

Children with Special Needs
Division

Division des services aux enfants
ayant des besoins particuliers

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March 11, 2021
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REFERRAL TO Health Services
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED _____

March 11, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO:

Chairpersons, Boards of Health
Medical Officers of Health, Public Health Units
Chief Executive Officers, Public Health Units

FROM:

Jennifer Morris, Assistant Deputy Minister

RE:

**Early Intervention Services for Children and Families:
2021-22 Service Delivery Expectations**

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) values our continued partnership with all public health units across Ontario in delivering the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) program, mandated under the Ontario Public Health Standards, as well as other early intervention services for children and families including the Infant Hearing (IHP), Blind Low Vision (BLV), Preschool Speech and Language (PSL) and Infant and Child Development (ICDP) programs, which the ministry funds several public health units to deliver. MCCSS also recognizes the continuing critical efforts and extraordinary work of public health units in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to address the public health needs of Ontarians.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the public health restrictions in place, the past year has been a challenging time to deliver HBHC and other early intervention services, yet many public health units have been finding new and innovative ways to support ongoing service delivery. This is important, as many families and children have lost other networks of support and have become more vulnerable with concerning reports of increased risks and missed opportunities related to child safety, optimal health and development. The early years are a critical stage of development that lays the foundation for lifelong health. Early intervention programs for children and families are critical public health programs supporting positive parenting, healthy child development and family well-being.

Public health units are asked to restore service delivery in the HBHC, IHP, BLV, PSL and ICDP programs for the 2021-22 fiscal year in accordance with transfer payment agreements and other program requirements currently in place. Recognizing that public health units are at different points in their local COVID-19 response and recovery planning efforts, MCCSS is committed to working with public health units to support them in restoring service delivery through the process outlined below.

2021-22 Financial Forecast and Service Delivery Plan Requirements

For fiscal year 2021-22, public health units are expected to develop service delivery plans and forecast the MCCSS funding anticipated to be spent on the HBHC and other early intervention programs. Public health units should consider continuing to employ innovative/flexible strategies for resuming service delivery in order to address any staff capacity issues and waitlists or backlogs in service need.

Approaches to restoration of service delivery are to be identified through the service delivery plan and financial forecast and will be considered on a case-by-case basis once the plans are submitted to MCCSS. Further instructions are identified in the attached templates. Completed plans are requested by April 14, 2021. MCCSS will hold information sessions for Public Health Unit staff on March 18 and March 23 to support the 2021-22 service delivery planning process. Please see further details in the attached template.

Any questions you may have pertaining to COVID-19 expenditures incurred at the local level should continue to be directed to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to delivering early intervention programs serving vulnerable families and children during these challenging times.

Sincerely



Jennifer Morris
Assistant Deputy Minister

c: Elizabeth Walker, Director, Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health, MOH
Associate Medical Officers of Health, Public Health Units
Business Administrators, Public Health Units
Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Directors and Managers

Attachment:
Service Delivery Template