

# A Parent's Handbook: Your Guide to Autism Funding



**Autism Information Services  
British Columbia (AIS BC)**

*We're Here to Help*

Call Toll-free: 1-844-878-4700

Website: [gov.bc.ca/autism](http://gov.bc.ca/autism)

Email: [AutismInformation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AutismInformation@gov.bc.ca)

**Autism Funding**

Call Toll-free: 1-877-777-3530

Email: [MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca)



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

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## Introduction

This handbook is for parents, guardians and caregivers of children and youth who have been diagnosed with autism. It provides information on autism, intervention, and services available for your child and family.

This handbook uses a combination of person-first and disability-first language to reflect the varied preferences of parents and individuals with autism. This handbook has been developed to align with the principles outlined in the *Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework* (APPF) in British Columbia.

We acknowledge that this work was carried out on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of over 200 Indigenous nations across B.C. We recognize the sovereignty of these nations and are grateful for the relationships that continue to develop through our work together.

The Ministries of Children and Family Development (CFD), Education and Child Care, and Health share responsibility for assessment, diagnosis, intervention and support services for children and youth with autism.

Services and supports for children with an autism diagnosis in B.C. are funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (CFD) through an individualized funding model. Individualized funding means your family has access to money to purchase eligible services and supports from private practitioners that best meet the unique needs of your child.

- » The Autism Funding program will transition to a new program. Until then, the Autism Funding program continues unchanged and is accepting new applications until March 2027.
- » Learn more: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs>

## Services and Supports for Children and Youth with Support Needs and Their Families

CFD provides a range of programs for children and youth with support needs and their families. For the most up to date information about available services, visit the children and youth with support needs website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs> and Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC): **1-844-878-4700** or <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/>.





## What is Autism?

Autism is a neurodevelopmental difference that shapes how a person experiences and interacts with the world. It can influence communication, social connections, interests, and behaviour—but these traits show up in many different combinations. Every autistic child or youth has their own unique mix of strengths, preferences, and ways of learning.

Autistic children and youth experience the world in unique and meaningful ways. They may communicate or learn differently, prefer routines, or develop deep interests in certain topics. These traits can shape the support they need, but they also come with real strengths—like strong focus, detailed knowledge, and creative problem-solving. When we understand and embrace these differences, we can help autistic children feel confident, supported, and able to thrive.

In many Indigenous communities, neurodevelopmental differences such as autism are understood as part of a child's inherent strengths and identity. These differences may be seen as unique gifts or abilities that shape the child's role, contributions, and place within the community.

## What Causes Autism?

The causes of autism are still largely unknown. We do know that it is not caused by you or the way your child is raised, and there is likely no single cause. Research is underway to explore possible causes including genetic and environmental factors.

## After Your Child Receives an Autism Diagnosis

You may have questions and concerns after your child has been diagnosed with autism. It may be helpful to learn as much as possible about autism and to connect with other parents and families who can offer information and support.

To help families navigate the services and supports offered for children and youth with autism in B.C., the Ministry of Children and Family Development (CFD) provides information, support, and training through Autism Information Services B.C. (AIS BC); they can provide resources on autism basics, post-diagnosis steps, funding supports and the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) to locate qualified professionals. The website also lists autism organizations across B.C. with more details at the back of this handbook.

Children and youth with autism can benefit from support based on evidence informed practices. These approaches are supported by research and have been shown to be effective. For more information, contact AIS BC at **1-844-878-4700** or visit their website [autisminfo.gov.bc.ca](http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca).

## Applying for Autism Funding

The goal of Autism Funding is to help your family with the cost of purchasing services that promote your child's communication, social-emotional, academic and functional life skills development. If your child has been diagnosed with autism, and you wish to enroll in Autism Funding, visit the website <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/> or contact AIS BC at **1-844-878-4700** for information about how to complete a funding application and next steps.

You can also visit the website "Apply for Autism Funding" for important information on gathering the required documents to apply for Autism Funding. Once your child is eligible, staff at Autism Funding will set up a funding account in your child's name. Visit the website to learn more: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/autism-funding/apply>.



## Accessing Autism Funding

Once your child's assessment is complete and a diagnosis is confirmed, the following documents must be submitted to CFD for review and approval for Autism Funding:

- Proof of your child's age and BC residency (e.g., front and back of your child or youth's BC Services Card)
- If your child received a publicly funded diagnosis through the **British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN)**, include the Clinical Outcomes form that confirms the diagnosis of autism by a BCAAN qualified specialist.
- If your child received a private assessment, include a **Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder** form that has been completed by an eligible regulated B.C. professional (registered psychologist, pediatrician or psychiatrist)

**Note:** For children under age six, the Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder form must

be accompanied with evidence that a multidisciplinary assessment was conducted including findings of speech-language, and psychological evaluations incorporated and/or provided as an attachment.

- For children diagnosed with autism outside of British Columbia, a **Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder** form, completed by a qualified B.C. specialist (pediatrician, psychiatrist, registered psychologist) and showing a diagnosis of autism.

**Note:** The Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder form must be accompanied by a copy of the original Diagnostic Report and/or any assessment information that supports the diagnosis of autism when available; if the out of province diagnostic assessment does not meet B.C. Standards, the qualified B.C. specialist may require the child to have a new diagnostic assessment within B.C. before applying for autism funding.

### **Tip for Families**

- » Providing the signed Autism Agreement is received by Autism Funding within two months of the date on the Pre-Admission letter, your child will be eligible for funding from the first day of the month in which CFD receives all required application documents.
- » If you already have service providers chosen, you can submit your Request to Pay Service Providers form along with your Autism Agreement.
- » In addition to Autism Funding for supports and services, CFD provides a range of supports for families of children and youth with support needs.

# Autism Funding

» The Autism Funding program will transition to a new program. Until then, the Autism Funding program continues unchanged and is accepting new applications until March 2027.

» Learn more: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs>

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides Autism Funding for:

» **UNDER AGE 6**

» **AGES 6-18**

## Autism Funding: Under Age 6

The primary intent of Autism Funding: Under Age 6 is to assist your family with the cost of purchasing evidence-informed autism supports and services. These are to promote your child's communication, social-emotional, pre-academic and functional life skills development. Children aged five and younger with a diagnosis of autism may receive up to \$22,000 per year towards eligible supports and services.

Your child's team should work with your family to create a support plan based on your child's strengths, interests, and needs. A qualified professional, such as a behaviour analyst, speech-language pathologist or occupational therapist, should write this plan with your input. Support plans can also include input from Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members. The support plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that your child is making meaningful progress.

## REGISTRY OF AUTISM SERVICE PROVIDERS (RASP)

If your child is receiving Autism Funding: Under Age 6, you are required to select professional service providers (behaviour consultant or analyst; speech-language pathologist; occupational therapist; physiotherapist) for your child from the RASP. In order to be included on the RASP, professionals must demonstrate that their education and experience meet the qualifications required by the ministry. More information about the RASP can be found at AIS BC: [autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/rasp/](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs). See [page 18](#) for descriptions of providers

## AUTISM FUNDING: UNDER AGE 6 MAY ONLY BE USED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Preapproval is required prior to accessing services, supports, equipment and training:

- » Services of behaviour consultants or analysts, speech- language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapist who are listed on the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP).
- » Services of behaviour interventionists (BI) – BIs should be supervised by a RASP professional
- » Family counselling/therapy. **Note:** Family counselling/therapy providers do not need to be listed on the RASP, however, to provide services for children under six, providers must be a member of one of the following:
  - » Canadian Certified Counsellors (CCC)
  - » Registered Clinical Counsellors (RCC)
  - » Registered Marriage and Family Therapists (RMFTs)
  - » Registered Psychiatrists, Registered Psychologists
  - » Registered Social Workers (RSW)/ Registered Clinical Social Workers (RCSW)

- Family's administrative costs (e.g., bookkeeping/payroll, up to \$100 monthly).
- Applicable employer costs (e.g., employee income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers Compensation Board premiums, standard vacation pay). Contact AIS BC for more information.
- Up to 20 per cent of the funding may be used for autism-specific training, travel costs to access eligible autism supports and training within B.C. (round trip greater than 80 kms) and eligible equipment as outlined in a Justification for Equipment/Supplies (JFE) Form completed by a professional.

#### » **Tip for Families**

**The service provider's hourly rate of pay should reflect the cost of doing business.**

When you use Autism Funding to pay a service provider, their hourly rate doesn't just cover the time they spend with your child. It also includes the basic costs the provider needs to run their practice—like office space, insurance, supplies, and administrative work. These expenses are part of the provider's normal "cost of doing business," and are built into the rate they invoice through the Autism Funding.

#### **TRAVEL COSTS TO ACCESS AUTISM SUPPORTS AND SERVICES WITHIN B.C. (ROUND TRIP GREATER THAN 80 KMS):**

- If you are unable to access service providers in your own community, you may claim expenses for the most cost-effective method of receiving services as close to home as possible.

- Options may include travel to the service provider or bringing the service provider to the community.
- Travel expenses may include actual fare for air, bus or train, or mileage at \$0.40 per kilometre for a private vehicle.
- Hotel expenses to a maximum of \$150 per night for one room only.
- Parking up to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges.

#### **EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS:**

Equipment and materials necessary to support your child's skill development must be requested in a Justification for Equipment and Supplies (JFE) Form that is completed by a professional from the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP), or by Early Intervention Therapy (EIT) professionals (i.e., speech-language pathologists (SLP), occupational therapists (OT) and/or physiotherapist (PT)) who are not on the RASP but are employed through MCFD contracted agencies/organizations/health authorities.



- An approved JFE is valid until Autism Funding ends on March 31, 2027. Your child must still be eligible for Autism Funding and spending cannot exceed the 20 per cent yearly limit for travel, autism-specific training, and equipment purchases. The date on the purchase receipt decides which funding period the purchase falls into. Your child's first funding period may not be exactly 12 months so ensure you verify the 20% prior to making any purchases..
- Submitting a JFE is not a guarantee that an item will be eligible for Autism Funding. It is recommended that families wait to purchase items only after the JFE has been approved by Autism Funding. The cost of items that are not eligible will not be reimbursed.
- The items you buy using an approved JFE belong to your child and family.

### **TRAVEL COSTS TO ACCESS TRAINING WITHIN B.C.**

#### **(ROUND TRIP GREATER THAN 80 KMS):**

- Reimbursement for registration, recommended reading material, and travel costs for families or behaviour interventionists to attend preapproved autism-specific training.
- Travel expenses may include actual fare for air, bus or train travel, or mileage at \$0.40 per kilometre for a private vehicle.
- Hotel expenses to a maximum of \$150 per night for one room only.
- Parking to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges.
- Educational books, DVDs and videos for parents (specific to your child's unique needs)

If an item is determined ineligible for Autism Funding other funding sources should be explored.

### **COMPUTERS, TOUCH SCREEN TABLETS OR SMART PHONES**

- Requests to purchase a computer, touch screen tablet or smart phone must be made in writing through a Justification for Equipment and Supplies (JFE) Form written by your child's RASP professional or EIT professional employed through CFD contracted agencies/organizations/health authorities.
- Your child's Autism Funding can be used to purchase one laptop OR one desktop computer; OR one touch screen tablet (e.g., an iPad OR an iPod touch or a smart phone) once every three years.

### ***Autism Funding: Under Age 6 Ineligible Expenses***

Some **equipment** recommended by a professional may be ineligible expenses. The following, while not an exhaustive list, are some examples of **ineligible** items:

- Home repairs, renovations, swimming pools, hot tubs, trampolines, playground equipment
- Household items, including appliances and indoor and outdoor furniture
- General recreation and sports enrolment fees
- Sports/fitness equipment
- Televisions
- Vitamins, medical supplies, orthotics
- Clothing
- Weighted blankets, unless recommended by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist in the JFE
- Items approved under SET-BC, the At Home Program, or other agencies
- Warranty and installation fees

- Any items to be used only in school settings
- Monthly smart phone bills and/or data plans
- Food (with some exceptions, small reinforcers for therapy; please confirm eligibility with Autism Funding before purchasing)

The following are some examples of **ineligible services**:

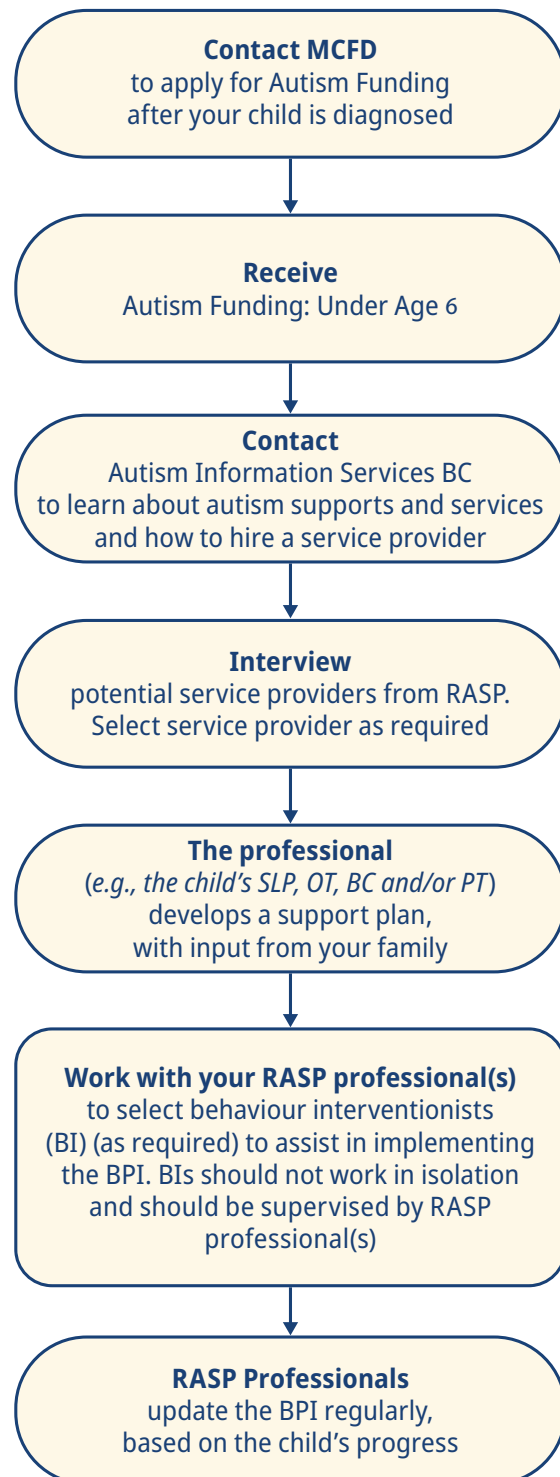
- Respite
- Child care
- General recreation lessons, such as swimming and karate
- Medical services
- Single consultation sessions that are not intended to be followed up with further therapy or supports are not eligible for Autism Funding. It is the responsibility of the service provider and the parent/guardian to negotiate any payment for that service.
- Services provided out of province, and associated travel
- Psychoeducational assessments

Not all ineligible expenses are listed. Please submit your JFE/RTP for approval prior to purchase to ensure it is eligible.

**Any costs incurred before an autism diagnosis and prior to enrolling in Autism Funding are not eligible for reimbursement.**



## Setting Up Autism Supports and Services for Your Child Under 6



## Autism Funding: Ages 6-18

The primary intent of Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 is to assist families with the cost of purchasing eligible out-of-school autism supports and services that will promote your child's communication, social-emotional, academic and functional life skills development.

Children aged 6 to 18 with a diagnosis of autism can receive up to \$6,000 per year towards evidence-informed eligible services that are outside of their school or educational program. Up to 20 per cent of the annual funding may be used to purchase training, travel and equipment related to autism supports.

Your youth's support plan should consider their unique strengths and needs. This support plan is written by a professional service provider (behaviour consultant analyst; speech-language pathologist; occupational therapist; physiotherapist), with input from family members and a circle of support, which can also include Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members. The support plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that your child is making meaningful progress.

### **AUTISM FUNDING: AGES 6-18**

#### **MAY ONLY BE USED FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

- Behaviour consultants or analysts
- Speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists
- Behaviour interventionists (BI) It is highly recommended that all BIs be supervised by one or all of the professionals listed above
- Life skills and social skills programs
- Out-of-school learning support or tutoring (not part of the regular school program)
- Specialized therapeutic activities and camps designed for the inclusion of a child with autism
- Dietary counselling from a registered dietician
- Family counselling or therapy, including:
  - Canadian Certified Counsellors (CCC)
  - Registered Clinical Counsellors (RCC)
  - Registered Marriage and Family Therapists (RMFTs)
  - Registered Psychiatrists, Registered Psychologists
  - Registered Social Workers (RSW)/ Registered Clinical Social Workers (RCSW)
- Other support and services as recommended by a professional who is not providing the recommended service (e.g., an occupational therapist writing to recommend a developmental optometrist for a child or youth). A Letter of Recommendation (LOR) written by an eligible professional is required and written pre-approval from Autism Funding is recommended.
- Autism Funding can be used towards independent school services if the invoice reflects out-of-school services only. This includes: before and after school supports, tutoring, therapy services (e.g., speech-language therapy, behaviour consultation), and social activities provided outside of the typical educational program
- Family's administrative costs (e.g., bookkeeping services, up to \$50 monthly or Direct Payment accountant fees up to a maximum of \$600 per funding period)
- Applicable employer costs (e.g., employee income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and WorkSafeBC premiums, standard vacation pay)

- Up to 20 per cent of the funding may be used for autism-specific training, travel costs to access eligible autism supports and training within B.C. (round trip greater than 80 kms), and eligible equipment as necessary for effective intervention, outlined in a Justification for Equipment and Supplies Form completed by a professional.

### **TRAVEL COSTS TO ACCESS TRAINING WITHIN B.C.**

#### **(ROUND TRIP GREATER THAN 80 KMS):**

- Reimbursement for registration and travel costs for families and/or behaviour interventionists to attend preapproved autism-specific training and/or the conference's educational material.
- Travel expenses including actual fare for air, bus or train travel, or mileage at \$0.40 per kilometre for a private vehicle.
- Hotel expenses to a maximum of \$150 per night, for one room
- Parking may be reimbursed to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges.
- Educational books, DVDs and videos for parents (specific to your child's unique needs).

### **TRAVEL COSTS TO ACCESS AUTISM SUPPORTS WITHIN B.C.**

#### **(ROUND TRIP GREATER THAN 80 KMS):**

- Travel related receipts are required for reimbursement.
- If you are unable to access service providers in your own community, you may claim expenses for the most cost-effective method of receiving services as close to home as possible.

- Options may include travel to the service provider or bringing the service provider to the community.
- Travel expenses may include actual fare for air, bus or train, or mileage at \$0.40 per kilometre for a private vehicle.
- Hotel expenses to a maximum of \$150 per night for one room.
- Parking up to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges.

### **EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS RELATED TO AUTISM SUPPORTS:**

Equipment and materials necessary for your child's unique needs must be requested in a Justification for Equipment and Supplies (JFE) form completed by a professional from the following list:

- Behaviour consultants or analysts
- Physiotherapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Occupational therapist
- Registered psychologist
- Registered psychological associate
- Psychiatrist
- Pediatrician
- Neurologist
- An approved JFE is valid until Autism Funding ends on March 31, 2027, providing your child remains eligible for autism funding and 20 per cent of the annual funding is not exceeded. The date on the purchase receipt will determine the funding period from which the transaction is processed, which may be prorated in the first year of Autism Funding to the child's next birthday. In your first year, the amount may be adjusted to match the shorter time period until your child's next birthday.

- A JFE is not a guarantee that an item will be eligible for Autism Funding. It is recommended that families wait to purchase items only after the JFE has been approved. The cost of items that are not eligible will not be reimbursed
- Anything purchased for your child through an approved JFE belongs to your child and family.

If an item is determined ineligible for Autism Funding other funding sources should be explored.

### **COMPUTERS AND/OR TOUCH SCREEN TABLETS**

- Requests to purchase a computer, touch screen tablet or smart phone must be made through a JFE written by your child's professional.
- Your child's Autism Funding can be used to purchase one laptop, desktop computer, OR touch screen tablet (e.g., an iPad OR an iPod touch OR smart phone) once every three years. Monthly phone bills or data plans are not eligible expenses and will not be paid.

### **AUTISM FUNDING: AGES 6-18 INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

Some services and equipment recommended by a professional are ineligible expenses The following are some examples of ineligible **equipment and supplies**:

- Home repairs, renovations, swimming pools, hot tubs, trampolines, playground equipment
- Household items, including appliances
- General recreation and sports enrolment fees
- Sports/fitness equipment
- Televisions

- Vitamins, medical supplies, orthotics
- Clothing
- Food (with some exceptions, including small reinforcers for therapy; please confirm eligibility with Autism Funding before purchasing)
- Any items to be used only in school settings
- Monthly smart phone bills and/or data plans
- Fees for post-secondary credit courses
- Items approved under SET-BC, the At Home Program, or other agencies providing equipment
- Weighted items, unless recommended by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist in the JFE
- Warranty and installation fees

The following are some examples of **services** that are **ineligible**:

- Child care
- Respite
- General, non-therapeutic recreation lessons
- Medical services
- Driver's education
- Fitness lessons
- Psychoeducational assessments
- Services provided out of province, and associated travel
- Single consultation sessions that are not intended to be followed up with further therapy or supports are not eligible for Autism Funding. It is the responsibility of the service provider and the parent/guardian to negotiate any payment for that service.

Not all ineligible expenses are listed. It is recommended that you contact Autism Funding at **1-877-777-3530** for more information..

# Funding Options

## Invoice Payment

Through an Invoice Payment Agreement, funding is set aside in an account held within government in your child's name and payment is provided directly to service providers for eligible intervention services.

You can choose the service(s) and service provider(s) your child needs and notify Autism Funding using a Request to Pay Service Providers/Suppliers form (RTP). Families accessing Autism Funding: Under Age 6 must select their professionals from the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP). For more information about the RASP, see: <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/>.

Behaviour interventionists (BI) are not required to be registered on the RASP, but BIs should be supervised by a RASP professional. Family counseling providers are also not required to be on the RASP. Service providers submit invoices to Autism Funding for services they have provided.

Autism Funding is committed to paying all authorized invoices within 30 days of their receipt, although most are paid sooner.

Currently, Autism Funding requires service providers to submit invoices no more than once per month for authorized services that have already taken place. Invoices received for future-dated services or for missed appointments are not eligible for Autism Funding. Service providers who provide services under Invoice Payment have up to a maximum of six months after the date of service being provided to submit an invoice to Autism Funding for payment.

You can contact Autism Funding at any time to confirm the amount of funds remaining in your child's account.

Autism Funding Agreements signed by the agreement signatory are automatically renewed at the end of a child's birth month.

**You are responsible for managing employment-related expenses, such as Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers' Compensation Board premiums, where there is an employer/employee relationship. Autism Funding cannot make these payments on your behalf but can reimburse you for these expenses.**

**Note:** Service providers must be payable within Canada. Funds can be issued either:

- by a cheque mailed directly to the service provider at a Canadian address that is not also the address of the child's parents/guardians; or
- by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) or direct deposit into a Canadian bank account.



## Direct Payment (For Children 12 and Over)

This information is only for existing families accessing Autism Funding via the Direct Payment method. Effective April 2026, no new families can be enrolled or renewed on the Direct Payment method. In a Direct Payment Agreement, the funding goes straight to you (the parent or legal guardian who signed the agreement) at the start of your child's funding period. In the first year, the amount may be adjusted based on your child's next birthday. You choose eligible services that best suit your child's needs and you are responsible for paying service providers for those services.

At the end of each funding period, you must account for the use of your child's Autism Funding. Required paperwork includes documentation identifying who provided the service with clear proof of payment (e.g., invoices, receipts), and any approval letters from Autism Funding, approved JFE Forms, and the Accountant Confirmation Form. The Accountant Confirmation Form must be completed and signed by a professional accountant, which means a Certified General Accountant (CGA), Chartered Accountant (CA), Certified Management Accountant (CMA) or Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA). You may find it helpful to seek the services of a professional accountant prior to setting up Direct Payment.

All documentation submitted to Autism is subject to audit. If it is found that Autism Funding was spent on ineligible expenses, the parent/legal guardian who signed the Direct Payment Agreement will be required to pay back the ineligible amount. **Note:** an audit can be done several years after the initial payment has been made. A Direct Payment Agreement can be cancelled if you do not comply with the

Agreement obligations. Your child will still be able to access Autism Funding through the Invoice Payment method, but will no longer be eligible to access further funding through Direct Payment.

## Eligibility Requirements for Direct Payment

- A child diagnosed with autism must be 12 years or older;
- The parent/legal guardian who signs the Direct Payment Agreement (agreement signatory) must have successfully managed Invoice Payment for a minimum of two full years (i.e., 24 months);
- The agreement signatory must have complied with all of their obligations under any previous Autism Funding Agreements with CFD;
- The parent/legal guardian must notify Autism Funding at least 60 days prior to the end of their current funding period that they wish to switch to Direct Payment; and,
- The parent/legal guardian must complete their child's existing funding period under Invoice Payment before establishing a new funding period under Direct Payment.

## Eligible Siblings Ages 6-12

- To simplify the payment process for families with more than one child with autism, agreement signatories can choose to have younger siblings between the ages of 6-12 access Autism Funding through Direct Payment.
- Conversion of any younger siblings onto Direct Payment must occur at the renewal of that child's funding period.
- Siblings under the age of six are not eligible for Direct Payment.

## Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Make sure you understand the responsibilities you agree to when you sign your Invoice Payment Agreement or Direct Payment Agreement. If anything is unclear, contact Autism Funding for help.

Parent/guardian responsibilities include:

- Using the funds for eligible expenses and for no other purpose, in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement and current program policies
- Hiring and monitoring service providers
- Ensuring all service providers are at least 19 years old and have a clear and current criminal record check
- Determining whether an employer/employee relationship exists between you and your service providers
- Meeting employer/employee obligations, including complying with relevant employment standards and paying Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers' Compensation Board – WorksafeBC premiums and other employer costs as required
- Selecting professional service providers from the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) if your child is under age six.
- Notifying Autism Funding within 30 days of any changes in address, child's care or custody, or any change in circumstances that may eliminate or reduce the need for funding
- Submitting a Request to Pay (RTP) Service Providers/ Suppliers form to Autism Funding for each service provider, every funding period. The RTP must be submitted every funding period and must indicate the maximum amount that a service provider can invoice during that period. This amount can be amended by the parent/guardian when necessary. Please ensure you have sufficient funds available to cover the cost of services received. **Note:** services are not eligible for reimbursement; only authorized travel, training and equipment purchase may be reimbursed.
- Submitting invoices to Autism Funding within six months of the purchase of the service or equipment. **Note:** the date the service happened or the equipment was purchased determines which funding period it falls under. In the first year, funding amounts may be adjusted based on your child's next birthday
- Complying with additional responsibilities as noted in the Invoice Payment Agreement or the Direct Payment Agreement



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## Children in Care

Children in care are eligible for Autism Funding. If you think that a child or youth you are caring for may have autism, discuss your concerns with their guardianship worker.

To access Autism Funding for children in care, the guardianship worker follows local procedures to complete the Autism Funding Application:

- In CYSN pilot areas (Kelowna, Haida Gwaii/Prince Rupert, Terrace, Smithers), staff at the local family connections centre or local CYSN Disability Services office can assist with completion of an application to Centralized Autism Funding Intake or the Guardianship Social Worker can also send the documents directly to [MCF.AutismFundingIntake@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingIntake@gov.bc.ca).
- In the rest of the province, guardianship workers can seek assistance with completing an application to Centralized Autism Funding Intake via their local CYSN office or the Guardianship Social Worker can also send the documents directly to [MCF.AutismFundingIntake@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingIntake@gov.bc.ca).

Contact AIS-BC to learn about autism supports and services and how to hire a service provider.

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## Concerns and Reconsideration

If you have a concern about the service provided by Autism Funding, please contact them at **1-877-777-3530**. If your concern is not resolved, request a call back from an Autism Funding Supervisor.

If you have a concern about a service provider on the RASP, contact Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC) toll free at **1-844-878-4700** to find out more on how to escalate your concern.

If you would like to have a decision about your child's Autism Funding reconsidered, you will need to provide additional information. You can submit your request by email or by My Family Service message using "Request for Reconsideration" in the subject line.

Your request will be reviewed with the additional information provided. Note that you must receive a written denial from Autism Funding before you can ask for a decision to be reversed.

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## Confidentiality and Your Privacy

Some personal information about you and your child is required to determine eligibility, and provide ongoing services. All necessary personal information is collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA).

Autism Funding may only release information regarding a child's agreement to the Agreement Signatory (the parent/legal guardian who signed the Autism Agreement). If you wish for another person to access this information, complete and submit the Release of Information form found on our website, or contact Autism Funding to request a Release of Information form be sent.

## Tips For Families

### Who Will Be Working with My Child?

Depending on the needs of your child, their therapy team may include:

- **Behavior analyst (BA) or behaviour consultant (BC):** BAs and BCs are professionals who conduct behaviour assessments, develop individualized support plans, train parents and interventionists, and monitor and oversee support plans on an on-going basis. Support plans provide a tailored roadmap to meet your child's unique needs. They may include strategies for developing your child's communication, social-emotional, academic and functional life skills development
  - » BAs and BCs who are listed on the British Columbia Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) have demonstrated the necessary education and experience in the field of autism to work with children under six years old. The difference between a BC and a BA is that a BA has received the certification of "Board Certified Behaviour Analyst" (BCBA) through the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (BACB).
- **Speech-language pathologist (SLP):** An SLP is a registered professional who supports individuals in developing and using their unique communication styles. They work collaboratively to enhance communication in ways that respect each person's strengths, preferences, and needs.

Communication is about understanding and sharing ideas in many ways—through speech, writing, gestures, and using tools like communication devices. An SLP can provide assessment, diagnosis, consultation, and treatment. SLPs also help with oral motor skills, like eating, drinking, and swallowing.

- **Occupational therapist (OT):** An OT is a registered professional who helps children and youth build skills for everyday life. OTs support participation in activities like play, dressing, eating, school tasks, and social interactions. They can assess, provide strategies, and work on areas such as motor skills, sensory processing, and coping skills to make daily routines easier and more enjoyable.
- **Physiotherapist (PT):** A PT is a registered professional who helps children and youth move and play more easily. PTs work to improve mobility, strength, and overall health so kids can join in everyday activities. They can assess movement and provide strategies or exercises to support independence and physical skills.
- **Behaviour interventionist (BI):** A BI is a paraprofessional who practices under the close, ongoing supervision of a BA or BC, SLP or OT. The BI is primarily responsible for implementing the support plan developed by the supervising professional(s). The BI may also collect data and conduct simple assessments. The BI does not have the qualifications to work in isolation or design and adjust intervention plans. The tasks that BIs perform will be based on their training, experience, and competence. The BI's supervisor is ultimately responsible for the work performed by the BI.

## Hiring Professionals

Supports and services change as new research becomes available. Learning along the way is important—staying curious and keeping up with what works best for your child as they grow helps you support them in the best way possible. When hiring professionals, select someone who has the qualifications, training and experience to provide the support approach that best fits with the needs and strengths of your child and family.

Understand what each person on your child's team will be doing, how much time they will spend with you and your child, and what they charge for their services. You should have a written contract or agreement with the professionals you hire. Information on creating a contract and selecting professionals to work with your child is available from Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC) at **1-844-878-4700**.

### HOW MUCH CAN I EXPECT TO PAY FOR SERVICES?

Professional fees can vary based on their training and experience. If you're hiring a service provider, talk with them about what a fair rate looks like. For more information on typical costs, you can contact Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC) at **1-844-878-4700**.

## How Do I Know My Child is Receiving Quality Support?

CFD requires that supports and services purchased with Autism Funding for children under age six use approaches that are supported by research and proven to be effective, culturally appropriate, and informed by lived experience. These practices are also highly recommended for children over age six.

### WHAT DO INFORMED PRACTICES LOOK LIKE?

- **Individualized Support Plan:** Your child's plan is built around their strengths and needs, focusing on areas like communication, play, emotional regulation, motor and sensory skills, and independence.
- **Learning in Different Settings:** Support happens at home, school, and in the community, using approaches that feel safe and positive for your child.
- **Qualified Professionals:** Programs are created and monitored by trained professionals who work together with your family.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Plans are reviewed often. If something isn't working, adjustments are made to better support your child.
- **Motivation Matters:** Activities and materials are chosen based on what your child enjoys, making learning engaging and meaningful.
- **Helpful Tools:** Visual supports, choice boards, and communication devices can make routines easier and more predictable.
- **Family Involvement:** Parents and caregivers are active partners in planning and learning strategies to support their child.
- **Predictability and Routine:** Consistent routines help children feel secure and ready to learn.
- **Variety of Strategies:** Teaching methods are flexible and supportive, helping your child build and keep new skills in both structured and natural settings.
- **Collaboration:** A team of professionals (like SLPS, OTs, PTs, and behavior consultants) works together with your family.
- **Peer Interaction:** Opportunities to connect with peers are included.

- **Planning for Transitions:** Support is provided during big changes, like starting school or moving to adulthood.
- **Life Skills for Youth:** Older children and teens get chances to learn skills for independence, hobbies, and friendships.
- **Ongoing Training:** Staff supporting your child receive regular training and supervision.
- **Monitoring Progress:** Your child's progress is tracked, and plans are updated as needed.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ✓ **How does this approach** respect my child's strengths and needs?
- ✓ **Is there research** showing it works?
- ✓ **How will progress** be measured and shared with me?
- ✓ **How will the plan change** if something isn't working?

*Adapted from Jack, M., Ady, J. A Guide to Choosing Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Alberta Centre For Child, Family & Community Research, 2006.*



## Contact Us

We are here to assist you and ensure you receive accurate and helpful information.

### AUTISM INFORMATION SERVICES BC (AIS BC)

**AIS BC** has experienced staff available to explain support options and assist with navigating the B.C. service system.

Toll-free: **1-844-878-4700**

General Email: [autisminformation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:autisminformation@gov.bc.ca)

Registry of Autism Service Providers

Email: [RASP@gov.bc.ca](mailto:RASP@gov.bc.ca)

Website: <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca>

Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 8:30am-4:30pm (PST)

### AUTISM FUNDING

**Autism Funding** handles funding agreements, makes payments to families and service providers, and keeps track of autism funding amounts.

For general inquiries and inquiries regarding parental responsibilities associated with funding agreements:

In Victoria: **250-387-3530**

Toll-free: **1-877-777-3530**

(translation services available)

Fax: **250-356-8578**

Website: <https://gov.bc.ca/autism>

Email: [MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca)

Mail: Autism Funding Branch

P.O. Box 9776

Victoria, B.C. V8W 9S5

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# Appendix 1:

## B.C. Service and Autism Organizations

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### **BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) – BC Children’s Hospital**

Information on assessment/diagnosis of children who may have autism.

Telephone: **604-453-8394**

Email: [autism@phsa.ca](mailto:autism@phsa.ca)

Web: <https://www.bcchildrens.ca/clinics-services/bc-autism-assessment-network>

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### **Workers’ Compensation Board – WorkSafeBC**

Information about reporting and investigating of serious incidents and accidents.

Telephone: **1-888-922-2768**

Web: [www.worksafebc.com/en/for-employers](http://www.worksafebc.com/en/for-employers)

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### **Employment Standards Branch**

Telephone: **1-800-663-3316** (or in Prince George, call: **250-612-4100**)

Web: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/hiring>

**Note:** Autism Funding is not able to provide advice or answer questions with regards to employer responsibilities or taxation.

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### **Canada Revenue Agency**

Canada Revenue Agency has information for individual income tax enquiries as well as specific information on topics and services that may be of interest to individuals with disabilities.

Toll-free: **1-800-959-8281**

Web: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/disability](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/disability)

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## Ministry of Children and Family Development Children and Youth with Support Needs

Information on autism funding and programs:

Web: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=252DFC49D4AB4F3BAEDE15EC19649C5A>

Information on other programs for children and youth with support needs:

Web: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=71558EA4F8F44CD5B505BAF5C4EBDA6B>

Contact your local Child & Family Service office to find out what services are available and talk about eligibility requirements.

Web: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=3101EE72823047269017D08E55AF6441>

For information about forms and resources, see:

Forms and resources – Province of British Columbia

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=93B0DDFD028C4A48A5834CE57EBE5EC0>

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## Ministry of Education and Child Care

Inclusive Education: Autism Information on special education programs and autism initiatives.

Web: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/resources-for-teachers/inclusive-education>

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## Ministry of Health

Access to an evidence-based report: *Standards and Guidelines for Assessment and Diagnosis of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in B.C.*

Telephone: **250-952-1742** | Toll-free: **1-800-465-4911**

Download PDF: [www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2003/asd\\_standards\\_0318.pdf](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2003/asd_standards_0318.pdf)

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## Autism Spectrum Disorder in B.C.

Telephone: **250-952-1742** | Toll-free: **1-800-465-4911**

Download PDF: [www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2003/asd\\_standards\\_0318.pdf](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2003/asd_standards_0318.pdf)

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## Service Provider Organizations:

For more information on the professionals that your child's team may include, go to:

Behaviour analyst: <https://www.bacb.com/> and <https://bc-aba.org/>

College of health and care professionals of bc: <https://www.chcpbc.org>

Occupational therapist: <https://caot.ca>

Physiotherapist: <http://cptbc.org/> and <http://bcphysio.org/>

Speech-language pathologist: <https://www.chcpbc.org>

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## Appendix 2: Glossary

**AIS BC:** Autism Information Services BC

**BC/A:** Behaviour Consultant/Analyst

**MCFD:** Ministry of Children and Family Development

**OT:** Occupational Therapist

**RASP:** Registry of Autism Service Providers

**PT:** Physiotherapist

**SLP:** Speech-Language Pathologist

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## Appendix 3: Invoicing and Payment

### General Information

- Autism Funding is committed to paying all authorized invoices within 30 business days of their receipt, although most are paid sooner.
- Service providers may submit invoices once per month.
- Invoices received for future-dated services or for missed appointments are not eligible for payment.
- Service providers have up to six months after the date of service to submit an invoice. Invoices submitted after this 6 month time period will not be considered for payment.
- It is recommended that service providers sign up for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), which would expedite payments to be deposited to a bank account, often within three to five business days of the invoice being processed. Details of the deposit by EFT are emailed to the service provider at the time of each payment. For more information, please visit <http://www.gov.bc.ca/autism>

➤ **Families, please advise your service providers to apply for the Service Provider Portal. Applying for the Service Provider Portal can ensure that service providers are paid more efficiently in a timelier fashion. Your service providers can use the Service Provider Portal to get access to self-service options related to the service they provide you and your family. It also helps speed up their data submissions and payment processes.**



**Autism Information Services  
British Columbia (AIS BC)**

*We're Here to Help*

Call Toll-free: 1-844-878-4700

Website: [gov.bc.ca/autism](http://gov.bc.ca/autism)

Email: [AutismInformation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AutismInformation@gov.bc.ca)

**Autism Funding**

Call Toll-free: 1-877-777-3530

Email: [MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca)



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