



Dufferin County Community Grant Impact Report

Picture this... a group of children and their caregivers reflect on their morning of mindfulness, music and mud. They remember their time together at Fiddlehead Care Farm (FCF) exploring the forest using all of their senses, banging two sticks together to make their own songs and playing outdoors with chickens, goats and a mini pig. Parents are grateful for the practical skills and resources provided by the staff and children are comforted by the memories they created with their family.

With the help of the Dufferin Country Community Grant and Headwaters Communities In Action, Fiddlehead Care Farm was able to offer a series of interactive therapeutic outdoor adventures targeted specifically for infants, toddlers and pre-school aged children and their caregivers. This evidence based, nature and farm program was facilitated by expert staff with a goal of supporting positive mental health and environmental exposure, all vital for early childhood development. Financial contributions from the Dufferin County Community Grant were put toward program specific equipment, expert staffing, family resources and activity supplies to lower costs to families and increase participation in this program.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FCF was forced to make several changes to the programming. The planned Spring 2020 block of sessions unfortunately was cancelled. With the implementation of strict health and safety policies and procedures, however, the Fall 2020 group was able to be implemented in a safe and successful way. One example of these procedures included cohorting the participants into smaller groups who rotated between activities. Participants reported feeling safe in the program at a time when being out in the community may have caused increased worry.

The demand for the program far exceeded our expectations. Due to Public Health restrictions, we had to cap the amount of interested participants. We were able to support an average of 13 families per week which represented 30 participants per session.

This program benefited children (birth to 4 years of age) with all needs and abilities and their caregivers. The following findings were reported on the program evaluation. Children and caregivers who participated in the program experienced many physical and mental health benefits from the opportunity to play outside. In fact, 100% of the families felt that the program positively influenced BOTH their child's and their own mental health. Nature brings people together; supported by the finding that all participants benefited from the social experience, deepening the bonds within their family and with other participants.

The caregiver participants benefitted from the networking opportunities with other caregivers and the chance to learn and build parenting skills, confidence, and knowledge in supporting their child's positive mental health. Each week caregivers received take-home resources on applying techniques, activities, and skills at home which 89% of the families indicated were implemented in the home.

Overall, 90% of caregiver participants indicated that the program exceeded their goals and expectations and 100% reported that they would like to sign up for a future session and would highly recommend the program to other caregivers.

Thank you for your support,

Breanne Mathers and Stephanie Deaken
Fiddlehead Care Farm



PARENT AND TOT

Fiddlehead Care Farm
GROW FROM WITHIN

PROGRAM RESULTS- FALL 2020

39 PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING 16 FAMILY UNITS

100%

Caregivers reported their child(ren) had fun at the program.

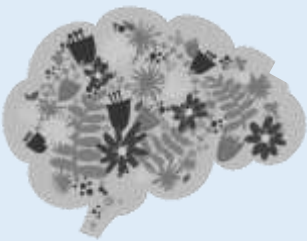
9 out of 10

Parents reported that the program exceeded their goals and expectations



100%

Caregivers reported the program positively influenced the mental health of their child as well as themselves.



100 %

Reported they would sign up for another session
AND
Would recommend this program to a friend

Top Three Reasons to Attend Group

According to caregivers...

1. To engage in fun outside the house.

2. Have protected time in nature.

3. Meet other adults

