

Putting it All Together: A Strategy for Special Needs Services that Make Sense for Families Information Session

Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

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Today's Webinar

- Today we will provide an overview of the special needs strategy.
- We will have time to answer questions at the end. Please enter your questions in the chat box at any time.
- Questions that we do not have time to answer today will be collected and answered at upcoming Regional Information Sessions and/or on our website.
- Participant lines are muted because of the large number of participants.

Putting it All Together: A Strategy for Special Needs Services that Make Sense for Families

- On February 20th, 2014, the Honourable Teresa Piruzza, Minister of Children and Youth Services introduced a strategy to improve services for children and youth with special needs and their families.
- This presentation will provide more information about the strategy and next steps for implementing it locally.
- By working across sectors, we will strengthen the services we provide to children and youth with special needs and their families:
 - We will be taking steps to improve the **early identification** of special needs in children; and
 - We will be working with communities to **improve how service planning is coordinated** and remove barriers to **seamless rehabilitation services**.



Why Change?

- Through many avenues, including Minister MacCharles's engagement with families, the Best Start Child and Family Centres consultations, and the Autism Services Family engagement, parents and service providers have told us that:
 - **Many parents and other experts don't know where to go or what to do when they have a concern about their child.**
 - **Finding services can be confusing and services can be difficult to navigate.**
 - **The current system can create unnecessary waits for and gaps in services.**
- Other experts have also told us that how we organize and deliver services can be improved, through:
 - the Review of School Health Support Services: Final Report (2010);
 - the Drummond Report, "Public Services For Ontarians: A Path To Sustainability And Excellence" (2012); and
 - the "Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning" (2009).



Building on Success

- **Community Action Research:** Communities are improving navigation and access and working toward integrating child and family services.
- **Tri-Ministry Speech Language Demonstration Sites:** District School Boards, Community Care Access Centres, Children's Treatment Centres and Preschool Speech and Language Programs have shown that different models for delivery of speech language services improves service experiences for children and their families.
- **Children's Treatment Centres' Full Day Kindergarten Pilots:** School boards and children's treatment centres are working together to deliver services to children in school.
- **Tri-Ministry Transition Planning Protocols for Young People with Developmental Disabilities** have brought together community partners and school boards to support young people to prepare for adulthood.

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Our Vision:

“An Ontario where children and youth with special needs get the timely and effective services they need to participate fully at home, at school, in the community, and as they prepare to achieve their goals for adulthood.”



Areas of Focus

- Beginning this spring, with you, we will begin to make improvements in three key areas:
 - Putting in place a new, voluntary **standard developmental screen** to:
 - identify potential risks to children’s development; and
 - connect families to the services they need.
 - Establishing **coordinated service planning** processes for children with multiple and/or complex special needs in communities so that:
 - families can access a range of services and supports without having to tell their stories multiple times.
 - Implementing **integrated delivery of children’s rehabilitation services** so that:
 - children have access to speech-language, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy services that are delivered seamlessly from birth to when they leave school.

1. Developmental Screen

A voluntary, standard developmental screen to identify developmental risks and introduce early supports as soon as possible

What will it look like?

- The screen will be grounded in a strong understanding of child development and be appropriate for children ages 0 to 6.
- Screening will be offered at well-publicized community locations by trained staff.
- The screen will not be compulsory; it will be available to parents upon request.
- The screen will identify risks for healthy development and developmental delays, which may be early signs of autism and/or learning challenges that could negatively impact a child's development or participation in school or community activities.
- If a need or needs are identified, children will be referred for further assessment and treatment via a single service or with coordinated service planning.

1. Developmental Screen (cont'd)

Implementation Process

- Working with scientific experts in the development of a screening tool or tool kit.
- Establishing a Provincial Consultation Group to consult on implementation.
 - Members will include representatives from public health, primary care, Ontario Early Years Centres, Resource Teachers, and Parenting and Family Centers.
- Providing provincial training to local community providers so that there is consistency in the delivery of screening across the province.

2. Coordinated Service Planning

A coordinated service planning process for children and youth with multiple or complex special needs will provide families with a Service Planning Coordinator to help them connect with the right services and supports.

What will it look like?

- Children with multiple and/or complex special needs, who need more than one community-based specialized service, will be referred to a Service Planning Coordinator at an existing local agency for coordinated service planning.
- Building on available information (e.g. from the developmental screen), the Service Planning Coordinator in collaboration with the family and the service providers will develop a coordinated service plan.
- With parental consent, information will be shared among providers, educators and other professionals so that parents don't have to repeat their story multiple times.
- The Service Planning Coordinator, in collaboration with the family, will keep track of the child's outcomes and monitor and update the service plan as appropriate.

2. Coordinated Service Planning (cont'd)

Implementation Process

- In accordance with provincial guidelines, a single existing transfer payment agency in each community will be responsible for coordinating service planning processes for children with multiple and/or complex service needs.
- These agencies will not be gatekeepers for access to services and will not be responsible for assessing eligibility for individual services. Their focus will be on leading coordinated service planning.
- Communities will be defined based on census divisions and child population into 34 service delivery areas, in alignment with the child and youth mental health service delivery areas.
- One agency in each of the 34 communities will be recommended to be the coordinating agency through a local proposal development process for the ministries' approval. More details will be shared at Regional Information Meetings to be held in spring 2014.
- MCYS will provide some funding for new Service Planning Coordinators, to build on existing capacity.

3. Integrated Delivery of Rehabilitation Services

Integrate delivery of school and community-based rehabilitation services so that children have seamless services from birth to school exit.

What will it look like?

- Children will receive seamless and efficient speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy services from birth through age 21, or school exit.
- There will be no need to re-apply for rehabilitation services upon school entry. Children and youth and their families will experience rehabilitation service delivery as a single, seamless program from their point of entry until they leave services.
- For children with multiple needs, rehabilitation services will be coordinated so that children experience a seamless program of rehabilitation supports facilitated by the child's coordinated service plan.

3. Integrated Delivery of Rehabilitation Services (cont'd)

Implementation Process

- The ministries will distribute guidelines for the delivery of rehabilitation services.
- All 34 service delivery areas will develop local proposals for the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services that are consistent with provincial guidelines and reflect the strengths and needs of the local community.
- Communities should not be constrained by existing funding arrangements and/or policies that present barriers to seamless service. The ministries will work together to support community plans that meet the objectives in the provincial policy guidelines.
- The integrated delivery of rehabilitation services requires changes to the way services are currently delivered. How services are delivered, and who delivers them, may change. Children's service providers and school boards will work together to develop local proposals for a new, integrated approach to rehabilitation service delivery.

Seeking Input and Advice

- The ministries will be engaging with parents, youth, service providers, educators and other experts in a number of ways:
 - The ministries are convening the Special Needs Strategy Reference Group to provide advice and feedback to support the successful implementation of the Special Needs Strategy and how to support communities through these changes.
 - This small group of experts, including two family members, will provide advice regarding change management.
 - The ministries will also have regular meetings with service providers, their associations and other experts.
 - We will also be seeking feedback from youth and parent associations as the strategy is rolled out.

Regional Information Sessions

- Later this spring, service providers will be invited to Regional Information Sessions to learn more about the proposal development process for coordinated service planning and integrated delivery of rehabilitation services.
- Invitations will be distributed soon.
- These sessions will provide more information about the process, including the guidelines for the proposals, and offer service providers an opportunity to meet their partners and begin planning.

Next Steps

- **Regional Information Meetings on Coordinated Service Planning and Integrated Approaches to Delivering Rehabilitation Services**
Spring 2014
- **Youth Engagement Process**
Spring – Summer 2014
- **Community Proposal Development for Coordinated Service Planning and Integrated Approaches to Delivering Rehabilitation Services**
May – October 2014
- **Community Proposals Submitted to Government**
Beginning Fall 2014



Question and Answer Session

Further questions can be sent to specialneedsstrategy@ontario.ca





Thank you

