

The BC Disability Collaborative on Children & Youth with Support Needs (CYSN): Public Statement on the 2023 Budget

April 17, 2023

Last fall, the BC Disability Collaborative¹ applauded Premier Eby and MCFD Minister Dean's [announcement](#) maintaining individualized funding for some children and youth while committing to engage in deeper consultation on a new service model. We were encouraged to hear that interim investments would be made and eagerly anticipated the release of Budget 2023, expecting to see this pledge fulfilled.

Disappointingly, while the budget included a few important investments, they fall far short of what is needed and there are significant deficiencies that have been left unaddressed. Though Premier Eby stated in November 2022 that "every child in BC should have the supports they need to thrive," Budget 2023 ensures that a substantial number of children, youth, and families remain completely unsupported, while others continue to be left without adequate support.

Premier Eby also said, "We are focused on listening to families of children and youth with support needs. We will work collaboratively with all partners to make sure our services work for every child."

We appreciate this commitment, however we have not seen follow through to support the immediate needs of children and families in BC. MCFD must give more children and families timely access to the supports they need by:

- 1) substantially increasing funding to CYSN to accommodate respite for every family in need, further enhancements to assessments, early screening, mental health supports for families, and training programs to enhance specialists and therapists,
- 2) eliminating wait-times in all CYSN program areas and assessments, and
- 3) expanding eligibility for existing programs to include children who are currently un-served or under-served such as those with Down syndrome, FASD, ADHD, and Learning disabilities to name a few.

Implementation of these recommendations will greatly reduce barriers to accessing essential support for thousands of BC children and youth, and will represent a major step towards Minister Dean's vision of "a province where services are provided that meet the unique needs of all children and youth."

¹ The BC Disability Collaborative consists of 16 organizations representing over 30,000 children and youth with disabilities in BC, along with their families. Please refer to the list of signatories at the end of this statement.

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