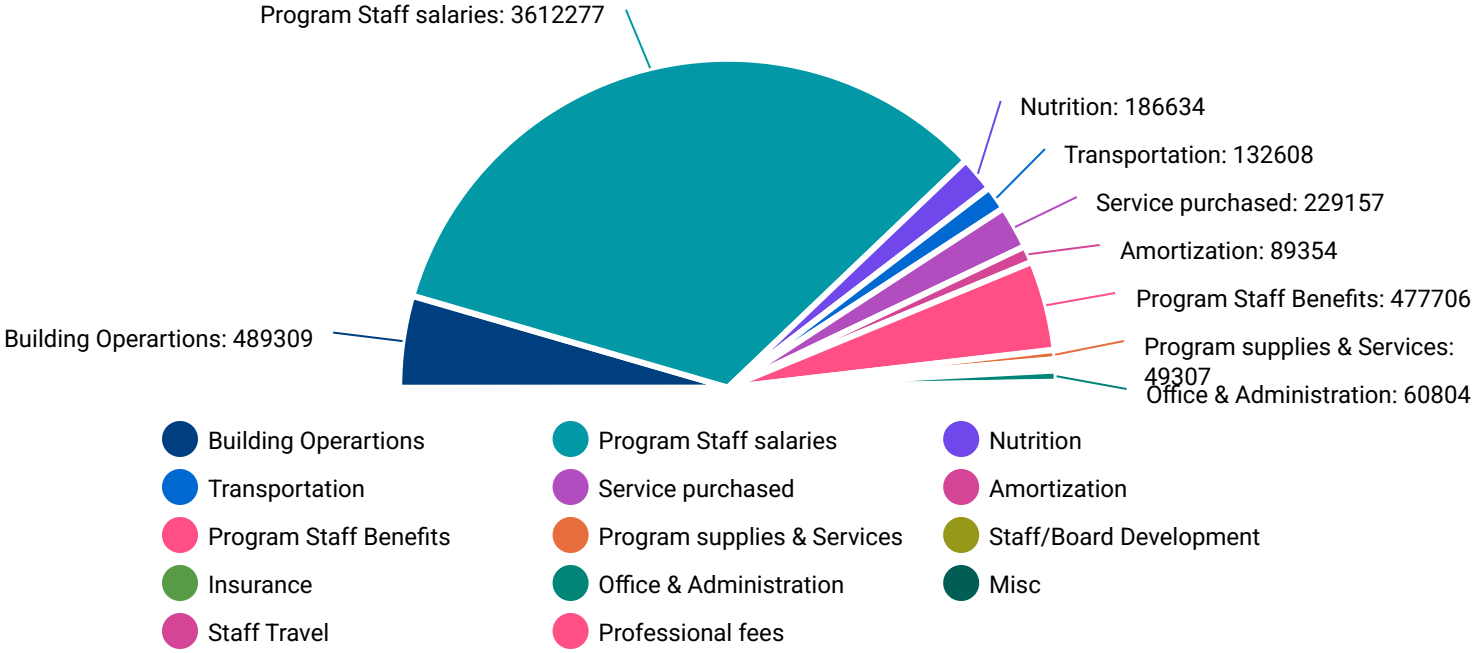


Financials 2026

Revenue



Expenses



How To Donate
CanadaHelps.com

Alder Academy is not your traditional child care program. Every child is assessed, every child has a growth plan, and every child is unique and important in their classrooms. Children have a team of experts to support their growth, from early childhood educators, to Bachelor of education teachers, Occupational therapists, Speech pathologists, and a Community Outreach worker to support parents. Every dollar donated goes directly into the programs to support the children in the programs. Your donation can make a large difference!

Alder Academy would like to thank everyone who donated to the organization over the past year. Your genorosity provided opportunities for children to explore and grow in their communities.

