

September 21, 2009

Dear Parent:

As most of you are aware, the Ministry of Children and Family Development recently announced service changes to the Autism Funding Programs. The ministry recognizes that many questions have arisen because of this announcement and we regret any anxiety this may have caused.

I am writing this letter to address some of the concerns expressed both by parents and service providers alike. Specifically, questions have been raised about the move from Direct Funding to Invoice Payment, timely payment to service providers, and the impact of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

Regarding the change to Invoice Payment from Direct Funding in 2004, the ministry introduced Invoice Payment for autism funding as an alternative to Direct Funding. The ministry had heard from many parents that Direct Funding was too time-consuming and difficult to manage. Over the past five years, Invoice Payment has proven to have considerable advantages over Direct Funding for both parents and government, due to **simpler paperwork, improved accountability, and increased efficiency**. Therefore, the decision was made to move to Invoice Payment only for new clients and to incrementally transition existing clients on Direct Funding on the anniversary dates of agreements, effective October, 2009.

Using the Invoice Payment method, government pays service providers directly for eligible intervention services. **Parents choose the service(s) they need, select their service provider(s)**, and notify the Autism Funding Unit (AFU), which pays the service providers **within 30 days** upon receipt of an approved invoice.

With respect to the issue of timely payments to service providers, we are committed to ensuring service providers are paid within 30 days. In order to assist with this:

- Parents must submit a Request to Pay (RTP) form.
- The service provider needs a billing number assigned by the ministry in order to authorize them to invoice the AFU.

Payment may be delayed if:

- The parent has not submitted an RTP and an invoice is received – the ministry must wait for the RTP.
- The invoice is for a greater amount than the parent requested be paid to the service provider or for different services – the AFU must have written authorization from the parent to approve the increase or new service before the invoice can be paid.

The introduction of HST in July, 2010, is another issue of some concern. It is clear that if parents were to remain on Direct Funding, they would be required to pay the HST in instances where GST is payable. However, government anticipates that **as a result of the shift to Invoice Payment, families will not be impacted by the HST**.

If you have any questions regarding your funding agreement or the upcoming changes, please contact the Autism Funding Unit at MCFD. The Autism Funding Unit can be reached at 250 387-3530 in Victoria or toll-free at 1 877 777-3530.



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.

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 diagnosed with ASD in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arif Lalani", written over a horizontal line.

Arif Lalani  
Senior Director  
Children and Youth with Special Need Provincial Operations