

# Guidelines

## Additional Direct Funding and/or

## Applied Behaviour Analysis- based Services and Supports

## Autism Intervention Program\*

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)

August 2016

*\* To be read in conjunction with "Guidelines: One-Time Direct Funding, Autism Intervention Program", May 2016*

[Ontario.ca/autism](http://Ontario.ca/autism)

# Table of Contents

Overview of Family Choice .....	3
Administration .....	6
Behavioural Services and Supports.....	10
Information for Families .....	14

# Overview of Family Choice

1

## Overview of Family Choice

As communicated by the Minister of Children and Youth Services on June 28, 2016, throughout the transition period to the new Ontario Autism Program (OAP), children who are transitioning off the waitlist for Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) through the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) will be provided with a choice to receive additional direct funding or priority access to government-funded Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)-based services and supports.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2016/06/strengthening-the-ontario-autism-program.html>

Families with children on the waitlist for Intensive Behavioural Intervention services who are five years and older; or who will be turning five by March 31, 2018 and who have elected to receive one-time funding, will be transitioned off the IBI waitlist and will receive \$8,000 to purchase eligible community services and supports to help meet their child's needs as per the *MCYS Guidelines, One-Time Direct Funding, May 2016*. If a child under the age of five has applied to the AIP, has been found eligible for IBI and will turn five before March 31, 2018, the family is eligible for direct funding and can receive the \$8,000 in one-time funding in accordance with the above-noted guidelines. These families may elect to receive this direct funding and be removed from the IBI waitlist. These families are eligible to receive direct funding in accordance with these guidelines.

Once families have spent their initial \$8,000 in direct funding, and the AIP lead agency has reconciled the \$8,000 on the basis of documentation provided by the families, they will be able to choose between the following options:

- Additional direct funding payments of \$10,000 per child to purchase eligible behavioural services and supports to help meet their child's needs (see Section 3 for additional information regarding behavioural services and supports); or
- Priority access to government-funded Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)-based services and supports. ABA-based services and supports will be provided as per the *"ABA-Based Services and Supports for Children and Youth with ASD" Guidelines, July 2011*.

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/specialneeds/guidelines/guidelines-2011.aspx>

Families will continue to be offered this choice each time their direct funding payment has been spent and reconciled or a block of ABA-based services has been completed, until their child's spot is available in the new Ontario Autism Program beginning in June 2017. Families will have the option to choose between a new \$10,000 direct funding payment or an additional block of ABA-based services each time. Families will continue to receive either direct funding or ABA-based services and supports, based on their choice, until their child's spot becomes available in the new program.

Children can be on the ABA-based services and supports waitlist but will not be eligible to receive publicly-funded ABA-based services and supports while they are receiving additional direct funding. Children will remain and retain their original spot on the ABA-based services and supports waitlist during the transition period, regardless of which option they choose. If families are not already on the ABA-based services and supports waitlist, AIP lead agencies will ensure that families are placed on the ABA-based services and supports waitlist prior to receiving the additional direct funding or priority access to ABA-based services and supports.

While families are spending their additional direct funding payments, they can also access additional government programs for children with special needs for which they are eligible, including healthy child development programs, children's rehabilitation and respite services, as well as other autism services such as Autism Ontario's Potential Programme and March break and summer camps. Families, where eligible, can also continue to access the Special Services at Home (SSAH) and the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) programs.

# Administration

# 2

## Administration

AIP lead agencies will offer to meet with families individually to explain their options of additional direct funding and/or priority access to ABA-based services and supports. At these meetings, providers will review the terms and conditions of both options, review eligible and ineligible expenses for the initial or additional direct funding and may offer suggestions and advice about helpful available resources.

Families who opt to receive additional direct funding will be responsible for choosing private service providers to deliver eligible behavioural services and supports. AIP lead agencies will not clinically re-assess children's service needs as part of this process, or approve, monitor or provide clinical oversight of the behavioural services selected and purchased by families. Ensuring appropriate qualifications and expertise of the chosen behavioural services providers is the responsibility of the family. Please see Section 3 of these guidelines for information on the professionals who can deliver behavioural services and provide clinical supervision.

Families will be required to enter into a service agreement with their AIP lead agency, indicating each choice of supports made throughout the transition period.

For families who choose the additional direct funding, the AIP lead agency will provide funding directly to the parent or caregiver who signed the service agreement within 10 business days of signing the service agreement.

A parent or caregiver is defined as the legal guardian of the child who is primarily responsible for care and upbringing of the child.

Parents or caregivers are responsible for paying service providers for services directly using the additional direct funding payments they receive. Please see Section 3 for a list of eligible expenses. It is anticipated that \$10,000 will allow families to purchase behavioural services and supports for approximately 10 weeks.

Families who choose to receive the initial or additional direct funding are required to account for the use of funds by submitting documentation and proof of payment to their AIP lead agency. Required documentation includes a record of what service was provided, who provided the service, the service provider's signature, and the date that the service was received. If supporting documentation is not provided to the AIP lead agency, the difference will be subtracted from future direct funding payments. If families are unsure whether a service is eligible, they are encouraged to discuss it with their lead AIP agency prior to purchasing the service.

Documentation may be submitted for eligible services received/purchased on or after the date of the last receipt submitted for a previous direct funding payment to the AIP lead agency.

It is the responsibility of families to ensure that invoices are submitted to AIP lead agencies. It is suggested that invoices be submitted in regular intervals (e.g., monthly). If it is determined that funding was spent on ineligible services, the AIP lead provider will take steps to recover the funds from the parent who signed the service agreement. All documentation submitted to the AIP lead agency is subject to audit by the Ontario government.

Once the funding has been spent and reconciled, or a block of ABA-based services and supports is complete, families will have the choice to receive a subsequent payment of \$10,000 per child or priority access to ABA-based services and supports. These options will continue to be offered until the child's spot in the new program becomes available.

If families who have chosen the additional direct funding wish to receive an additional direct payment upon completion and reconciliation of current funding, they must notify their AIP lead agency a minimum of 30 business days prior to the anticipated completion of their current additional direct funding payment to prevent disruption in service continuity. This time is needed for lead agencies to receive and reconcile receipts, renew the funding agreement and issue the payment. If families wish to receive priority access to ABA-based services and supports instead of receiving a subsequent additional direct funding payment, they must notify their AIP lead agency a minimum of 45 business days prior to the anticipated completion of their current additional direct funding payment to prevent service disruption.



AIP lead agencies are expected to reconcile all submitted documentation within a maximum of 30 business days after the last receipt is submitted for the full \$10,000 payment.

It is the responsibility of parents to determine their income tax obligations with respect to this funding for income tax purposes.

# Behavioural Services and Supports



# Behavioural Services and Supports

## Eligible Services

The list of services eligible for purchase with the additional direct funding described in these guidelines is focused on behavioural services and supports to bridge children to the new Ontario Autism Program. There are no changes to the eligible and ineligible services for the initial \$8,000 direct funding. Please refer to the guidelines “*One-Time Direct Funding, May 2016*” for more information. Eligible services must meet the definition of a behavioural service and support, be individualized goal-directed services for the child and be clinically appropriate and clinically supervised. These elements are described below.

## Definition of Behavioural Services and Supports

- Behavioural services and supports are intervention services based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). These services are evidence-based, supported by research and use methods based on scientific principles of learning and behaviour to help people:
  - learn new behaviours and build skills that support learning, language, and problem solving
  - increase adaptive behaviours that may be occurring too infrequently (including daily living and social domains)
  - decrease problematic behaviours (e.g., behaviours that negatively impact everyday activities).
- ABA interventions are based on scientific research and the direct observation and measurement of behaviour and the environment. This ensures that programs are developed, monitored on an ongoing basis and refined based on objective rather than subjective information.
- The practice of behaviour analysis expressly excludes psychological assessments for the purposes of diagnosis, psycho-educational assessments, speech therapy, occupational therapy, diagnosis of a mental or physical disorder, neuropsychology, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, hypnotherapy, long-term counseling as treatment modalities, and any other treatment, therapy, or technique that does not meet the definition above.

These services will include the following elements:

## 1. Individualized Goal-Directed Services for the Child

- Services may include a comprehensive assessment of the client's current skill level and needs to inform treatment planning by determining specific goals for the child.
- An individualized behaviour-analytic treatment plan will be developed that uses reinforcement and other behavioural principles, but excludes the use of methods or techniques that would not qualify as behaviour analytic treatments (see definition above).
  - Program materials and/or other supporting equipment that are required based on the child's assessed needs and are included as part of the child's treatment plan may be eligible for reimbursement, if recommended by the professional providing service to the child.
- Services will include direct support and training of family members and other involved professionals to promote maintenance and generalization of skills.
- Direct observational data on behavioural targets will be collected before, during and after treatment to assess the child's progress toward treatment goals.

## 2. Clinically Appropriate and Clinically Supervised

- Services will be clinically appropriate based on the child's needs.

### Professionals Who Can Supervise Services

- Services will include clinical supervision by:
  - A Regulated Health Professional as chosen by the family, who has expertise in developmental disorders, autism, child/adolescent development, and behaviour analysis; and/or
  - A Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA or BCBA-D) with experience supervising the delivery of ABA-based services and supports for children diagnosed with ASD.

### Professionals Who Can Provide Services

- As part of your child's behaviour-analytic treatment plan, services may be provided by one or more of the following professionals:

- Psychologists and/or psychological associates with ABA training and experience working with children with autism;
  - Board-Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA or BCBA-D) and/or individuals working under the supervision of a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA or BCBA-D) who have graduated from a recognized university or community college program in behavioural sciences or a related health or social service discipline with specific training in ABA intervention strategies and experience working with children with autism;
  - Occupational therapists with ABA training and experience working with children with autism; and/or
  - Speech-language pathologists with ABA training and experience working with children with autism.
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- It is the family's responsibility to ensure that the professionals providing services to their child are in good standing with their respective college, if applicable, and/or possess the qualifications and expertise to provide behavioural services.
  - A maximum of \$1,000 of a \$10,000 payment may be used to pay for travel costs (excluding accommodations and meals) within Canada to access eligible services. Travel costs can be claimed for having a provider travel to the family, and/or a family travel to a private provider.

# Information for Families

4

# Information for Families

As families start to plan the spending of their additional direct funding payments, they may wish to explore existing resources that provide information on what to consider when hiring professionals to deliver behavioural services.

These include:

## **Autism Parent Resource Kit**

An online resource to help parents, caregivers and families better understand autism and the range of services and supports available in Ontario.

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/autism/aprk/index.aspx>

## **Autism Intervention Program (AIP) Family Supports**

Families who have questions regarding finding the right services for their child are encouraged to contact their local AIP lead agency for support. The supports that AIP lead agencies will provide will be based on families' individual needs, and may include providing information to families, connecting families to supports and services in their communities, and helping families to identify, plan and coordinate services for their child.

## **Autism Ontario Resources**

### **ABACUS**

Provides general information on Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services as well as a searchable listing of private ABA service providers available in Ontario.

<http://www.abacuslist.ca/>

### **SPIRALE**

Provides information and tip sheets on what to expect from a regulated professional who might provide service for a child or family, as well as a searchable listing of professionals available in Ontario.

<http://www.autismontario.com/client/aso/spirale.nsf/web/guide?OpenDocument>

## **Autism Ontario Local Chapters**

<http://www.autismontario.com/Client/ASO/ao.nsf/web/OntarioMap>

## **Behaviour Analyst Certification Board Guidelines on the Provision of Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Provides information on how to identify qualified ABA practitioners.

## **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)**

[http://bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ABA\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_ASD.pdf](http://bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ABA_Guidelines_for_ASD.pdf)

## **Contact Information for Professional Bodies**

College of Psychologists and Psychological Associates of Ontario

- Parents can confirm the membership of psychologists and psychological associates with the College on this website:

[https://members.cpo.on.ca/public\\_register/new](https://members.cpo.on.ca/public_register/new)

## **Behaviour Analyst Certification Board**

- Parents can confirm the certification of Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBAs), Behaviour Certified Behaviour Analysts-Doctoral (BCBA-Ds) and Board Certified Assistants Behaviour Analysts (BCaBAs) on this website:

<http://info.bacb.com/o.php?page=100155>



