

Effective Date: April 16, 2020

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

During this pandemic there are special challenges facing families of children and youth with special needs whose children/youth may not be able to access school, childcare, respite care and other therapeutic supports and programs. Families may also have additional financial hardship related to caring for a child/youth with special needs during this time. Families should be encouraged to explore Federal and Provincial benefits where available.

Eligible families are facing increased challenges securing Respite and other supports due to reduced availability of caregivers and Provincial Health Officer guidelines and recommendations regarding physical distancing. During these unique times, MCFD will support families with flexible respite options, streamlined processes to reduce the burden on families and provision of emergency funds where needed. Respite funding should continue to be used for its intended purpose of providing families with a break from caregiving activities where possible.

Effective April 16, 2020, the following three interim measures will be introduced and in place until further notice:

#### 1. Increased Flexibility in the use of At Home Respite Funding/Direct Funded Respite

Families are able to explore flexible respite options during this period such as:

- Using Respite funds during school hours
- Meal prep/grocery shopping assistance
- Home maker supports
- Caregiver relief support (e.g. family member providing care for children)
- On-line programs, toys or entertainment for children who are CYSN eligible
- Counselling services
- Other services that support family functioning; and
- Consistent with the emergency fund, families are able to use respite funds to pay themselves if other options are unavailable to them.

CYSN workers are available to support families upon request.

#### 2. Streamlining Paperwork and Renewal Process for At Home Respite/Direct Funded Respite Agreements

- Families are not required to provide Record of Expense forms to reconcile funds received under Respite Agreements expiring between April 1st and June 30th, 2020.

- Agreements expiring during this time period will automatically roll over with a two-month grace period for families to submit a signed copy of the Respite Agreement.
- An automatic renewal process will be operationalized by Finance/Accounts with CYSN DOOs involvement and approval of payments.
- Records of expenses for new/renewed agreements should be kept for reconciliation of those agreements.

**Note:** Signed agreements can be submitted electronically by sending a photo or scanning a copy of the signature page to the CYSN worker.

Newly approved Respite Agreements for families not already receiving payments will require an initial agreement to be signed and processed for payment set up. Agreements can be sent to families in a password protected email. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Streamlining Paperwork and Renewal of Enhanced Respite Agreements**

- Families will need to continue reconciling Enhanced Respite Agreements before they are renewed.
- Record of Respite Expense forms can be provided electronically (scanned, photo images).
- Families will need to sign a new Agreement if Enhanced Respite is going to be extended.

**Note:** Agreements can be sent to families in a password protected email.

Signed agreements can be submitted electronically by sending a photo or scanning a copy of the signature page.

### **3. COVID-19 Emergency Relief Funds:**

This is a financial benefit of \$225 per month available to families during the pandemic. It is intended to help alleviate some of the stress associated with caring for children with extra support needs as physical distancing limits the number of services available.

#### **Funding Parameters**

To support consistency in decision making regarding the Emergency Relief funds the following principles are to be applied in determining dispersal of funding to families:

- A. Priority 1 children on the waitlist, eligible for CYSN Family Support Service but not yet receiving service
- B. Priority 2 children on the waitlist, eligible for CYSN Family Support Service but not yet receiving service; and/or
- C. Families currently receiving services but are presenting to CYSN with risk of family disruption or imminent health and safety concern (guided by policy and local process).

Families will receive a direct payment of \$225/month to purchase supports help alleviate family stress levels. These supports may include but are not limited to:

- meal prep/grocery shopping assistance
- home maker supports
- caregiver relief support (e.g. family member providing care for children)
- on-line programs toys or entertainment for children who are CYSN eligible
- counselling services
- and other services that support family functioning
- families are able to use respite funds to pay themselves if other options are unavailable to them.

#### **Procedures:**

- For detailed information please refer to Interim *COVID-19 Steps to Process Emergency Relief Support Fund Payments 15-Apr-2020*.

#### **Where to Find More Information:**

There is additional information for families in FAQs on the CYSN Covid-19 [website](#).

If you have further questions, please contact your Director of Practice and for DAAs contact your Practice Analysts.