

**Ministry of Children,
Community and Social
Services**

Minister's Office

438 University Avenue
7th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Tel.: (416) 325-5225
Fax: (416) 325-5240

**Ministère des Services à
l'enfance et des Services
sociaux et communautaires**

Bureau du Ministre

438, avenue University
7^e étage
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Tél. : (416) 325-5225
Téléc. : (416) 325-5240



127-2021-1409

March 1, 2021

Ms. Susann Palmiere
Ms. Alison Ouellette
Co-Chairs
People for Personalized Funding
pfpfontario@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Palmiere and Ms. Ouellette:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Special Services at Home (SSAH) program, and the delays that some families have experienced in receiving their reimbursements.

Ontario continues to take decisive action to protect the health and safety of all individuals and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. As you may know, in the 2020 Budget we invested an additional \$70.3 million over three years in the SSAH program. This has provided support to over 4,800 more children and youth with developmental and/or physical disabilities, and their families this year. It will also support approximately 2,100 additional children and families each year in the next two fiscal years.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services acknowledges that some families have experienced a delay in SSAH payments as the ministry continues to process reimbursements for families. This has been due to the onboarding of over 4,800 new families into the program in this fiscal year, and has been compounded by challenges related to the pandemic. The ministry is working to resolve this issue as quickly as possible. Ministry staff are currently processing invoices from December and January, and are making progress on reducing the wait times.

.../cont'd

In addition, to support families accessing SSAH and Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and Technologically Dependent Children programs during the pandemic, we have temporarily expanded the list of eligible expenses to accommodate activities, services and supports for children and families while they physically distance at home. These temporary changes recognize the challenges families of children with special needs face while community-based activities and settings are closed.

To protect the health and economic well-being of the people of Ontario, our government continues to invest and budget for further contingencies in the fight against COVID-19. As you may be aware, effective October 1, 2020, workers who provide direct support services for children with special needs through MCCSS-funded programs are eligible for a temporary wage increase. This temporary increase provides \$3 per hour worked to eligible support workers who provide direct assistance with personal care, respite and community activity participation. This includes workers employed by families with funding from SSAH. More information about eligibility and how families may apply for this temporary funding is on the ministry's [website](#). Ministry staff have sent letters to all families accessing SSAH supports to provide information about this temporary wage increase.

Our government continues to evaluate the situation to determine additional steps to support families of children with special needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families may wish to contact their service providers or their local ministry regional office for updates on what services or supports may be available as the situation evolves.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Todd Smith
Minister