

**Children and Youth with Support Needs Announcement – February 2026
FAQ Summary**

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Preamble

This is a compilation of questions received from key partners, town hall participants, and social media. This document will be updated as those questions and answers become available.

For any other general program information or questions, please email mcf.childrenyouthsupportneeds@gov.bc.ca

Introduction

What's Changing

Two existing programs are being **phased out by March 31, 2027**:

- **Autism Funding Program (AFP)**
- **School Age Extended Therapies (SATE)** portion of the At Home Program

They are being replaced by two new direct funding programs and expanded community services, described below.

What's NOT Changing

- At Home Program (medical equipment & supplies) is unchanged.
- Higher-functioning children are not cut off — we anticipate that about 80% of current autism funding recipients will receive direct funding through one or both new funding streams.
- Family supports and disability services (respite, homemaker, family support, behavioral consultants) continue along with health and medical supports / nursing support services and CYSN social worker access (families will not lose their social worker).
- Community-based programming (Infant Development Programs (IDP), Aboriginal Infant Development Programs (AIDP), Supported Child Development (SCD) programs, Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) key workers, pediatric occupational, physio and speech and language therapies) continue, with expansion.
- Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) continues through March 2027.
- Schools are unaffected. No school funding has been redirected and inclusive education supports in schools continue unchanged.

- The modality of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) therapy is not the default, and community services include a wide range of intervention models.
- Early intervention remains a priority, and the new model allows children to access support *before* diagnosis, potentially earlier than the current system.
- Private providers remain essential and can be accessed with direct funding.

What's NEW: Two New Direct Funding Programs

Note that families can receive BOTH the Benefit AND the Supplement described below.

Child and Youth Disability Benefit

- For children **birth to age 19** with the **highest functional support needs**
 - No level on autism diagnosis does NOT automatically exclude a child
 - No reassessment will be required if you already have documentation
- Two tiers of funding will be available: **\$6,500/year** or **\$17,000/year**
 - Once eligible, funding continues for the **duration of childhood** (to age 19)
- Expected to serve **12,000–15,000 children** (approximately 9,000 of which have autism)

Key Points

- If you already have documentation, you will not require a reassessment to access the Benefit
- Once eligible, funding continues for the **duration of childhood** (up to age 19)
- No, level one autism diagnosis does NOT automatically exclude a child

Two pathways to eligibility:

Direct Admit Pathway (diagnosis-based):

- For children who already have a diagnosis linked with high and ongoing support needs. Those who automatically qualify include (but are not limited to):
 - Moderate to profound intellectual disability
 - Certain clinically defined syndromic disorders such as Down Syndrome and Angelman Syndrome)
 - Concurrent FASD and intellectual disability
 - Autism with the most pervasive needs, e.g. with intellectual disability
 - Severe self-injurious behaviour (SIB)
 - Degenerative conditions with predictable decline
 - Palliative conditions
 - Some forms of cerebral palsy

Needs-Based Review Pathway:

- Does not require a specific diagnosis and considers how a child's combined needs affect their daily life
- Eligibility can be determined through a professionally administered functional assessment; health-care provider attestation of limitations; and consideration of real-world functional impact
- The functional assessment process will be defined between March 2026 and March 2027 with sector and clinical experts – no action is required from families at this time in relation to assessments.

BC Children and Youth Disability Supplement

- Maximum funding: **\$6,000/year per child**
 - Automatically deposited into your bank account
 - **Flexible** funding, spend it however your family needs
- This is an **income-tested** supplement for families with children with disabilities
 - Requires child to hold the **Federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC)**
 - Family automatically enrolled — **no application needed** if DTC is in place

- Phases out at approximately \$200,000 adjusted family net income for a family with one eligible child. For reference – less than 10% of the BC population have an adjusted family net income over \$200,000.

Federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC) - Action Item for Families

Eligibility for the DTC is required for families to be eligible for the Disability Supplement. If your child doesn't have the DTC:

- An assessment is required (eligibility is not based on diagnosis alone; it is based on the severity of functional limitations e.g., walking, feeding, dressing, mental functions etc.).
 - The assessment must be completed by a medical practitioner (doctor, nurse practitioner, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, optometrist, audiologist, psychologist or speech-language pathologist).
- **Current Autism Funding Program funds can be used to cover medical practitioner fees** associated with completing DTC paperwork (up to \$300).

Expanded Community-Based Services

- Investment is increasing community programs by **40%** over three years around BC
- Priority areas: **behavioral intervention, mental health for neurodiverse children, programming for ages 6–18, navigation services**
- Delivered through existing established and experienced providers (child development centers, etc.)
- Families access **both** direct funding and community services

The Money Picture: This is new money — existing services are not being cut to fund these changes.

	Before	After
Direct funding to families	\$190M/year	\$326M/year
Total new investment	—	\$475M over 3 years
Combined (redirected AFP (\$285M over two years)+ new (\$475M))	—	\$700M+ over 3 years

Eligibility and Assessment - The Benefit

What is the eligibility criteria for the Benefit?

- A child or youth may qualify if they have a long-term disability that results in significant and complex developmental support needs based on diagnosis and/or functional impact.
- There are two ways to qualify – direct admission and needs-based review. This approach creates a consistent process for families, while still allowing flexibility to consider each child’s unique situation.
- Please visit the [BC Children and Youth Disability Benefit website](#) for more information.

How do I apply for the Benefit?

- Families cannot currently apply for the Benefit. No action is needed right now.
- Transition will happen based on the services your child or youth currently receives.
- If your family is currently accessing the At Home Program, you will begin to transition in April 2026. If your family currently receives Autism Funding, you will begin to transition in July 2026.
- Ministry workers will contact all families currently receiving supports to discuss their situation.

- If your child or youth is not currently accessing any services, intake for the [At Home Program](#) and the [Autism Funding Program](#) will remain open from March 2026 – March 2027.

What are the income thresholds or brackets for the Benefit?

- There is no income threshold for the Benefit.

Will I need a new medical assessment for the Benefit?

- No. You will not need a new medical assessment.
- If your child or youth is already receiving services based on an existing medical assessment, that same assessment will be used to determine how your child or youth transitions to the new programs.
- Please visit the [BC Children and Youth Disability Benefit website](#) for more information.

I do not yet have a medical assessment, should I get one now?

- There are two pathways for eligibility to the Benefit.
- Please visit the [BC Children and Youth Disability Benefit website](#) for more information.

Will social workers be determining eligibility for the Benefit?

- No. Social workers will not determine eligibility.
- Eligibility for the Benefit will be based on the following:
 - a diagnosis that is strongly linked with high and ongoing support needs, or
 - a professionally administered functional assessment and/or
 - a health-care provider attestations of combined needs that create significant challenges in daily life.

My child's autism assessment has no level. Will I need reassessment to qualify for the Benefit?

- No. You will not need a new or updated assessment.
- The Benefit can be accessed by any child or youth where a professionally administered functional assessment and/or health-care provider attestation confirms that the child or youth has needs that create significant challenges in daily life.

- Existing assessment documents that provide information about a child or youth's needs will be sufficient to begin discussions about their eligibility for the Benefit.
- Please visit the [BC Children and Youth Disability Benefit website](#) for more information.

How will high, moderate, low, or profound needs be determined?

- The process for determining a child or youth's support needs is still being developed.
- Between March 2026 and March 2027, the ministry will work with clinical experts, service providers and sector partners to develop criteria and tools to define the functional assessment process and establish how needs will be determined.
- The goal is to ensure the assessment of the needs of each individual child or youth is fair, evidence based and provides access for children who may not be easily captured through traditional diagnostic categories.

Who administers functional assessments and what training do they have?

What functional assessment tools will be used?

- Between March 2026 and March 2027, the Ministry will be working closely with the sector and clinical experts to define the functional assessment process, and establish how needs will be determined.

Will my child or youth need reassessment throughout their life to remain eligible for the Benefit?

- No. Ongoing assessments will not be required.
- Eligibility for the Benefit is based on a child or youth having a specific diagnosis, or on having combined, long-term needs that create significant challenges in daily life. Due to the long-term nature of these needs, families will not be asked to repeatedly re-assess their child's needs to remain eligible.

What expenses are eligible as part of the Benefit funding?

- The Benefit funding must be used for disability-related supports that improve a child's functioning and daily life. Eligible expenses may include:
 - respite,

- pediatric therapies,
- family counselling,
- genetic testing,
- sensory clothing,
- certain medical travel expenses,
- other supports that meet your child's needs.
- A Ministry worker will assist and guide the family's use of funding.
- Please visit the [BC Children and Youth Disability Benefit website](#) for more information.

Will children already in the At Home Program, receiving School-Aged Extended Therapies (SAET) or with specific diagnoses, automatically move into the Benefit?

- Yes, all children who currently receive SAET through the At Home Program are eligible for the Benefit. Families will receive clear information and support throughout this transition to ensure continuity of services. Ministry staff will contact eligible families to discuss their child's transition to the Benefit.

Eligibility and Assessment – The Supplement

What is the eligibility criteria for the Supplement?

- A family is eligible for the new Disability Supplement if both of the following apply:
 - The child is eligible for the federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC)
 - The family meets the income thresholds
- The amount decreases with income and phases out at \$200K adjusted family net income for one eligible child or \$350k adjusted family net income for two eligible children.
- Please visit the [BC Children and Youth Disability Supplement website](#) for more information on how the Supplement amount is impacted by household income and number of eligible children.

How do I apply for the Supplement?

- You do not need to apply to the Ministry for the Supplement.

- If a family receives the federal Disability Tax Credit on behalf of their child, AND meets the Supplement eligibility income thresholds, then families will automatically be enrolled to receive the Supplement.
- The CRA will automatically pay the Supplement monthly, combined with Canada Child Benefit payments.
- The first monthly payment of the Supplement to eligible families will be in July 2027.
- Please visit [BC Children and Youth Disability Supplement website](#) for more information.

What are the income thresholds or brackets for the Supplement?

- The Supplement amount your family receives depends on your adjusted net family income and the number of children or youth in your family who are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC).
- Please visit the [Children and Youth with Support Needs website](#) for more information.

Eligibility and Assessment - General

How many families do you expect to qualify for funding?

- It is expected that approximately 80% of families currently receiving Ministry services are expected to qualify for the Benefit and/or Supplement.
- 46% are expected to qualify for the maximum Benefit amount.
- 74% have net income under the \$100,000 threshold and therefore are expected to be eligible for a Supplement of \$4,500/year or more.
- All families will have access to high quality, free support through expanded community-based programs, which will be significantly through an \$80 million investment over the next three years.

My child with autism has made progress as a result of accessing therapy and now no longer presents as high needs. Will they now be losing access to any funding or services?

- No. Children and youth who have made progress will not be left without support.

- All families will have access to high quality, free support through expanded community-based programs, which will be significantly through an \$80 million investment over the next three years. Families who do not qualify for the Benefit or the Supplement will be prioritized for these services.
- In addition, the Supplement will be available for all children and youth who are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), and where the family meets the income thresholds.
- Please visit the [Children and Youth with Support Needs website](#) for more information.

Will diagnostic capacity be expanded?

- The ministry recognizes that many families face long waits to receive a diagnosis. That is why eligibility for the new Disability Supplement and the Disability Benefit do not rely on diagnosis alone. Instead, eligibility can be based on functional needs as identified by a health care provider.
- This approach eases the burden on families to secure a formal diagnosis before accessing supports.
- Please visit the [Children and Youth with Support Needs website](#) for more information.

Will I be able to appeal if my child or youth is deemed ineligible for the Benefit and/or the Supplement?

- A new appeals process will be introduced to support families who want to ask questions or raise concerns about decisions made about their child's eligibility.
- Between March 2026 – March 2027 the Ministry will be working with families, service providers, and experts to design a review and appeals process that is clear, accessible, and responsive to the needs of children and youth with disabilities.

Will I receive notice if my child is no longer eligible for direct funding?

- Yes. During the transition period (starting April 2026 for families in the At Home Program, and July 2026 for those receiving the Autism Funding and continuing through March 2027), ministry staff will contact all

families currently receiving supports to discuss their eligibility for the new [Disability Benefit](#).

- They will also explain the [expanded community-based services](#) that all children and youth will be eligible for, and how the new [Disability Supplement](#) works.

[Will children and youth who are no longer eligible for direct funding be prioritized for expanded community-based services?](#)

- Yes. While community-based services are available to all children and youth aged 0-18, with no diagnosis required.
- Children and youth who are experiencing a change to how they currently receive support will be prioritized for access to community-based services.
- If your child is not eligible for the new Benefit and/or Supplement, Ministry staff will work with your family to understand your circumstances and prioritize your child's access to community-based services that will provide ongoing support to meets your child's needs.

Federal Disability Tax Credit

[What is the federal Disability Tax Credit \(DTC\) and what is the eligibility criteria?](#)

- The DTC is a federally administered tax credit that helps reduce the income tax that people with physical or mental impairments, or their supporting family members, may have to pay. You can find information on eligibility on the [Canada Revenue Agency website](#).

[How can I apply for the federal Disability Tax Credit \(DTC\)?](#)

- You must apply either online or via a paper application through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). You can find out information on how to apply on the [Canada Revenue Agency website](#).

[Where can I find support on how to apply for the federal Disability Tax Credit \(DTC\)?](#)

- A range of supports are available to help answer questions and guide families through the process of applying for the DTC. The Canada

Revenue Agency (CRA) can answer questions and support families with the steps required to attain the Disability Tax Credit (DTC).

- Some families also choose to seek help from third-party organizations when applying for the DTC, such as low or no-cost non-profit sector organizations, or private sector “promoters”.
- Families should be aware that private-sector fees can range up to 40% of the value of the DTC if approved. Families are encouraged to carefully review and vet any third-party agencies before paying for any services.

Can I appeal if I am found ineligible for the federal Disability Tax Credit?

- The Province has no oversight regarding eligibility decisions related to the Disability Tax Credit (DTC). Families found ineligible for the BC Children and Youth Disability Supplement due to a denied DTC application should contact the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to discuss their application, request a review, or submit new documents, or file an objection.

Why is the federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC) being used as an entry requirement for the Supplement?

- The DTC has been used as an entry requirement for the Supplement because eligibility for the DTC is based on a wide range of functional support needs. The ministry anticipates that a significant number of children and youth with support needs will be eligible for the DTC (not just those with a formal diagnosis). For questions about the DTC, you can [contact the CRA](#).

Can I use my existing direct funding to pay a medical practitioner for federal Disability Tax Credit certification requirements?

- Yes. Many medical professionals can complete the DTC form, and sometimes there will be a fee.
- Families currently receiving Autism Funding may use their Travel, Training and Equipment budget to help cover the cost of getting the DTC medical form completed. This applies only to fees from eligible medical practitioners for completing and submitting Form T2201, and cannot be used for fees from third-party consultants or organizations that help with DTC applications.

- Up to \$300 could be reimbursed, with a submitted receipt, against the cost of the DTC form completion. A Justification for Equipment (JFE) form is not required. For questions about the DTC, you can [contact the CRA](#).

Community Services

Will direct-funded Ministry respite contracts continue?

- Yes. Respite remains unchanged. Families can also use direct funding for additional respite.

Will families continue to receive Autism Funding until 2027?

- Yes, the Autism Funding program continues until March 31, 2027. and the Ministry will start transitioning families to the new program in July 2026.
- All families currently receiving Autism Funding will be contacted directly by Ministry staff to discuss their case.

Can families keep their current private providers and access community-based services?

- Yes, families can continue to pay their private providers if they choose. At the same time, they will also have free access to services at community-based service providers.
- Community-based programming will be significantly expanded through an \$80M investment over the next three years. Families can combine private services with community-based services in whatever way works best for their child.

Are existing services being cut to fund these changes?

- No. Existing services are not being cut to pay for this new model. In fact, the Benefit and Supplement will be reaching more families, and community-based programming will be significantly expanded through an \$80M investment over the next three years.
- Some families may experience changes in how they receive funding and services. When changes occur ministry staff will work with families to understand their needs and support them through the transition.

Will the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) continue?

- Autism Funding continues until March 2027, and the RASP remains available to support families seeking autism service providers.
- Any changes that could affect the RASP will be communicated to the public before they are implemented.

Will private providers be required to provide free community-based provision?

- No. Private providers will not be required to offer free community-based services.
- Direct funding, which families can choose how to spend, is increasing from \$190M to \$326M. This expansion means the number of families receiving direct funding is expected to grow from approximately 28,000 to 33,000 families.
- Private providers will therefore remain essential in providing services alongside expanded community programs. Families can choose to continue to pay for private services, and can use Benefit and/or Supplement funding to do so.

How will wait-times for community-based services and workforce shortages be managed?

- Community-based programming will be significantly expanded through an \$80M investment over the next three years. This expansion will be introduced through a careful, phased approach, to expand capacity, support workforce recruitment and retention, and reduce wait times for families.
- The Ministry will build capacity through existing, established and experienced providers (such as child development centers), team-based care, allied health professionals and therapy assistants, structured onboarding and mentoring of recent graduates, and other strategies to service more children while maintaining the quality of services, no matter where families live.

How does my family find a community-based provider?

- A [map](#) of community-based service provider locations is available on the ministry website to help families find locations in their area.

- Providers are prepared for more families to reach out to them, including those who may be accessing community-based services for the first time, and can explain the supports they offer and how to get started.

How can service providers register to be a community-based service provider?

- The Ministry welcomes interest from providers; however, the Ministry is focused on building capacity through existing, established and experienced providers at this time.
- We recommend [subscribing for updates](#) to receive the latest information regarding community-based service provision.

Will families receiving public therapy be required to move to private therapy if they start to receive direct funding for the first time?

- Yes, families can continue to pay their private providers for services while accessing free services at community-based service providers.
- Community-based programming will be significantly expanded through an \$80M investment over the next three years.

Are the Benefit and the Supplement taxable income?

- No, families will not be taxed on direct funding received through the Benefit or the Supplement.

Will limits be placed on provider fees?

- All families will have access to free community-based programming.
- The Ministry is unable to influence the fee schedules for private service providers.
- Before accessing any private services, you should ensure you have a clear understanding of the fees charged by the provider.

How will the transition from the At Home Program and/or Autism Funding work and what are the timelines?

- During the transition period (starting April 2026 for the At Home Program, and July 2026 for Autism Funding and continuing through March 2027), ministry workers will contact all families currently receiving supports to discuss their eligibility for the new [Disability Benefit](#).

- They will also explain the [expanded community-based services](#) that all children and youth will be eligible for, and how the new [Disability Supplement](#) works.

Timeline for new financial supports

- April 2026: School-Aged Extended Therapy program begins transition to the [Disability Benefit](#)
- July 2026: Autism Funding begins transition to [Disability Benefit](#)
- March 31, 2027: Autism Funding ends, Disability Benefit now available to eligible families
- July 2027: [Disability Supplement](#) payments begin

Is funding being pulled from the school system to pay for these changes?

- No. these changes are supported by new investment, and funding for schools is not being reduced.
- Budget 2026 includes a \$475M investment to support these changes. Supports and funding provided by the education system are not affected.
- If your family qualifies for the Benefit and/or the Supplement, this will not negatively impact any support children and youth receive through their school.
- Inclusive education policies and processes remain unchanged, and school boards will continue to directly receive funding in relation to the needs of children across their district, just as they do now.