



**Special Services at Home Passport Provincial Coalition (SSAHPC)
Has Been Re-Established With A New Name!**

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February 10, 2021

Hon. Minister Todd Smith
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
438 University Ave. 7th Floor
Toronto, ON
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Dear Minister Smith:

We are writing in reference to a CBC news article posted by Kimberley Molina February 2, 2021.
“Respite Program Turning into a Costly Ordeal”

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ontario-special-services-at-home-program-funding-delayed-months-1.5896483>

Our volunteer organization People for Personalized Funding supports families to use direct, personalized, provincial funding to support their family members who have disabilities to have everyday lives within their communities.

The Special Services At Home Program provides funding to families caring for children with disabilities to hire support workers. SSAH connects children within their communities, and strengthens their families to continue to provide good lives at home and lessen the likelihood of dependency on paid support as adults. To achieve these aims **personalized funding** must be provided early in families' lives, in adequate amounts and in a timely manner.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic many, if not most, families have had to discontinue in-home and out-of-home worker support in order to protect their children with disabilities from the virus. In response to the closure of community-based activities, and the restriction of home visitation by individuals outside of the family, the Ministry has advised families that they may use their funds to purchase therapeutic, educational and recreational equipment for their children.

Timely reimbursement of SSAH expenditures has, unfortunately, not occurred. Since March 2020, families across Ontario have waited weeks and months for reimbursement, placing many in financially precarious positions. Your Ministry attributed these delays to the addition of more families to the program and “pandemic related technical problems.”

The pandemic has closed community-based activities, restricted in-home and out-of-home visits by support and home health care workers, restricted respite care, and closed schools, clinics and other education activities. The stress and workload of families caring for children with disabilities is, at this point in time in our province, unsustainable. The unnecessary stress of financial burden brought on by this delay in reimbursement is totally unacceptable.

We ask, on behalf of families caring for children with disabilities in Ontario, that the Ministry ensure the timely and efficient administration of SSAH.

Respectfully yours,

Susann Palmiere and Alison Ouellette, Co chairs, People for Personalized Funding

Cc:

The Honorable Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children and Women’s Issues

Janet Menard, Deputy Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

Jennifer Morris, ADM Children with Special Needs

Rupert Gordon, ADM, Community Services Division

Carla O'Neill, President, Family Alliance ON