

**ONTARIO CHILD CARE
SERVICE MANAGEMENT
GUIDELINES**

**SPECIAL NEEDS
RESOURCING**

SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCING

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SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCING

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCING

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide CMSMs and DSSABs with an overview of the ministry's current policies, standards, requirements and expectations with respect to the management of special needs resourcing. The document is organized into three main sections: part one provides an overview of special needs resourcing and the related legislative authority; part two describes the protocols for managing special needs resourcing; and, part three states the process and required documentation for performance measures.

In their role as child care service system managers, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABs) plan and manage special needs resourcing within the parameters of legislation, regulations, standards and policies established by the province.

In November 2004, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) announced Ontario's Best Start Strategy. Best Start is a comprehensive, evidence informed early learning and care strategy designed to help provide Ontario's children the best possible start in life and help them to achieve success in school. Best Start is comprised of a number of components including the expansion of the licensed child care system. The expansion of child care is funded through the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) and the 2005 federal funds.

The child care component includes increased access to quality child care and development of an integrated and seamless system of early learning and care. Phase One of Best Start will focus on expanding the number of child care spaces and subsidies for children in Junior Kindergarten (JK) and Senior Kindergarten (SK), with moderate growth in the overall child care system for children 0 to 4 years of age.

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1.1 Special Needs Resourcing Overview

The ministry's policy encourages the inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services with their peers. Children should be placed in segregated settings only when there is no other appropriate or safe placement.

Special needs resourcing provides supplemental staffing to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care and is available for children with special needs at no additional cost to parents. Regular special needs resourcing may be provided in day nurseries and licensed private-home day care for children up to age 18 and to children age 6 to 18 in approved recreation programs. (Refer to the *School-Age Recreation Guideline* for program eligibility).

Resource teachers² assist licensed child care and eligible recreation services to assess children with special needs, prepare individual program plans for the children, and provide support to the child care or recreation staff working regularly with the child in developing and carrying out daily activities in accordance with these plans. To assist the individual child within the larger group, resource teachers may work with several children in more than one location; they also work with parents to develop a consistent expectation and approach for the child. The resource teacher also provides centre-based child care staff and private-home day care providers with general training regarding their work with both parents and children.

Special needs resourcing funds may also be used to purchase specialized toys and equipment, in support of an individual child's program plan.

The 2006/07 Early Learning and Child Care funds should continue to be used to stabilize and expand the current distribution of special needs resourcing to support the inclusion of children under age 6 in licensed child care programs.

Best Start funding (2006/07 and onwards) may be used to address increased needs associated with the expansion of child care for Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten children, as well as children age 0 to 4.

Planning for children with special needs occurs in collaboration with other community resources and services such as Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Infant Development, Pre-school Speech and Language, Best Start Networks, Ontario Early Years Centres, children's mental health, autism initiatives and others.

² Resource teachers include direct service resource teachers, resource consultants, and teacher assistants.

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1.2 Legislative Authority

The following information identifies the specific sections of the *Day Nurseries Act* that relate to special needs resourcing and outlines how provincial funds are allocated to CMSMs and DSSABs for the provision of prescribed child care services.

1.2.1 Definitions

DNA O. Reg. 262, Subsection 66.1(2)4 defines special needs resourcing as a prescribed service as follows:

With respect to the special needs of handicapped children, the provision of staff, equipment, supplies or services,

- i. in a place where private-home day care is provided,
- ii. in a place where a children's recreation program is provided in accordance with the prescribed service mentioned in paragraph 8, or
- iii. in a day nursery.

DNA O. Reg. 262, Section 1 defines a child eligible for special needs resourcing as follows:

A "handicapped child" means a child who has a physical or mental impairment that is likely to continue for a prolonged period of time and who as a result thereof is limited in activities pertaining to normal living as verified by objective psychological or medical findings and includes a child with a developmental disability;

DNA Section 1 defines a developmental disability as:

A "developmental disability" means a condition of mental impairment present or occurring during a person's formative years, that is associated with limitations in adaptive behaviour;

DNA O. Reg. 262 Section 1 defines an integrated day nursery as:

"a day nursery that is licenced by the Minister to provide services for both handicapped children and children who are not handicapped".

1.2.2 Prescribed Services

Under O. Reg. 262, Subsection 66.1(2) of the *Day Nurseries Act*, the provision of special needs resourcing services as defined above, is a prescribed service. Please refer to the *Child Care System Guideline* for additional information about prescribed services.

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1.2.3 Cost Sharing

In the past, the province has paid 80% of the approved costs of providing special needs resourcing services (for prescribed services defined above), with CMSMs and DSSABs funding the remaining 20% of costs. The province has also cost shared 50% of the CMSMs and DSSABs approved administration costs with respect to special needs resourcing. In territories without municipal organization, the province has paid 100% of the program costs and administrative costs. This cost sharing includes funds received in 2004/05 under the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

Beginning in 2005/2006, municipalities will not have to cost share program and administration costs on the new federal funding for the expansion of early learning and child care for the duration of the new 2005 Ontario-Canada Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the new funds received under the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.

CMSMs and DSSABs will continue to cost share on previously cost shared child care services.

For additional information concerning cost sharing and fee subsidies for children with special needs, please refer to the *Child Care System Guideline* and *Fee Subsidy Management Guideline*, respectively.

PART 2: CMSM/DSSAB PROTOCOLS FOR MANAGING SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCING

This section outlines the protocols for special needs resourcing management and identifies required financial and performance management policies and procedures.

2.0 Financial Management

- CMSMs and DSSABs plan the usage of special needs resourcing funds for children attending licensed child care programs or approved recreation programs for school-age children and manage within contracted levels of funding.
- CMSMs and DSSABs enter into purchase of service contracts with agencies providing special needs resourcing services. These service contracts detail the funding allocation and contracted levels of service.
- The service contract contains specific data elements that are the performance measures monitored by regional offices.

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- Service providers report actual financial and service activity data to CMSMs and DSSABs on a quarterly basis in relation to previously established targets.
- CMSMs and DSSABs reconcile service providers' use of funds annually. If the service provider's year-end report identifies a surplus, the surplus is deducted from future special needs resourcing payments. In the event of a service closure, surplus funds are to be refunded to the CMSM/DSSAB.
- Refer to the *Business Practices Guideline* for further information about CMSM's and DSSAB's business practices with service providers.

PART 3: SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCING PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The cornerstone of the Ontario child care performance management framework is accountability for service. Service information strengthens accountability for results, informs the public and decision-makers and other public officials, influences policy, signals areas needing attention and improvement and emphasizes the "differences that have been made" by a program or service.

3.0 Process for Monitoring Performance Measures

- The ministry enters into service contracts with CMSMs and DSSABs for the provision of child care services.
- The service contract contains specific data elements that are the performance measures monitored by regional offices.
- CMSMs and DSSABs report actual financial and service activity data to regional offices on a quarterly basis in relation to previously established targets.
- CMSMs and DSSABs may refer to the current service contract / budget package for required service data elements and definitions.

3.1 Required Documentation

- At minimum, CMSMs and DSSABs must maintain the following special needs resourcing documentation:

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- record of payments to special needs resourcing service providers;
 - quarterly year-to-date(YTD) reports from service providers, reporting actual YTD expenditures and service data elements;
 - YTD reports from service providers; and,
 - audited financial statements from service providers that have received more than \$20,000 in funding.
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- Other financial practices and reporting requirements for CMSMs and DSSABs are detailed in the *Business Practices Guideline*;
 - CMSMs and DSSABs must retain required documentation for at least seven years.
 - The local ministry regional office can be contacted for further assistance (e.g., monitoring and reporting requirements).