

## 1. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

*Supply Act.*

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and accompanying standards is to provide clarification regarding the criteria and process used to determine eligibility for the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 and Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 Programs.

## 3. POLICY

The Ministry of Children and Family Development will provide Autism Programs for eligible children and their families.

## 4. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### 4.1. Autism Funding: Under Age 6 Program

Autism Funding: Under Age 6 Program provides families of children with ASD under age six with up to \$22,000 per year to assist with the cost of purchasing eligible autism intervention services, based on best practices, that promote their child's communication, social-emotional, pre-academic and functional life skills development.

### 4.2. Autism Funding: Ages 6 to 18 Program

Autism Funding: Ages 6 to 18 Program provides families of children with ASD ages six through 18 (inclusive) with up to \$6,000 per year to assist with the cost of purchasing eligible out-of-school autism intervention services that will promote their child's communication, social-emotional, academic and functional life skills development.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

**5.1. "Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)"** is recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – 5 (DSM-5). ASD is a complex neurobiological condition that impacts normal brain development and affects a person's social relationships, communication, interests and behaviour. The categories of autistic disorder, Asperger disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified are combined into the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

**5.2. "Best practice"** means interventions and approaches that are supported by evidence and found to be most effective based on the current state of the research literature. Research into autism interventions is continuously evolving and improving what is defined as best practices.

**5.3. "Eligible children" means:**

**5.3.1. For the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 Program, children who:**

- a) have a diagnosis of ASD that meets the standards of the British Columbia Autism Assessment Network, **or**;
- b) received a diagnosis of ASD from another province in Canada, **and** have a Confirmation of Diagnosis form completed by a qualified specialist, **and**;
- c) are age five or under, **and**;
- d) are a resident of BC

**5.3.2. For the Autism Funding: Ages 6 - 18 Program, children who:**

- a) have a diagnosis of ASD that meets the standards of the British Columbia Autism Assessment Network, **or**;
- b) received a diagnosis of ASD from another province in Canada, **and** have a Confirmation of Diagnosis form completed by a qualified specialist, **or**;
- c) received a diagnosis of ASD before April 1, 2004, and have a Confirmation of Diagnosis form completed by a qualified specialist, **and**;
- d) are between six and 18 years of age (inclusive), **and**;
- e) are a resident of BC

**5.4. "Behavioural Plan of Intervention" (BPI)** is an individualized plan of intervention designed for a specific child or youth that focuses on identifying areas where intervention is needed. The BPI should have a multidisciplinary focus that emphasizes: academics, communication, social/play skills, emotional/self-regulation, motor/sensory functioning, independence/life skills. The BPI is written by a Behaviour Consultant/Analyst in collaboration with the child's parents and/or guardians, and should include input from professionals who are members of the child's team (e.g., speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist). The BPI should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that your child is making meaningful progress.

**5.5. "Registry of Autism Service Providers" (RASP):** Parents of children receiving Autism Funding: Under Age 6 are required to select professional service providers for their child from the RASP. The RASP is managed by ACT – Autism Community Training on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. In order to be included on the RASP, professionals must demonstrate that their education and experience meet the qualifications required by the ministry.

**5.6. "Qualified specialist" in the context of diagnosing or confirming a diagnosis** means a pediatrician, child psychiatrist, or registered psychologist.

**5.7. a) "Resident of British Columbia"** is defined in accordance with the *Medicare Protection Act* ("Act"),<sup>[1]</sup> which provides the following definition:

**"resident"** means a person who

- (a) is a citizen of Canada or is lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence,
- (b) makes his or her home in British Columbia, **and**
- (c) is physically present in British Columbia for
  - (i) at least 6 months in a calendar year, **or**
  - (ii) a shorter prescribed period,

**and** includes a person who is **deemed under the regulations** to be a resident but does not include a tourist or visitor to British Columbia.

**b) "Deemed under the regulations"** As per the *Medical and Health Care Services Regulation* ("Regulations"), a child or youth that is a '**deemed resident**' and thus eligible for autism funding includes:

- (a) a person **admitted to Canada as a student** who,
  - (i) **possesses a valid student authorization** issued under the *Immigration Act* (Canada) before its repeal or a study permit issued under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada), for a period of 6 or more months *within a calendar year, and*
  - (ii) **continues to retain such valid authorization, and**
  - (iii) meets the criteria under section (b) and (c) of the definition of "**Resident of British Columbia**" (5.7a)

**5.8. a) "Autism Signatory for Student Deemed a Resident"** The person signing the Autism Agreement (i.e., the Autism Signatory) is the student's designated custodian.

**b) "Custodian"** A minor who comes to Canada to study without a parent or legal guardian must be cared for by a responsible adult in Canada. This person is known as a custodian. Custodianship requires that legal arrangements be made to give the custodian in Canada permission to act in place of a parent. A custodian declaration form must be completed through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

[1]

## 6. STANDARDS

### 6.1. Information and Support to Families Standard

<b>1</b>	<b>The organization ensures that each family has access to a knowledgeable Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) Worker</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CYSN Worker is knowledgeable about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Best practices in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) intervention.</li> <li>○ The potential impact of ASD on a child or youth's family members.</li> <li>○ Services and supports available for children and youth with special needs and their families.</li> <li>○ Parents' responsibilities under the Autism Programs, including those related to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ administration of autism funds; <b>and</b></li> <li>➢ selection of professional service providers from the Registry of Autism Service Providers (for children under age six).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• At the initial meeting with the family, the CYSN Worker provides information regarding available services and supports, or arranges for another meeting time to do so.</li> <li>• The CYSN Worker is available to provide ongoing information and support to the family</li> </ul>

### 6.2. Autism Funding: Under Age Six Program Eligibility Standards

<b>1</b>	<b>The organization uses consistent criteria to determine children's eligibility for the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 Programs</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Autism Funding: Under Age Six Program is intended for children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ are under age six <b>and</b>;</li> <li>○ have a documented multidisciplinary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), coordinated by a qualified specialist, <b>and</b>;</li> <li>○ are residents of British Columbia (BC).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>The organization informs the family of, and receives, the required eligibility documents</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required eligibility documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) Clinical Outcomes form completed by a qualified specialist and showing a multidisciplinary diagnosis of ASD; <b>or</b></li> <li>○ A Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of ASD completed by a qualified specialist and showing a multidisciplinary diagnosis of ASD (Note: the Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis form must be accompanied by psychological, paediatric, and speech-language pathology assessment reports); <b>or</b></li> <li>○ For children diagnosed with ASD outside of British Columbia*, a Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of ASD form, completed by a qualified BC specialist <b>and</b> showing a diagnosis of ASD (Note: The Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of ASD form must be accompanied by the child's original assessment and diagnostic report(s); <b>and</b></li> <li>○ Proof that the child is under age six (such as a birth certificate); <b>and</b></li> <li>○ Current BC Care Card (as proof of residency).</li> <li>○ For student's <b>deemed as residents</b> the additional documents are required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ a valid student authorization issued under the <i>Immigration Act</i> (Canada) <b>or</b> a study permit issued under the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> (Canada); <b>and</b></li> <li>➢ a custodian declaration form completed through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

\*If a child has had a diagnostic assessment of ASD from another country and the family is applying for MCFD autism programs, a Confirmation of Diagnosis Form must be completed by a qualified BC specialist (paediatrician, psychiatrist or registered psychologist). If the out of country diagnostic assessment does not meet BC Standards, the qualified BC specialist may require your child to have a new diagnostic assessment within BC before applying for autism programs.

<b>3</b>	<b>The organization reviews the required eligibility documents to determine program eligibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The documents are reviewed for completeness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) Clinical Outcomes form completed by a qualified specialist and showing a multidisciplinary diagnosis of ASD; <b>or</b></li> <li>◦ A Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of ASD completed by a qualified specialist and showing a multidisciplinary diagnosis of ASD (Note: the Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis form must be accompanied by psychological, paediatric, and speech-language pathology assessment reports); <b>or</b></li> <li>◦ For children diagnosed with ASD outside of British Columbia*, a Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of ASD form, completed by a qualified BC specialist and showing a diagnosis of ASD (Note: The Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of ASD form must be accompanied by the child's original assessment and diagnostic report(s); <b>and</b></li> <li>◦ Proof that the child is under age six (such as a birth certificate); <b>and</b></li> <li>◦ Current BC Care Card (as proof of residency).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Questions regarding eligibility may be directed to Autism Policy, Ministry of Children and Family Development.</p>	

## 6.3. Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 Program Eligibility Standards

<b>1</b>	<b>The organization uses consistent criteria to determine children and youths' eligibility for the Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 Program</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 Program is intended for children and youth who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ are ages six through eighteen; <b>and</b></li> <li>◦ have a documented clinical diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), completed by a qualified specialist; <b>and</b></li> <li>◦ are residents of British Columbia (BC),</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## 2 The organization informs the family of, and receives, the required eligibility documents

- Required eligibility documents:
  - For children and youth diagnosed with ASD in BC prior to April 1, 2004, or at any time in another Canadian province, a Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis\* of ASD form, completed by a qualified BC specialist and showing a diagnosis of ASD must be accompanied by the child's original assessment and diagnostic report(s); **or**
  - For children and youth diagnosed with ASD after April 1, 2004, a BCAAN Clinical Outcomes form or Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of ASD form, completed by a qualified specialist and showing a diagnosis of ASD; **and**
  - Proof that the child or youth is between the ages of six and eighteen (such as a birth certificate); **and**
  - Current BC Care Card (as proof of residency).
  - For student's **deemed as residents** the additional documents are required:
    - a valid student authorization issued under the *Immigration Act* (Canada) or a study permit issued under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada); **and**
    - a custodian declaration form completed through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

\* If a child has had a diagnostic assessment of ASD from another country and the family is applying for MCFD autism programs, a Confirmation of Diagnosis Form must be completed by a qualified BC specialist (paediatrician, psychiatrist or registered psychologist). If the out of country diagnostic assessment does not meet BC Standards, the qualified BC specialist may require your child to have a new diagnostic assessment within BC before applying for autism programs

## 3 The organization reviews the required documents to determine program eligibility

The documents are reviewed for completeness:

- For children and youth diagnosed with ASD in BC prior to April 1, 2004, or at any time in another Canadian province, a Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis\* of ASD form, completed by a qualified BC specialist and showing a diagnosis of ASD must be accompanied by the child's original assessment and diagnostic report(s); **or**
- For children and youth diagnosed with ASD after April 1, 2004, a BCAAN Clinical Outcomes form or Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of ASD form, completed by a qualified specialist and showing a diagnosis of ASD; **and**
- Proof that the child or youth is between the ages of six and eighteen (such as a birth certificate); **and**
- Current BC Care Card (as proof of residency).

Questions regarding eligibility may be directed to Autism Policy, Ministry of Children and Family Development.

#### 6.4. Initiating Access to Autism Programs Standards

<b>1</b>	<b>The organization assists families to complete the documents required to initiate access to Autism Programs</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A completed <u>Application for Autism Funding</u> is required.</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>The organization activates autism funding for eligible children and youth</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The child or youth is eligible for funding from the first day of the month in which the organization receives all required eligibility documents and the completed Application for Autism Funding</li></ul>

Children and youth in care and youth in youth agreements who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may be eligible for Autism Funding Programs through the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Services for children and youth with ASD are delivered by MCFD Guardianship Workers and the Autism Funding Unit.

The following information is intended to assist Guardianship Workers and Autism Funding Unit staff in providing access to autism funding for children and youth in care.

### **AUTISM PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

The child or youth's guardianship worker contacts the local MCFD office, provides the documents required to establish program eligibility and completes the Autism Funding Application. (available at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/62EFC451C5D04C348105A900F6D368AB>).

A MCFD worker confirms program eligibility and provides information about autism programs.

### **ACCESS TO FUNDING/INTERVENTION**

#### **1. Confirming Funding**

Once eligibility is established, the guardianship worker contacts the Autism Funding Unit to confirm the amount of funding available for the child or youth for the funding term. A funding term ends on the last day of the month of the child's birthday.

To confirm available funding the Guardianship Worker emails the Autism Funding Unit at: [MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca) and provides the following information:

- (1) Child's full name (First, middle, and surname)
- (2) Birth date of child
- (3) CS file number
- (4) Start date for the funding
- (5) Guardianship worker's name, phone number and address

Once the Autism Funding Unit has received this information, they send the guardianship worker an email/letter confirming the term and the amount of funding available.

#### **2. Selecting Service Providers/Intervention Services**

A child's guardianship worker decides, in consultation with the child's team, how much of the available funds to use for intervention services.

- Up to 20% of funds may be reserved for eligible travel, training and equipment expenditures.
- Service providers and foster parents may invoice the Autism Funding Unit for eligible travel, training and equipment costs.
- The invoice must include the original receipt for the expenses and the pre-approved Justification for Equipment and Supplies CFO908 (submitted prior to all equipment purchases).
- In some cases the Autism Funding Unit can purchase eligible items directly e.g. airfare, conference registrations, equipment.



The guardianship worker selects a service provider and determines an approach to intervention that is eligible for funding and consistent with the child's plan of care. The guardianship worker determines which service provider or service providers to pay with the autism funds.

- Note that for children under age 6 all professional service providers (behaviour consultants, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists) must be selected from the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) at <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/>
- Selecting a service provider from the RASP is also recommended for children over the age of 6 whenever possible.
- Autism Community Training (AIS BC) provides web- and phone-based information and support regarding services and interventions for children and youth with ASD. For more information, please visit <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/>.
- For assistance in selecting service providers for a child in care under 6, please contact MCFD's Senior Behaviour Consultant at 1-877-3530.

### 3. Developing Goals, Outcomes, Deliverables

The guardianship worker develops autism program goals, desired outcomes and specific deliverables in consultation with the child's parent, foster parent and other team members. These goals will flow from the related section in the child's or youth's CPOC (Emotional and Behavioural Development, Social Presentation, Family and Social Relationships). NOTE: for children under age 6 a Behavioral Plan of Intervention completed by a qualified professional must guide autism intervention. The Plan is submitted within 4 months of the child's application for autism funding being approved. The Plan is updated annually.

#### Desired Outcomes examples

- Reduced incidence of targeted problem behaviours
- Demonstrated gains in skills across developmental domains
- Improved receptive and expressive language and communication skills

#### Deliverables examples

- Up to # hours of speech language therapy or occupational therapy in this funding period
- Up to # hours of behaviour intervention per month in this funding period
- Up to # hours of behaviour consultation in this funding period, as needed to train and supervise interventionists; develop or update the Plan of Intervention and monitor the child's progress

**The Outcomes and Deliverables must be submitted by the Guardianship Worker with the Request to Pay form in order to initiate Services.**

### 4. Initiating Service – Request to Pay

In order to initiate service, the guardianship worker submits a completed Request to Pay form (CF0925) located at: <https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/F56071551E43438C9825753C6ECBF150> to:

Autism Funding Unit  
PO Box 9776  
Victoria BC V8W 9S5  
**Phone: 1-877-777-3530**  
**Fax (250) 356-8578**

The Autism Funding Unit reviews and approves the Request to Pay, or requests additional information. Services should not commence until the Request to Pay has been approved.

### **5. Services from an Agency (recommended option)**

If the service provider is an agency (i.e. more than one staff), and the Request to Pay has been approved, no additional steps are required.

The Autism Funding Unit will set up an invoice payment account and pay invoices submitted by the service provider for intervention services. Payments can only be made to the agency name, not employees or subcontractors of the agency.

### **6. Services from an Individual**

If the service provider is an individual and the Request to Pay has been approved, an MCFD **Client Service Agreement (CSA) and Component Services Schedule (CSS)** are required.

MCFD field staff prints 2 original copies of the completed CSA and CSS, reviews them with the Contractor, obtains the contractor signature on both original copies and submits both original copies to the Autism Funding Unit for approval and processing.

## CLARIFICATION OF POLICY

### Eligible expenses for Autism Funding: Under Age 6

The primary intent of autism funding is for the purchase of direct autism intervention. Parents may choose the type of behavioural treatment, as identified in the child's behavioural plan of intervention and based on the best practices guidelines that best suits their child's needs. Up to 20 per cent of the family's annual funding may be used to purchase training, travel and equipment related to autism intervention.

### Recommended equipment

Equipment and materials must be related to autism intervention. This does not include regular educational supplies.

### Equipment guidelines:

- Equipment must be recommended in writing by a professional/specialist as necessary for effective intervention and must be consistent with intervention recommended in the child's behavioural plan of intervention. The written recommendation must explain the outcomes that the recommended equipment will help achieve.
- Other avenues of funding for equipment purchases or loans must be explored and purchases must not duplicate those that would be approved under SET-BC, the At Home Program, or other agencies providing equipment.
- Where possible, the child should use equipment available from other sources (e.g., loaner equipment, equipment in the school setting, etc.)

## PURPOSE

This advisory further clarifies that Autism Funding cannot be used to purchase trampolines, rebounders of any size, or bouncing equipment (e.g., inflatable bouncers) due to the potential for serious injury. All trampolines, rebounders and bouncing equipment recommended or purchased after June 1, 2007, will not be covered as a benefit of the program.

## RATIONALE

- Health Canada, Canada Safety Council, several Canadian hospitals, the Canadian Pediatric Society, and other organizations in North America have issued public announcements advising against trampoline use for all children, and recommend that children under 6 be prohibited from trampoline use under any circumstances.
- The advisories highlight significant safety concerns with the use of trampolines. These include:
  - Common injuries include: broken bones, sprains, concussions and other head injuries. Neck and spinal cord injuries are also a risk
  - 80% of children suffering trampoline-related injuries in Canada in the 1990s were between the ages of 5 - 14.
  - Children under the age of 6 should never use a trampoline that is over 50 centimetres in height.
  - Adult supervision does not adequately prevent injuries on home trampolines; the supervisor/s should be trained in trampoline safety.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics summarizes the safety concerns for trampolines and rebounders as follows:

Despite all currently available measures to prevent injury, the potential for serious injury while using a trampoline remains. The need for supervision and trained personnel at all times makes home use extremely unwise. The trampoline should not be used at home, inside or outside. During anticipatory guidance, pediatricians should advise parents never to purchase a home trampoline or allow children to use home trampolines<sup>1</sup>

- The Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) also advises that trampolines pose a serious safety hazard to children and youth. On May 4, 2009 the CPS released the following statement: injuries from trampolines are on the rise. Most injuries happen to children between 5 and 14 years of age. That's why the CPS recommends that trampolines not be used at home and that children not use trampolines as play equipment—indoors or outdoors.
- Other equipment used for bouncing has also been found to be a potential cause of serious injury in children. A study by Avoian et al. (2008) which investigated hospital admissions as a result of inflatable bouncing equipment related injuries made the following conclusion: The data for inflatable bouncer-related injuries parallel the statistics for trampoline-related trauma. Inflatable bouncers can cause serious orthopaedic injuries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Canadian Paediatric Association does not have its own position on trampolines, but refers inquires to the American Academy of Pediatric's position statements on this topic. APA Policy Statement: Trampolines at Home, School, and Recreational Centers. *Pediatrics*. 1999;103:1053–1056 accessed August 9, 2007 at: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;103/5/1053>

<sup>2</sup>Avoian, T., Choi, P., Manjra N., & Weiss, J., (2008). Inflatable bouncer – related fractures in children. *Journal of Pediatric Orthopaedics*, 28, 656-659.



July 31, 2008

## **Advisory Regarding the Use of Weighted Blankets for Children**

Dear families and service providers:

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has received information from the Autism Society of Canada regarding a potential suffocation risk of using weighted blankets with children. Weighted blankets are manufactured and sold as a therapeutic approach to calming children with autism, or others with sensitive sensory systems. Quebec Chief Coroner Dr. Louise Nolet, issued a report in June 2008 following the investigation into the death of a child in that province. She advises that specific recommended practices be followed in order to minimize the danger from the use of weighted blankets.

If you have a weighted blanket please contact your child's Occupational Therapist or Physical Therapist and request that he or she review the safe and appropriate use of the blanket with you.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Karen Bopp, MCFD Children and Youth with Special Needs Senior Behaviour Consultant through ServiceBC at 1-800 663-7867 or by email at [Karen.Bopp@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Karen.Bopp@gov.bc.ca).