

September 16, 2009

Dear Parent:

## **Re: Changes to the Autism Funding Programs**

On behalf of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), I am writing to advise you of changes to the Autism Funding Programs that will provide additional supports for all children under age six, simplify the administrative requirements of autism funding and address funding and service inequities. It is important to note that these changes are not result of a budget reduction for the Autism Funding Programs.

### **EIBI Program Changes**

As a parent of a child enrolled in the EIBI program, changes to this program will be of great importance to you. Since 2001, EIBI has been provided through five agencies to children with ASD. At any point in time, it serves approximately 70 to 75 children. At the same time, over 850 additional children under the age of six receive supports through the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 program.

In order to ensure fairness and equal access to services for all families raising a child or youth with ASD, MCFD will be ending the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) program effective January 31, 2010. MCFD is consulting with community agencies to implement a program that focuses on outreach and capacity building to increase families' access to supports and services for children and youth with ASD.

Once the EIBI program has ended, access to autism funding will continue to be available for your child through Invoice Payment. The Autism Funding Unit will send you an Autism Funding agreement in late November/early December 2009 for you to sign and return directly to the Autism Funding Unit for processing. We will be working with you and your EIBI service provider in the coming months to ensure a coordinated transition is in place to support you and your child during the transition to the Autism Funding program.

### **Autism Under Six: Increase in Funding**

We are pleased to announce an increase in funding available through the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 program. Research indicates that intensive intervention before age six results in better long-term outcomes for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Effective April 1, 2010, MCFD is increasing the funding available for children in this critical stage of development by \$2,000 per child per year from \$20,000 to \$22,000. Families who have children enrolled on the Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 program will continue to receive \$6,000 per child per year, in addition to the \$16,000 in special education funding that School Districts receive for each child.

### **Invoice Payment Versus Direct Funding**

In 2004, MCFD introduced Invoice Payment for autism funding as an alternative to Direct Funding. This was in response to parents' concerns that the administrative requirements of Direct Funding were



too time-consuming and difficult to manage. Over the past five years, Invoice Payment has proven to have considerable advantages over Direct Funding, with simpler paperwork, improved accountability, and increased efficiency – for both parents and government. Currently, families have a choice of whether to receive autism funding by Direct Payment or Invoice Payment. Effective October, 2009, Autism Funding will only be available via Invoice Payment. All new applicants, including families currently participating in the EIBI programs, will be enrolled on Invoice Payment starting October 2009.

Through Invoice Payment, funding is set aside in an “account” held within government in the child’s name and payment is provided directly to service providers for eligible intervention services. Parents choose the service(s) they need and select service provider(s), and notify the Autism Funding Unit, which pays the service providers directly upon receipt of an approved invoice. At any time, parents can change service providers and/or funding commitments. There is no need to renew funding agreements annually. There is no need to submit Schedule B forms to account for services. Parents may be reimbursed for purchases of eligible travel, training, materials and supplies.

### **Next Steps**

The Parent’s Handbook, the Autism Funding website and Autism Funding: Frequently Asked Questions will be updated shortly, please visit the Autism Funding website at [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism) on or after November 1, 2009 for the most current information.

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming changes, please contact Karen Bopp at the Children and Youth with Special Needs Policy branch in MCFD. You can reach her at 250-387-2015 in Victoria or toll-free at 1-800-663-7867 – ask for Karen Bopp.

MCFD is committed to the goal of improving the system of supports for children and youth with special needs and their families as outlined in the ministry’s action plan, and the ministry is proud to continue to provide funding to assist with the cost of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) intervention services for all children and youth with ASD in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

Arif Lalani  
Senior Director  
Provincial Operations, MCFD