

## CLARIFICATION OF POLICY

### Eligible expenses for Autism Funding: Under Age 6

The primary intent of autism funding is for the purchase of direct autism intervention. Parents may choose the type of behavioural treatment, as identified in the child's behavioural plan of intervention and based on the best practices guidelines that best suits their child's needs. Up to 20 per cent of the family's annual funding may be used to purchase training, travel and equipment related to autism intervention.

### Recommended equipment

Equipment and materials must be related to autism intervention. This does not include regular educational supplies.

### Equipment guidelines:

- Equipment must be recommended in writing by a professional/specialist as necessary for effective intervention and must be consistent with intervention recommended in the child's behavioural plan of intervention. The written recommendation must explain the outcomes that the recommended equipment will help achieve.
- Other avenues of funding for equipment purchases or loans must be explored and purchases must not duplicate those that would be approved under SET-BC, the At Home Program, or other agencies providing equipment.
- Where possible, the child should use equipment available from other sources (e.g., loaner equipment, equipment in the school setting, etc.)

## PURPOSE

This advisory further clarifies that Autism Funding cannot be used to purchase trampolines, rebounders of any size, or bouncing equipment (e.g., inflatable bouncers) due to the potential for serious injury. All trampolines, rebounders and bouncing equipment recommended or purchased after June 1, 2007, will not be covered as a benefit of the program.

## RATIONALE

- Health Canada, Canada Safety Council, several Canadian hospitals, the Canadian Pediatric Society, and other organizations in North America have issued public announcements advising against trampoline use for all children, and recommend that children under 6 be prohibited from trampoline use under any circumstances.
- The advisories highlight significant safety concerns with the use of trampolines. These include:
  - Common injuries include: broken bones, sprains, concussions and other head injuries. Neck and spinal cord injuries are also a risk
  - 80% of children suffering trampoline-related injuries in Canada in the 1990s were between the ages of 5 - 14.
  - Children under the age of 6 should never use a trampoline that is over 50 centimetres in height.
  - Adult supervision does not adequately prevent injuries on home trampolines; the supervisor/s should be trained in trampoline safety.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics summarizes the safety concerns for trampolines and rebounders as follows:

Despite all currently available measures to prevent injury, the potential for serious injury while using a trampoline remains. The need for supervision and trained personnel at all times makes home use extremely unwise. The trampoline should not be used at home, inside or outside. During anticipatory guidance, pediatricians should advise parents never to purchase a home trampoline or allow children to use home trampolines<sup>1</sup>
- The Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) also advises that trampolines pose a serious safety hazard to children and youth. On May 4, 2009 the CPS released the following statement:

Injuries from trampolines are on the rise. Most injuries happen to children between 5 and 14 years of age. That's why the CPS recommends that trampolines not be used at home and that children not use trampolines as play equipment—indoors or outdoors.
- Other equipment used for bouncing has also been found to be a potential cause of serious injury in children. A study by Avoian et al. (2008) which investigated hospital admissions as a result of inflatable bouncing equipment related injuries made the following conclusion:

The data for inflatable bouncer-related injuries parallel the statistics for trampoline-related trauma. Inflatable bouncers can cause serious orthopaedic injuries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Canadian Paediatric Association does not have its own position on trampolines, but refers inquires to the American Academy of Pediatric's position statements on this topic. APA Policy Statement: Trampolines at Home, School, and Recreational Centers. *Pediatrics*. 1999;103:1053–1056 accessed August 9, 2007 at: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;103/5/1053>

<sup>2</sup>Avoian, T., Choi, P., Manjra N., & Weiss, J., (2008). Inflatable bouncer – related fractures in children. *Journal of Pediatric Orthopaedics*, 28, 656-659.