

Re: Upcoming Launch of Autism Information Services British Columbia (AIS BC)

Below is an update on the previously announced transition of autism information, support, and referral services from ACT-Autism Community Training to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

Effective July 4, 2017, the ministry will offer these services through *Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC)*.

AIS BC's mandate will include responsibility for provincial autism information, resources, referrals, and the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP). These services are currently provided by ACT and will formally transfer to MCFD on June 30, 2017.

AIS BC will be located on the first floor of the Pacific Autism Family Network Good Life Fitness Family Autism Hub at 3688 Cessna Drive, Richmond, BC.

What services can you expect from AIS BC?

- Autism Information Services BC will be a provincial information centre for autism and related disorders and will focus on providing information and supports to families, service providers, MCFD staff, and community professionals across the province.
- AIS BC will have Information Officers available to assist families, service providers, and community professionals to better understand the range of best practice treatment options for autism spectrum disorder and to find their way through the BC service system.
- To support the continuity and quality of service, MCFD has hired all relevant ACT employees. This will help to ensure families have continued access to the individuals with whom they have developed trusting relationships.

AIS BC services will be delivered within three streams:**1. Supports to Families**

- AIS BC staff will assist the growing number of BC families affected by autism who need support in making informed decisions about treatment options for their children. Support will be available through a toll-free line, in-person, in groups at live outreach events, or through the new website.

- In general, AIS BC will assist families by providing information on assessment and diagnosis; best practice treatment options; navigating the Autism Funding Program; finding and hiring professionals; identifying and accessing provincial and local-level community supports and services; and managing transitions across infancy, preschool, school-age and emerging adulthood.
- AIS BC will also be the home of the BC Autism Outreach Program which since 2011 has provided over 30 face-to-face training workshops on Autism Spectrum Disorders to families, caregivers, service providers, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, and front-line MCFD staff in rural and remote communities across the province.

2. Supports for Service Providers

- AIS BC will be a central resource for MCFD staff and related contracted employees, such as Infant Development Program and Child Development Centre staff, so that they are better able to support the families they serve.
- AIS BC will also focus on promoting collaboration and coordination between autism-related service organizations and community support providers across BC, including continuing to work with ACT and the broader autism community, and building partnerships with new initiatives such as the Pacific Autism Family Network, and the network of inter- and cross-ministry services and supports across the province.

3. Management of the RASP

- AIS BC will manage and administer the RASP with continued support from the RASP Expert Advisory Panel. The existing online RASP search engine will be hosted on the AIS BC website so that families have continued access to a list of qualified professionals (Behaviour; Speech-Language Pathology; Occupational Therapy; and Physical Therapy).
- There are no changes to the application requirements and procedures. All on-line application forms have been updated to reflect the change in mailing and email addresses so that submissions are now directed to AIS BC.

Effective July 4, 2017, families, service providers, ministry staff, and the general public can reach AIS BC at:

Mailing Address: AIS BC c/o 3688 Cessna Drive, Richmond, British Columbia, V7B 1C7

Toll Free Line: 1-844-878-4700

Email – general information: AutismInformation@gov.bc.ca

Email – RASP: RASP@gov.bc.ca

Website: live web link available July 4th (www.gov.bc.ca/autisminfo)

ACT-Autism Community Training will continue to offer training opportunities and information resources for families and service providers across BC, including:

- [Live events](#) - available both in-person and via web streaming; **MCFD-funded bursaries available.**
- [Autism Videos @ ACT](#) – nearly 30 free online video.
- [Autism Information Database](#) –over 1,000 vetted information resources related to ASD.
- [ACT's Special Needs Events Listing](#) – information on what BC organizations are doing.
- For more information, please visit ACT's website at <http://www.actcommunity.ca/>