



February 2021 Budget Submission

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Who are We?

Ontario Disability Coalition is a grassroots organization advocating for ALL children and adults with disabilities. Our goal is to build a Barrier Free Ontario through needs-based funding. One in four people in Ontario has a disability – 43% of people with disabilities are seniors.

COVID19 has magnified many barriers to dignity, basic human rights, and quality of life for Ontarians of all ages living with disabilities.

What are our Recommendations?

We propose 3 avenues of action to create the greatest impact to improve the lives of Ontarians, invest directly in people rather than systems, and promote a non-disabling society.

1) Direct Funding for needs-based therapy and equipment for all Disabilities:

To date, there have been 3 main problems with how therapy is allocated in Ontario:

- funds provided for one high incidence disability but not for others
- funds swallowed mostly by administration rather than actually therapy
- funds earmarked according to bureaucratic judgement rather than parent and clinician expertise.

Providing funding directly to the user (adult) or the parent (for minors) according to what is needed will resolve these problems. It provides choice, control and access to needs based services close to where a recipient resides, generating small business growth in the rehabilitation sector. Access to therapy outside of banker's hours will enable caregivers the opportunity to return to the workplace. Shorter commutes for disabled children and adults, reduce waitlists, diversity in delivery and effectiveness in treatment will enable individuals and families to thrive.

We Propose: matching needs-based therapy funding currently provided to the ASD Community for ALL individuals with physical and developmental disabilities:

· Children	Ages 0 to 4	\$10,900 to \$65,000
· Children	Ages 5 to 18	\$ 9,000 to \$50,000
· Young Adult	Ages 18 to 29	\$ 9,000 to \$45,000 +
· Adult	Ages 29 to 65	\$ 9,000 to \$35,000 +

Ensure funding is flexible for any type of therapy (e.g. Physiotherapy, Occupational and Speech & Language Therapy) **plus necessary assistive devices not funded by ADP**. Evidence of economic success of such funding are found in New Zealand's and Australia's successful strategies¹.

¹ Australia NDIS Economic Results: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/4413-ceo-address-council-economic-development-australia>

2) Income Security:

Many individuals living with disabilities are at, below, or in danger of sinking toward poverty levels. Many are already homeless. The current ODSP maximum of \$1169 is inhumane.

We Propose: providing a livable income for individuals on ODSP by increasing it to \$2000 per month, which was taken directly from the basic income amount established for the COVID19 pandemic with CERB.

3) Investment in Caregiver Funding:

Family caregiving is typically at the core of what sustains children, youth and adults with complex needs. Yet caregivers are often forced to make major financial sacrifices, such as loss of employment income, pension and workplace benefits, to ensure loved ones receive that care at home. This pushes the family towards poverty as well as physical and mental health decline.

We Propose: \$450/week as established by the Caregiver Recovery Benefit.

What will this Achieve?

- Puts funds directly in the hands of families rather than wasted in bureaucracy
- Eliminate public policy discrimination
- Increase in the number of jobs in the disability sector
- Enable individuals with disabilities and caregivers to return to the workforce
- Supports the development of the disabled to be contributors to society
- Creates flexibility for disabled/ caregivers by allowing them to choose needed supports