

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 10, 2026

Family Support Institute of BC (FSI) welcomes \$475 million investment and redesign of supports for children and youth with disabilities and support needs

(February 10, 2026 – New Westminster, B.C.)— The Family Support Institute of British Columbia (FSI) welcomes today’s provincial announcement outlining a redesigned Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) system, including a \$475 million investment over the next three years to strengthen supports for children, youth, and families across BC.

The announcement, delivered this morning by Minister of Children and Family Development Jodie Wickens, signals a renewed and significant commitment to children and youth with disabilities and support needs.

“This is welcome and hopeful news for families across British Columbia,” said Angela Clancy, Executive Director of the Family Support Institute of BC. “A \$475 million investment over three years — especially in today’s economic climate — is a significant commitment. This redesign and expansion of support honours what families have been telling us for years. We feel optimistic and remain committed to staying engaged as these changes take shape across the province.”

For families, the redesign represents a meaningful shift toward a system that is more inclusive, easier to navigate, and grounded in functional need rather than diagnosis alone. Through this sustained multi-year investment, the Province is strengthening both direct financial supports for families as well as increasing the types of services funded for communities across BC. Importantly, it expands community-based services and shifts from primarily autism-specific funding to funding that supports all disabilities and complex health needs, acknowledging the diverse realities families have been speaking to.

Key elements include:

Needs-based direct funding

Targeted direct funding for children and youth with the highest support needs, through two new funding streams that will gradually replace the Autism Funding Program:

- The BC Children and Youth Disability Benefit, providing approximately \$6,500 to \$17,000 per year, depending on child or youth’s level of support needs; and
- The BC Children and Youth Disability Supplement, an income-tested supplement of up to \$6,000 per year per child, beginning in 2027.

\$80M to expand free community-based services

- Increased access to behavioural and mental health supports
- Programming for children and youth aged 6-18
- Strengthened navigation supports to help families move more easily across health, education, and community systems.



Continuity of support

The Ministry has made a clear commitment to keeping existing services and supports in place.

- **Existing supports that families rely on today will not be withdrawn.** This commitment will help alleviate fears that many families may face with transitions of this magnitude.
- **Changes will be implemented gradually in phases.** During the transition period, families and community-based agencies will receive clear guidance and communication to facilitate a smooth and supported implementation of new services.

Honouring Family Voices: Alignment with the Family Voices Project

FSI views this redesign as a direct reflection of what families shared through the [Family Voices Project](#) (2024-2025), a province-wide community engagement initiative funded by MCFD and led by the Family Support Institute of BC, in partnership with the University of British Columbia's Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship (CIIC).

Through conversations in communities across BC, families and self-advocates consistently told us that:

- The system must be inclusive of all children and youth with disabilities, not limited to specific diagnoses.
- Eligibility should reflect functional need, not rigid categories.
- Families want choice, flexibility, and agency in deciding what supports work best for their child and family.
- Earlier access to supports, fewer barriers, culturally safe practices, and recognition of the whole child within their family and community context are essential to improving outcomes.
- Easier and seamless access of supports in rural and remote parts of BC.

Many of the core elements announced today — inclusive eligibility, needs-based funding, expanded community services, improved navigation, and sustained investment — directly respond to these community recommendations. FSI is deeply grateful to the families and self-advocates who shared their experiences and expertise, directly influencing the Province's response and commitment to change.

Moving Forward with Optimism and Continued Engagement

FSI welcomes the Province's commitment to ongoing engagement with families, Indigenous partners, self-advocates, and community organizations as implementation unfolds. While significant system change takes time, this level of investment — particularly in a period of fiscal restraint — gives families and the sector reason to feel cautiously optimistic about the path forward.

For more than 40 years, FSI has supported families through peer-to-peer connection, information, navigation, and advocacy grounded in lived experience. We remain committed to staying actively engaged as these changes roll out and to working collaboratively with government and community partners to ensure this investment delivers meaningful, equitable outcomes for children and youth with disabilities and their families.





Families seeking support or information about the CYSN redesign are encouraged to connect with the Family Support Institute of BC and other family-led advocacy organizations as implementation continues.

Read the official announcement from the Ministry here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026CFD0002-000136>

Read *The Family Voices Project: Helping Shape the Future of CYSN Services* (Full and Summary report) here: <https://familysupportbc.com/blog/news-releases/release-of-fsi-and-ciics-family-voices-project-helping-shape-the-future-of-cysn-services-full-report-to-mcfd/>

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About Family Support Institute of BC:

The Family Support Institute (FSI) supports families who have family members with disabilities and mental health challenges. FSI is unique in Canada and is the only grass-roots, family-to-family support organization. FSI believes families are the best resource to support one another and the most vital voice for their family members. FSI supports all families with children of all ages, disabilities, and concurrent conditions. FSI's supports are free to any family.

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