
UPDATE

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Ministry of Children and Family Development

Pandemic supports to continue through the summer

VICTORIA – The Province is extending interim measures, including a new round of funding and supports for children with special needs and youth aging out of care, to help children, youth and families through the ongoing pandemic.

“COVID-19 has turned our world upside down, and we need to do all we can to support young people and families who are still struggling,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. “As a Province, we’re moving ahead with a restart plan focused on restoring services that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. In the meantime, vulnerable youth and families can continue to rely on interim supports to help them through this time of transition.”

A final round of the short-term Emergency Relief Support fund for children and youth with special needs and their families will provide a direct payment of \$225 per month for up to three months to assist eligible families. This will be available from July 1 to Sept. 30, 2020, and will reach twice as many families as the first round of funding, helping them to access critical supports.

Flexible parameters regarding autism funding and the temporary suspension on maintenance payments for children on special needs agreements will remain through to Aug. 31, 2020. Flexible use of respite funding will continue for families until March 31, 2021.

Measures to ensure youth and young adults from care continue receiving the same level of service, even if they were set to age out, have been extended to Sept. 30, 2020. Youth living in foster care, contracted residential agencies or with relatives through the extended family program are able to stay where they are.

Independent living and youth agreements will be extended, and participants in the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program can continue to receive funding. Any "paused" AYA time during the pandemic, or the inability for a youth to find employment because of COVID-19 during a natural program break, will not count toward the maximum 48-month program duration or age limit of 27. A new temporary life-skills option has been developed for AYA, with expanded program access, including cultural programs, and fewer required hours of participation per week.

Social workers are reaching out to youth and young adults to support them and modify agreements where extensions are needed over this time frame. Families accessing children and youth with special needs (CYSN) supports are encouraged to contact their local ministry office or speak with their CYSN worker to see how they can benefit from emergency help.

These measures are part of government’s COVID-19 Action Plan to provide income supports,

tax relief and direct funding for people, businesses and services.

Learn More:

For questions about CYSN programs or to apply for the Emergency Relief Support Fund, contact a local CYSN office:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/search?id=3101EE72823047269017D08E55AF6441&tab=1&q=special+needs>

Ministry's response to COVID-19:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/covid-19-information>

CYSN supports:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/special-needs>

Agreements with Young Adults:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/youth-and-family-services/teens-in-foster-care/agreements-with-young-adults>

Further resources for former youth in care: <https://agedout.com/>

Contact:

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