AutismBC

ADVOCACY GUIDE



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YOUR VOICE MATTERS

> **This downloadable guide offers clear steps and links to support your personal advocacy journey across the lifespan. It aims to reduce overwhelm and help you decide your next right step.**

Advocacy is strongest when it reflects lived experience.

Autistic people and their families and supporters understand the real impact of policies, services, and systems in daily life. Decision-makers need to hear from you.

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How To Use This Guide

- Start where you are. You do not need to take every step. Choose what feels doable today.
- Save your notes, letters, and receipts in one folder. Keep dates and names. This helps if you need to escalate later.
- Bring a support person if you wish. You can ask for accommodations and plain language at any point.

Emotional safety first

Change can feel destabilizing. Take breaks, pause when needed, and return when you feel ready. It is okay to move slowly.

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Preamble: When to know it is time to advocate

This guide supports autistic adults, youth in transition, and caregivers of children and youth. Use the lowest-stress step you can take today. Your pace is valid.

- A service or funding changes is denied, or stops, and there is no clear written plan with dates.
- You are waiting without updates, or the pathway is unclear and you need plain-language steps.
- You are told to use a new program but there is no timely capacity where you live.
- You experience a safety, dignity, or accessibility concern at school, in health services, CLBC, housing, employment, or community programming.
- Communication is not neuro affirming, trauma informed, culturally safe, or accessible, and you need adjustments to participate.

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ADVOCACY RESOURCES

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There is strength in numbers and data: Want to have your voice heard, remain connected to outcomes, be part of a feedback loop? The more members we have, the stronger our voice. You can help today:

- Share your story: advocacy@autismbc.ca
- Become an AutismBC Member

Advocate Directly with Decision-Makers

- Write to your MLA
- Attend community information sessions
- Participate in public consultations

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Connect with Local Advocacy Networks

- Representative for Children and Youth (RCY)
- Complaints from Child or Family Service Providers
- BC Ombudsperson
- CPPM Procedure Chapter N: Vendor Complaints
- Self Advocate Net
- BC People First
- Disability Alliance BC
- Advocate for Service Quality

Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) — Children, Youth, Transitions

Program hubs and complaint routes (keep using existing links if already present; the following are added or consolidated for ease):

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- Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) overview
- CYSN engagement and information sessions
- Client Concern Resolution (adult page)
- Children and Teens complaint page
- Autism Funding Unit (contacts and My Family Services login)
- At Home Program Medical Benefits

Self-advocacy prompt: ask for a written transition plan with dates, who will contact you, and a call-back window. Keep copies of replies.

Adults with Developmental Disabilities — Community Living BC (CLBC)

- CLBC complaints and reviews (online form and Quality Assurance Office)

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- Request a review with the complaints process (stages and timelines)
- Advocate for Service Quality (independent, neutral)

Self-advocacy prompt: request written reasons for decisions, use the CLBC complaints process, and contact the Advocate for Service Quality if stuck.

Income and Disability Assistance (PWD) — Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

- Apply and manage online — My Self Serve
- Disability assistance overview and eligibility
- Access services by phone or office
- Reconsideration and appeals + independent tribunal

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Self-advocacy prompt: note the 20-business-day reconsideration deadline and the 7-business-day tribunal deadline after reconsideration.

Health Services and Regulators (Adults and Children)

- Patient Care Quality Office (first step) and Patient Care Quality Review Board (escalation)
- Ministry of Health complaints and navigation
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC complaints
- College of Health and Care Professionals of BC public complaints (OT, PT, SLP, Psych, etc.)
- Adult abuse or neglect — report to your regional Designated Agency (see your health authority or CLBC)

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Self-advocacy prompt: in your PCQO request, ask for a written response, include dates and impacts, and escalate to the Review Board if needed.

Education — K-12 and Post-Secondary

- K-12 Inclusive Education policy
- Inclusive Education Services Manual
- School Act section 11 appeals and Appeals Regulation
- Post-secondary Accessibility Services directory (StudentAid BC resource)
- ACE-BC supports for Deaf, hard of hearing and DeafBlind students
- EducationPlannerBC inclusive education hub

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Self-advocacy prompt: contact your Accessibility/ Disability Resource office early and request an accommodations letter before the term begins.

Personal Planning and the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT)

- PGT contact for adult services and investigations
- Representation Agreements (RA7 and RA9) — Nidus resources and forms

Self-advocacy prompt: adults can create a Representation Agreement to name trusted supporters for health and personal decisions in advance.

Accessibility and Human Rights

- Accessible BC Act overview and committees
- BC Human Rights Tribunal and BC Human Rights Commissioner resources

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Self-advocacy prompt: request the centre's issue resolution policy and a written response with timelines if a request is delayed.

Work and Employment

- Find your local WorkBC Centre
- Issue resolution examples (ask your centre for its policy)

AutismBC remains committed to advocating alongside you.

When we speak together, we strengthen our collective voice across British Columbia.