

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

## Individualized Funding FAQs

As announced in the 2018-19 Budget, \$4,000 annually is available for children under the age of six with a diagnosis of ASD. Out-of-province diagnosis, or a diagnosis provided by private service providers, will need to be reviewed and confirmed by a Saskatchewan Health Authority ASD diagnostic team.

### **What is Individualized Funding?**

Individualized funding provides parents with funding to purchase services that best suit their child's individual needs. This will give parents the flexibility and freedom to choose from a range of therapeutic interventions and supports that will most benefit their child.

### **How do I know if I am eligible to receive this funding?**

Only children under the age of six years who have been diagnosed with ASD will be eligible for funding. If you suspect your child has ASD, contact an ASD Consultant in the community closest to you. You can refer to the ASD Services Directory at <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/redirect.cfm?p=89623&i=106463>.

### **How do I apply?**

Applications and information about the application process for the ASD Individualized Funding program are available on [www.saskatchewan.ca/autism](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/autism).

The Ministry of Social Services is accepting applications, and funding will be provided to parents starting in August 2018. People with questions about funding and how to apply can contact Social Services at 1-833-304-1774 or [autismif@gov.sk.ca](mailto:autismif@gov.sk.ca).

### **What services can I purchase using this money?**

You can view and download a list of eligible services at <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/redirect.cfm?p=90571&i=107487>.

### **How do I know what services would be best for my child?**

Parents/caregivers are encouraged to consult with their Saskatchewan Health Authority Autism Spectrum Disorder Consultant to assist them with identifying intervention services and supports that would be most beneficial for their child.

### **Why are some services eligible and some are not?**

The goal of the ASD Individualized Funding program is to provide families with funds for effective interventions that result in improvements to the child's functional abilities and/or family supports (e.g. respite) that promote the well-being of the family.

The lists of eligible and ineligible services were developed with input from the Stakeholder Working Group (SWG), the public engagement survey results and best practice knowledge.

**Are other interventions like art therapy, music therapy or equine therapy covered?**

The initial launch of the ASD Individualized Funding program will focus on evidence-based therapy and services provided by regulated service providers. Expanding the program to include other therapies may be considered in the future.

**Can I spend the funding on travel to other provinces to receive services?**

Travel is permitted within Saskatchewan to access services. Allowing funds to be used for travel will provide access for families living in rural and remote areas so they can either travel to the service provider or pay the service provider to travel to them. Travel to other provinces is not eligible.

**How much funding will I get every year?**

Families will receive \$4,000 per year, per child under the age of six with a diagnosis of ASD.

**Since this year's funding is going out in August, will I get a reduced amount?**

This year's funding will not be pro-rated. Families who apply and meet the program criteria will receive the full \$4,000 starting in August 2018.

**When can I expect to receive the money every year? And how will I receive it?**

For the first year of the program, families who apply and meet the program criteria will receive the full \$4,000 starting in August 2018. For the second fiscal year of the program beginning April 1, 2019, families will receive the full \$4,000 in the birth month of their child.

**What if my child turns six during the year – will I receive a pro-rated amount?**

No – you will receive the full \$4,000 every fiscal year your child is eligible for the funding. The last payment will be in the month of the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**How is the Government of Saskatchewan going to ensure families spend the money appropriately?**

Parents and caregivers may be asked to participate in a future review and potential audits of receipts to verify approved services are being used to provide feedback on their experience with the program and their ability to access services. This information will help assess the effectiveness of the program and help to make improvements.

The Ministry of Social Services will be providing a log sheet to assist parents and caregivers in tracking expenditures, which may also be part of future reviews.

**What do I do if I spend money on services that aren't eligible?**

The Ministry of Social Services will follow up on a case-by-case basis and work with families to understand the circumstances surrounding the funding spent on ineligible services.

It's best to check the list of eligible services prior to purchasing services or equipment. If you're unsure, or your equipment/service is not listed on the [Eligible Services List](#), contact the Ministry of Health at 1-800-667-7766 or [info@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:info@health.gov.sk.ca) for further information.

**What information do I need to keep in case I am contacted for a review?**

The Ministry of Social Services will be providing a log-sheet to assist you in tracking your expenditures. Parents/caregivers may be asked to submit the log along with approved service invoices, if they are chosen to participate in a review. The review will focus on your experience with the program and your ability to access services, and will help assess the effectiveness of the program and make improvements.

**Is ASD Individualized Funding considered income and do I have to claim it?**

ASD Individualized Funding is not a taxable benefit; therefore, individuals receiving this funding do not need to claim it as income for income tax purposes.

**Will autism services still be provided publicly through the Saskatchewan Health Authority?**

Autism services will continue to be provided in the public system, as before. Individualized Funding is in addition to what is already available to families.

**Who do I contact for more information?**

For information related to **eligible services and the service provider registry**, contact the Ministry of Health at 1-800-667-7766 or [info@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:info@health.gov.sk.ca).

For information related to **applications and payments**, contact the Ministry of Social Services at 1-833-304-1774 or [autismif@gov.sk.ca](mailto:autismif@gov.sk.ca).