



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - November 5, 2021

**Polarizing MCFD CYSN announcement leaves families petrified or hopeful.  
FSI encourages pause and meaningful consultation**

[The Ministry for Child and Family Development \(MCFD\)](#) recently [announced a new model](#) for [Children and Youth with Support Needs Services \(CYSN\)](#). A model that claims to support more children and youth with support needs following a needs-based model rather than a diagnostic model and implementing [family connections hubs](#) all over British Columbia. The program will commence in 2023 with two pilots, [expanding by 2025](#), with individualized funding ending by 2025 when all hubs are up and running.

Since the announcement [The Family Support Institute of BC \(FSI\)](#) has heard from many anxious families and who have many concerns and questions about the new model. The announcement came from a high level with insufficient answers given – leading to assumptions, which in turn creates fear and frustration within families who have already been operating inside of a very broken and fragmented system. Many families have trauma from their experiences already, and that has been simmering for a long time.

FSI has also heard families feeling optimistic and celebratory about the potential for what this new model may bring to their loved ones. Many of them have not accessed services from MCFD before. They are feeling they have finally been heard and acknowledged, and a weight has been lifted. They may now be able to access services they have not been eligible for prior to now.

While we know that the idea of a needs-based model is creating anticipation and excitement for many, others feel opposed to the hubs and see it as a one size fits all model - one that they don't see themselves mirrored in, and leaves them feeling forgotten. A transition of this magnitude will not see success without a significant influx of resources and we urge MCFD to take a moment to pause and allow for meaningful consultation.

FSI asks families to consider the following questions, and comments, and ideas:

**Regarding the needs-based assessment vs diagnosis, how will this model impact:**

- In the K-12 school system, a “designation” or diagnosis is often still used in school districts to generate funding and supports for some students.
- Youth transitioning into Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) where a diagnosis help determine eligibility for services.
- Applying for or re-affirming eligibility for the Federal Disability Tax Credit where a diagnosis can be helpful.

\*Please remember that other ministries work differently from MCFD – so do your research before you remove yourself from a waitlist, or stop yourself from getting your child a diagnosis. This decision may impact your child’s ability to get services and support from other ministries\*

**Further questions to consider when it comes to the needs-based assessment itself:**

- Who will assess the needs?
- If it is the CYSN Social worker – how is that relationship with families?
- Is that the right person to be applying the assessment? If not, why not?
- What tools will be used?
- How much money will be invested?
- Where do families go to have the needs-based assessment done? Is it the Ministry office or the family connections hub?
- How will the culture of MCFD that has been broken for so long, change in this new model with the shift to a needs-based model?
- Let’s remember to ask questions that hold them accountable for true change.

**Regarding the move away from Individualized Funding (IF):**

- Removing IF will affect families receiving Autism Funding Program, At Home Program, and School- aged Extended Therapy.
- Some families find managing their own funding complicated and overwhelming, while others find it empowering, flexible, and meet their needs entirely.
- How will this new hub model ***not*** disrupt the current services and teams families have, some of which have taken years to build for their loved ones?
- How does the hub model impact families who live in remote parts of the province?
- Flexibility and choice are what families have been asking for in every engagement and consultation session with the ministry. Removing IF from any family removes that.
- How much budget is invested in this transition to transform this system of change?
- How many new children, youth and families will this model support?

**Regarding engagement:**

- Do you feel you were engaged and consulted on this model and the announced decisions?
- Do you feel you were consulted in the aspects of this model and the decisions that have been announced?
- If you were engaged, does this decision reflects what you brought forth?
- If you were engaged, do you have more to share?
- If you were not engaged, would you like to make your voice heard?
- Do you feel that COVID has shifted your perspective, and you would like to share what that is?
- Things evolve and change – It’s not too late for families to have their voices heard, as it is imperative to this announcement.

FSI encourages all individuals and families to contribute to this conversation by addressing their questions, stories and concerns directly to the Ministry.

**Contact MCFD:**

- Call 1-833-882-0024.
- Email [mcf.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:mcf.minister@gov.bc.ca)
- Writing to the Honourable Minister Mitzi Dean:  
ATTN: Minister Mitzi Dean  
Minister of Children & Family Development PO Box 9057 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2

**Additional Resources FSI urges you to read:**

- [The Society for Children and Youth of BC – Guiding Principles and Rights](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children and Youth](#)



The Family Support Institute of BC (FSI) is a provincial not for profit society committed to supporting families who have a family member with a disability. FSI is unique in Canada and the only grassroots family-to-family organization with a broad volunteer base. FSI supports and services are free to any family.

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