

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. Even if you've expected the diagnosis, finding out that your child does have autism can be shocking. Compounding the situation is the overwhelming amount of information to process. Fortunately, there are meaningful therapies 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 an autistic child is challenging but there is help from the government and organizations like AutismBC.

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 on the autism spectrum through their Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) branch.

- You will need to contact your local Children and Youth with Special Needs MCFD office in order to apply for funding.
- 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).

No matter what age your child is diagnosed at, growth is possible.

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

Team-based Therapies

In B.C., parents have a choice to hire their own service providers. An autism team may include: a behavior consultant/analyst, behaviour interventionist(s) a pediatrician, a registered psychologist, a psychiatrist, occupational therapist and a speech language pathologist or other professionals. Each person 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 to finding autism professionals that fit your child and family's specific needs.

Evidence-based Therapy

Choosing evidence-based, scientifically validated therapy is essential in ensuring that your child receives the best opportunities for growth. If therapies do not have research to back them up, they may be less effective.

Click [here](#) to learn more about specific therapies, 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 the RASP list to have the cost covered. Behavior interventionists do not need to be from the RASP list. If children are over six and receiving funding from MCFD, you are not required to hire professionals from the RASP list, 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 provide personalized support through email, phone, and in-person.

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