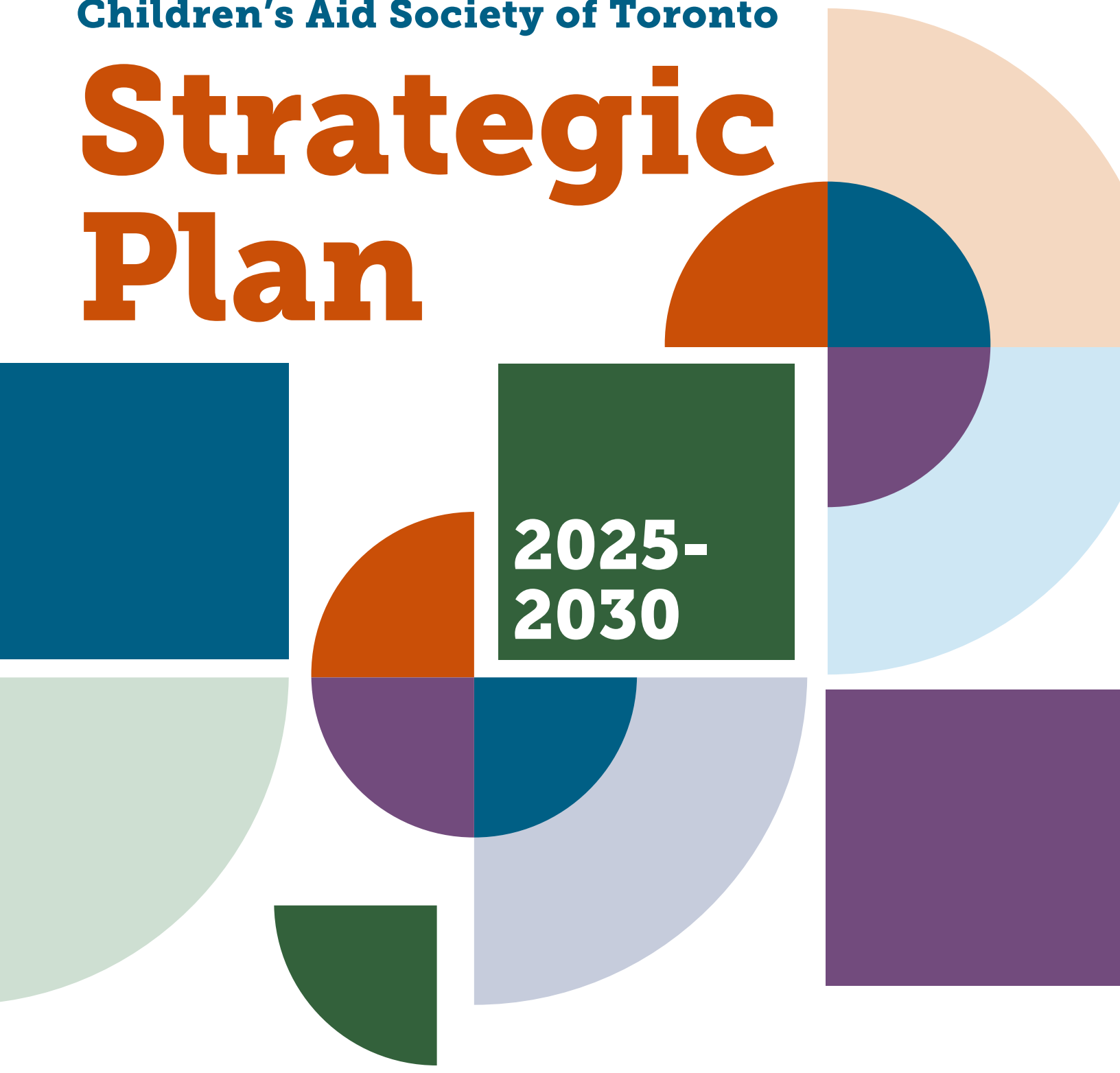
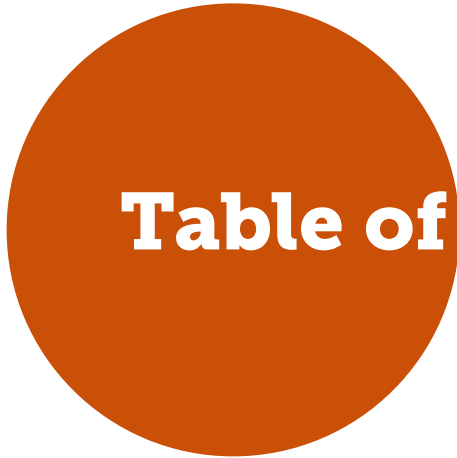


**Children's Aid Society of Toronto**

# Strategic Plan



**2025-  
2030**



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# Introduction

Welcome to the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto’s (CAST’s) 2025-30 Strategic Plan.

Our latest plan outlines our priorities and commitments for the next five years. Developed by our Board of Directors, Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team, in collaboration with staff, service providers and community partners, this plan reflects a shared responsibility to improve outcomes for children, youth and families across Toronto.

Beginning in 2025 and beyond, this plan guides how we will support children and youth, strengthen families, lead system modernization to help address Service gaps impacting children and youth, and empower our people through clear roles, the right tools, and strong organizational stewardship to advance this critical work sustainably.

Together, our Strategic Directions position CAST to respond to growing complexity, lead meaningful system change, and remain a strong and resilient organization dedicated to protecting children and youth, and supporting families now and into the future.

# Organizational Commitments

Our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan is grounded in CAST’s organizational commitments to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Truth and Reconciliation; Anti-Black Racism; and support for 2SLGBTQ+ communities. These commitments guide how we design services, engage with communities, and support our workforce.



Learn more about CAST’s commitment statements by visiting our website using the QR code.

# 2025-30 Strategic Plan



## Commitment to Financial Sustainability

In addition to our organizational commitments, CAST's Strategic Plan will be implemented with a clear focus on long-term financial sustainability. A strong and sustainable organization is essential to fulfilling our mandate and serving children, youth and families across Toronto.

CAST is operating in a challenging financial environment that requires deliberate and responsible action. Through our Strategic Plan, our Agency is prioritizing financial stewardship to ensure we remain viable for those who depend on us. Our financial sustainability is essential to preserving our capacity to focus on child safety, strengthen families, and advocate for system modernization.



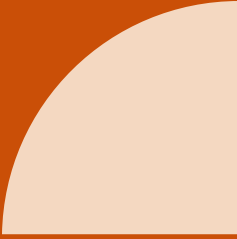
## Strategic Directions

CAST's three Strategic Directions provide the framework for how we will deliver on our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. Together, our Strategic Directions reflect our commitment to improving outcomes for children, youth and families, strengthening the child and family services system, and ensuring our organization and staff are supported to sustain this work.

### CAST's 2025–2030 Strategic Directions

- 1. Strengthening Children, Youth and Families**
- 2. Leading System Modernization**
- 3. Empowering Our People, Strengthening Our Purpose**

Each Strategic Direction is interconnected and mutually reinforces the importance of strong families, a responsive and coordinated system, and a healthy and well-supported workforce in achieving lasting impact. These Directions guide our work, priorities and decision-making, and form the foundation for our Key Performance Indicators and initiatives that follow.



**Children and youth leaving care are more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes, such as homelessness, mental health concerns, unemployment, lack of education, and involvement in the justice system.**

Ministry of Children,  
Community and Social Services



**Every time a youth moves, they lose four to six months of academic progress and then struggle to make up the loss over time.**

Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal



## Strategic Direction #1:

### **Strengthening Children, Youth and Families**

CAST will deliver its mandated protection services through an equity and prevention approach that aligns care and supports with the needs of children, youth and their families.



#### **Our Goals Under This Strategic Direction**

Our goals in relation to this Strategic Direction are to implement evidence-informed family preservation practices that address the root causes of instability before protection concerns escalate, maximizing family and chosen family preservation and placement permanency.

We are also focused on connecting children and youth with equitable and inclusive care and supports across the child and family services sector, and engaging families, communities and support networks from the very beginning of their child welfare journey.

## Strategic Direction #2:

### **Leading System Modernization**

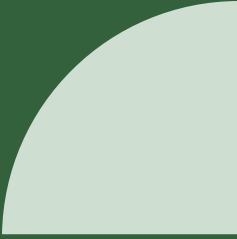
CAST will leverage its sector position and skills to advocate for and co-create a more integrated, resourced and responsive child and family services system that addresses cross-sector service gaps that are failing vulnerable children and youth in crisis.



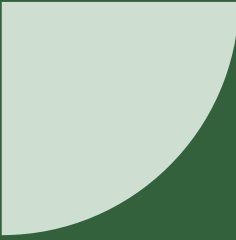
#### **Our Goals Under This Strategic Direction**

Our goals in relation to this Strategic Direction are to advocate for reformative action by building a strong evidence base, leveraging the Child Welfare Institute to demonstrate the critical unmet needs of children, youth and families, the preventable harms and additional costs that result from system gaps and failures.

We are also focused on leading collective sector advocacy for the system changes required to create a financially sustainable child welfare model in Ontario. This includes driving deeper collaboration across the child and family services sector to establish clearly defined, seamless Service and support pathways for children, youth and families through collaborative governance frameworks that clarify roles, service boundaries, and shared accountability.



**Access to adequate health services continues to be a barrier to marginalized children and youth. It is imperative that youth who leave care have all of their identification in order, which will help prevent unnecessary challenges in their independence.**



## Key Performance Indicators

To ensure our Strategic Directions lead to meaningful and measurable outcomes, CAST will identify yearly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each area of focus. These indicators help translate our Strategic Directions into practical action and allow us to track progress, strengthen accountability, and continuously improve how we serve children, youth and families, while best supporting and developing our staff.

The KPIs align with our mandate, organizational commitments and financial sustainability goals. Together, they guide our decision-making, inform resource allocation, and provide a clear framework for evaluating our impact over the duration of the CAST 2025–2030 Strategic Plan.

The 2026-27 KPIs below are organized and presented under the Strategic Direction to which they directly contribute.

### Strategic Direction #3:

#### **Empowering Our People, Strengthening Our Purpose**


CAST will define success in ways that support staff, strengthen organizational capacity, and advance financial sustainability.



#### **Our Goals Under This Strategic Direction**

Our goals in relation to this Strategic Direction are to ensure that our staff have a clear understanding of their roles, accountabilities, and what success looks like within their scope of work. By providing the appropriate tools, supports and clarity, we aim to strengthen staff capacity to make informed, effective and timely decisions in service of children, youth and families.

We are also focused on strengthening organizational capacity and financial sustainability by pursuing strategic partnerships, shared services models, business process improvements, technology enablement, and organizational rightsizing. Together, these efforts are intended to enhance our impact, improve efficiency, and ensure CAST operates responsibly and within its means while continuing to fulfill its mandate.



**For every 1,000 youth in Canadian foster care, only eight go on to graduate with a post-secondary education. One of the largest barriers to entry for children in foster care is the financial burden that comes along with post-secondary education.**

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance



## 2026-27 Key Performance Indicators by Strategic Direction

### Strategic Direction #1:

#### Strengthening Children, Youth and Families

##### Key Performance Indicators:

- Improve experience for child, youth and Foster Parent(s) at Admission.
- Prioritize permanency planning and promote reunification of children on Extended Society Care.
- Ensure safety planning and risk mitigation is consistently done for all children and youth.
- Ensure youth transition to adulthood with essential documentation and financial readiness.

### Strategic Direction #2:

#### Leading System Modernization

##### Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase the availability, quality and stability of foster homes available to the children, youth and families we serve.
- Enhance partnerships with other child welfare service providers.

### Strategic Direction #3:

#### Empowering Our People, Strengthening Our Purpose

##### Key Performance Indicators:

- Build future workforce and sector leadership capacity by providing more placement opportunities to college, undergraduate and graduate students.
- Build leadership capacity by training management on Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Strengthen financial literacy capacity for leadership.
- Establish a culture of accountability and continuous improvement at all staff levels.



## Agency Initiatives that Align to Strategic Directions

In addition to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) outlined in this Strategic Plan, CAST is advancing several important initiatives that may not be captured through a specific KPI but still directly support and strengthen our three Strategic Directions. This work reflects our commitment to continuous learning, responsible innovation, and long-term sustainability in service of children, youth and families.

### Strengthening evidence and practice through our University of Toronto partnership

CAST is strengthening knowledge sharing and practice development through our partnership with the University of Toronto's Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and the Child Welfare Institute. This includes work to showcase and share emerging sector and system research from across North America and learnings with staff to support their work. As part of this initiative, CAST has hosted learning sessions with internationally recognized researchers such as Dr. John D. Fluke and Dr. Darcey Merritt, helping connect research insights to real world practice and service delivery through workshops and dialogue with staff, students and community partners.

Throughout the duration of the Strategic Plan, CAST will continue to build on this work by expanding opportunities for staff to access timely research, practice relevant learning and knowledge exchange. We will continue to prioritize structured knowledge sharing and professional learning as a key way to strengthen evidence-informed practice, support staff in increasingly complex work, and embed learning into how we evolve services over the life of the Strategic Plan.

### **Guiding ethical and effective innovation through our new AI Committee**

Recognizing the growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in supporting how organizations work, CAST is forming a first-ever AI Committee to guide the Agency’s ethical and responsible use of AI. The Committee will develop strategies, guardrails and practical guidance to ensure AI is used purposefully and in alignment with our mandate, strengthening Service quality, supporting staff and improving organizational efficiencies where appropriate.

Given the sensitive nature of CAST’s work, the Committee will apply a strong privacy, confidentiality and ethics lens to all AI considerations. This includes clear expectations for information handling, appropriate human oversight, and a careful, risk-informed approach to implementation that reflects the responsibilities of a service organization supporting children, youth and families.

### **Advancing financial sustainability to protect Service continuity and impact**

CAST continues to focus on the work required to strengthen our financial sustainability and ensure we remain a viable organization over the long-term. A stable and sustainable organization is essential to meeting our legislated mandate and maintaining Service continuity for the children, youth and families who depend on us. This work includes ongoing efforts to align resources with legislative requirements, service needs and operational priorities, while strengthening planning, monitoring and financial stewardship across the Agency.

CAST is also pursuing practical approaches that enhance impact and efficiency, such as process improvements, responsible use of technology, strategic partnerships and shared services opportunities, so we can operate within our means while continuing to deliver high-quality services.



## **Accountability and Measurement**

CAST’s 2025–2030 Strategic Plan is designed to be a living plan, guided by ongoing implementation, evidence and continuous learning.

Progress will be measured through the KPIs associated with each Strategic Direction, with results reviewed regularly to strengthen accountability and inform timely adjustments. It is anticipated that our KPIs will be updated annually and will evolve over the duration of the Strategic Plan. Additionally, we will regularly evaluate the impact of Agency initiatives in advancing our Strategic Directions.

Oversight and reporting will flow through clear governance and leadership channels, including our CAST Executive Team and Board of Directors, with a clear and defined cadence for reporting progress back to the organization.

Together, these accountability measures will help ensure our Strategic Directions remain active, transparent and focused on impact over the life of the plan.

**Kin Caregivers provide higher levels of permanency and children experience less re-entry into foster care when living with kin. Relatives are more likely to provide a permanent home through guardianship, custody or adoption.**

Journal: Trauma, Violence and Abuse



## Next Steps

From now until 2030, CAST will advance this Strategic Plan through focused implementation aligned to each Strategic Direction, its KPIs, and key initiatives that support overall progress across the plan.

Our Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team will work closely with our Board of Directors to monitor and analyze results, support timely decision-making and changes required, and to reinforce overall accountability and success. We will use performance measurement, evidence and ongoing learning to strengthen our approaches and identify where adjustments are required.

In addition to KPI reporting, CAST will also monitor and evaluate strategic initiatives that do not have specific KPIs but meaningfully contribute to our Strategic Directions, using clear milestones, outcomes and regular review. This work will be supported through continued collaboration with staff, service providers and community partners, in recognition that lasting impact depends on coordinated efforts, consistent measurement and evaluation, and making adjustments as required along the way.

**For questions related to the Strategic Plan, Strategic Directions and/or KPIs, please contact:**

[communicationsteam@torontocas.ca](mailto:communicationsteam@torontocas.ca).



[www.torontocas.ca](http://www.torontocas.ca)