

Monday, November 8th, 2021



To: Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development
Victoria, BC
MCF.Minister@gov.bc.ca & Mitzi.Dean.MLA@leg.bc.ca



Subject: CYSN Framework and Funding Changes

Dear Honourable Mitzi Dean,

A growing group of organizations representing all children and families under the Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) Framework have come together to discuss their concerns regarding your announcement on October 27th, 2021. Today, we write together on two topics of immediate concern: consultation and information.

First, we call for a review of your decision-making process by revisiting the practices and principles of *meaningful* consultation.

Second, we request changes to your communication strategy to prevent further harm to the disability community and promote supportive systemic change.

We are deeply concerned about the absence of meaningful and informed consultation with the diverse range of families and children under the CYSN Framework and the organizations that support them. While you repeatedly cite the 1,500 families consulted in 2019 and insist that you continue to hear from families, we consider this past consultation grossly inadequate and inaccurate.

We invite the Minister to define the parameters of future consultation together with the disability community to demonstrate her accountability to the families and stakeholders she serves. There is ample research and dozens of frameworks that outline healthy and meaningful processes of public consultation. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how the Minister believes British Columbians would be satisfied with the minimal and questionable consultation process undertaken. There was no consultation on the decision to remove or reallocate the individualized funding for the Autism Funding Programs or the At-Home Program ahead of the announcement of this decision last week.

Additionally, the way information was released last week has caused confusion and chaos in the disability sector. Your communication strategy does not reflect best practices in change management, nor does it demonstrate your understanding, concern, or care for the people affected by the proposed CYSN Framework. The Left Out report has confirmed that the disability community is struggling 20 months into the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly, instead of lifting the spirits of families of neurodivergent children, this announcement has added more stress, fear, and emotional weight to the entire community. The heartbreaking testimonials



of these families can be found in every corner of the province and on every platform of self-expression.

We respectfully ask you to answer the questions raised by parents across BC and provide detailed information on the strategies, tactics, and funding your Ministry will use to implement the hub-based model. Explaining how this model will operate in the immediate future and into 2025 is a crucial step towards the Ministry building trust, confidence, and calm among members of the disability community. This trust is critical for the Ministry to build with Indigenous children and families if it is serious about reconciliation.

Your announcement and communications appear to be an attempt to cause an unnecessary divide between the autism community and the broader disability community. Your comments have jeopardized relationships and trust by politicizing and prioritizing the needs of specific community members over others. The strategy of removing services from one marginalized group in the name of equality to better serve another marginalized, underfunded group is theoretically, economically, logistically, and ethically flawed. All children with disabilities deserve support tailored to their unique needs and strengths without pitting their families against each other to secure those supports.

The signed are eager to prevent further harm by promoting safe spaces for discussion. We invite any organization representing families under the CYSN Framework to reach out to the hitherto signed organizations to further dialogue about how best to meet the needs of families, children, and youth with support needs in this province.

We call on the Minister to engage in a truly meaningful consultation process and develop a strategy to address the informational needs and concerns of all families affected by these sweeping changes to the CYSN Framework. We demand a transparent and open consultation strategy that will allow room to adjust the model to truly meet the needs of all children and families across the province.

Sincerely,



Julia Boyle
Executive Director
AutismBC



Deborah Pugh
Executive Director
Autism Community Training



Nancy Walton
Executive Director
Autism Support Network



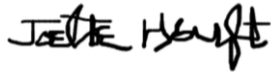
Vicky Ryan
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Sergio Cocchia O.B.C., LLD (Hon)
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Pacific Autism Family Network



Sherri Palle
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Joette Heuft
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