

Claims and Facts - CYSN Redesign

June 18, 2026

Claim: Families are being forced to prove their child is "disabled enough."

Fact:

The Ministry recognizes that changes to services can create stress and uncertainty for families, However, suggesting families have to prove their child is "disabled enough" is simply not accurate and does not reflect how this system actually works.

This is about understanding what support a child needs in their daily life, not judging their worth.

The purpose is to understand the nature, intensity and duration of a child's support needs so support can be provided fairly, consistently and transparently.

Assessing support needs is not unique to this program. Across disability programs, health care, education and other public services, information is gathered to determine the right level of support.

Families can use existing documentation to demonstrate support needs. No new diagnosis is required, and families do not need to obtain a new assessment.

Claim: MCFD should pause or withdraw the criteria.

Fact:

For years, families told us that too many children were being left without support, and that the system needed to change.

This new approach reflects years of engagement with families, Indigenous partners, service providers, experts and the broader disability community.

Government also provided funding to the BC Disability Collaborative to support engagement and gather input from families, including highlighting how too many children were not receiving support under the previous system.

That feedback directly informed this new approach, which will expand support to thousands more families.

Families told us too many children were being left behind. It is the Ministry's responsibility is to fix a system that was not working for many families.

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Claim: If a child doesn't qualify for the Disability Benefit, they get nothing.

Fact:

This is not accurate.

Not qualifying for the Disability Benefit is not the same as being excluded from support.

The Disability Benefit is one part of a broader approach, which also includes the Disability Supplement and expanded community services and supports.

Recent public discussion has focused on the Disability Benefit as though it is the entire system. It is not.

- The Disability Benefit is to support those children with the highest needs.
- The Disability Supplement is for those with more moderate needs.
- Expanded free community-based services are available for everyone.

Any discussion of the Benefit without discussion of the larger program redesign government is funding is inaccurate and misleading.

By 2028/29, families will receive approximately \$316 million annually in direct supports, and government is investing an additional \$80 million in expanded services.

Some of the public discussion has focused on the Disability Benefit as though it is the entire system. It is not.

This new approach is a full expansion of supports intended to help more families in more ways.

Claim: Certain disability groups will be excluded.

Fact:

The Ministry understand why families are asking questions about how the criteria apply to different disability groups.

However, no group is automatically excluded.

Eligibility is based on individual support needs and circumstances, not labels.

There are also direct admission pathways for some disability groups. Children and youth who qualify through those pathways do not go through the functional review process that has been discussed publicly.

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It is important to distinguish between eligibility for one specific benefit and access to support overall. Not qualifying for one benefit is not the same as being excluded from support.

Claim: The criteria will exclude children based on the examples in the news release.

Fact:

The examples the BC Disability Collaborative included in their news release do not reflect how decisions are actually made, and they are creating unnecessary fear for families.

No decision is based on a single sentence, diagnosis, behaviour or situation. Each decision is based on a full review of the child's needs, circumstances and existing documentation.

Assessments consider a range of information to understand the full scope of a child's support needs.

It is not possible to determine eligibility based on a one-line example, because that is not how decisions are made.

Claim: Children will have to be in crisis to qualify.

Fact:

The Ministry recognizes why some families would be concerned hearing that, because no parent wants to feel they have to wait until their child is struggling more to get help.

That is not how this system works, and that characterization is creating unnecessary fear for families.

Nothing in the criteria requires a child to be in crisis before support is available.

This new model will expand support to thousands more families, including families who previously received no direct funding at all.

Most families already receiving funding will receive support, and many families, including those with autism, will receive more support when you stack the Disability Supplement and expanded community services and supports.

Again, the value of moving to a needs based model is that support can more appropriately match children's individual needs.

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Claim: All children must go through the same strict assessment.

Fact:

That is incorrect.

The Disability Benefit includes direct admission pathways for some children with significant disabilities. Children and youth who qualify through those pathways do not go through the functional review process.

Some children are automatically eligible based on established criteria.

Claim: Government didn't listen to families or the sector.

Fact:

This is not accurate.

This work reflects years of engagement with families, Indigenous partners, self-advocates, disability organizations, service providers and experts.

Government also provided funding to the BC Disability Collaborative to support engagement and gather input from families and the disability community. Many of the concerns raised during that engagement, including inequitable access to supports and the fact that many children and youth received little or no support, directly informed this new model.

Claim: The criteria themselves are unfair and should be removed.

Fact:

The Ministry understands that families want confidence the system will be fair and respond to their child's needs. However, every needs-based program requires a way to understand and assess need, so support can be allocated fairly and consistently.

Children and youth have very different needs. Some require occasional support, while others require intensive and ongoing support in many areas of daily life.

Without a way to assess need, there is no fair or transparent way to determine how support should be provided. This is about ensuring support is based on what a child actually needs, not just a diagnosis.

No child should be left without support because they don't fit neatly into a diagnosis-based system. Support must reflect the reality of a child's day-to-day needs.