



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development

# *A Parent's Handbook:* Your Guide to Autism Programs



November 2009



# Table of Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Services and Supports for Children and Youth with Special Needs and Their Families	1
What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?	2
Early Indicators of Autism Spectrum Disorder	3
What to Do if You Think Your Child May Have Autism	4
What Causes Autism Spectrum Disorder?	5
Is There a Cure?	5
<b>Assessment and Diagnosis</b>	<b>6</b>
British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN)	6
Non-BCAAN (Private) Assessment and Diagnosis	6
Children Over Age Six Diagnosed with ASD Prior to April 1, 2004	6
Moving to B.C. from Another Province	6
Moving to B.C. from Another Country	6
My Child Has a Diagnosis of ASD. What Do I Do?	8
Applying for Autism Programs	8
<b>Autism Programs</b>	<b>9</b>
Autism Funding: Under Age 6	9
Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP)	9
Setting Up an Autism Intervention Program for Your Child Under 6	12
Autism Funding: Ages 6 – 18	13
Accessing Autism Programs	16

<b>Funding</b>	<b>17</b>
Invoice Payment	17
<b>Autism Funding Programs and Parent Responsibilities</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Foster Parents and Children in Care</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appeals or Complaints</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Confidentiality and Your Privacy</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Tips for Parents</b>	<b>20</b>
Who Will Be Working with My Child?	20
How Much Can I Expect to Pay for Services?	21
How Do I Know My Child is Receiving Quality Intervention?	21
What is a Behavioural Plan of Intervention (BPI)?	23
<b>Contact Us</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
1. B.C. Service and Autism Organizations	25
2. Behavioural Plan of Intervention	27
3. Autism Funding – Summary of Eligible Expenses	29
4. Autism Funding – Summary of Ineligible Expenses	30

## Frequently Used Acronyms

**ASD:** *Autism Spectrum Disorder*

**MCFD:** *Ministry of Children and Family Development or the ministry*

## Introduction

This handbook is for parents and caregivers of children and youth who may have, or have been diagnosed with, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It provides information on ASD, intervention, and programs available for children and youth with ASD and their families.

The Ministries of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Education and Health Services work closely to coordinate assessment, diagnosis, intervention and support services for children and youth with ASD and their families.

### **Services and Supports for Children and Youth with Special Needs and Their Families**

In addition to the autism programs described on pages 9-16, MCFD provides a range of programs for children and youth with special needs and their families. These include:

- Aboriginal Infant Development Program
- Aboriginal Supported Child Development
- At Home Program (medical and respite)
- Community Brain Injury Program
- Early Intervention Therapies
- Infant Development Program
- Key Worker and Parent Support
- Nursing Support Services
- Provincial Outreach and Professional Supports
- Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- School-Aged Therapies
- Supported Child Development

For information on program eligibility, see the **WEBLINK**.



#### **WEBLINK**

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/index.htm)

## **What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?**

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex condition that impacts normal brain development and affects a person's social relationships, communication, interests and behaviour. Studies indicate that ASD affects one in every 150 children. ASD usually appears early in life, often before the age of three, and is four to five times more common in boys than in girls.

ASD is a general term that includes the following disorders: Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), Rett's Disorder, and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD). In each of these disorders, social interaction is most commonly affected.

The symptoms and characteristics of ASD can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations, from mild to severe. Although ASD is defined by certain sets of behaviours, individuals can exhibit any combination of the behaviours in any degree of severity. Children with the same diagnosis can act very differently and have varying skills. Therefore, there is no standard type or typical person with ASD.

Parents may hear different terms used to describe children within the spectrum, such as: autistic-like, autistic tendencies, autism spectrum, high-functioning or low-functioning autism. These terms are not related to the child's abilities or needs. It is more important to understand that, whatever the diagnosis, appropriate education and treatment based on the child's abilities and needs can help children to develop to their full potential.



### **WEBLINKS**

[www.autismsocietycanada.ca](http://www.autismsocietycanada.ca)

[www.child-autism-parent-cafe.com](http://www.child-autism-parent-cafe.com)

[www.cairn-site.com](http://www.cairn-site.com)

## **Early Indicators of Autism Spectrum Disorder**

If you think your child may have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), please read through the list of possible signs of ASD. Your child does not need to demonstrate all of the indicated behaviours in order to be referred for an assessment. Please note that these characteristics may also be indicators of other conditions.

Possible signs of ASD (adapted from First Signs\*):

- Seems disinterested in sharing enjoyment with others
- Does not speak, or uses very few words
- Appears to understand very little
- May seem deaf or doesn't respond when name is called
- Unusual sensitivity to light or sound; for example, flickering lights or a vacuum cleaner can provoke uncontrolled screaming
- May walk on his or her toes
- When excited, may flap hands
- May not make eye contact as other children do
- May resist cuddles and hugs
- Frequent tantrums when required to do anything new or when asked to change activities without advance warning
- Does not point to show you interesting things
- Does not engage in make-believe play
- May line up toys and obsess on strange objects
- Does not show objects to others
- Does not look to where you are pointing
- Likes things to be done the same way all the time
- Exhibits a loss of social play or language skills

*If you think your child is not developing typically, please consult your doctor as soon as possible. Your local Child Development Centre or Infant Development Program may also be able to provide information, guidance and support.*

### **WEBLINKS**

**ACT – Autism Community Training:**  
[www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)

**Infant Development Programs:**  
[www.idpofbc.ca](http://www.idpofbc.ca)

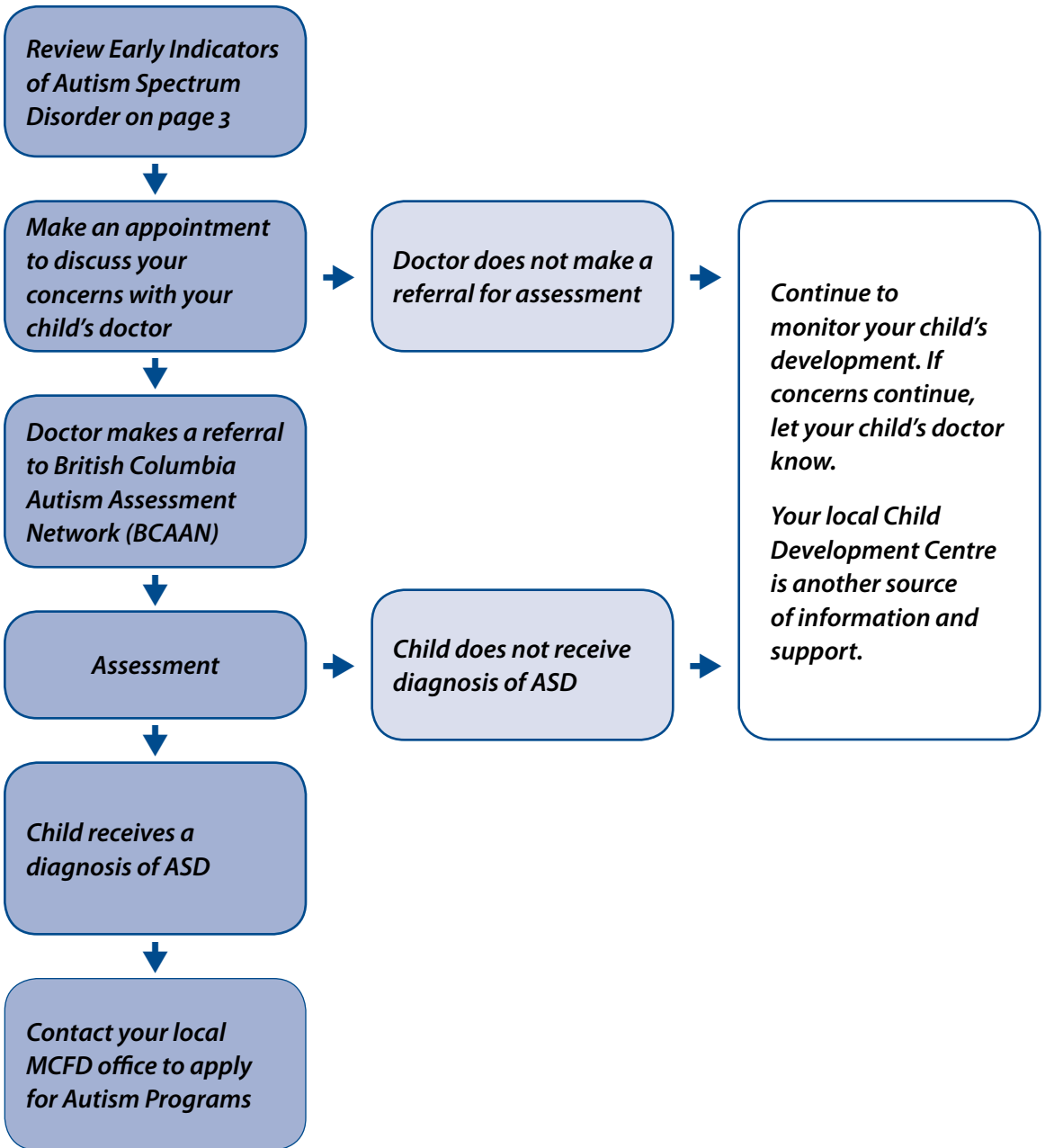
**British Columbia Association for Child Development and Intervention:**  
[www.bcacdi.org/member.html](http://www.bcacdi.org/member.html)

**First Signs:** [www.firstsigns.org](http://www.firstsigns.org)

**Children and Youth with Special Needs Ministry of Children and Family Development:**  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/index.htm)

\*First Signs, Inc. is a national non-profit organization dedicated to educating parents and pediatric professionals about the early warning signs of autism and other developmental disorders.

## What to Do if You Think Your Child May Have Autism





## ***What Causes Autism Spectrum Disorder?***

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

## ***Is There a Cure?***

For now, there is no cure for ASD. There are, however, highly effective treatment and intervention methods available that can help individuals and their families address the characteristics of this disorder. Early interventions based on best practices are intended to help children with ASD develop skills, learn to communicate effectively, share in family life and enjoy success at school. For more information on best practices, please see page 21.

### ***WEBLINKS***

For information on current research, see the National Institute of Mental Health:  
[www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/autism/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/autism/index.shtml)

[www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-pervasive-developmental-disorders/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-pervasive-developmental-disorders/index.shtml)



## **Assessment and Diagnosis**

### **British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN)**

If you have concerns about your child's development, please see your family doctor who may refer you to BCAAN for assessment and diagnosis.

BCAAN provides multidisciplinary diagnostic assessments for children under age six and clinical diagnostic assessments for children age six and older. Children can be diagnosed at any age, some as young as two years old. BCAAN will arrange for an assessment to be done as close to where you live as possible. There is no charge for BCAAN services.

At the completion of the assessment and diagnosis, you will receive a BCAAN Clinical Outcomes form. This form provides a summary of the testing results that will indicate whether your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder.

### **Non-BCAAN (Private) Assessment and Diagnosis**

Families may obtain a non-BCAAN (private) diagnostic assessment. This assessment must meet the same standards as a BCAAN assessment (see the **WEBLINK** opposite page).

Children under age six require a multidisciplinary diagnostic assessment. Children age six and older require a clinical diagnostic assessment (completed by a paediatrician, child psychiatrist, or registered psychologist).

The clinician must complete a Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder form to document a positive ASD diagnosis if the family wishes to apply for autism programs.

Parents are responsible for any costs charged for the private assessment.

### **Children Over Age Six Diagnosed with ASD Prior to April 1, 2004**

If your child was diagnosed with ASD before April 1, 2004, and you would like to apply for autism programs, a Confirmation of Previous Diagnosis of ASD form must be completed by a qualified B.C. specialist (paediatrician, child psychiatrist, or registered psychologist).

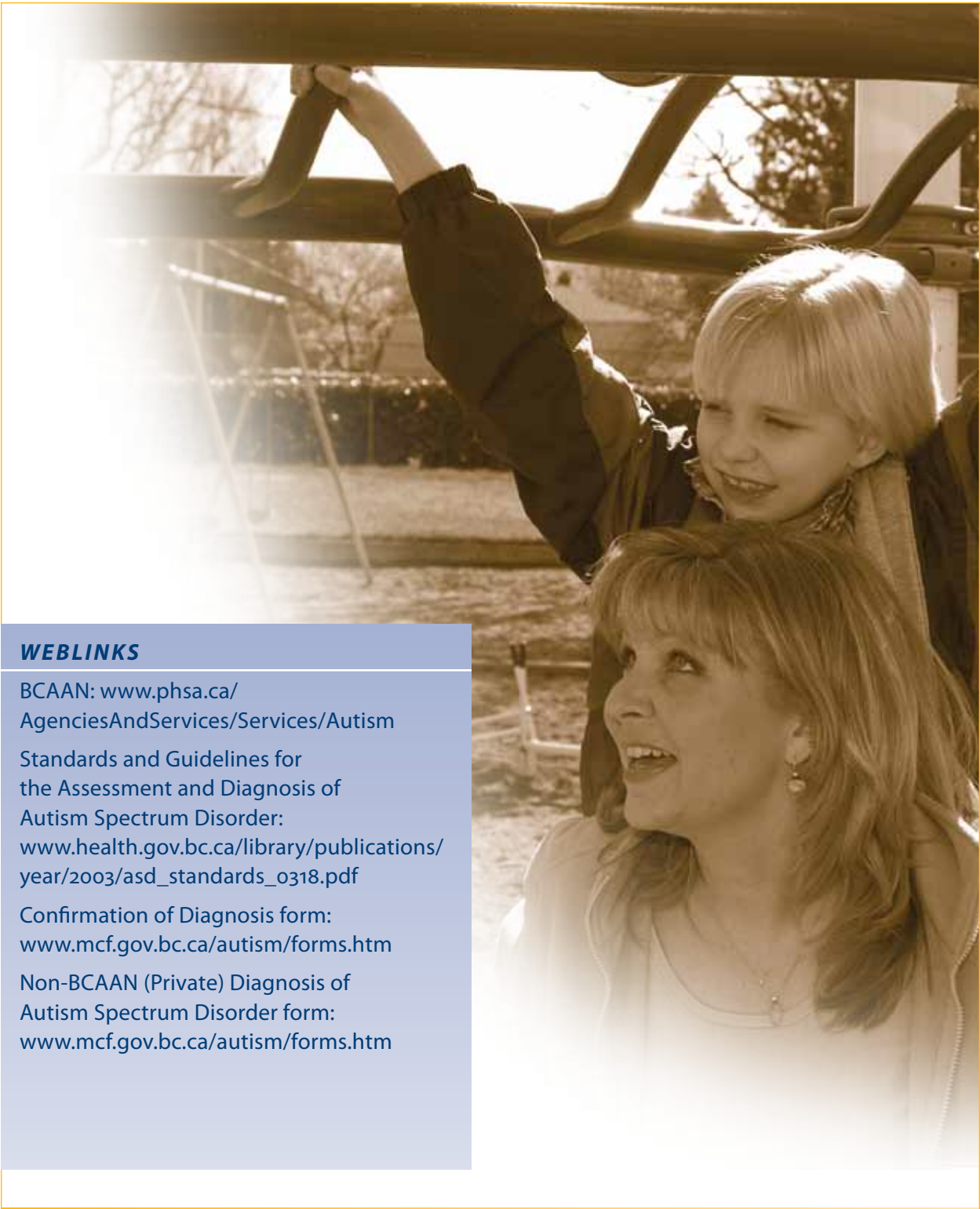
### **Moving to B.C. from Another Province**

If your child has had a diagnostic assessment of ASD from another province in Canada and you are applying for the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) autism programs, a Confirmation of Diagnosis form must be completed by a qualified B.C. specialist (paediatrician, psychiatrist or registered psychologist).

### **Moving to B.C. from Another Country**

Families who have recently moved to British Columbia from another country are required to have a new diagnostic assessment for ASD within B.C. to apply for autism programs.

***You can obtain the Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Confirmation of Diagnosis forms from the WEBLINK opposite or by calling MCFD at 1 877 777-3530.***



## **WEBLINKS**

BCAAN: [www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/Autism](http://www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/Autism)

Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder: [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)

Confirmation of Diagnosis form: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm)

Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder form: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm)

## ***My Child Has a Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. What Do I Do?***

When a child is diagnosed with ASD, the emotional impact on parents and extended family can be profound. This can be a very difficult and stressful time for everyone.

Every family has their own questions and concerns, but for many families it is important to learn as much about ASD as possible, and to connect with other parents and professionals who can offer information and support.

Information on local groups can be found through organizations listed on page 25. Workshops are also available throughout the province on a range of topics (see the ACT – Autism Community Training **WEBLINK** below for more information).

It is important for parents to know that children and youth with ASD can benefit from an intervention program. Research has identified interventions and approaches that are supported by evidence and proven to be effective for ASD – these are known as best practices. For more information on best practices, please see page 21.

### ***Applying for Autism Programs***

If your child has been diagnosed with ASD, and you wish to enrol in the Autism Funding Program, contact your local MCFD office to complete a funding agreement.

#### ***WEBLINKS***

ACT – Autism Community Training:  
[www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)

MCFD:  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm)



## Autism Programs

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides two autism programs:

- Autism Funding: Under Age 6
- Autism Funding: Ages 6-18

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

The primary intent of Autism Funding: Under Age 6 is to assist families with the cost of purchasing autism intervention services (based on best practices) to promote their child's communication, social-emotional, pre-academic and functional life skills development. Families of children age five and younger with a diagnosis of ASD may receive up to \$20,000 per year (\$22,000 as of April 1, 2010) towards eligible intervention.

Your child's intervention program must be based on a plan that takes into account his or her unique strengths and needs. This **Behavioural Plan of Intervention (BPI)** is written by a behaviour consultant, with input from family members and other intervention team members, such as the speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, and/or behaviour interventionist(s). The BPI should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that your child is making meaningful progress. For more information on BPIs, see page 23.

You must submit the BPI to the Autism Funding Unit within four months of signing the Autism Funding Agreement. The behaviour consultant you use to develop and monitor your child's BPI must be selected from the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP). While the BPI is being completed, you may hire other professionals listed on the RASP. An updated BPI must be submitted annually to the Autism Funding Unit.

### **Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP)**

Parents of children receiving Autism Funding: Under Age 6 are required to select professional service providers for their child from the RASP. The RASP is managed by ACT – Autism Community Training on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. In order to be included on the RASP, professionals must demonstrate that their education and experience meet the qualifications described by the ministry.

#### **WEBLINKS**

**Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) and information on choosing service providers at: [www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)**



## *Autism Funding: Under Age 6 may only be used for the following:*

- Services of behaviour consultants, speech-

### **Tip for Parents**

***The service provider's hourly rate of pay should reflect the cost of doing business. Administrative costs incurred by the service provider are not eligible expenses.***

language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists who are listed on the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) (see **WEBLINK** opposite page).

- Behaviour interventionists
- 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, four per cent vacation pay).
- Up to 20 per cent of the funding may be used for training, travel costs to access autism intervention and training within B.C. (round trip greater than 80 kms) and equipment as necessary for effective intervention, outlined in a Justification for Equipment/Supplies form from a professional/specialist (please see the **WEBLINK** next page or Autism Funding: Under Age 6 - Ineligible Expenses on page 11 for more information).

## *Training within B.C. (round trip greater than 80 kms):*

- Reimbursement for registration and travel costs for parents or behaviour interventionists to attend autism-specific training. Fees for post-secondary credit courses are not eligible expenses.
- 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 \$100 per night are eligible.
- Parking may be reimbursed to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges are eligible expenses.
- Educational books, DVDs and videos for parents (specific to autism).

## *Travel costs to access autism intervention 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 \$100 per night are eligible.
- Parking may be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges are eligible expenses.

### ***Equipment and materials related to intervention:***

Equipment and materials necessary for the child's intervention must be requested in a Justification for Equipment /Supplies form that is completed by a professional/specialist from the following list:

- Behaviour consultant
- Physiotherapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Occupational therapist
- Registered psychologist
- Registered psychological associate
- Paediatrician
- Psychiatrist
- Neurologist

Other avenues of funding for equipment purchases or loans must be explored. Purchases must not duplicate those that would be approved under SET-BC, the At Home Program, other agencies providing equipment or that are typical expenses for a child. Please see the **WEBLINK** below for more information on SET-BC.

### **WEBLINKS**

Justification for Equipment/Supplies form:

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm)

SET-BC: [www.setbc.org](http://www.setbc.org)

ACT – Autism Community Training:

[www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)

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

Some interventions and equipment recommended by a professional/specialist are ineligible expenses. The following are examples of ineligible items:

- Home repairs, renovations, swimming pools, hot tubs, trampolines, playground equipment
- Household items, including appliances
- General recreation and sports enrolment fees
- Sports/fitness equipment, including bicycles
- Electronics, including televisions, CD players, stereos, MP3 players, game systems, video games, tracking devices, and cellular phones/palm pilots
- Non-ASD specific CDs, DVDs, and videos
- Musical instruments (purchase or rental)
- Vitamins, medical supplies, incontinence supplies, orthotics
- Clothing, helmets
- Food (however, small reinforcers for Applied Behaviour Analysis therapy may be eligible)

The following are examples of ineligible services:

- Child care
- Respite
- Lessons (group or individual), such as swimming and karate
- Medical services

Not all ineligible expenses are listed here. It is recommended that families contact the Autism Funding Unit at 1 877 777-3530 for pre-approval before purchasing items.

## Setting Up an Autism Intervention Program for Your Child Under 6

**MCFD:** Ministry of Children and Family Development  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm)

**ACT:** ACT- Autism Community Training  
[www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)

**ASD:** Autism Spectrum Disorder  
(see page 2)

**RASP:** Registry of Autism Service Providers  
(see page 9)

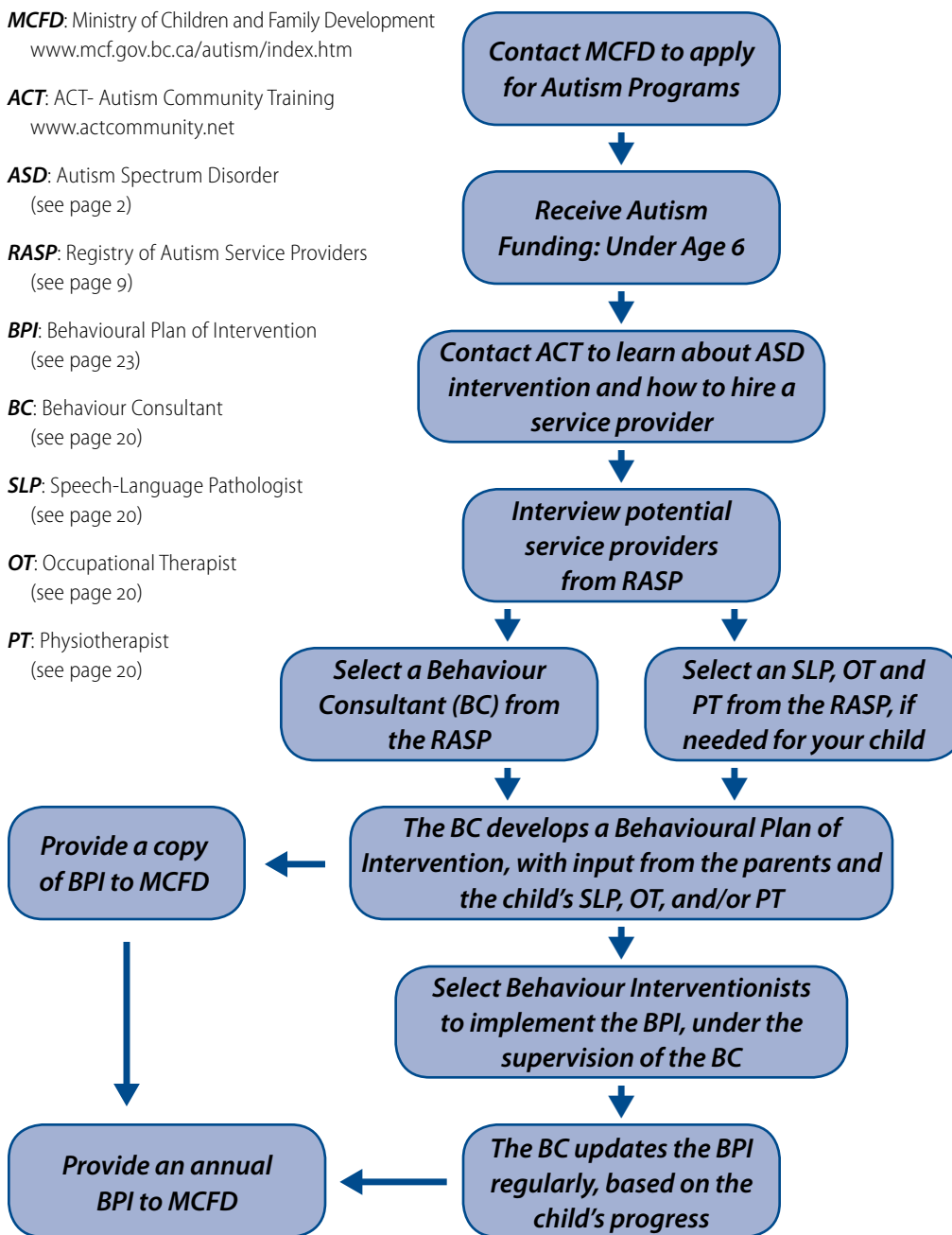
**BPI:** Behavioural Plan of Intervention  
(see page 23)

**BC:** Behaviour Consultant  
(see page 20)

**SLP:** Speech-Language Pathologist  
(see page 20)

**OT:** Occupational Therapist  
(see page 20)

**PT:** Physiotherapist  
(see page 20)

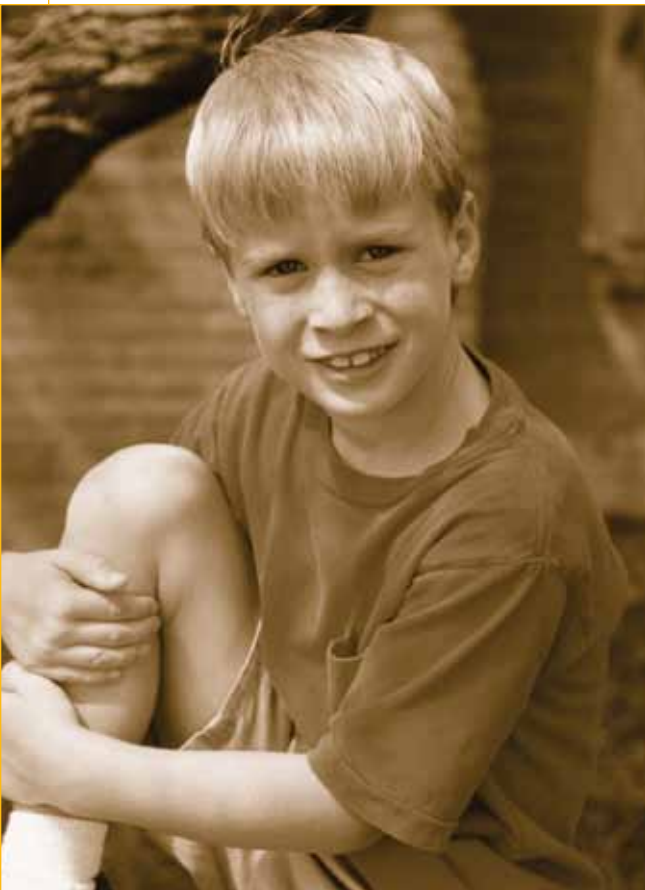




## ***Autism Funding: Ages 6 - 18***

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

Families of children aged 6 to 18 with a diagnosis of ASD may receive up to \$6,000 per year towards eligible intervention services that are outside of the child's school or educational program (please see Best Practices on page 21). Up to 20 per cent of the annual funding may be used to purchase training, travel and equipment related to autism intervention.



## ***What can Autism Funding: Ages 6 – 18 be used for?***

Funding may be used to purchase a range of autism intervention services, designed to address your child's individual needs. For example, you may choose to use the funding for consultation on a specific routine or behaviour issue that is impacting your child or family. Some examples of common routine issues are: toileting, bedtime, independent play, meal times, morning routines and transportation issues.

## ***Autism Funding: Ages 6 – 18 may only be used for the following:***

- Behaviour consultants
- Speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists
- Behaviour interventionists
- Life skills and social skills programs
- Out-of-school learning support/tutoring (not part of the regular school program)
- Specialized therapeutic activities and camps designed to address your child's ASD
- Dietary or nutritional counseling from a registered dietician/nutritionist
- Family counseling/therapy
- Other interventions as recommended by a professional/specialist (written pre-approval from the Autism Funding Unit recommended)
- Administrative costs (e.g., bookkeeping services, up to \$50 monthly)
- Applicable employer costs (e.g., employee income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and WorkSafeBC premiums, four per cent vacation pay)
- Up to 20 per cent of the funding may be used for training, travel costs to access autism

intervention and training (round trip greater than 80 kms), and equipment as necessary for effective intervention, outlined in a Justification for Equipment/Supplies form completed by a professional/specialist (see the **WEBLINK** below or Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 - Ineligible Expenses on page 16 for more information)

### ***Training within B.C.***

#### ***(round trip greater than 80 kms):***

- Reimbursement for registration and travel costs for parents or behaviour interventionists to attend 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 \$100 per night are eligible.
- Parking may be reimbursed to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges are eligible expenses.
- Educational books, DVDs and videos for parents (specific to autism).

### ***Travel costs to access***

#### ***autism intervention 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 \$100 per night are eligible.

- Parking may be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$15 per day.
- Ferry and toll charges are eligible expenses.

### ***Equipment and materials related to intervention:***

Equipment and materials necessary for the child's intervention must be requested in a Justification for Equipment/Supplies form completed by a professional/specialist from the following list:

- Behaviour consultant
- Physiotherapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Occupational therapist
- Registered psychologist
- Registered psychological associate
- Psychiatrist
- Paediatrician
- Neurologist

Other avenues of funding for equipment purchases or loans must be explored. Purchases must not duplicate those that would be approved under SET-BC, the At Home Program, other agencies providing equipment or that are typical expense for a child. Please see the **WEBLINK** below for more information on SET-BC.

## **WEBLINKS**

**Justification for Equipment/Supplies form:**  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm)

**SET-BC:** [www.setbc.org](http://www.setbc.org)

## *Autism Funding: Ages 6-18*

### *Ineligible Expenses*

Some interventions and equipment recommended by a professional/specialist are ineligible expenses. The following are examples of ineligible items:

- Home repairs, renovations, swimming pools, hot tubs, trampolines, playground equipment
- Household items, including appliances
- General recreation and sports enrolment fees
- Sports/fitness equipment, including bicycles
- Electronics, including televisions, CD players, stereos, MP3 players, game systems, video games, tracking devices and cellular phones/palm pilots
- Non-ASD specific CDs, DVDs, and videos
- Musical instruments (purchase or rental)
- Vitamins, medical supplies, incontinence supplies, orthotics
- Clothing, helmets
- Food (however, small reinforcers for Applied Behaviour Analysis therapy may be eligible)

The following are examples of services that are not eligible:

- Child care
- Respite
- Lessons (group or individual), such as swimming and karate
- Medical services

Not all ineligible expenses are listed. It is recommended that families contact the Autism Funding Unit at 1 877 777-3530 for pre-approval before purchasing items.



## Accessing Autism Programs

### Step 1:

Once an assessment is completed, you will receive a BCAAN Clinical Outcomes form or a Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of ASD form. If the form indicates a diagnosis of ASD and you would like to apply for autism programs, it is important to contact the local MCFD office as soon as possible to schedule a meeting with a CYSN Support Worker (see Contact Us on page 24).

The following documents are required:

- The BCAAN Clinical Outcomes form or Non-BCAAN (Private) Diagnosis of ASD form, showing a diagnosis of ASD (see Diagnosis and Assessment on page 6)
- Proof of your child's age (such as a birth certificate)
- Your child's BC Care Card
- An Application for Autism Programs.

The Application for Autism Programs can be found at: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/), or your CYSN Support Worker can provide you with one.

### Step 2:

Your CYSN Support Worker will meet with you to:

- Confirm your child's eligibility for autism programs
- Describe the autism programs, including the options available in your community
- Discuss additional planning and support service available through MCFD (please see the sidebar)

#### Tip for Parents

*Your child will be eligible for funding from the first day of the month that MCFD receives all required documents. It is suggested that you mail or fax the required documents to your local MCFD office before your meeting with a CYSN Support Worker (see Contact Us on page 24). The CYSN Support Worker will review the documents to ensure that they are complete.*

#### Tip for Parents

*In addition to autism programs, MCFD provides a range of supports for families of children and youth with special needs. The CYSN Support Worker will provide you with information about these supports.*

# Funding

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## Invoice Payment

Through an Autism Invoice Payment Agreement, 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 the service provider(s), and notify the Autism Funding Unit using a Request to Pay Service Providers/Suppliers form. (The non-profit agency ACT – Autism Community Training maintains a Registry of Service Providers that parents with children under six must choose from.) Service providers submit invoices to the Autism Funding Unit for services they have provided.

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

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.

Parents can contact the Autism Funding Unit at any time to confirm the amount of funds remaining in their child’s account.

Autism funding agreements are automatically renewed at the end of a child’s birth month.

*Parents 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. MCFD cannot make these payments on behalf of parents but can reimburse parents for these expenses.*

## Autism Funding Programs and Parent Responsibilities

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The autism funding programs offer flexibility and choice to parents.

It is important to know the responsibilities associated with these programs. Review the parental obligations listed in your Autism Invoice Payment Agreement and request clarification from the Autism Funding Unit if needed.

Parents’ responsibilities include:

- Using the funds for eligible autism intervention 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 the parent and 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*

- If the child is under age six:
  - Submitting a copy of the child's Behavioural Plan of Intervention within four months of entering into the Autism Invoice Payment Agreement
  - Selecting professional service providers from the Registry of Autism Service Providers
- Submitting a Request to Pay Service Providers/ Suppliers form to the Autism Funding Unit for each service provider, indicating the maximum amount that the service provider can invoice during the period listed on the Request to Pay form.
- Notifying the Autism Funding Unit 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
- Additional responsibilities as noted in the Autism Invoice Payment Agreement



## WEBLINKS

Resources of assistance in determining obligations as an employer and tax information:

### **Canada Revenue Agency**

(information specific to employment obligations) 1 800 959-5525  
[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4110/README.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4110/README.html)

### **Workers' Compensation Board - WorkSafeBC**

1 888 922-2768  
[www.worksafebc.com/employers\\_and\\_small\\_business/overview/default.asp](http://www.worksafebc.com/employers_and_small_business/overview/default.asp)

### **Employment Standards Branch**

### **Ministry of Labour and Citizen's Services**

1 800 663-3316  
 (or in Prince George, call: 250 612-4100)  
[www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/does-esa-apply.htm](http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/does-esa-apply.htm)

**Please note:** The Autism Funding Unit is not able to provide advice or answer questions with regards to employer responsibilities or taxation.

## Foster Parents and Children In Care

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

Services for children and youth with ASD are delivered by MCFD. The child or youth's guardianship worker completes the Autism Funding Application (see the **WEBLINK** below). CYSN Support Workers confirm eligibility and initiate access to autism funding.

For information on health supports available for children in care, please see the Health Supports Guide accessible through the **WEBLINK** below.

### **WEBLINKS**

Application Form for Autism Funding:  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/forms.htm)

**Ministry of Children and Family Development:**  
*Health Supports for Children in Care and Youth Agreements:*  
[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/pdf/health\\_supports\\_cic.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/pdf/health_supports_cic.pdf)

## Appeals or Complaints

If you have a concern about the service provided by the Autism Funding Unit, or about an autism funding decision, contact the Autism Funding Unit at 1 877 777-3530. If your complaint is not resolved, contact the manager, Autism Funding Unit, at 1 877 777-3530.

## Confidentiality and Your Privacy

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

### **WEBLINKS**

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:  
[www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/F/96165\\_00.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/F/96165_00.htm)

## Tips For Parents

### *Who Will Be Working with My Child?*

Depending on the needs of your child his or her therapy team may include:

- **Behaviour Consultant (BC):** Designs and/or develops the individualized Behavioural Plan of Intervention (BPI) and behaviour support plans, and provides ongoing supervision of the plans.
- **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):** Provides services that focus on verbal and non-verbal communication skill development and the oral-motor skills required for drinking and eating.
- **Occupational Therapist (OT):** Provides services to promote the development of the child's highest attainable level of participation in all daily activities
- **Physiotherapist (PT):** Provides services that focus on the prevention, identification and alleviation of movement dysfunction.
- **Behaviour Interventionist(s) (BI):** Implements the BPI, under the supervision of the Behavioural Consultant, typically on a one-to-one basis.

When hiring professionals, select someone whose training, experience and approach 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 selecting a professional to work with your child is available from ACT – Autism Community Training.

### WEBLINKS

ACT – Autism Community Training for the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) and information on hiring professionals: [www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)

The British Columbia Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists: [www.bcaslpa.ca](http://www.bcaslpa.ca)

The College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia: [www.cotbc.org](http://www.cotbc.org)

British Columbia Society of Occupational Therapists: [www.bcsot.org](http://www.bcsot.org)

The College of Physical Therapists of BC: [www.cptbc.org](http://www.cptbc.org)

Physiotherapy Association of BC: [www.bcphysio.org](http://www.bcphysio.org)





## **How Much Can I Expect to Pay for Services?**

The yellow box has guidelines to assist you and service providers in negotiating fees. These guidelines were developed in consultation with professionals and upon review of existing guidelines developed by professional associations. Although many factors may affect the fees charged by professionals, you can expect a correlation between the rate and their credentials, education and experience.

### **Fee Guidelines**

**BC:** \$60 - \$100 per hour  
(Registered psychologists:  
Up to \$150 per hour)

**OT:** \$80 - \$110 per hour

**SLP:** \$95 - \$120 per hour

**PT:** \$64-74 per visit

**BI(s):** \$10 - \$30 per hour  
\$15 to 20 per hour is common.

Service providers' rates may vary from these guidelines.

## **How Do I Know My Child is Receiving Quality Intervention?**

MCFD requires that interventions and programs for children under age six be based on best practices. "Best practices" refers to interventions and approaches that are supported by evidence and proven to be effective. These should also be used as a reference for children over age six.

### **Best Practices for Autism Intervention**

- Development of an individualized behavioural plan of intervention based on a curriculum that emphasizes: academic, communication, social/play skills, emotional/self regulation, motor/sensory functioning, independence/life skills
- Intensive one-to-one intervention at home, in preschool programs and in a variety of community settings on a year-round basis
- High levels of predictability and routine
- Highly supportive, structured teaching methods, based on the principles of applied behaviour analysis (ABA), that incorporate a variety of strategies to help your child acquire, generalize and maintain new skills
- Intervention progresses from more formal and structured settings to more natural environments
- Use of functional assessment and positive behavioural support techniques to address problem behaviours
- Collaboration between behaviour consultants and therapists such as speech-language pathology, occupational therapy and physical therapy
- Interaction with typical children in preschool or day-care settings
- Families are involved in the development, implementation and review of intervention

plans and receive training in order to help their child progress

- Deliberate planning for the transition from preschool to kindergarten
- Interventionists are trained
- Regular, ongoing monitoring of the child's progress

Adapted from the following publications: Dawson, G. & Osterling, J. (1997). *Early Intervention in Autism*. In M.J. Guralnick (Ed.), *The Effectiveness of Early Intervention* (pp. 307-326). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Lovaas, OI. *Teaching Individuals with Developmental Delays*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

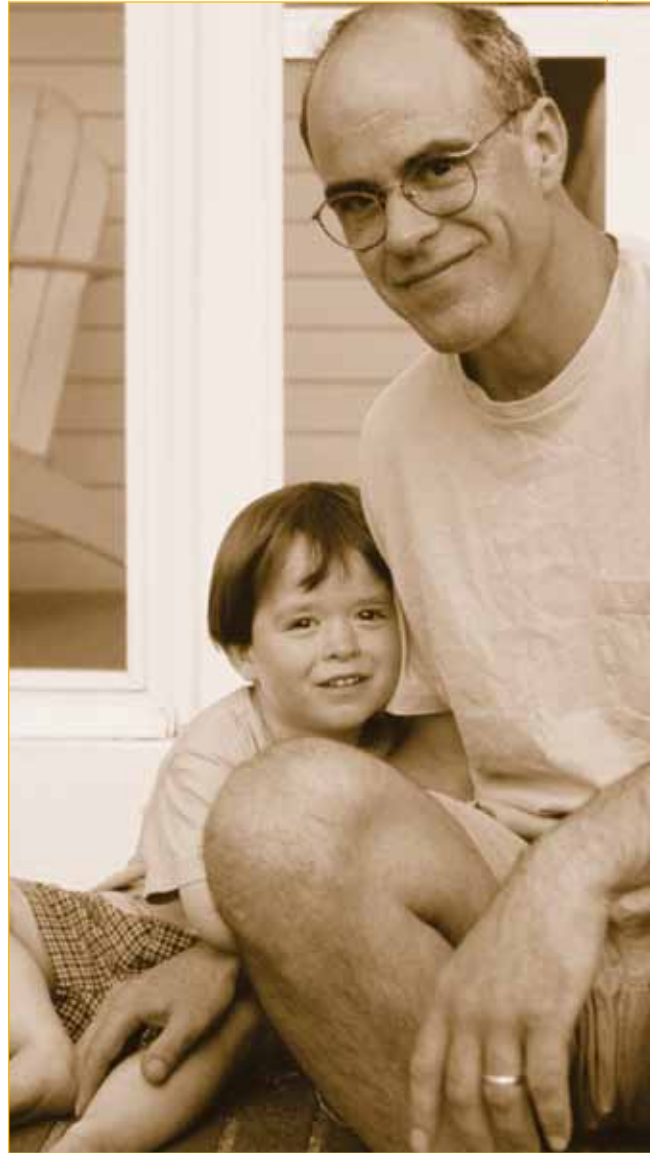
National Research Council (2001). *Educating Children with Autism*. Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

When choosing an intervention for your child, ask the service provider:

- Is there research that shows this intervention is effective, if so what kind of research is it?
- How will this intervention help my child function better?
- How will my child's progress be evaluated?
- What will be the measures and how often?
- How will the program be adjusted according to my child's progress?

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.

Information on selecting a professional to work with your child is available from ACT – Autism Community Training (see the **WEBLINK** opposite).



## WEBLINKS

ACT – Autism Community Training:  
[www.actcommunity.net/AI/Treatment/  
SelectPro.htm](http://www.actcommunity.net/AI/Treatment/SelectPro.htm)

## **What is a Behavioural Plan of Intervention (BPI)?**

A behavioural plan of intervention (BPI) is an individualized program designed for a specific child that focuses on identifying areas where the child needs intervention. It is developed and written by a behaviour consultant in collaboration with the parents of the child, and includes input from professionals who are members of the child's team (e.g., speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist).

A BPI is needed to put in place effective and suitable interventions for a child. The initial BPI also establishes a baseline that states "where the child is now" and looks towards "where we want to go." It is also a roadmap that outlines how intervention will proceed. Through regular reviews, the plan measures the child's progress. It is important that parents are part of the planning and review processes.

The BPI is required for children under the age of six. Although a BPI is not required for children older than six, it is recommended that intervention is always guided by a plan that is regularly reviewed.

## **A Behavioural Plan of Intervention (BPI) should:**

- Be completed within the framework of best practices
- Be based on a developmental curriculum that includes: identifying global goals for all areas of development (academic, communication, social skills/play skills, motor/sensory functioning and independence/life skills)
- Identify specific goals within the global goals
- Include input from specific professionals who are on the team, as appropriate
- Identify the specific teaching strategies or methods to be used to achieve each goal
- Use ongoing data collection procedures to monitor the child's progress and make adjustments to the child's program based on this information
- Use a functional approach to challenging behaviour
- Identify team members (including their contact information) and their responsibilities to ensure collaboration, communication and accountability
- List dates for regular review and updating of the plan, based on the child's individual needs (e.g., some children may require reviews as often as monthly)
- Include strategies for generalization and maintenance of acquired skills across different environments and ensure that these are regularly addressed, monitored and updated

See page 27 for a Behavioural Plan of Intervention (BPI) Template.

## Contact Us

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

### *Autism Funding Unit*

This unit is responsible for funding agreement processing, payments to families and service providers, and financial reconciliation.

For inquiries regarding eligible expenses and parental responsibilities associated with funding agreements:

In Victoria: 250 387-3530  
Toll-Free: 1 877 777-3530 (translation services available)  
Fax: 250 356-8578  
Web: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm)  
E-mail: [MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.AutismFundingUnit@gov.bc.ca)  
Mail: Autism Funding Unit  
P.O. Box 9776  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9S5

### *Service BC*

Service BC provides information and referral services for all provincial government programs and services and can provide you with contact information for local ministry offices.

In Victoria: 250 387-6121  
In Vancouver: 604 660-2421  
Elsewhere in BC: 1 800 663-7867

## **Appendix 1 : B.C. Service and Autism Organizations**

### ***ACT – Autism Community Training Society***

A not-for-profit society providing information and training on a wide range of autism-related topics. ACT also maintains the Registry of Autism Service Providers for the ministry.

Tel: 604 205-5467, Toll-Free: 1 866 939-5188

E-mail: [info@actcommunity.net](mailto:info@actcommunity.net)

Web: [www.actcommunity.net](http://www.actcommunity.net)

### ***The Autism Society of BC***

A parent-based and directed society providing support to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families in B.C. and the Yukon.

Tel: 604 434-0880, Toll-Free: 1 888 437-0880

E-mail: [administrator@autismbc.ca](mailto:administrator@autismbc.ca)

Web: [www.autismbc.ca](http://www.autismbc.ca)

### ***BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) – Provincial Health Services Authority***

Information on assessment/diagnosis of children who may have Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Tel: 604 453-8343

E-mail: [autism@phsa.ca](mailto:autism@phsa.ca)

Web: [www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/Autism/default.htm](http://www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/Autism/default.htm)

### ***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)

### ***Ministry of Children and Family Development***

The ministry provides services and planning support for children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities and for children and youth who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, or are eligible for the At Home Program (children with severe disabilities).

Web: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm)

### ***Families for Early Autism Treatment of British Columbia (FEAT of BC)***

Information for parents and concerned professionals working for universal access to effective autism treatment.

E-mail: [info@featbc.org](mailto:info@featbc.org)

Web: [www.featbc.org](http://www.featbc.org)

### ***Family Support Institute***

A family-directed organization providing information, training and province-wide networking to assist families and their communities.

Tel: 604 540-8374

E-mail: [fsi@bcacl.org](mailto:fsi@bcacl.org)

Web: [www.familysupportbc.com](http://www.familysupportbc.com)

### ***The Knowledge Network***

Provides information about autism and treatment options available in B.C.

Web: [www.knowledgenetwork.ca/autism/index.html](http://www.knowledgenetwork.ca/autism/index.html)

### ***Ministry of Children and Family Development Children and Youth with Special Needs***

Information on autism funding and programs:

Web: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm)

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

Web: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/index.htm)

## **Ministry of Education**

### **Special Education: Autism**

Information on special education programs and autism initiatives.

Web: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sped\\_res\\_docs.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sped_res_docs.htm)

### **Ministry of Health Services**

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

Tel: 250 952-1742, Toll-Free: 1 800 465-4911

Web: [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)

### **Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders (POPARD)**

An educational organization to help teachers, parents and para-professionals access information about autism and the B.C. school system's available resources.

Web: [www.autismoutreach.ca](http://www.autismoutreach.ca)

### **SET – BC**

Provides resources and training for assistive technology used in the school setting.

Tel: 604 261-9450

Web: [www.setbc.org](http://www.setbc.org)



## Appendix 2: Behavioural Plan of Intervention

(required for children under age 6)

Name of child:	<i>Child's date of birth:</i>	
Name of parent(s)/guardian(s):	<i>Today's date:</i>	<i>Date to review/update plan:</i>

### *Professionals involved in the child's program*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Role &amp; Responsibilities</b>	<b>Contact information</b>
<i>Behaviour consultant</i>			
<i>Occupational therapist</i>			
<i>Physiotherapist</i>			
<i>Speech language pathologist</i>			
<i>Supported Child Development consultant</i>			
<i>Supported Child Development worker</i>			
<i>Preschool/daycare supervisor</i>			
<i>Behaviour interventionist(s)</i>			
<i>Other</i>			

### **Family Goals:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The following is a list of domain areas that need to be addressed in the behavioural plan of intervention. With collaboration from family and professionals who are members of the child's intervention team, identify: specific goals/objectives, teaching procedures, measurable outcomes/mastery criterion for each domain and which family goal this objective is addressing.

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>Specific Goals/ Objectives</b>	<b>Teaching Procedures</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes/ Mastery Criterion</b>	<b>Family Goal</b>
<i>Social skills</i>				
<i>Play skills</i>				
<i>Communication</i>				
<i>Emotional functioning/ Self regulation</i>				
<i>Academics/ cognition</i>				
<i>Fine &amp; gross motor/ sensory functioning</i>				
<i>Life skills</i>				

\_\_\_\_\_  
Behaviour Consultant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Behaviour Consultant

*(In signing I confirm that I have assessed the child's skill level and will monitor his/her program)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent

*(In signing I agree the behavioural plan of intervention addresses my family's and child's needs)*



## Appendix 3: Autism Funding – Summary of Eligible Expenses

### **Autism Funding: Under Age 6 may only be used for:**

- Services of behaviour consultants, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists who are listed on the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP), at [www.actcommunity.net/](http://www.actcommunity.net/).
- Behaviour interventionists
- Administrative costs (up to \$100 monthly).
- Applicable employer costs (e.g., employee income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers Compensation Board premiums, four per cent vacation pay).

### **Autism Funding: Ages 6 – 18 may only be used for:**

- Behaviour consultants
- Speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists
- Behaviour interventionists
- Life skills and social skills programs
- Out-of-school support/tutoring (not part of regular school program)
- Specialized therapeutic activities and camps designed to address your child's ASD
- Dietary or nutritional counselling from a registered dietician/nutritionist
- Family counseling/therapy
- Other interventions recommended by a professional/specialist—pre-approval suggested
- Administrative costs (up to \$50 monthly).

- Applicable employer costs (e.g., employee income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers Compensation Board premiums, four per cent vacation pay).

### **Up to 20 per cent of BOTH Autism Funding: Under Age 6 and Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 may be used for:**

- Training within B.C.
- Travel costs to access autism intervention or training within B.C. (round trip greater than 80 kms)
- Equipment, as necessary for effective intervention, outlined in a Justification for Equipment/Supplies form, from a professional/specialist—pre-approval suggested

**Please note:** A professional/specialist is defined as a behaviour consultant, physiotherapist, speech-language pathologist, paediatrician, psychiatrist, registered psychologist, registered psychological associate, neurologist or occupational therapist.

**Call 1 877 777-3530  
for further information.**

## **Appendix 4: Autism Funding – Summary of Ineligible Expenses**

**Please note:** Some interventions and equipment recommended by a professional/specialist are ineligible expenses. The following are examples of items that are ineligible expenses:

- Home repairs, renovations, swimming pools, hot tubs, trampolines, playground equipment
- Household items, including appliances
- General recreation and sports enrolment fees
- Sports/fitness equipment, including bicycles
- Electronics, including televisions, CD players, stereos, MP3 players, game systems, video games, tracking devices, and cellular phones/palm pilots
- Non-ASD specific CDs, DVDs, and videos
- Musical instruments (purchase or rental)
- Vitamins, medical supplies, incontinence supplies, orthotics
- Clothing, helmets
- Food (however, small reinforcers for Applied Behaviour Analysis therapy may be eligible)

The following are examples of services that are not eligible:

- Child care
- Respite
- Lessons (group or individual), such as swimming and karate
- Medical services

***Not all ineligible expenses are listed. It is recommended that families contact the Autism Funding Unit at 1 877 777-3530 for pre-approval before purchasing items.***







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