



EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY

2022 - 2025

FORWARD

I am pleased to share with you the very first corporate Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy at SickKids.

I, like many senior leaders, began this journey by **listening**: to voices previously unheard, lived experiences rarely amplified and perspectives seldom explored. The engagement of patients and families, staff, learners, volunteers and community partners in the process has helped SickKids to critically examine where we can and must do better and guide us on our path ahead.

This journey has required ongoing self-reflection as well as acknowledging that SickKids has been complicit in harms done to marginalized communities, including in our recent history. As a global leader in children's health, it is our responsibility to dismantle systemic racism at SickKids and decolonize hospital practices as part of our institutional commitment to achieve authentic and meaningful transformation. It is this commitment to transparency and honesty that will support us in truly being a world-class leading paediatric hospital.

This strategy signifies my hope to build trust with you – the staff, patients and families – who have been and will continue to be heard as we begin to co-create a more inclusive and equitable organization. SickKids is embedding equity, diversity and inclusion into the foundations of initiatives across the organization and as part of the compassionate care we provide patients at SickKids every day.

When **SickKids 2025** was unveiled, the organization's five-year strategic plan, inclusion was firmly embedded as a core value. Through the leadership and contributions of Tee Garnett, Executive Lead and Strategic



Advisor, EDI, and so many of you, SickKids is building a foundation to advance EDI in its care, research and education initiatives, many of which have already begun to take steps to achieve, such as progress on an anti-racism policy and an employee disaggregated data survey, which will provide insight into who staff are and how to provide individualistic support.

EDI is part of an ongoing transformation, not an endpoint or a box to check off, and there is still a long way to go. Together, we now have a path that will allow us to embed EDI in all that SickKids does, and to create safe and brave spaces so all can feel acknowledged, valued and respected.

Thank you – and please join me on this journey.

Dr. Ronald Cohn (He/Him)
President & CEO



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

If you have lived under the weight of oppression...

If you have felt unseen, unheard, or passed over...

If you have experienced distrust, fear, or absence of opportunity...

Please take refuge in these pages.

SickKids' inaugural EDI Strategy is a blueprint for a better tomorrow. If we can deliver on the promise of the aspirations within, we can light the way to a future where our community – our entire community – is acknowledged, valued and respected.

At SickKids, children are at the core of our mission and every effort we pour into them represents an investment in society. By modeling genuine equity, diversity, and inclusion in all that we do, we are sending a message of the possible to the youngest generation and taking steps to heal the wounds of older ones.

To achieve our aims, we must act boldly against the structural barriers underpinning racial inequality. We must create an organization where diverse groups are reflected in the people and lived experiences around them. We must create safe spaces for difficult conversations. And we must learn the truth about institutionalization of discrimination, then implement the remedies.

This work is not easy, yet it is necessary and overdue. In the best way that you know how, I invite you to join us.



Tee Garnett (They/Them)
Executive Lead and Strategic Advisor
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



DEFINITIONS

EQUITY

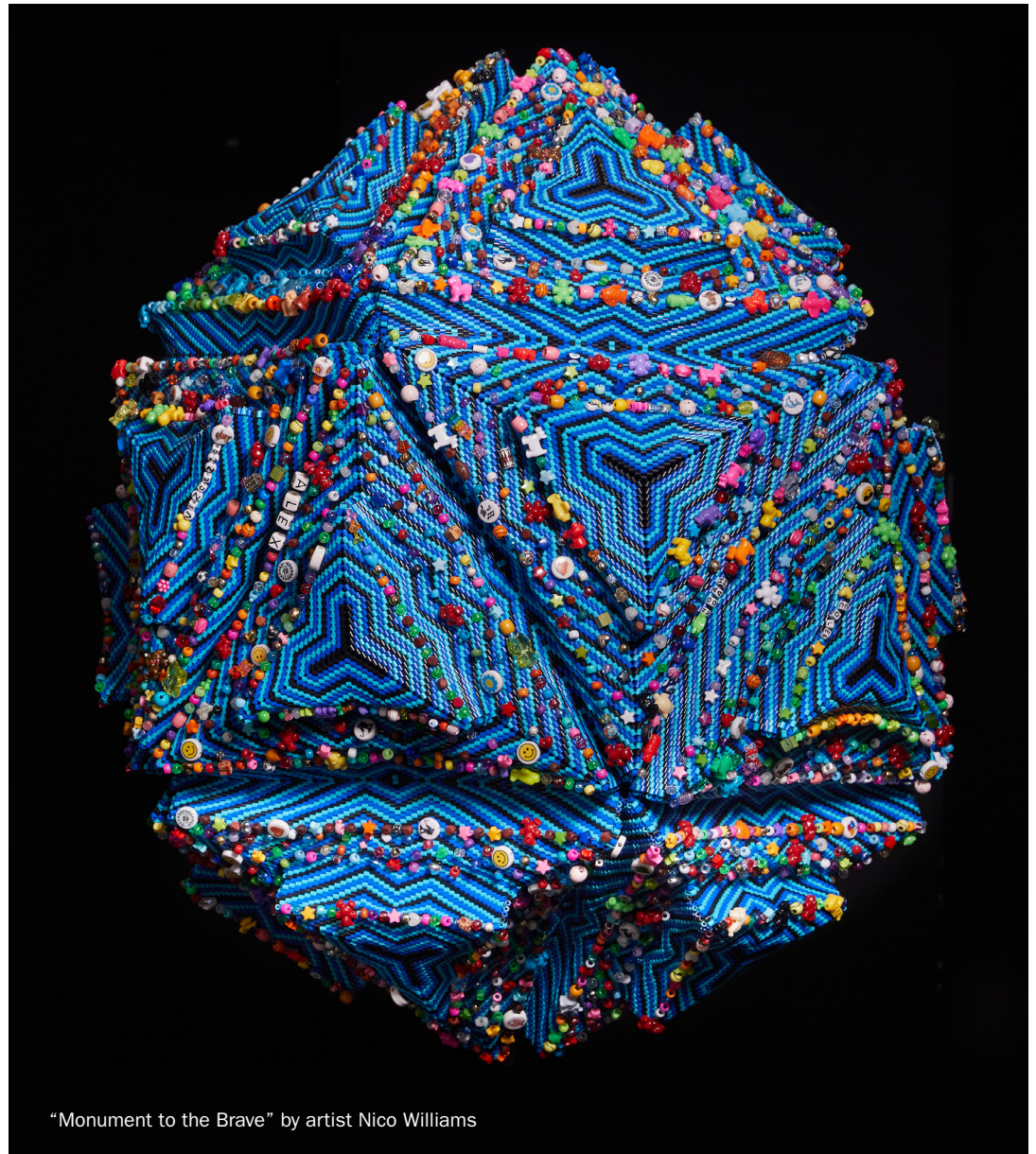
Access to opportunities and outcomes that do not vary in quality because of personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, race, geographic location, and socioeconomic status.

DIVERSITY

The existence and intersection of difference in demographics, worldviews, knowledges and experiences, observed as the recruitment and retention of diverse persons, talents and perspectives.

INCLUSION

The creation of feelings of connectedness and engagement, observed in environments where all feel welcomed, respected, uniquely valued and empowered to be their authentic and best selves, irrespective of intersectionality.



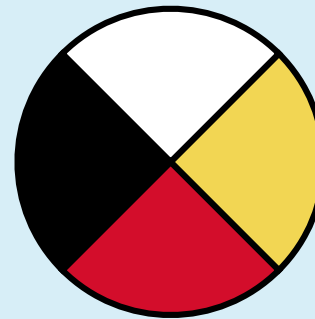
"Monument to the Brave" by artist Nico Williams

ABOUT THE SICKKIDS EDI ICON

“When we focus on the most marginalized, anyone in between will be included due to the natural state of how systems work.”*



SickKids EDI Icon



Medicine Wheel



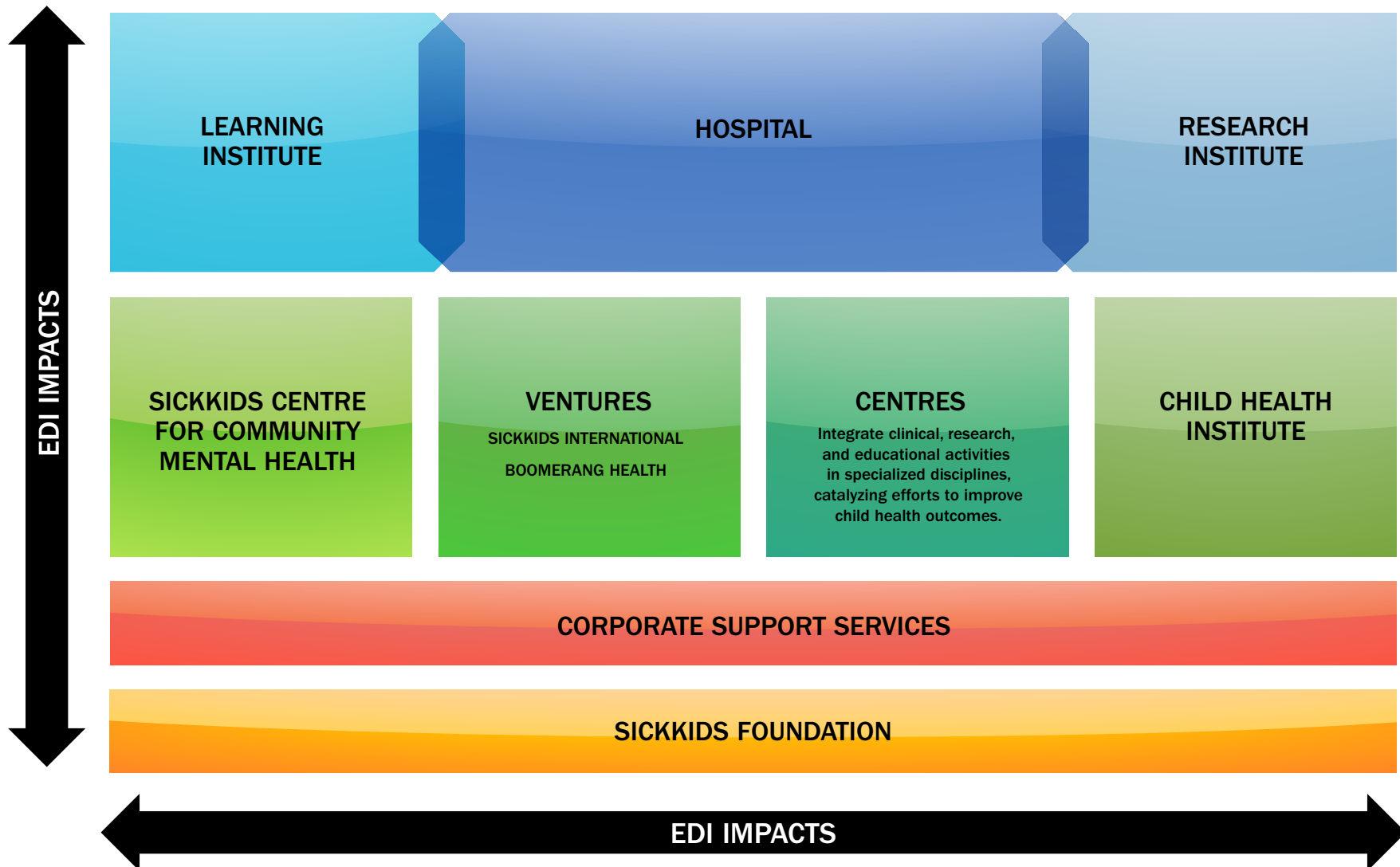
Pan-African Flag

The inspiration behind the colours on the EDI icon were derived from the colours of the Medicine Wheel and the Pan-African flag. It is with sensitivity and intentionality that we selected these colours to signify inclusivity of all persons, regardless of age, creed, political affiliation, place of origin and racialization, and our goal of transforming historical systems to achieve a community where everyone is acknowledged, valued and respected.

*Feedback from EDI Strategy focus group

AN ENTERPRISE-WIDE EDI STRATEGY

SickKids[®]



HOW WE GOT HERE...

DIRECTION FROM OUR STAKEHOLDERS

“Let’s create a culture where speaking up against injustice is valued.”

“When we focus on the most marginalized, anyone in between will be included due to the natural state of how systems work.”

“It’s TRUTH and then reconciliation. You can’t get to the R without bring the T into the light.”

“Training for staff will be crucial for them to understand the reason for this work, not just at the executive level.”

“Recruitment and retention of marginalized staff is important. And promotion, so that they don’t just stay in junior positions.”

“EDI goals need to extend well beyond executives in terms of accountabilities and outcome measures that will drive change.”



30

Patients and
families
contributing



469

SickKids
trainees and
staff contributing



66

EDI Survey
responses



16

Focus
groups



Environmental
scan of EDI
strategies in
health-care
organizations

VISION

Where everyone is
acknowledged, valued
and respected.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Promote health justice



Adopt equity, diversity, inclusion and
accessibility as a collective responsibility



Champion human rights



Illuminate and address personal,
organizational and cultural barriers



Model truth and reconciliation
with Indigenous communities



EMBED EDI IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

- Complete an internal review to identify and address systemic and clinical biases
- Develop data systems to inform best practice, planning, implementation and evaluation
- Advocate for equitable financial planning, fundraising and procurement
- Dedicate time and resources to curate safe spaces



CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY EXPERIENCE

- Ensure equity, accessibility and cultural safety across SickKids spaces
- Strengthen service pathways between SickKids and community agencies that support marginalized groups
- Recruit diverse representation by removing barriers for volunteer participation
- Establish and monitor benchmarks on EDI priorities with external partners



ACHIEVE A WORKFORCE THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY

- Develop data driven recruitment and retention tools
- Design diversity specific tools for career development, mentoring and succession planning
- Address systemic barriers that deny equitable career opportunities in diverse communities
- Implement mandatory training for staff and leaders

Establish organizational EDI foundations to advance EDI in care, research and education



INTEGRATE EDI IN CARE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

- Reform care, research and education to respect Indigenous traditions and medicines
- Embed EDI in the foundations of key strategic initiatives
- Incorporate EDI analysis in curriculum design, training and practical application
- Eliminate disparities in access to services to optimize child health outcomes

EMBED EDI IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS AND POLICIES



Complete an internal review to identify and address systemic and clinical biases

Develop data systems to inform best-practice, planning, implementation and evaluation

Advocate for equitable financial planning, fundraising and procurement

Dedicate time and resources to curate safe spaces

A fundamental step in our journey to become an equitable, diverse and inclusive organization will be a critical analysis of current organizational structures, systems and policies to determine the reformation required to work with, and for, the diverse communities we serve.

A review of our policy database and development of an anti-racism policy will ensure language reflects the broad identities of patients, families and staff. Examination of clinical pathways and patient experiences will facilitate removal of biases or barriers negatively impacting

patients. And extension of this review to financial practices will ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion aspirations are matched in financial planning, investments and procurement. Lastly, collaboration with SickKids Foundation will extend opportunities to communities not typically highlighted in fundraising campaigns.

EDI activities will be data-driven, informed by comprehensive data collection in partnership with children, families and staff. Implementation of a socio-demographic employee survey will support establishment of benchmarks and



tracking of key performance indicators as we work towards equitable representation, while collection of equity and social determinants of health data will support population health management efforts to benefit patients.

For transformational equity to be successful, we must foster a work environment where sufficient time and resources are allocated to advance equity, diversity and inclusion objectives and curate safe spaces for all.

ACHIEVE A WORKFORCE THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY



Develop data driven recruitment and retention tools

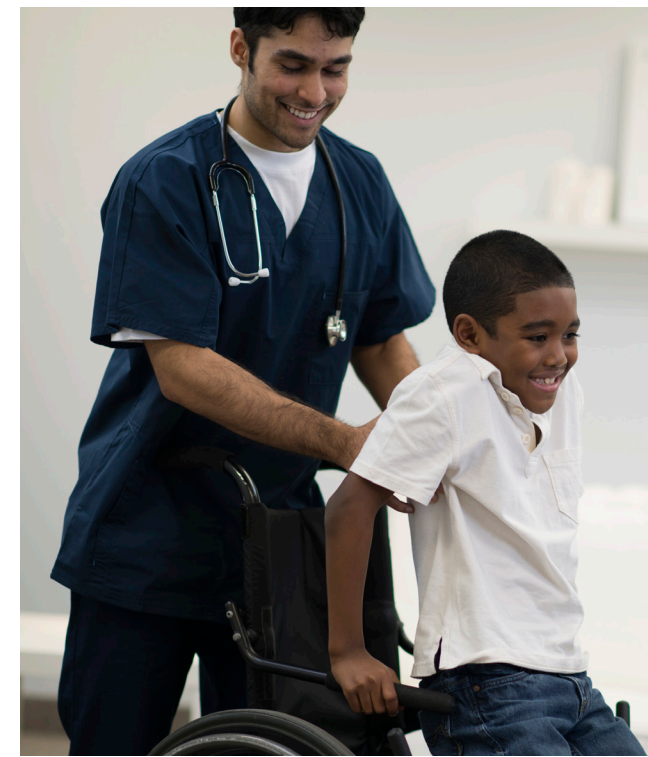
Design diversity specific tools for career development, mentoring and succession planning

Address systemic barriers that deny equitable career opportunities in diverse communities

Implement mandatory training for staff and leaders

As a critical underpinning of equity, diversity and inclusion, we will aim to achieve a workforce that reflects the diversity of our community, improving representation across all levels of the organization. An EDI scorecard published on the SickKids website will enhance visibility of and accountability for progress. To fuel continuous improvement, staff will be provided opportunities to share feedback regarding leadership support of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Implementation of standardized recruitment tools and training will aim to eradicate biases and ensure focus remains on candidates' qualifications. To increase the diversity of candidate pools, we will collaborate with academic partners to identify and eliminate barriers students may face in seeking placements in post-secondary educational institutions, and to promote careers that may feel out of reach for some populations.



Recognizing the importance of employees' understanding the value of equity, diversity and inclusion, mandatory educational materials and training will ensure SickKids staff have, at minimum, a baseline understanding of what EDI is and how to mobilize it in their work environments. Leadership will undergo intensive equity coaching, equipping them to lead change in hospital systems that continue to harm or negate the experiences of oppressed groups.

INTEGRATE EDI IN CARE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION



Reform care, research and education to respect Indigenous traditions and medicines

Embed EDI in the foundations of key strategic initiatives

Incorporate EDI analysis in curriculum design, training and practical application

Eliminate disparities in access to services to optimize child health outcomes

Western health systems remain informed by the needs and views of Eurocentric peoples, historically ignoring the traditions and medicines of Indigenous nations. Taking direction from Indigenous partners, SickKids will support the development of contemporary best practices for Indigenous health, working to find an optimal balance between western medicine and traditional healing.

SickKids 2025, our organization's five-year strategic plan, is poised to transform the future

of paediatric academic health sciences. By embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in the foundations of strategic initiatives such as our enterprise-wide data strategy, Artificial Intelligence in Medicine for Kids, and Precision Child Health, we will set the stage for a more equitable future.

Often what inhibits organizations' abilities to advance equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded biases working against them. By applying EDI analysis to curriculum design and training, we will ensure that biases and/



or stereotypes are not amplified in educational aids and simultaneously adopted by educators. This will be supported through the inclusion of SickKids' EDI Steering Committee in the approval process of new curriculum and aids.

To deliver equitable services across the population we serve, SickKids will measure and evaluate disparities in access to care, research and education to minimize variation, ultimately striving to improve child health outcomes.

CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY EXPERIENCE



Ensure equity, accessibility and cultural safety across SickKids spaces

Strengthen service pathways between SickKids and community agencies that support marginalized groups

Recruit diverse representation by removing barriers for volunteer participation

Establish and monitor benchmarks on EDI priorities with external partners



Experiencing illness and placing the fate of a child's health in the hands of a health-care team comes with immense vulnerability – feelings that may be heightened for oppressed populations. SickKids will meet this vulnerability with compassion, striving to ensure equity, accessibility and cultural safety across digital, interpersonal and physical spaces.









While SickKids is a leader in the provision of specialized paediatric services, many children and families have additional needs that cannot be met within our walls. Working closely with

health and social services organizations, we will connect families to culturally appropriate services in the community, especially those designed by and for Black and Indigenous families.

Our organizational efforts will only be as strong as the minds who inform them, therefore we will remove barriers that inhibit diverse and inclusive volunteer representation, using critical race-based recruitment tools to drive participation in advisory networks, councils and committees. These entities will be regularly evaluated to ensure equitable and safe participation.

Placing a high value on partnership, SickKids will engage our community with humility and transparency, building relationships to advance truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, improve services for Black communities, and evolve best practices to meet the needs of these communities, all backed by measurement and accountability.

SICKKIDS EDI STRATEGIC CHANGE DIAGRAM

	FROM 2022	TO 2025
 STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS, AND POLICIES	Systemic biases and inequities in organizational structures, systems and policies	 Organizational structures, systems and policies that promote and uphold equity, diversity and inclusion
 WORKFORCE	A workforce that does not reflect the diversity of Toronto, with real and perceived barriers to participation for oppressed groups	 A workforce that reflects the diversity of our community, with equal opportunity for all individuals and groups
 INTEGRATED EDI	Early-stage equity, diversity and inclusion efforts happening in select areas across the organization	 Equity, diversity, and inclusion embedded in the foundations of care, research, education and system leadership activities
 INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES	Limited representation, barriers to access and opportunities to improve cultural safety for marginalized groups	 Equitable, accessible and culturally safe experiences and services that meet the needs of the entire SickKids population

STAFF, PATIENTS & FAMILIES OF THE FUTURE

We envision a future where the stories shared below are part of the everyday experience of patients, families and staff at SickKids. Together, our EDI Strategy will help us get there.



Sidone
General Surgery Fellow

I am honoured and proud to be part of an organization that supports the professional development of their staff in a fulsome and equitable way. With SickKids' equity succession plan supporting workforce planning and development activities, my supervisor and I worked together to identify how my educational pursuits could advance my aspirations to be a future leader.



Kira
SickKids patient

I have been a patient of SickKids for the past 10 years. As I transition to the adult system, I am thankful that I have a foundation of care that is built on feeling safe to incorporate my cultural medicines and traditional Indigenous knowledge as an important part of my spiritual wellbeing. Knowing what cultural respect and safety feel like as a child at SickKids has my rights and expectations as a patient.



Colton
Parent of Levi, SickKids patient

I am a Black Queer parent of a medically complex child. As the non-biological parent of this child, I am always included and respected whenever I take him for his numerous appointments. The people at SickKids were respectful of our family structure and spent the time necessary to build trust with my son, myself, and the rest of the family.



Dilip
Clinical Director

With SickKids' use of a resume scorecard, I felt I was fairly ranked against my competitors and was happy to have met with a diverse hiring panel. They took the time to learn my name and a big focus during my interview was on the criteria for the position and exploring how I could support their vision.

IMPACT THROUGH ALIGNMENT

The SickKids EDI Strategy is aligned with [Ontario Health](#)'s Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework to address racism and discrimination and reduce inequities in the Ontario health system. Developed using a health systems lens, our EDI Strategy provides a roadmap to achieve a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organization and support the vision of the [SickKids 2025 Strategic Plan](#).

