

March 25, 2020

Hello FSCD Families,

The ministry of Community and Social Services (CSS) is reaching out to you because we know the COVID-19 pandemic situation is an extremely challenging time for all Albertans and we know every family in Alberta is facing unforeseen pressures related to accessing community services such as day care and recreation, purchasing household necessities, and remaining connected to family and friends. Regardless of who you are or where you live, COVID-19 is affecting all Albertans practically, financially and emotionally. CSS knows that the current situation can be particularly hard on families who rely on our programs and services for support, and we want you to know we are committed to maintaining CSS programs and services during the COVID-19 pandemic, within the context of our current reality.

Please note we are in daily discussions with Inclusion Alberta and the Alberta Council for Disability Services to monitor the impact the COVID-19 situation is having on Albertans with disabilities and their families. We are also speaking regularly with the Chair of the Provincial Parents Advisory Council (PPAC). These conversations are informing the management of our disability programs during this pandemic crisis.

Please be assured that during the COVID-19 pandemic, CSS staff will continue to administer FSCD agreements as per usual practice; including the renewal of existing agreements. We encourage you to remain in regular phone and on-line contact with your FSCD worker to address any concerns you may have (in-person meetings are paused until further notice as per public health social distancing directives). As always, and on a case-by-case basis, there is room for flexibility within existing FSCD agreements to make adjustments to help meet your needs during the COVID-19 crisis. FSCD staff will work with you and be as flexible as possible. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic you can utilize community aide hours within your agreement to support respite. Additionally, as there are no 'typical school day/hours' at this time with schools closed, you can utilize your existing FSCD agreement funding for respite and other FSCD services during the day. Please connect with your FSCD worker regarding how to make this happen and to discuss other ways to meet your current needs within your existing agreement.

We are tracking the administrative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic so please record the things you are doing within your agreement that are specific to COVID-19, and remember to inform your FSCD worker about each one. Our staff will continue to support your family as best we can during this challenging time.

In closing, please know we recognize the current COVID-19 pandemic situation may affect the availability of services you typically access through your FSCD agreement. For example, because of public health protective measures, it will be increasingly difficult to access some of the services that support your child and your family. If your FSCD agreement has lower expenditures in certain service areas that are only due to the COVID-19 situation, this will not impact decisions regarding your child's FSCD support needs in future FSCD agreements.

Remember, the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 is available on line at www.alberta.ca.

Sincerely,

John Stinson, Assistant Deputy Minister
Program Policy and Improvement, Community and Social Services

Jason Chance, Assistant Deputy Minister
Delivery Services, Community and Social Services