

# Autism Spectrum Disorder - Individualized Funding (ASD-IF)

## Policy Manual 2022



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# 1. Legislative Authority

[The Rehabilitation Act](#) allows the Minister of Social Services to provide rehabilitation and other services to groups deemed to be in need of rehabilitation services, including making payments to individuals and entering into agreements.

# 2. Purpose

The purpose of Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding (ASD-IF) is to provide parents or guardians with a benefit to purchase therapeutic interventions and family supports that best suit their child's individual needs.

# 3. Objectives

- Foster skill development and independence by building on the abilities of the child and developing community participation, social, and daily living skills.
- Provide support to the parent or guardian to help them access supports through the [Registry of Autism Service Providers](#) and [ASD Consultants](#).
- Help address the need for increased service provider availability.
- Provide choice and flexibility in the purchase of preferred therapeutic services and respite.
- Recognize the valued role of the parent or guardian through the provision of respite and other family support services.
- Prepare children for school.

# 4. Principles

ASD-IF is guided by the following principles:

- **Person-centred or directed services and supports:** services and supports are provided, which build on the child's strengths and are responsive to their preferences and needs.
- **Choice and flexibility:** parents or guardians have increased options in how supports are provided.
- **Responsibility:** the benefit is used to purchase services (based on the [Eligible Services List](#)) from providers that meet minimum qualifications ([Registry of Autism Service Providers](#)) requirements.
- **Strong families:** acknowledges the need for supports to parents or guardians of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) so they can continue in their valued role.

## 5. Eligibility

### 1. Eligibility requirements for ASD-IF include individuals:

- who are under the age of 12;
- have a diagnosis of ASD;
- who are Saskatchewan residents; and,
- who are not ordinarily a resident on reserve as defined in the Indian Act (Canada).

### 2. Multiple children in the same family with an ASD diagnosis, and who meet eligibility requirements, are each eligible for the benefit.

### 3. To be deemed eligible for ASD-IF, parents or guardians must submit the following documentation:

- Proof of Saskatchewan Residency, such as SGI photo identification, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, or a municipal water or utility bill from the last three months.
- Verification of the child's ASD diagnosis:
  - ◊ Diagnosis of ASD form signed by a qualified specialist. <sup>1</sup>
- Child's Saskatchewan Health Services Number.
- Child's birth certificate or permanent resident card.
- Parent or guardian's Social Insurance Number.

### 4. Alternative documentation may be considered by the Ministry of Social Services (MSS), if applicants cannot supply any of the above.

### 5. Legal Guardians or Persons of Sufficient Interest are also required to submit legal documentation as proof of guardianship.

### 6. Additional documentation for verification of any other caregiver relationships may be requested by MSS.

### 7. Children in care of the Minister of Social Services, as per the [Child and Family Services Act](#), are not eligible for ASD-IF.

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<sup>1</sup> Qualified Specialist: Pediatrician; Registered Psychologist; Physician (General Practitioner); ASD Consultants; Registered Social Worker; or Psychiatrist.

## 6. Diagnostic Assessment Guidelines

1. A diagnosis of ASD, according to the criteria of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-5)/International Classifications of Diseases 10th edition (ICD-10).

2. **Diagnosis from outside Saskatchewan:**

A diagnosis obtained out of province must be reviewed by an [ASD Consultant](#) and a consultation with a Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) Psychologist, if needed.

## 7. Application Process

1. **Clients are encouraged to access the application for ASD-IF funding online at <http://autismfunding.saskatchewan.ca/>.**

Clients also have the option to submit a [PDF version](#) of the application by mail to:

Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding  
Suite 90 - 1235 Main St. North  
Moose Jaw, SK S6H 6M4

Alternatively, clients may submit their application via e-mail at: [autismif@gov.sk.ca](mailto:autismif@gov.sk.ca).

Clients without access to the internet can call **1-833-304-1774** for assistance with their application.

Date of application for online applicants, is the date of online submission. Date of application for mail in applicants is the date the application is received in the MSS office.

2. **Parents, Legal Guardians, Persons of Sufficient Interest, and other specified caregivers (as identified below) may apply for ASD-IF on behalf of the child.**

**Parent:** The biological or adoptive mother or father of a child.

**Legal Guardian:** A person to whom custody of a child has been granted by a court of competent jurisdiction, or by a deed or agreement of custody.

**Persons of Sufficient Interest:** Person having a sufficient interest; holds legal custody and is designated by the court to be a person having a sufficient interest in a child pursuant to section 23 of the [Child and Family Services Act](#).

**Other:** A person with whom the child resides, who is the primary caregiver and is not a legal or natural guardian, but who is raising the child (i.e., grandparent, aunt).

3. **Parents or guardians will be notified in writing if their application has been approved, denied, or if additional information is required. Applicants are also notified in writing of their annual benefit amount.**

- 4. If review of the application determines additional information is required, parents or guardians will have 30 days to provide the information, or the application will be closed and parents or guardians will need to fill out a new application.**
- 5. Only one parent or guardian will be allowed to request the ASD-IF benefits on behalf of the child. Benefits will only be paid to one parent or guardian.**

In the case of joint-custody arrangements, parents or guardians must reach an agreement regarding which parent will apply for the benefit and determine how the benefit will be used to meet the needs of the child.

**6. Application Consent for Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Information and Declaration Form:**

Parents or guardians are required to complete the Consent and Declaration section on the ASD-IF application and renewal form.

- 7. Parents or guardians will be provided a choice to receive the benefit through direct deposit or cheque. Direct deposit is the preferred option.**
- 8. For the purpose of application, a child is deemed to be under the ages of 6 and 12 during the entire month in which they attain that age.**

**9. New Applicants:**

New applicants (i.e., applicants who have never received ASD-IF) will be provided the benefit, upon approval of the initial application. Parents or guardians will be required to apply for a benefit renewal each year to receive subsequent benefits annually in the month the application was approved, until the child turns 12.

**10. Returning Applicants:**

For returning applicants (i.e., children who previously aged out of the program, moved out of province, and returned, or it has been more than 24 months since their last anniversary month), the month they re-apply will become their new anniversary month. Parents or guardians will be required to apply for a benefit renewal to receive subsequent benefits annually in the month the application was received, until the child turns 12.

**11. Retroactive or Exceptional Application Requests:**

New or returning applicants requesting a retroactive or exceptional benefit payment (e.g., including applications for children who recently turned 12 or delayed applications due to unforeseen circumstances) may be considered by MSS.

Exceptional requests related to wait times for diagnosis of ASD, will not be considered.

In the event of a retroactive payment, if the applicant is eligible for future payments, the anniversary month is the month in which the retroactive payment was approved. In the case of an exceptional or retroactive payments, the applicant will still be required to track and report on all expenses, as outlined in clause 9.3.



## 8. Benefit Administration Process

### 1. Benefit Levels:

Children under the age of six are eligible for up to \$8000.00 per year.

Children under the age of 12 are eligible for up to \$6000.00 per year.

### 2. Calculation of Benefits:

Initial applications are eligible for the maximum benefit level, determined by the child's age. Subsequent annual benefit amounts, until the child turns 12, are calculated based on the recipient's verified expenses and benefit amount paid the previous year.

Unused funds, or funds spent on ineligible expenses, will be deducted from the following year's renewal payment. Maximum benefit levels will be paid when an applicant can show proof the previous year's benefit amount was spent, in full, on eligible expenses.

*\*ASD-IF recipients who applied or renewed before July 27, 2021, are exempt from expense submission requirements until July 2023.*

### 3. Parent or Guardian Responsibilities:

Parents or guardians:

- Must use the benefit for its intended purpose and comply with the eligibility and benefit administration rules.
- Report any change in circumstances using the [Change of Circumstance form](#) that may affect eligibility for ASD-IF (i.e., out of province move).
- Track and submit proof of expense information to MSS, for all services purchased with ASD-IF funds for their approval year.

## 9. Expenses

1. **The benefit provided through the ASD-IF program is for therapeutic interventions and family supports, as per the [Eligible Services List](#). Parents or guardians are encouraged to consult with their SHA [ASD Consultant](#) to assist them with identifying services and supports that would be most beneficial for their child, and in accordance with the Eligible Service List.**
2. **Only expenses from service providers located within Saskatchewan, with the exception of Lloydminster and Flin Flon, will be considered eligible.**

- 3. Parents and guardians are required to submit their proof of expenses, as outlined in their approval letter. Only expenses incurred within their current funding approval year (anniversary month plus 11 months), as per the [Eligible Service List](#), will be processed.**

Parents and guardians are encouraged to submit their expenses on the online Citizen Portal available at [saskatchewan.ca/autism](http://saskatchewan.ca/autism). The option to submit a [PDF version](#) of the Expense Submission Form by mail or e-mail [autismif@gov.sk.ca](mailto:autismif@gov.sk.ca) is an acceptable alternative.

Parents and guardians may submit expenses throughout their entire benefit year, up to and including, the last day of their benefit year.

- 4. Parents or guardians of children receiving ASD-IF are required to select professional service providers for their child(ren) from the [Autism Service Provider Registry](#). To be included on the registry, interested professionals must complete an application package and apply to the Ministry of Health. This registry is maintained by the Ministry of Health.**
- 5. Parents or guardians purchasing respite with ASD-IF funds are encouraged to select respite providers who are at least 12 years of age, and have the emotional and intellectual maturity to provide alternate care to children. Parents and guardians may choose to hire family members to provide respite. Parents and guardians cannot be paid to provide respite for their children.**
- 6. Parents or guardians are required to retain and submit receipts for all items purchased with ASD-IF funds. For proof of expense for items such as respite, mileage, or other items with no receipts, parents and caregivers are required to complete and submit the ASD-IF [Expense Invoice Form](#), and submit with their expense submission.**

## 10. Benefit Renewal

- 1. Parents or guardians are required to submit a renewal application in their anniversary month. A reminder letter will be sent to the parent or guardian one month prior to the anniversary month.**

Clients are encouraged to renew their ASD-IF funding online at <http://autismfunding.saskatchewan.ca/>.

Clients also have the option to submit a [PDF version](#) of the renewal application by mail to:

Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding  
Suite 90 - 1235 Main St. North  
Moose Jaw, SK S6H 6M4

Alternatively, clients may submit their renewal application via e-mail at: [autismif@gov.sk.ca](mailto:autismif@gov.sk.ca).

Clients without access to the internet can call 1-833-304-1774 for assistance with their renewal application.



- 2. The renewal application includes verification of Saskatchewan residence, and that all expense claims have been submitted for the current approval year. Once the renewal application is submitted, no more expense claims can be submitted for that approval year.**

Parents and guardians are also required to answer a set of mandatory program questions as part of their renewal application to assist with program analysis and improvements.

- 3. Parents or guardians will also be asked to report any [Change of Circumstance](#), as part of the renewal application.**

## **11. Accountability**

- 1. ASD-IF is provided on the condition that it is used for the purchase of [eligible services](#). Accountability measures have been established to ensure the benefit supports effective interventions (e.g., evidence-based therapy), that result in improvements to the child's functional abilities and/or family or guardian supports (e.g., respite), that promote the well-being of the family.**
- 2. Parents or guardians must keep all receipts and track expenses related to the ASD-IF benefit, as indicated on their approval letter. Recipients are also required to submit proof of expenses to MSS to be eligible for the following year's payment.**
- 3. Unused funds or funds spent on ineligible items, will be deducted from future benefits as per clause 8.2.**
- 4. Parents or guardians may request MSS review decisions related to an ineligible expense, within 30 days of receiving the written notice. The [Expense Request for Review Form](#) must be completed and sent to [autismif@gov.sk.ca](mailto:autismif@gov.sk.ca). A final decision will be communicated to the parent or guardian within 30 days of receipt of the expense review form.**

## **12. Non-Acceptance/Acceptance**

- 1. As a quality assurance measure, MSS will track acceptance and non-acceptance of applications through the application process and administration portal.**