

The Priority for Service Tool is used to determine the urgency of a family's request for Family Support Services and, where applicable, At Home Program Respite, and Staffed Residential and Family Care arrangements (see the Determining Priority for Children's Services policy for more information). The scoring of the tool is based on the current circumstances of the family and the child or youth.

This guide is designed to assist Children and Youth with Special Needs Support Workers (CYSN SW) in understanding the intent of the questions in the Priority for Service Tool (PST). It also provides an overview of the factors that should be considered in determining the scores.

The PST is intended to give an indication of the overall relative ranking of the urgency of the support needs of the child/youth in relation to others in the area. When funding becomes available, other factors may affect the decision making about who will receive funding first. For example, a specific support or service such as respite may become a priority for funding. Staff should assist families to understand that the scoring of the PST and resulting ranking of urgency is just one factor in determining who receives funding.

It is important that staff record comments for each question when completing the tool. The comments assist staff in understanding how the score was selected. This history is essential as more than one staff person may complete a PST for an individual. Staff should review the comments and scoring on the previous version of the PST before completing a new version.

The first nine questions of the Priority for Service Tool have a six point scale, with five points representing the greatest urgency or risk and zero points indicating no urgency or risk. The tenth question is called "Other Considerations". This question can be used to give additional scoring weight to a previous question by adding a score for the same issue under "Other Considerations". This section can also be used to capture important additional circumstances for the child/youth or family, or for additional factors not included in the PST.

Note that the family's Priority Score is not the sum total of the scores in each of the ten PST domains. Rather, the Priority Score is determined through the use of the Priority Score Calculation spreadsheet. Each of the ten values is entered into the appropriate cells on the spreadsheet, and weighting is automatically applied to produce the Priority Score. This value will be shown in the bottom row, labelled 'Final Score.'

Following the administration of the Priority for Service Tool, the CYSN SW should complete a Service Request and Support Plan form in collaboration with the family. The purpose of this form is to: document the service request date; record the Family Support Services that are being requested and their relative priority; document specific goals for each service, and; provide other relevant information to support the service request.

The term "parent" throughout the tool is defined in accordance with the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, and means:

- a) the mother of a child
 - b) the father of a child
 - c) a person to whom custody of a child has been granted by a court of competent jurisdiction or by an agreement, or
 - d) a person with whom a child resides and who stands in place of the child's mother or father
- but does not include a caregiver or director

NOTE: The Priority for Service Tool and the Service Request and Support Plan form are provided in Appendix A

DISABILITY-RELATED SUPPORTS

This question considers:

- How much support does the child/youth require?
- What type of support does the child/youth require?
- Is this level of support typical of the support required by his/her same age peers or does it reflect the disability-related support needs of the child/youth?

For example, all young children require constant support and supervision but older children typically become more independent and the type of support they require changes.

5 points: Child/youth must have a support person with them at all times to keep him/her safe, including someone awake with him/her at night.

Examples:

- Significant medical issues that require continual monitoring
- Child's/youth's behaviour place him/her or others in the home at risk if the child is left unsupervised during the day or night

4 points: Child or youth requires someone with him/her at all times when he/she is awake to provide support (including any times when the child is awake at night).

3 points: Child or youth needs support throughout the day but does not need someone directly with or in sight of him/her or at all times.

Examples:

- Child or youth requires someone available throughout the day to provide personal care support
- Child/youth requires someone nearby and available at all times to provide behavioural support.

2 points: Child or youth needs support at predictable and scheduled times throughout the day, but does not need someone with him/her at all times.

Examples:

- Child or youth may need personal care or meal-time support at regular times during the day
- Child/youth can play, watch a video, etc for periods of time without direct support

1 point: Child or youth requires occasional support during the day.

Examples:

- Child or youth may require prompts or support to follow and complete daily routines
- A youth can be left alone for an hour or two.

ENVIRONMENT (HOME OR COMMUNITY)

This question looks at the impact on daily living of any accessibility issues that the child or youth has. A child's or youth's access to his/her home or community may be limited by physical or behavioural challenges that the child/youth experiences. The following factors should be considered:

- The age of the child/youth – are the limitations consistent with those of their same age peers?

Example:

- A young child is not expected to access the community independently, but is typically able to attend preschool

- Have some accessibility barriers already been addressed reducing their impact on daily life?

Example:

- A youth who uses a wheelchair who lives in an accessible home and is able to access his home and community independently.

5 points: Child's or youth's activities of daily living (dressing, eating, toileting, going into the community, etc.) are significantly impacted by physical or behavioural limitations, including visual, auditory or communication challenges.

Examples:

- The child's/youth's behaviour prevents him/her from successfully participating in community activities
- The child/youth can not independently move around his/her home environment and is dependent in all activities of daily living

4 points: Child's or youth's daily life at home or in the community is impacted by accessibility issues

Examples:

- The child/youth has limited awareness of danger in the community
- The child/youth is able to independently move around his/her home environment and requires support for most activities of daily living

3 points: Child's or youth's environment requires specific modifications or changes to improve daily living

Examples:

- Child/youth requires use of a communication system to enable him/her to better make his/her wishes known
- Child requires behavioural support to learn/improve daily skills such as eating, dressing and toileting
- Child/youth is growing and modifications to the environment are required to enable the parent(s) to continue to physically care for the child/youth.

2 points: Child or youth always requires minimal behavioural, communication or physical support either at home or in the community to improve daily living

Examples:

- Child requires someone to drive or walk with him/her to community activities
- Child can eat independently if someone prepares the meal/snack for him/her

1 point: Child or youth occasionally requires support in the home or community

Example:

- Child/youth needs some initial support when activities or routines change

0 points: Child or youth can access his/her home environment and the community without any additional environmental or behavioural supports

PARENT HEALTH

This question measures the extent to which any physical health and/or diagnosed mental health issues of the parent(s) impact the capacity of the parent(s) to care for the child/youth. Because serious health issues for one parent in a two-parent family impact the family's ability to provide care for the child/youth, select the indicator that best reflects the situation of the parent with the most significant health concerns.

Note: Health concerns indicated should be based on known/diagnosed medical information and not the speculation of either the parent or the Children and Youth with Special Needs Support Worker (CYSN SW) completing the Priority for Service Tool, however, no doctor's note is required.

5 points: A parent is terminally ill or has died recently (within the past 12 months).

4 points: A critical or chronic illness of a parent(s) is significantly affecting the ability of the family to provide care for the child/youth.

3 points: One or both parent's capacity to provide care is diminishing due to health/aging issues of the parent

Examples:

- Parent can no longer lift or transfer the child because of health, strength, repetitive strain or age-related concerns

2 points: A parent has occasional significant health issues that impact his/her ability to care for the child/youth for periods of a week or more.

Examples:

- Parent has a chronic illness and experiences acute episodes that impact his/her ability to care for the child/youth

1 point: A parent has intermittent health issues that impact his/her ability to care for the child/youth.

0 points: The parent has not identified any health issues.

N/A: The child is in care through MCFD or a delegated Aboriginal agency (i.e. the parents are not currently parenting)

PARENT STRESS

This question reflects the level of stress experienced by the parent who is providing most of the daily care for the child/youth and the impact this has on the family. Consider stressors that are related to or impacting caregiver responsibilities and assess what the level of stress is on an ongoing basis i.e. over the past few weeks or months not just at the moment of contact with the parent(s). The scoring may be based on the parent's self-report, observations by the Children and Youth with Special Needs Support Worker (CYSN SW) or input from community partners.

5 points: Parent is experiencing severe stress related to his/her care giving responsibilities for the child/youth. Parent may have indicated that they feel unable to continue caring for the child and may have expressed a need for the child/youth to move out of the family home.

4 points: Parent is experiencing constant and severe stress but has not indicated that the parent(s) is unable to continue caring for the child.

3 points: Parent is experiencing a moderate level of stress everyday or stressful situations of an unpredictable nature that occur intermittently.

2 points: Parent is experiencing a low level of stress every day

1 point: Parent experiences stress frequently.

0 points: Parent is not experiencing stress related to or impacting his/her care giving responsibilities for the child/youth.

N/A: The child is in care through MCFD or a delegated Aboriginal agency (i.e. the parents are not currently parenting)

SAFETY OF CHILD AND FAMILY MEMBERS

This questions looks at the impact on the family members of any aggressive or self-injurious behaviours that the child/youth may engage in. Aggressive behaviours include, but are not limited to hitting, punching or pinching others or themselves, throwing or breaking objects, sexually intrusive behaviours, or attempting these actions or threatening others. Self-injurious behaviours include but are not limited to pinching, biting, head-banging or scratching.

5 points: Parent(s), siblings or the child/youth have been seriously injured (i.e. required medical treatment) by the child/youth. Incident(s) causing injury is part of an ongoing history of aggressive or self-injurious behaviour on the part of the child/youth.

Example

- Child/youth assaulted a family member, threw an object that seriously injured a family member or seriously injured themselves.

4 points: Parent(s), siblings or the child/youth have been injured by an action of the child (did not require medical attention). Incident(s) causing injury is part of an ongoing or escalating pattern of aggressive or self-injurious behaviour on the part of the child/youth.

3 points: Parent(s) or siblings constantly witness or experience the child/youth engaging in aggressive behaviour. Behaviour occurs three times a week or more. This may include attempts to injure people around the child/youth, throwing or breaking objects.

2 points: Parent(s) or siblings witness or experience the child/youth engaging in aggressive behaviour once or twice a week.

1 point: Parent(s) or siblings are exposed to constant and pervasive environmental stress as a result of the child's/youth's behaviour such as property destruction, verbal threats, loud or repetitious vocalizations, etc.

0 points: Parent(s) or siblings do not feel threatened by the child's/youth's behaviour.

MCFD-FUNDED SUPPORTS

This question looks at the amount of MCFD-funded supports or services that the child/youth and his/her family currently receive. The amount of support is measured in hours/week. Each score reflects the average weekly total of all the different types of supports being provided to the family by MCFD.

As some MCFD funding and/or supports are provided on a monthly basis the following approximations should be used to ensure provincial consistency:

Respite support is calculated as follows:

$\# \text{ days/month} \times 24 \text{ hours/day} \times 12 \text{ months/year} \text{ divided by } 52 \text{ weeks/year} = \# \text{ hours/week}$

For example: At Home, Direct-Funded, globally funded at two days/month = 11 hours/week

5 points: 0 hours – child/youth does not receive any MCFD-funded services or supports

4 points: Less than six hours per week.

3 points: Six to 18 hours per week.

2 points: 19 to 24 hours per week.

1 point: 25 to 36 hours per week.

0 points: More than 36 hours per week.

NOTE: partial units of service should be rounded down where doing so would result in a higher score (eg. in cases where a child/youth and family receive 18.5 hours of service)

GENERIC SERVICES AND INFORMAL SUPPORTS

This question looks at the number of hours per week that the child/youth is currently participating in generic services (funded services available to all citizens) or informal activities (non-funded associations such as clubs or sports teams) in his or her community. The child may or may not require extra support when attending the activity (e.g. volunteer, family member, or non-MCFD funded support person,).

Generic services include activities such as school, pre-school, recreation centre programs. Informal activities include activities like Scouts/Brownies, faith communities, sports teams.

Note: The focus of this question is on community/social activities that the child/youth participates in, therefore, therapeutic interventions (including those that are generic services) should not be included in the calculation of the weekly hours of community activities. Therapeutic interventions not counted in the calculation include: Autism funding programs, nursing support services, speech therapy, physical or occupational therapy, etc.

The scoring options for these questions reflect the expected developmental norms for the involvement of children and youth in generic and informal activities.

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3:

- Not typically involved in generic services or informal activities.
- Score of zero must be selected.

CHILDREN AGE 3-5:

- Typically have limited involvement in activities outside of the home
- Scores of 4 and 5 removed as this level of urgency/risk does not fit this age group

CHILDREN/YOUTH 6-18:

School is typically the main generic activity for children ages 6 – 18. School hours should be calculated based on the hours that a child regularly attends school during the school year and not scored as zero during school breaks. School breaks are part of the normal cycle of family life and should not increase priority. The typical school week is 30 hours/week.

5 points: Less than six hours per week (i.e. child is attending school one day/week or less.

4 points: Six to 15 hours/week

3 points: 16 to 25 hours per week

2 points: 26 to 36 hours per week

1 point: 37 to 45 hours per week

0 points: More than 45 hours per week

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6:

5 points: This score is not available for a child under 6

4 points: This score is not available for a child under 6

3 points: Less than 5 hours per week

Example:

- Child attends pre-school two days/week

2 points: 5 to 9 hours per week

1 point: 10 to 20 hours per week

0 points: More than 20 hours per week OR child is under age 3 (a score of zero must be selected for children under 3)

NOTE: partial units of service should be rounded down where doing so would result in a higher score

FAMILY COMPOSITION

This question considers other care giving responsibilities that the parent(s) has that may affect the family's ability to manage the disability-related support needs of the child/youth. This includes other family members with disability-related needs (e.g. another child or adult in the family with a developmental disability) as well as family members who are dependent on the parent(s) for care giving support (e.g. children under age 6 or any child who requires extra care or attention, aging parents or grandparents). This may also include a family member who is experiencing a personal or health crisis that places demands on the parent(s).

5 points: Two or more family members have disability-related needs (in addition to the child/youth)

4 points: One family member has disability-related needs (in addition to the child/youth)

3 points: Three or more family members have dependent care needs (in addition to the child/youth)

2 points: Two family members have dependent care needs (in addition to the child/youth).

1 point: One family member has dependent care needs (in addition to the child/youth)

0 points: Only the child/youth has disability-related needs.

N/A: The child is in care through MCFD or a delegated Aboriginal agency (i.e. the parents are not currently parenting)

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

This question looks at the availability, proximity, and effectiveness of the family's support network (including extended family, friends, neighbours, etc). Support provided by a family's support network may include such things as looking after the child/youth for a weekend, providing transportation to activities or medical appointments, helping with housework or yard work, babysitting the child/youth and/or other children in the family, etc.

Although only the first descriptor refers exclusively to a parent who is parenting on his/her own, all of the remaining descriptors are relevant for single or two-parent/partner families.

5 points: The family is headed by a parent who is parenting without the support of another parent/partner (either in the home or out of the home) and does not have a support network. The parent is not able to manage the child's/youth's disability-related support needs. This is a "composite" question, where all three factors apply.

4 points: The family does not have a support network and is not able to manage the child's/youth's disability-related support needs.

Example:

- Family has no family or friends near-by

3 points: The family has limited access to a support network or the family's support network is unable to provide effective support. The parent(s) is struggling to manage the child's disability-related support needs.

Examples:

- Family has very few connections in the community and extended family members live too far away to provide practical support to the family on a regular basis.
- Family has some friends and/or family in the community but these individuals are not able to provide practical support to the family due their own personal circumstances (e.g. health issues)

2 points: The family has an adequate support network but is not consistently available to them.

Example:

- Family has family and friends that are able to provide some support but family is still struggling to manage the child's special needs as they require more consistent support than their support network can provide.

1 point: The family is managing to care for the child's disability-related support needs and has a support network that they can draw upon.

0 points: The family is managing well and has a good support network that is consistently available

N/A: The child is in care through MCFD or a delegated Aboriginal agency (i.e. the parents are not currently parenting)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This question provides an opportunity for staff to enter factors that may not be relevant for all children/youth and/or their families but are relevant for this family or child/youth. This section may also be used to add further weight to a previous question when required by a specific situation. Other considerations may include significant transitions for the child/youth, family or medical emergencies, significant financial pressures such as a loss of employment, etc. For example, planning for a CIC to transition back to the family home should be noted in this section and scored as a 5.

Note: Although certain issues that a family faces may be outside of MCFD's mandate, for example financial or housing pressures, this section can be used to capture the impact these pressures/issues are having on the family's ability to manage the support needs of their son or daughter. Comments for this section are mandatory and should provide a detailed description of the consideration.

APPENDIX A:

**Priority for Service Tool and
Service Request and Support Plan**

DISABILITY-RELATED SUPPORTS

The disability-related support needs of the child/youth must be considered in relation to the expected support needs of the same age peers of the child/youth. For example, all very young children require physical care and constant supervision. This question looks at the supports such as personal care, communication, and health care, as well as any behavioural supports that the child/youth requires specifically related to his/her disability.

- 5** The child or youth has significant disability-related support needs and requires a support person with him/her at all times (including awake support overnight).
- 4** The child or youth has significant disability-related supports needs and requires a support person with him/her at all times when he/she is awake.
- 3** The child or youth has moderate disability-related support needs and requires support throughout the day but does not require someone with him/her at all times.
- 2** The child or youth has mild disability-related support needs and requires support at times during the day.
- 1** The child or youth has mild disability-related support needs and requires occasional support e.g. verbal prompts required to initiate personal care; older youth can be left alone for an hour or two
- 0** The child or youth has disability-related support needs that requires minimal support e.g. able to follow most daily routines independently; older youth can be home alone for three hours or more

Comments:

ENVIRONMENT (HOME OR COMMUNITY)

This question measures the extent to which the child's/youth's access to his/her home or community may be limited by physical or behavioural challenges that the child/youth experiences. The developmental age of the child needs to be considered in this question as all young children have limitations on access in both their home and community

Child/youth has:

- 5** Limited to no accessibility (physical, visual, auditory or behaviourally) within the home or community environment which affects all aspects of daily living
- 4** Restrictions on accessibility which affect daily living
- 3** Requires specific modifications to environment to improve daily living
- 2** Requires minimal supports for accessibility all the time
- 1** Requires support for accessibility intermittently
- 0** No accessibility issues that require support

Comments:

PARENT HEALTH

Note: In a two-parent family, health concerns for either parent should be considered if they impact on family function and the parent(s) ability to provide care for the child or youth. "Health concerns" include both physical and mental health issues.

- 5** A parent is terminally ill or recently deceased
- 4** A parent is critically or chronically ill
- 3** A parent's ability to care for the child/youth is diminishing due to aging/health reasons (of the parent or the child)
- 2** A parent has occasional significant health issues that impact the care of the child/youth
- 1** A parent has intermittent health issues
- 0** No health issues identified
- N/A** The child/youth is in care (CIC)

Comments:

PARENT STRESS

This question is designed to reflect the circumstances of the parent who is providing most of the daily care for the child/youth. Stressful circumstances of an unpredictable nature that occur intermittently or may recur should be considered.

Parent has expressed and/or displayed:

- 5** Severe stress related to caregiving responsibilities – parent may have indicated that the child will need to move out of family home
- 4** Constant and severe stress without indication that the parent(s) are unable to care for the child
- 3** Constant and moderate stress
- 2** Constant low levels of stress
- 1** Frequent stress
- 0** No stress
- N/A** The child/youth is in care (CIC)

Comments:

SAFETY OF CHILD AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Note: This question includes self-injurious behaviour

- 5** Parents or siblings have been seriously injured by the child/youth or the child/youth has seriously injured him/her self
- 4** Parents or siblings have been injured by the child/youth or the child/youth has injured him/her self
- 3** Parents or siblings constantly experience or witness the child/youth engaging in aggressive behaviour
- 2** Parents or siblings occasionally experience or witness the child/youth engaging in aggressive behaviour
- 1** Family is exposed to constant and pervasive environmental stress (e.g. vocalizations, property destruction, verbal threats)
- 0** Parents, child and siblings are safe

Comments:

MCFD-FUNDED SUPPORTS

Note: Record the approximate number of hours per week of funded supports that the child/youth or family currently receives. The supports may be provided hourly or daily and be direct funded or globally funded. These funded supports may include but are not limited to, Child and Youth Care Workers, respite, homemakers, and behavioural support. Respite support should be calculated as follows: # days/month x 24 hours x 12 months divided by 52 week. For example respite at two days/month = 11 hours/week. See guide for further details.

- 5** No support
- 4** Less than six hours per week
- 3** Six to 18 hours/week
- 2** 19 to 24 hours/week
- 1** 25 to 36 hours/week
- 0** Over 36 hours/week

Comments:

GENERIC SERVICES AND INFORMAL SUPPORTS

This question captures the approximate number of hours per week that the child/youth participates in generic services or informal supports. The child may or may not be supported by a family member, friend or support person when he/she participates in the activity. Informal supports include non-funded associations or clubs such as Scouts or Brownies or sports teams. Generic services include services such as school, day-care or pre-school, etc. that are funded by other governmental bodies.

Note: The scoring reflects the fact that pre-school age children typically have less community involvement. Select the appropriate score for the child's chronological age.

Child/Youth: Ages 6-18

- 5** Less than six hours per week
- 4** Six to 15 hours per week
- 3** 16 to 25 hours per week
- 2** 26 to 36 hours per week
- 1** 37 to 45 hours per week
- 0** More than 45 hours per week

Child under Age 6

- Does not apply
- Does not apply
- Less than 5 hours per week
- 5 to 9 hours per week
- 10 to 20 hours per week
- More than 20 hours per week **OR**
child is under age 3

Comments:

FAMILY COMPOSITION:

This question considers other caregiving responsibilities that may affect the family's ability to manage the disability-related support needs of the child/youth. For example infants, young dependant siblings and aging grandparents may have dependent care needs that impact the parents' availability and ability to care for the child/youth. Another family member may also be experiencing a personal or healthcare crisis.

- 5** Two or more family members have disability-related needs (in addition to the child/youth)
- 4** One family member has disability-related needs (in addition to the child/youth)
- 3** Three or more family members have dependent care needs (in addition to the child/youth).
- 2** Two family members have dependent care needs (in addition to the child/youth)
- 1** One family member has dependent care needs (in addition to the child/youth)
- 0** Only the child/youth has disability-related needs.
- N/A** The child/youth is in care (CIC)

Comments:

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

A number of factors influence the ability of a family to manage the child's/youth's special needs. In this section consider the proximity, ability and availability of the family's support network (including extended family, friends, neighbours, etc.).

- 5** The family is headed by a parent who is parenting on his/her own and is not able to manage the child's special needs. The parent does not have a support network to draw on.
- 4** The family is not able to manage the child's special needs and does not have a support network to assist it.
- 3** The family is struggling with managing the child's special needs and has limited access to a support network or the family's support network is unable to provide effective support
- 2** The family has an adequate support network but it is not consistently available.
- 1** The family is managing and has a support network to draw upon
- 0** Parent(s) is managing well and has a good support network consistently available
- N/A** The child/youth is in care (CIC)

Comments:

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This question addresses situations that are not looked at in the other questions or adds extra weight to a previous question when needed to reflect a specific situation. This may include significant transitions, family or medical emergencies, significant financial pressures including loss of employment, etc. A detailed description of the consideration(s) is required.

- 5** Urgent
- 4** Severe
- 3** Moderate impact
- 2** Problematic
- 1** Mildly problematic, may need consideration in the future.
- 0** No impact

Describe Considerations:

Service Request and Support Plan

Parent's Name		Spouse's Name	
Address		Child's Name (Last, First)	
City/Town		Child's Date of Birth (YYYY/MM/DD)	
Postal Code		Priority Score	FH File Number
Home Phone	Work Phone	MCFD Office Code	

For each service requested:

Tick the column labelled **N** if the request is for a **new** service

Tick the column labelled **E** if the request is for an **enhancement** to an existing service

Family Support Services	Priority 1 (high) to 8 (low)	Service Goal(s) (should be time-limited, and clearly linked to the family's support needs and the child's/youth's strengths and interests)	Estimated Cost	N	E
Behavioural Support					
Child and Youth Care Worker					
Contracted Respite					
Direct Funded Respite					
Homemaker/ Home Support					
Parent Support					
Professional Support					
Respite Relief					

What are the family's strengths?

What are the family's support needs arising from child's/youth's disability?

What types of supports are accessed currently, or will be accessed?

What are the child's/ youth's strengths and interests?

What are the child's/ youth's community living and support needs arising from his/her disability?

CYSN Support Worker Name (Print Clearly)
CYSN Support Worker Signature
Parent Signature
Date (YYYY/MM/DD)