

Dear Autism Program families,

The uncertainty of the past several months has been hard on all of us, but especially on you. We greatly admire the strength you have shown for your children during this time.

We can all agree that things weren't working in the old system. Many families were missing out on services because of long wait lists and not enough funding. The new system is still evolving, and we are evolving our services as well. We want you to know we have been working hard with the government and families to get there. We expect more change to come, but we can't wait and neither can you.

Under the Ontario Autism Program's new direct funding model, families are able to purchase the services they want and need most. That's why we at McMaster Children's Hospital have developed a fee schedule for autism services for the first time ever. We are not in this to make money—that couldn't be further from the truth. But under the OAP's new model, we need to cover our costs so we can maintain crucial services. This is new territory for us, so we will be looking for your input and guidance along the way.

We have consulted with families to learn what matters most to you, and our new program offerings reflect that. As one of the largest children's hospitals in Canada, we are in a unique position.

- Our Autism Program is connected to dozens of other exceptional child and youth services, and we're able to offer a level of integration and expertise that not all centres can provide.
- As a teaching hospital, we have the latest research at our fingertips, and our patients participate in globally-recognized studies.
- We are nationally accredited, and our staff are held to the highest standard of training.

We have developed our service pricing to cover our staffing costs, and remain comparable to our peers. We want you to be able to access the top-tier care MCH is known for providing. Our exceptional team can develop a customized service plan to give you the best value for your budget.

Under this new system, many things will change, but one thing will surely stay the same. **You want the best for your kids. So do we.** As we navigate this together, we are here to listen. You know your children better than anyone, and have proven time and time again that you are their best advocates. We want to work with you to make this program work for them.

With warmth and compassion,



Dr. Peter Fitzgerald  
President  
McMaster Children's Hospital



Colleen Anderson  
Director, Child & Youth Development  
McMaster Children's Hospital