

Are You a Parent of a Child or Youth With Special Needs?

“Children and youth with special needs” refers to children and youth up to 19 years of age who need significant additional educational, medical/health and social/environmental support — beyond that required by children in general — to improve their health, development, learning, quality of life, participation and community inclusion.

How Can I Find Out if My Child Has a Special Need?

If you have concerns about your child’s development, please see your family doctor.

Your family doctor may conduct a developmental assessment or refer you to a specialized service.

What if My Child is Diagnosed With a Special Need?

When a child is diagnosed with a disability, or identified as at risk for developmental delay, parents and other family members are understandably anxious. You may want to begin by identifying available services based on the individual circumstances and needs of your child. A good place to start is by contacting your local Ministry of Children and Family Development office to find out about possible services and supports. In addition, other parents can often provide practical information and emotional support.



Local Offices

Provincial Service Delivery Area Map

The Ministry of Children and Family Development serves all communities in thirteen service delivery areas across the province.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/sda/index.htm

Local Contacts

To find out information about local Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) services and supports, contact your local office.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/contacts.htm

Contact Us

For more information, please contact:
Children and Youth with Special Needs Policy
Ministry of Children and Family Development
PO Box 9719 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9S5
Phone: 250 952-6044
Email: mcf.childrenyouthspecialneeds@gov.bc.ca

Visit our website:
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/index.htm

Services and Supports for Children and Youth with Special Needs

Raising a child can be very rewarding and also very challenging — there are unique rewards and challenges for families raising a child with special needs.



Ministry of
Children and Family
Development

An Overview

In B.C., the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) offers a range of programs and supports for you and your child. The ministries of Health and Education also offer programs that may assist you.

Services are intended to promote your child's healthy development, maximize quality of life, and enhance your ability to meet your child's needs and support their full participation in community life.

MCFD Children and Youth with Special Needs Workers have specialized training and expertise to support families of children and youth with special needs. They can help you access MCFD and other government programs and link you to other supports in your community.



Programs and Services

Access to these services depends upon a child's eligibility for the specific program and the available resources in the community.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Funding Programs

Funding to assist families with the cost of autism intervention services that promote communication, social-emotional, pre-academic/ academic and life-skills development.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/funding_programs.htm

Infant Development Program/ Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP)

Home-based services for infants up to age three (AIDP may be up to school entry) who have, or are at risk for, developmental delay to optimize their development and participation in a range of community activities.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/eci.htm

Supported Child Development/ Aboriginal Supported Child Development

Additional support that children with special needs may need to participate in preschool and child-care settings.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/eci.htm

Early Intervention Therapy Program

Community-based physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and family support services.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/eits.htm

School-Aged Therapy

Occupational therapy and physiotherapy services for school-aged children with special needs.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/school_aged_therapies.htm

Community Brain Injury Program

Planning, co-ordination and funding for short-term, acute rehabilitation services and assistance with important life transitions for children and youth with acquired brain injuries.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/brain_injury.htm

Family Support Services

A range of services to support parents in caring for their child or youth with special needs in the home, such as respite (a break from care giving) and behavioural support to address challenging behaviour.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/family_support.htm

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Key Worker and Parent Support

Specialized support for families with children and youth with confirmed or suspected FASD.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/fasd/kw_support.htm

At Home Program

Medical and/or respite benefits assisting parents in caring for children with severe disabilities at home.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/at_home/index.htm

Nursing Support Services

Specific nursing services in homes, schools and child care settings, for children with eligible special health care needs.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/nursing.htm

Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

A range of services supporting Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind individuals and their families including family development, youth transition support, a residential program and consultation on access issues.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/pdhhs/index.htm

Provincial Outreach and Professional Supports

Specialized services for children with significant disabilities to support their community-based teams in such areas as custom assistive devices (e.g., wheelchair prescription and fitting), and complex feeding and nutritional assessment.
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/outreach.htm