

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION NOTE**

DATE: January 29, 2021

CLIFF#: 256953

PREPARED FOR: Carolyn Kamper, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Integration, Policy and Legislation Division

ISSUE: Interviews for needs-based assessment research to inform CYSN Service Framework implementation

BACKGROUND:

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is developing a Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) Service Framework to contribute to the overall efforts of the Ministry in strengthening its approach to prevention, early intervention and family preservation. It is intended to clarify and explain MCFD's system of supports, guide planning and establish an approach to the delivery and access of CYSN services that is driven by the needs of children, youth and families and reflects current research. An important aspect of this work will be to identify tools that can be used to support assessing the level of need for a child or youth, regardless of a formal diagnosis.

DISCUSSION:

CanChild, a world leader in the field of childhood disability and housed within the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University, was provided a direct award contract to develop recommendations for an evidence informed approach to assessing child and youth functional abilities, strengths and needs. A key component of the project plan is to conduct individual interviews with key contributors who can advise on the context of services in B.C. and practicalities of needs-based eligibility for services.

The purpose of the consultation is for CanChild to:

- Understand the B.C. context of services for children and youth with support needs
- Inform the evaluative and planning process of the needs-based assessment tools
- Understand issues and barriers that may arise in implementing needs-based eligibility in B.C.

CanChild will use this information to inform the development of the needs-based eligibility framework.

The interviews are intended to sample a variety of perspectives including service providers, academics and linked contributors. It is not intended to be an open call for engagement. Inclusion Policy has identified key contributors to participate in the interviews. See Appendix A for list of proposed contributors to be invited to participate.

This consultation aligns with the broader engagement happening in 2021 related to the CYSN Service design. Other engagement opportunities include a Minister's Advisory Council on CYSN and ministry-led virtual engagement sessions with external partners regarding the CYSN service model and implementation of the CYSN Service Framework. Contributors who are not included in the needs-based assessment research interviews may have other opportunities to be consulted on the CYSN service design and service framework implementation.

Process of consultation and timeline:

- MCFD and CanChild will decide upon the contributors who will be interviewed – *last week of January*
- MCFD will contact contributors via email and describe the purpose of the interviews – *second week of February*
- MCFD will connect contributors who agree to be involved to CanChild via email – *end of February*
- CanChild will conduct individual interviews with key contributors – *end of February*
- CanChild will present the needs-based eligibility framework to MCFD – *end of March*
- MCFD will provide feedback to CanChild on the draft approach – *mid-April*
- CanChild will work with MCFD to refine the framework and finalize the recommended approach – *end of April*
- Final report for needs-based assessment project submitted to the ministry – *mid-May*

SUMMARY:

To move forward with the implementation of the CYSN Service Framework, timely research on needs-based assessment options is required. CanChild will conduct individual interviews with key contributors to inform the development of the needs-based assessment approach.

ATTACHMENTS (if applicable):

- A. Interviewee list
- B. MCFD introductory email

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Appendix A: Interviewee List

Needs-based assessment research

Name	Role/Position
Alison Gerlach	Assistant Professor for School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (academic)
Sue Sterling-Bur	Indigenous early intervention, University of British Columbia (Interior) (academic/linked contributor)
Dr. Karen Bopp	Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Director of Provincial Outreach, CIRCA (academic)
Beth Ott	Occupational Therapist, Positioning and Mobility, Sunnyhill (linked contributor/service provider, provincial)
Stacey Miller	Physiotherapist, Coordinator of the Child Health BC Hip Surveillance Program for Children with Cerebral Palsy, BC Children's Hospital (linked contributor/service provider, provincial)
Dr. Jill Zwicker	Associate Professor, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, University of British Columbia (academic)
Jason Gordon	BC Association for Child Development and Intervention (BCACDI) Provincial Advocate (linked contributor)

Appendix B: MCFD introductory email to needs-based assessment interview

Good morning/afternoon,

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is developing a service framework to better support children and youth with support needs (CYSN) and their families. The framework will guide how the ministry provides and funds CYSN programs and services and will be ready for phased implementation in the coming year.

To inform the approach to implementation of the CYSN Service Framework, further research around an approach to needs-based assessment is being conducted by CanChild, a leader in the field of childhood disability and housed within the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University.

CanChild will be conducting individual interviews with identified contributors who can advise on the context of services in B.C. and practicalities of needs-based eligibility for services.

The purpose of the consultation is for CanChild to:

- Understand the B.C. context of services for children and youth with support needs
- Inform the evaluative and planning process of the needs-based assessment tools
- Understand issues and barriers that may arise in implementing needs-based eligibility in B.C.

You have been identified as a key contributor to participate in this consultation which consists of a one-hour individual interview. If you are interested in participating, please respond to this email indicating your interest. Once we have received your response, we will pass on your contact information to CanChild who will reach out to you directly to provide further details about the interview.

MCFD has intentionally selected a cross section of diverse representatives to participate in this consultation and we ask that you please do not forward this invitation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Best regards,

Christine Therriault-Finke
Director, Inclusion Strategic Policy
Ministry of Children and Family Development

CYSN Service Framework
Needs based assessment interviews
Questions and Answers

Q1: MCFD has been talking about the CYSN Service Framework for a long time. When will the framework be released?

A1:

- The CYSN Service Framework is intended to clarify the system of supports available to children and youth with support needs and their families, guide future planning, and establish an approach to accessing and delivering CYSN services that is driven by the needs of the child and family.
- Outlined in Minister Dean's Mandate letter is the commitment to "improving support for families of children with special needs by ensuring that the new CYSN Service Framework is designed to serve the needs of a broad range of families."
- We do not yet know when the CYSN Service Framework will be released; however, the creation of the Minister's Advisory Council on CYSN was announced, which is aiming to assist in the finalization of the framework throughout the Spring and Summer 2021.

Q2: Is MCFD moving to needs-based assessments for CYSN Services?

A2:

- The ministry completed user-experience research and a review of the current state of CYSN services in 2019.
- Outcomes of the [research](#) identified key barriers within the current service system, including significant wait times for services, inequitable access favouring families with financial and personal resources or specific diagnoses, and high administrative and financial burdens for families, among others.
- The CYSN service framework is intended to clarify the system of supports available to children and youth with support needs and their families, guide future planning, and establish an approach to accessing and delivering CYSN services that is driven by the needs of the child and family.
- No decision has been made about changes to the CYSN system, but MCFD is exploring what a needs-based system could look like and how this may better serve children and youth with support needs and their families.

Q3: There are many key contributors who would like to weigh in on this issue. Why is this consultation with such a small group? How did you select contributors to participate?

A3:

- The purpose of this consultation is to assist CanChild in understanding the B.C. context of services for children and youth with support needs.

- MCFD identified contributors to participate in the interviews with the intention of sampling a variety of perspectives, including those of service providers, academics and other key contributors.
- Although this consultation was limited to a smaller number of participants, broader engagement related to the CYSN Service Framework is being planned for 2021.

Q4: Why is an organization from Ontario conducting this research? Wouldn't a B.C. agency understand our context better?

A4:

- Initially, MCFD reached out to three B.C. universities; however, we didn't receive any proposals for this work.
- As a result, MCFD reached out to CanChild who was interested in and available to complete this research.
- As a world leader in the field of childhood disability, CanChild is well positioned to conduct this research.
- CanChild, which is housed within the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University, has expertise in needs-based assessment tools, child- and family-centred care, and evaluation measures related to quality of life and the participation of children and youth with disabilities.
- In addition, CanChild has completed similar research around needs-based assessments for the Ontario provincial government.

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