

Updated: April 8, 2020

Common Questions and Answers for Families accessing/applying to the At Home Program (AHP)

Q1: We are waiting for an assessment for our At Home Program (AHP) application, will this be delayed?

A1: During the COVID-19 pandemic, nursing assessors may not be available to conduct regular assessments. If your child is likely to be eligible for the At Home Program and appears to meet the [AHP eligibility criteria](#) according to the eligibility committee, they will be temporarily admitted without an assessment until assessors become available. To apply to the AHP, you must:

- Apply to the AHP using the [AHP Application Form](#) found on the [AHP website](#);
- Provide supportive documentation from a regulated health professional (e.g. Physical Therapist or Pediatrician) describing the child's functional need for support for daily living activities (eating, dressing, bathing and toileting);
- Send your application to your [AHP regional office](#).

After the COVID-19 pandemic period, your child must undergo an assessment to continue enrollment on the AHP.

Q2: My child is scheduled for a reassessment soon, will that be delayed?

A2: During the COVID-19 pandemic, nursing assessors may not be available to conduct regular assessments. Children currently on the AHP will maintain their current eligibility until assessors become available.

Q3: My child needs to be discharged from hospital or has been diagnosed with a palliative condition, will we still be able to access urgent admission to the AHP?

A3: Yes. The [AHP admission processes](#) are unchanged for urgent admissions. Eligibility committees and regional advisors will maintain regular processes for urgent admissions.

Q4: Will my School Aged Extended Therapies continue?

A4: MCFD is supportive of virtual care sessions where appropriate, and parents are in the best position to make that decision. MCFD encourages families to have discussions with providers so they are confident virtual care is helpful for your child and family. If you decide virtual care is the best course of action for your unique family situation, reach out to your regular professionals to plan next-steps.

This may include a teleconference call or virtual care. Virtual care is a therapy appointment, consultation, or parent coaching session with a regulated health professional done through an online or telecommunication platform (e.g. Skype or teleconference call). In general, virtual care is not appropriate for initial or maintenance *assessments*, but virtual care for *regular check-up or maintenance therapy/intervention visits* is possible.

If virtual care is not the best option for you and your family, your service provider may choose to offer in-person care. To support in-person appointments, you and your family can use the [COVID-19 Self Assessment tool](#) and the [COVID-19 preventative measures information](#) to determine if it would be safe to bring a professional into your home; regulated health professionals (such as Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists) are mandated to follow the [BC Centre for Disease Control's COVID-19 Care instructions](#).

Q5: Will we be able to continue to get medical supplies to support our child?

A5: The [Public Distribution Centre \(PDC\)](#) is still delivering supplies as normal. Services providing supplies and repairing equipment for people with extra support needs have been deemed a [COVID-19 BC essential service](#). You can contact the PDC about your authorized supplies. If you have specific questions about Medical Benefits, you can e-mail MCF.MedicalBenefitsProgram@gov.bc.ca or call toll free 1 888 613-3232. Other contact details are available in the [AHP guide](#).

If you are receiving direct funding, you must keep all receipts for all purchases billed to the AHP medical benefits for three years.

Q6: Will I be able to access support to get my child's equipment repaired?

A6: Yes. [CMEDS](#) is still in full operation with enhanced cleaning and some adjustments to equipment pick up and drop off.

Q7: How can I contact my CYSN worker?

A7: If you're unsure of who your CYSN worker's contact information or need help reaching your local MCFD office, you can [search for your regional CYSN office](#) and call or e-mail them to learn more.

Q&A Regarding AHP Service Delivery

Q8: Will services continue?

A8: Yes. Some services may transition to virtual service delivery, but the Ministry is dedicated to preserving essential services for children and youth with special needs wherever possible. Support services for children with extra support needs have been designated as essential services. Please see the [List of COVID-19 Essential Services](#) for additional detail.

Q9: Will home visits continue?

A9: The Ministry encourages continued service delivery where possible and we continue to follow the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer. To support in-person appointments, you and your family can use the [COVID-19 Self Assessment tool](#) and the [COVID-19 preventative measures information](#) to determine if it would be safe to bring a professional into your home; regulated health professionals (such as Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists) are mandated to follow the [BC Centre for Disease Control's COVID-19 Care instructions for vulnerable people](#).

Q10: Will urgent admissions be prioritized?

A10: Urgent admissions to the AHP are prioritized in the current system, and this will continue to be the case.

Q11: What additional financial resources are available to families during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A11: Please look to the [Federal COVID-19 financial support plan](#) and the [BC Provincial government's COVID-19 response](#) learn more about emergency benefits that are available to you and your family.

MCFD is allowing for more flexible respite funding so families can purchase services not usually allowed, including: services during school hours, home making services, and sibling care. Additionally, MCFD is initiating an emergency relief fund for children/youth with special needs and their families that have demonstrated a need but are not receiving services (e.g. families that are eligible for respite funding but are not currently receiving benefits). Please speak to your CYSN worker to determine which resources are right for your family and to learn more.

Q&A about Services that Transition to Virtual Care

Q12: What is virtual care?

A12: Virtual care is a therapy appointment, consultation, or parent coaching session with a regulated health professional done through an online or telecommunication platform (e.g. skype or teleconference call). In general, virtual care is not appropriate for initial or maintenance *assessments*, but we do support virtual care for *regular check-up or maintenance therapy/intervention visits*.

Q13: Can School Aged Extended Therapy Funding be used to provide virtual care?

A13: Yes, School Aged Extended Therapy funding can be used for virtual care. In general, follow up appointments are considered appropriate for virtual Care, where general guidance and advice can be offered by the therapist. Service providers can provide parent coaching and deliver services through electronic means in compliance with Regulatory Colleges and provincial privacy regulations.

Q14: Who decides if virtual care is an option for serving a child's needs through the School Aged Extended Therapies Program?

A14: Parents/ caregivers make the final decision on whom and how services are provided for their child. Therefore, if the therapist suggests virtual provision of an eligible service, it is up to the parent/ caregiver to decide if that supports the therapy plan. Essentially, each therapy service should be goal directed, based on practical meaningful outcomes and an identified family priority.