

Updated: April 8, 2020

Common Questions and Answers for Families Accessing/Applying to Autism Funding (AF)

Q1: Will there be interruptions to Autism assessment?

A1: ASD assessments are completed through the BC Autism Assessment Network, funded by the Ministry of Health. Please contact phsacomm@phsa.ca for information on assessments.

While waiting for an assessment, families can contact Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC) to learn about resources and supports available in their communities. Connect with AIS BC and find information on the MCFD [Autism website](#).

Q2: What if I need new equipment and cannot get a therapist signature?

A2: Typically, families are required to have a therapist sign off on Justification for Equipment (JFE) requests to authorize payments for equipment and materials to support children/youth intervention plan. However, with social distancing instructions in place and many service providers reducing services, families are unable to adequately meet this expectation.

For the Interim COVID-19 period the Autism Funding Branch will accept detailed JFE requests linked to the child's Behavioural Plan of Intervention submitted and signed by the agreement signatory with therapist's supported e-mail consult where possible. Agreement signatories will be advised to look at items or pieces of equipment that would enhance their current Behavioural Plan of Intervention and be consistent with current policy.

Q3: Can families carry over their Autism Funding into the next Funding Period?

A3: No. Funding period extensions are not approved at this time. Families are encouraged to connect with their service provider teams and plan alternate services at this time. Up to 35% of funding can be utilized to purchase items or pieces of equipment that would enhance their current Behavioural Plan of Intervention. Typically, this is restricted to 20%, however increasing to 35% will enable families to purchase equipment and items that assist in learning as families and children adapt to home learning and virtual instructional approaches.

Q4: What mental health supports are available for children with Autism?

A4: During this time, “Family Counseling/Therapy” is an eligible program expense for all age categories accessing Autism Funding program. Families will be able to direct some of their child’s Autism Funding during COVID–19 to access these services through a virtual care (tele-therapy) arrangement with a qualified provider. Typically, this is restricted to children over 6 years

Q5: Will services continue for my child during the pandemic?

A5: 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.

Q5: Will home visits continue?

A5: Home visits will be made with less frequency during this time, but the Ministry encourages continued service delivery where possible. 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](#).