

Minister's Letter

Making Services Easier to Navigate Changes Coming to Special Services at Home

I am writing to tell you about some changes that are being made to make it easier for individuals and families to apply for developmental services and supports.


I would like to start by reminding you about our developmental services transformation journey.

Our transformation of Developmental Services is grounded in the principles of:

- fairness, equity and easier navigation
- helping people with a developmental disability lead more independent lives
- greater flexibility and choice
- enabling more inclusive communities
- financial sustainability.

We have made great strides. Since 2004, we have:

- created Passport to help individuals transition from school into their communities.
- introduced new legislation that lays the foundation for a more modern system.
- closed the province's institutions. Ontario's system is now completely community-based.
- put province-wide quality assurance measures in place to maintain high quality services and supports.
- developed clear eligibility criteria and a standard application and assessment process. They are the same across Ontario so everyone with a developmental disability is treated fairly.



We will soon be announcing our next milestone which is one-stop access to applying for services through Developmental Services Ontario which will:

- provide individuals and families with information about community programs and resources
- assess and determine what services and supports people need based on the same criteria no matter where they live in Ontario
- confirm if they are eligible and connect people to specific programs.

Today, we are taking one more step in that transformation by making it easier for individuals and families to apply for funding for supports and services by moving to one direct funding program.

We currently have two direct funding programs to help adults with a developmental disability that live in the community or with their families: Special Services at Home and Passport.

Just recently we were able to announce our most recent Budget investment of \$15 million to reduce waitlists in these two programs. That means that 1,900 more adults will be receiving service through Special Services at Home and Passport.

While these programs are administered in different ways, there is some similarity in the types of supports that they provide. For example, through Special Services at Home, a family could hire someone to help teach their family member new skills or help their family member participate in more daily living activities.

Similarly, Passport helps adults with a developmental disability find more ways to participate in their communities once they have left school. Passport encourages independence; builds social, emotional and community participation skills; and promotes continuing education and personal development.

As of April 2012, direct funding for eligible adults with a developmental disability will be available through Passport. This would include their current Special Services at Home funding. We will change Passport to cover a broader range of services, such as respite care. Special Services at Home will continue to serve children and youth.

This approach supports Ontario's modernization plan for developmental services by giving people flexibility in their supports while making the developmental services system easier to navigate. These changes will mean that you will still have choice in the supports that meet your needs, but we will be able to serve you more efficiently

I want to reiterate that these changes will not impact the amount of funding a person with a developmental disability is currently eligible to receive and the level of service provided to stakeholders by the ministry will remain the same as we transition.

At this time, we are not changing the way we administer Special Services at Home for children. Families of children who receive Special Services at Home will continue to work through the Ministry of Community and Social Services' regional offices to manage their funds.

I want to assure you that we will manage these changes carefully and we will keep Special Services at Home and Passport recipients up-to-date on our progress as we move forward. Look for updates in future issues of Spotlight.

Sincerely,



Madeleine Meilleur
Minister of Community and Social Services

Questions and Answers About the Upcoming Changes to Special Services At Home

Q: Will these changes affect how much funding an adult who currently receives Special Services At Home gets?

A: No, the amount of funding a person is eligible to receive will not change.

Q: Will these changes affect the services an adult who currently receives Special Services At Home gets?

A: No, the changes will not affect the services a person is eligible to receive.

Q: Are adults who currently receive service through Special Services At Home going to have to apply for Passport now?

A: No. Adults who currently receive Special Services at Home will automatically receive the same level of funding through Passport for one year, starting April 1, 2012, without completing an application.

The ministry will be in touch with current adult recipients of Special Services At Home in the upcoming months to provide them with more information about this transition and future application requirements.

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