

September 16, 2009

Dear Service Provider:

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

As you may be aware, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has recently announced changes to its autism programs. These changes are intended to create efficiencies, address funding and service inequities, and improve access to intervention, information and support while maintaining the current autism budget.

First and foremost, 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 2010, MCFD is increasing the amount of funding available for children under six and their families in this critical stage of development from **\$20,000 to \$22,000 per child per year**. Families who have children enrolled in 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.

Second, there will be a move from Direct Funding to Invoice Payment. 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. In other words, families of children who are enrolled on Direct Funding will be transitioned to Invoice Payment in the month following their birth month. However, in order to ensure access to the increased funding, all families of children under age six who have not yet moved to Invoice payment will be transitioned in April 2010. All new applicants to autism funding 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.

MCFD is committed to paying all authorized invoices within 30 days of their receipt. Currently, MCFD 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 funding through the Autism Funding Programs. 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 the Autism Funding Unit for payment.

Lastly, in order to address funding and service inequities between children served by the EIBI programs and those receiving individual funding, the ministry will discontinue the Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention (EIBI) program effective January 31, 2010. Approximately \$1 million will be redirected toward the creation of a new provincial outreach program to improve access to professional services, particularly in rural communities. More information will be available as this project progresses.

Additional information about the autism programs is available at [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism) .

If you have questions regarding the upcoming changes to the Autism Funding Programs, please call the Autism Funding Unit (250) 387-3530 in Victoria or toll -free at 1-877 777-3530.

Sincerely

Arif Lalani  
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Children and Youth with Special Need Provincial Operations