

We understand that receiving an autism diagnosis for your child can be both a distressing and relieving experience. The diagnosis process can be long and discouraging, and even if you've had a suspicion for a while, finding out that your child does in fact have autism can be shocking. Compounding the situation is the overwhelming amount of information to sift through. Fortunately, there are meaningful treatment options available that can greatly improve the learning ability and quality of life of your child. An autism diagnosis does not spell the end, but rather the beginning of a lifetime of learning between you and your child. Raising a child with autism is challenging and sometimes frustrating, but there is help from the government and non-profit societies like Autism Society of British Columbia there to support you!

### Applying for Autism Funding in B.C.

Now that your child has a diagnosis, the first step is to apply for autism funding through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). MCFD provides funding and services for children with autism through their Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) branch.

- You will need to find your local Children and Youth with Special Needs MCFD office in order to apply for funding. You can do that [here](#).
- Call your local MCFD office as soon as possible. Funding will start as soon as CYSN receives your signed application along with the required supporting documents.
- Ask to talk with a CYSN Intake Worker to apply for autism funding for your newly diagnosed child.
- You will need your child's birth certificate, BC Care Card and a confirmed diagnosis in order to apply. You cannot apply if your child does not have an autism diagnosis.
- Children under six years of age receive \$22,000 a year.
- Children receive \$6,000 a year from their 6th birthday until their 19th Birthday (Autism Funding ends in the month before they turn 19)

The average age of diagnosis for B.C. children is seven. No matter what age your child is diagnosed at, there are treatment options available and progress is possible.

Click [here](#) to view MCFD's "A Parent's Handbook: Your Guide to Autism Programs".

### Team-based Treatment

In B.C., parents have a choice to hire their own service providers and decide what type of therapy to emphasize. In order to treat your child with the greatest efficiency, you'll need to build a treatment team or use a multi-disciplinary service provider. An autism team may include: a behaviour consultant, behaviour interventionist(s), a pediatrician, a registered psychologist, a psychiatrist, educators, occupational therapist and a speech-language pathologist or other professionals. Each individual with autism is unique and will require individualized services.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning it affects each individual differently. Symptoms vary in intensity and type from person to person. Learning more about autism and your child's symptoms is imperative in helping find autism professionals that fit your child and family's specific needs.

Click [here](#) to see what an autism team looks like.

### **Evidence-based Treatment**

Choosing evidence-based, scientifically validated treatment is essential in ensuring that your child receives the best treatment possible. If treatment methods do not have research to back them up, they risk slowing the development of your child.

Click [here](#) to learn more about specific treatments, and about what works and what doesn't.

### **Finding Service Providers**

The Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) is a listing of MFCD approved autism professionals. If your child is under six and is receiving funding from MFCD, you must hire behavior consultants, occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech pathologists from RASP in order to have the cost covered. Behavior interventionists do not need to be from RASP. If they are over six and receiving funding from MCFD, you are not required to hire autism professionals from RASP, although it is a great place to start. Click [here](#) to search RASP.

### **Talk to Us**

Have a question? Looking for further information? Our friendly and knowledgeable Information Officers and Branch Co-ordinators provide personalized support through email, phone, and in-person.

#### **Lower Mainland**

Lindy Chau  
(604) 434-0880  
lchau@autismbc.ca

Stella Hui  
(604) 434-0880  
shui@autismbc.ca

**Vancouver Island**

Teresa Everitt  
(250) 751-9278  
teveritt@autismbc.ca

**Interior BC**

Lisa Watson  
(250) 762-3076  
lwatson@autism.ca

**Northern BC**

Corey Walker  
(250) 961-7620  
cwalker@autism.ca

**Autism Society of BC**

#303 – 3701 E. Hastings Street Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6  
Telephone: (604) 434-0880  
Toll-free: 1-888-437-0880  
Fax: (604) 434-0801