

**Ministry of Children,
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January 13, 2022

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

Dear Ms. Ouellette and Ms. Palmiere:

Thank you for sharing the findings of the People for Personalized Funding's 2021 survey of Ontario families who receive Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services appreciates your feedback about the value of the SSAH program to families. We are committed to improving service experiences and outcomes for all children and youth with special needs. The SSAH program currently serves over 29,000 children and youth across Ontario and in March 2020, our government announced \$70.3 million over three years, which will serve an additional 4,800 children and youth in 2020–21, and an additional 4,500 children and youth in 2021–22. This funding allows families to purchase supports not available elsewhere in the community, such as helping the child learn new skills and abilities and providing respite support to the family.

Our government is also investing \$240 million over four years, beginning in 2021, to support children and youth with special needs by improving access to critical services and building capacity in early intervention and rehabilitation services.

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Ms. Alison Ouellette

Ms. Susann Palmiere

People for Personalized Funding

To support families accessing direct funding from the SSAH and Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and/or Technology Dependent Children programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, we temporarily expanded eligible expenses to accommodate activities services and supports for children and families. The temporary eligible expenditures include sensory items, technology, and home-based recreation and fitness activities that children and youth would otherwise access through day programs or community-based programs. Personal protective equipment and supplies, essential service delivery fees and behavioural support plans and related interventions may also be eligible for this funding.

Families who receive direct funding from the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities program may also use pre-approved unspent funding to purchase items from the expanded list. These temporary changes recognize the challenges families of children with special needs face while community-based activities and settings are closed.

Our government is continuing to evaluate the situation to determine additional steps that can be taken 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 continues to evolve. More information on how to contact local ministry regional offices can be found [here](#).

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your feedback.

Sincerely,



Dr. Merrilee Fullerton
Minister