



ALBERTA
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Minister

June 29, 2018

Dear Parents, Families and Advocates:

Thank you all for sharing your concerns with respect to the delivery of specialized services through the FSCD program and for your suggestions for program improvements over these last weeks.

In response to your concerns, we held open listening sessions for families in Edmonton and Calgary, and over 100 parents participated and shared their experiences with the FSCD program. A What We Heard document from the listening sessions is attached for your awareness.

It is clear from these conversations that parents and families want the FSCD program policy and practice to shift immediately and we agree. As a result, we are making a number of immediate changes to the program.

These changes will be completed in July 2018 and include the following:

1. We are ending all reference to “parent training” and “parent coaching” language.
2. We are making substantive change to our specialized services policy to confirm parent involvement in specialized services is entirely optional. Parents are not expected to become therapists to their child, and they are not required to be in the room or participate when specialized services are being provided to their child.
3. We are changing our Family Centred Supports and Services policy, FSCD Program Outcomes policy and Overarching Policies and Considerations Policy to confirm support for direct services to children, and to ensure full alignment with FSCD legislation.
4. We are sharing a FSCD tool kit with all families to share information about the program, services that are available, and what parents can do if they have a concern or question about access to direct services.
5. We will share a transparent and accountable description of what specialized services are, what the eligibility criteria is and what services are available.
6. We are updating our information, resources, forms and website content to be clearer and improve access to information for parents and families about direct services to children. This includes changes to FSCD program brochures, Director’s Decision about Specialized Services letter, Welcome to FSCD letter and other resources.

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In addition to these immediate changes, the following further improvements will be made in the coming months:

1. The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) process will be reviewed to identify improvements to ensure this process is supportive for families by way of enhancing consistency, accountability and best practice.
2. FSCD staff training is being updated and orientation training will be provided to staff to support an immediate shift in practice to providing direct services to children in addition to supports for families.
3. A full review of the entire FSCD policy manual will be completed to ensure it follows the legislation and supports direct services to children.
4. We will explore ways to increase service provider and FSCD program staff capacity to ensure better access to services.

The changes outlined above are just first steps. We know there is more work to do and we will work with you to identify further improvements that can be made to the program. We have and will continue to work openly and collaboratively with you, and will be hosting additional listening sessions over the summer to have more conversations and hear your feedback. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns about your specialized services agreement, please reach out to your FSCD case manager. If you have questions regarding FSCD specialized services policy or provincial FSCD policy in general, I encourage you to contact Roxanne Gerbrandt at 780-643-9404 or Roxanne.Gerbrandt@gov.ab.ca.

Once again, thank you for sharing your concerns and feedback with me. Please know we appreciate and value your advocacy and feedback. Our government is committed to working with you to ensure children with disabilities get the best possible services for a bright future.

Sincerely,



Irfan Sabir
Minister