



Disability Policy  
Research Program



# Disability Policy in Canada: Provincial and Territorial Report

January 2025

Prepared by: Brittany Finlay, Samuel Ragot, Lucyna M. Lach, and  
Jennifer D. Zwicker

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Disability Policy in Canada Provincial and Territorial Report was commissioned by Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN), and developed in collaboration with researchers from the Disability Policy Research Program (DiPo) and McGill University. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of disability policy across Canadian provinces and territories. This report can serve as a baseline against which future progress in policy changes can be assessed, or at least understood.

In this report series, we aim to be as comprehensive as possible by including all policy related to persons with disabilities in each province and territory. We acknowledge that this report reflects a point in time assessment of disability policy. As such, information and links will likely change over time as governments and policy change. All information included in this report is accurate as of the date of publication. To maximize the accuracy of this report, it has been reviewed and verified by individuals with expertise in and/or lived experience with disability policy across Canada.

In an effort to be comprehensive while also succinct, we chose to apply a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria to the disability policy tools included in this report. The focus in this report series is to include legislation, plans of action, advocacy/awareness initiatives, tax programs, and services that support children and adults who have disabilities that are permanent and present from birth or that develop in early childhood. This includes neurodevelopmental disabilities and physical disabilities, deafness and hearing impairments, and blindness and vision impairment. We do not include policy tools that exclusively provide support to individuals that develop disabilities later in life, for example due to accidents or workplace injury. In some cases, there are policy tools that are accessible to all citizens and so are not explicitly designed for persons with disabilities and their families. We refer to these programs as 'blended' and include them in our analysis as they may be relevant to persons with disabilities and/or have unique

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

eligibility criteria for them. This is particularly important in provinces and territories that do not have policy tools and programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities to highlight other avenues through which they can receive support.

We chose to focus this report on children and adults with disabilities, and do not include programs that support seniors (65 years of age or older) with disabilities. The caveat to this is that we do include programs that support seniors if they also support adults under the age of 65 years with disabilities. This report is also focused on current government-funded or administered programs. We include some non-profit and community organizations that administer programs on behalf of government, but acknowledge that there are many more that we do not mention that are instrumental to the provision of support for individuals with disabilities across the country.

With respect to education, this report includes legislation and government directives relating to inclusive education, as well as outlines the bodies that are responsible for administering inclusive education, when available. We also include specific government funding streams or government-funded programs that support inclusive education. We do not include specific programs administered by school boards or other entities.

## **Measuring Up**

In this report, we provide information about the experiences of parents and caregivers when applying for and accessing disability programs, as well as information that emerged during the research process or from our peer reviewers. This information is provided in “Measuring Up” boxes throughout the report. Our intent in including this information is to provide additional context regarding the realities of accessing the policy tools outlined in this report and to give a voice to those with lived experience. It is important to note that these perspectives reflect opinions and experiences of a select group of individuals and may not align with the experiences of all individuals within a given province or territory.

Parent and caregiver experiences were sourced from a [study](#) completed by our team, which involved conducting an online survey and follow-up interviews with participants across Canada. We provide more information about the individuals we spoke with during this study on the following page.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**499** Survey Participants **81** Interview Participants

English Speakers: 93%  
French Speakers: 7%

**14%** Spoke more than one language in their home

Average age: 42 years  
Range: 22-70 years

Average age: 11 years  
Range: 0-30 years

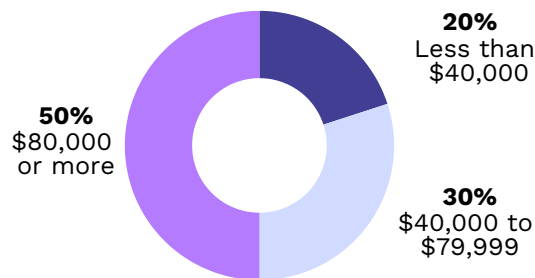
Males: 8%  
Females: 91%  
Non-binary: 1%

Males: 68%  
Females: 31%  
Non-binary or other: 1%

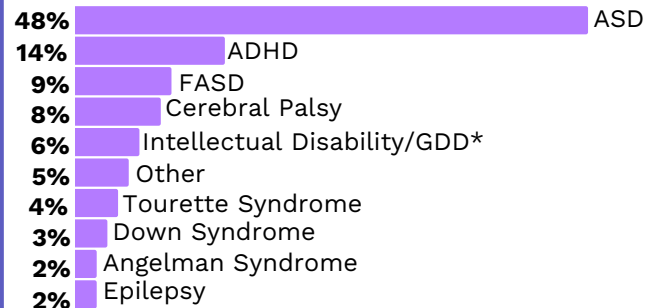
Participants

Youth

## Household Income



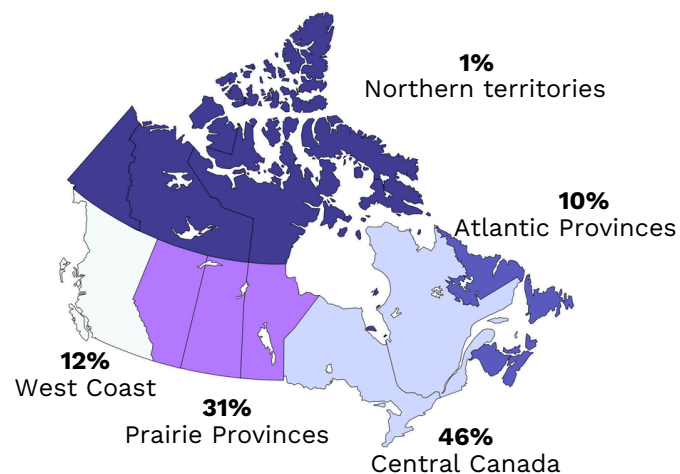
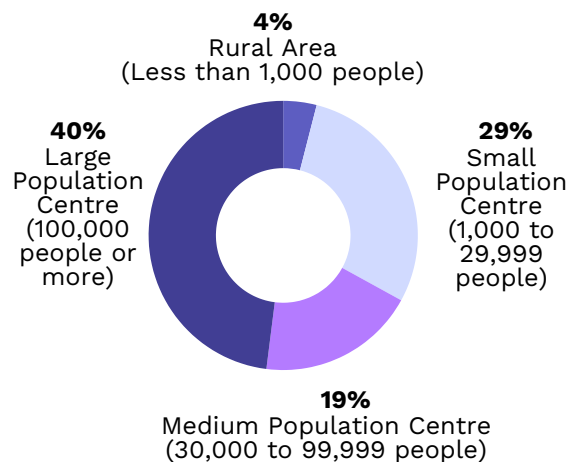
## Primary Diagnosis



**40%** Have more than one diagnosis

\*GDD = Global Developmental Delay

## Location



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all of the families that shared their experiences with our team and all of the community peer reviewers that provided insightful feedback on this report. The creation of this report would not have been possible without their contributions.

## **Peer Reviewers**

- Kathleen O’Grady, QUOI Media and Concordia University
- Hajer Chalghoumi, Kids Brain Health Network
- Logan Wong, IDEAA Perspectives Training & Consulting
- Philip Ney, Inclusion Alberta
- Nilima Sonpal-Valias, Alberta Council of Disability Services
- Shino Nakane and team, Autism Society Alberta
- Erika Cedillo, Inclusion BC
- Michelle Hewitt, Disability Without Poverty
- Michael Prince, University of Victoria
- Tim Stainton, University of British Columbia
- Brenda Lenahan, BC Complex Kids Society
- Melissa Graham, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- Leanne Fenez, Abilities Manitoba
- Ken Pike, Inclusion New Brunswick
- Haley Flaro, Ability New Brunswick
- Ntibabaza Nigene and Colleagues, Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
- Denise McKee, NWT Disabilities Council
- Guillaume Parent, Finautonome
- Keiko Shikako, McGill University
- Natasha Rumsey, Rumsey Consulting
- Cynthia Anaba, University of Regina
- Haley Jones, parent and advocate
- Marli Robertson, parent and advocate

## **Suggested Citation**

Finlay, B., Ragot, S., Lach, L.M., and Zwicker, J.D. (2024). Disability Policy in Canada Provincial and Territorial Report. Kids Brain Health Network.

# BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY POLICY

“Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.”

*-Kilpatrick, 2016*

“A set of interrelated decision taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve”

*-Jenkins, 1978*

### **What is Disability Policy?**

There are many different ways to conceptualize and define public policy, and by extension, disability policy. For the purposes of this report, disability policy is broadly defined as what governments and other decision-making entities chose to do or not do that impacts persons with disabilities and their families.

### **Provincial and Territorial Disability Policy**

In Canada, disability policy is delivered by all levels of government in many different sectors, including health, education, finance, and social services. Our previous [report](#) provides an overview of disability policy at the federal level in Canada. This report series focuses on disability policy provided by provincial and territorial governments. For the purposes of this report, we provide information about disability policy for all provinces and territories in alignment with the following five categories:

1) [Income Supports](#) are programs that provide financial assistance to individuals with a low-income so they are able to afford basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and other daily needs. Persons with disabilities in Canada at a lower income level or who experience barriers to employment can access financial assistance from income support programs. Some provinces and territories provide income support programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities, while others provide an additional allowance for persons with disabilities within their general income support program. Others still offer one income support program that all individuals with a low income who meet eligibility criteria can access, with no additional supports for persons with disabilities, specifically.

2) Laws and Policies include laws and policy documents that allow systems to be put in place to help governments carry out changes they want to make to systems and structures. Laws are created from bills that are introduced in the provincial or territorial legislature. To become law, bills must pass through a specific legislative process. Policy documents are often published by ministries and can provide guidelines with respect to a specific topic. Legislation may stipulate that ministers can publish policy documents related to the topic of the piece of legislation (for example, education-related legislation often gives ministers the power to publish policy guidelines related to inclusive education).

3) Advocacy, Awareness, and Action Plans include councils, offices or events funded by provincial and territorial governments that can serve a variety of purposes, such as advocating to government on behalf of individuals with disabilities, advising on the development of government programs or policies, connecting individuals with disabilities with programs in their community, awareness building and education, support for mistreatment and discrimination, and, in some cases, direct service provision. This category also includes provincial and territorial action plans related to persons with disabilities that outline policy priorities and recommendations for government action.

4) Programs Provided through the Tax System include refundable and non-refundable tax credits, as well as tax deductions, that aim to offset the additional costs associated with having a disability by reducing the amount of income taxes an individual owes each year. Non-refundable tax credits reduce the amount of income tax owed but do not produce a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed, whereas refundable tax credits reduce the amount of tax owed and will create a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed. Tax deductions allow for certain expenses to be deducted from taxable income to lower the amount of taxes owed. In Canada, provincial and territorial governments develop their own tax law and policies; however, the Canada Revenue Agency collects and administers individual income taxes on behalf of provincial and territorial governments (except for the province of Quebec, where taxes are administered by Revenu Quebec).

5) Services and Supports for Basic Needs and Activities of Daily Living are services, supports, and programs that provide assistance to persons with disabilities in their day-to-day lives. This can include community-based support, employment programs, home and housing support, respite, early intervention, transportation support, and rehabilitation, among others. For each province and territory, we provide sub-categories within this section for added clarity.

### **Disability Policy Outside Government**

In many provinces and territories, disability policy is delivered by entities outside of government, such as Crown Corporations, non-profit organizations and registered charities. In some cases, these organizations are funded and/or contracted by the provincial or territorial government to provide these services. We specify these cases whenever possible throughout the report. We also provide a list of these organizations at the end of the section on each province and territory as a resource for individuals and families looking for support.

# UN CRPD

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is an international treaty that upholds and protects the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. Canada, along with 183 other states parties, has adopted the UN CRPD, which means that they accept the legal obligations contained in the UN CRPD. These obligations include ensuring that there are national laws to prevent discrimination, eliminating barriers to accessibility, and working to promote the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities. Associated with the creation of laws are the provision of disability programs that have the purpose of providing support to persons with disabilities to ensure they are able to fully participate in society.

Contained in the UN CRPD are processes that help to ensure that states parties are meeting the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD. For example, states parties must regularly report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to explain what actions they are taking to implement the UN CRPD. In Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission is also tasked with monitoring how well Canada is implementing the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD.

Canada and 99 other states parties have also signed on to the Optional Protocol to the UN CRPD. The Optional Protocol creates a process for people to make complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities if they have exhausted all other legal options within Canada.

While the UN CRPD is ratified federally, many of the obligations contained in the UN CRPD can be met by policy and programs delivered at the provincial and territorial level. In fact, due to the federalist nature of Canada, many articles, such as Health (Article 25), Habilitation and Rehabilitation (Article 26), and Education (Article 24) are met to a greater extent by programs provided by provincial and territorial governments, rather than the federal government.

To demonstrate how government actions can fulfill requirements under the UN CRPD, we link UN CRPD articles with the various disability policy tools we include in this report. For the purposes of this report, we have sorted the 50 articles of the UN CRPD with similar aims into 10 categories (outlined below). Articles that are not included in this report are administrative in nature, related to reporting requirements, or are outside the scope of government action in this context. The icons used on the following pages will be used throughout the report to demonstrate how provincial and territorial disability policy is aligned with the UN CRPD articles.





## Equality

### Description

This category includes articles that promote equality for persons with disabilities both before and under the law, and ensure that persons with disabilities do not face discrimination.

### Relevant Articles

Article 4: General obligations

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

Article 6: Children with disabilities

Article 7: Women with disabilities

Article 10: Right to life

Article 14: Liberty and security of person

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

Article 22: Respect for privacy



## Accessibility

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities can access public spaces, systems, and facilities, such as the physical environment, transportation and communication technologies.

### Relevant Article

Article 9 – Accessibility



## Social Participation

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in society fully and on an equal basis with others.

### Relevant Articles

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Article 20: Personal mobility

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport



## Employment and Financial Security

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to work, and have access to inclusive and accessible workplaces. It also includes articles that outline the responsibility of states parties to alleviate poverty and promote financial security of persons with disabilities.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 27](#): Work and employment

[Article 28](#): Adequate standard of living and social protection



## Health and Social Services

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to healthcare and social services that allows them to have the highest attainable standard of health and well-being, achieve inclusion and maintain maximum independence.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 25](#): Health

[Article 26](#): Habilitation and rehabilitation



## Public Education and Information

### Description

This category includes articles that require states parties to provide public information about persons with disabilities to foster respect and combat stereotypes.

### Relevant Article

[Article 8](#): Awareness-raising



## Legal Capacity and Justice

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure persons with disabilities have equality with respect to legal capacity and access to justice.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 12](#): Equal recognition before the law

[Article 13](#): Access to justice



## Caregiving and Family

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 23](#): Respect for home and the family



## Education

### Description

This category includes articles that maintain the right to education for persons with disabilities through the provision of inclusive and quality education, accommodations, and support.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 24](#): Education



## Housing and Related Supports

### Description


















This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equality in their ability to choose where they would like to live and are able to live as independently as possible in the community through the provision of in-home and community supports.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 19](#): Living independently and being included in the community

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

| Income Support       |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Disability-Specific</b>   | <b>Blended</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assured Income (part of AccessAbility Supports)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Assistance Program</li> </ul>  |
| Laws and Policies    |  |
| <b>Disability-Specific</b>   | <b>Blended</b>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PEI Human Rights Act</li> <li>Adult Protection Act</li> <li>Education Act</li> </ul>  |
| Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans       |  |
| <b>Disability-Specific</b>   | <b>Blended</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AccessAbility Advisory Council</li> <li>National AccessAbility Week</li> <li>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OmbudsPEI</li> <li>Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Prince Edward Island</li> <li>PEI Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>  |
| Programs Provided by the Tax System       |  |
| <b>Disability-Specific</b>   | <b>Blended</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability amount for self</li> <li>Disability amount transferred from a dependent</li> <li>Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caregiver amount</li> <li>Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later</li> <li>Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents</li> </ul> |

## Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



### Disability-Specific

- Early Years Autism Service
- Preschool Autism Funding
- AccessAbility Supports
- School-age Autism Funding
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

### Blended

- PEI Home Renovation Program
- Employment Assistance Services
- Seniors Housing Program
- Long-term Care
- Family Health Benefit Drug Program
- Designated Parking Permit

## ACRONYMS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| APSEA | Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority |
| CNIB  | Canadian National Institute of the Blind       |
| CSLF  | Commission scolaire de langue française        |
| IBI   | Intensive Behavioural Intervention             |

## INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Employment & Financial Security
 Health & Social Services
 Caregiving & Family  
 Social Participation
 Equality
 Housing & Related Supports

PEI residents aged 18 years and older in financial need are able to access the Social Assistance Program, which provides financial support to pay for basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Individuals with greater financial need may also receive funding to assist with the cost of childcare, medications (including hearing aids and eyeglasses), transportation costs, and security deposit for rent or utilities. To apply for the program, individuals are required to make an intake appointment, where a social supports coordinator will review documentation (including identity and financial documents), assess eligibility, and provide information about the program. Individuals accepted into this program are automatically enrolled in:

- The Financial Assistance Drug Program, which provides coverage for approved medication costs.
- The Provincial Dental Care Program, which provides dental coverage.

Persons with disabilities who are accessing AccessAbility Supports (described in further detail below) can receive financial assistance through the Assured Income program. Notably, individuals cannot access both the Assured Income program and Social Assistance program. This program provides financial support for individuals and families with disabilities enrolled in the AccessAbility

program that may not be able to afford their basic needs. Monthly benefit levels are calculated on a case-by-case basis and determined by the applicant's needs, expenses, and income. The Assured Income program provides funds specifically for the following:

- Essentials
- Food Allowance
- Shelter Supports
- Communication Supports
- Special Needs
- Medical Supports
- Transportation
- Community Living Expense



## Did you know?

In February 2024, the Government of Prince Edward Island announced an increased investment of \$2.7 million into social program rates, resulting in modest increases to monthly rates for clients accessing Social Assistance and Assured Income programs.

# LAWS AND POLICIES





⊖ Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice

At the time of publication, Prince Edward Island does not have accessibility legislation or other legislation and policies specifically related to persons with disabilities.

The following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Prince Edward Island:

- The PEI Human Rights Act prevents unequal or prejudicial treatment on the basis of personal characteristics, including disability.
- The Adult Protection Act protects and assists vulnerable individuals who may be in immediate and significant danger, and do not understand or are unaware of the danger they are in; do not have the physical ability to get out of a dangerous situation; or are unable to protect themselves because of physical or cognitive limitations.
- The Education Act outlines requirements for the Minister to “establish policies for the provision of special education services,” for education authorities to “provide a continuum of specialized supports and services to students that is consistent with the principles of inclusive education,” and parents to “co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of specialized supports and services to the student.”

# ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Social Participation  
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The AccessAbility Advisory Council is comprised of a maximum of eight individuals with a range of views, knowledge, and community awareness related to disability. The purpose of this council is to provide input, consultation, and advice to the minister on issues affecting individuals with disabilities.

Specifically, the Council has the following responsibilities:






- Provide advice to the minister on disability-related issues.
- Provide input into the development of policy, programs, and services.
- Identify and discuss issues impacting the disability community.
- Champion research to inform policy and practice.
- Foster partnerships among persons with disabilities, government, and community.
- Enhance public awareness and education.

Prince Edward Island recognizes National AccessAbility Week at the end of May. This week is an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of Islanders with a disability, while also recognizing the efforts of individuals, businesses, and organizations who are actively removing barriers to ensure persons living with disabilities have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of society. The Government of Prince Edward Island also recognizes the International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually on December 3.

Other offices and initiatives in Prince Edward Island related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- OmbudsPEI is an independent office of the Legislature that responds to and helps resolve complaints about fairness in government programs and services.
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Prince Edward Island has the responsibilities of advocating for children and youth, connecting children, youth and their families to programs and services, working with families, professionals, communities, and government to protect and promote the rights of children and youth, and making recommendations and reports about important matters for children and youth.
- The PEI Human Rights Commission is an independent agency that administers the PEI Human Rights Act. The main roles of the Commission are to receive human rights complaints from individuals, investigate complaints as needed, resolve complaints, and advise government to make changes based on complaints as needed. The Commission reports annually to the Legislature through the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

# PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
  Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Prince Edward Island that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Prince Edward Island taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

| Tax Credit   | Description and Eligibility   |
|--|---|
| <b>Disability amount for self</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities.</li> <li>Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit.</li> <li>Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$6,890 on their tax return.</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Disability amount transferred from a dependent</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This amount (up to \$2,446) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions.</li> <li>The dependent must have a net income under \$7,412.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit.</li> <li>Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Caregiver amount</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$14,399 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$2,446 for each dependent).</li> <li>This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.</li> </ul> |



# SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



## Services for Children

Preschool and school-age children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder can also access the [Early Years Autism Services](#) program. In this program, Early Years Autism Specialists provide services to young children before entering school. The primary service provided at this stage of the program is Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI), which takes place in the child's natural daily routines and environments. Families receiving IBI can also receive [Preschool Autism Funding](#), which provides financial support for hiring an Autism Assistant. Children entering school can receive Intensive Kindergarten Support for the first year of school, where an Early Years Autism Specialist can provide regular support for both the child and the school staff. As the child moves into Grade 1, they will begin to receive support from school-based Autism Consultants.

## Services for Children and Adults

The central program that supports persons with disabilities in Prince Edward Island is [AccessAbility Supports](#). This program is available to residents of Prince Edward Island under the age of 65 years with a physical, intellectual, neurological, sensory, and/or mental disability diagnosis from a medical practitioner. There are five main types of support provided by this program:

- Personal Supports, which includes life skills training, technical aids and assistive devices (such as wheelchairs), in-home supports, personal care workers, and specialized care supports.
- Housing Supports, which includes Vehicle Modifications Funding, Residential Supports for paid caregivers, and Home Modifications Funding.
- Community Supports, which supports active participation in the community. This can include supporting involvement in peer connection groups, day programs, personal support workers, and support for specialized transportation.
- Caregiver Supports, which includes supervision funding, respite funding (maximum of \$430 per month), and behavioural supports.
- Financial Supports, which includes assistance for basic needs through Assured Income (see above).

AccessAbility Supports also provides the [School-Aged Autism Funding](#) program, which provides funding to school-aged children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder who require the support of an adult to access community-based activities and/or tutoring outside of school hours.

To get support from this program, individuals are required to meet with a staff person who assesses the applicant, and determines how their disability affects their daily life and how AccessAbility Supports can help them meet their needs.



## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Parent Perspective: Extreme Lengths to Receive Needed Support

In Prince Edward Island, we had a relatively small sample size for our study, with three individuals completing the survey and only one individual participating in a follow-up interview.

Our interview participant shared a story with our team regarding the extreme lengths they had to go to to receive the support they needed for their child. This story emphasizes how difficult it can be for individuals and families to get the support they need.

“We put [my son] in daycare full-time in September. And he went without a special needs assistant for about a month because the province was short of money to- to have a funded special needs assistant in that center. It was frustrating to be told no, we couldn't have a one-on-one for our son who was a flight risk and who has limited language skills, that he was going into a center without that support. At one point, I called the Department of Early Childhood Education. And they had the, like, the director on the phone, and I was, like, crying and she was like, "Well, there's nothing I can do.”

The daycare supervisor and I just pushed. We met with MLAs. We met with, um, someone that was running for, uh, the federal election last fall. We were just trying to get the funding pushed through because there are kids in centers, like my son, who didn't have that one-on-one that they needed. And one day, we just got a call that, you know, someone had heard about it and called the Department of Early Childhood Education and pushed it through. So that was frustrating process, to say the least.”

### Education

Services for students with special education needs are provided by the Public Schools Branch and La Commission scolaire de langue française (CSLF). These entities supply inclusive education consultants, who provide consultation to principals, resource teachers, and classroom teachers to support students with disabilities.

Students under the age of 21 years with low incidence sensory impairments (including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired) can also access educational services, programs, and opportunities through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA).



## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Accessing Healthcare Services in Prince Edward Island

A recent survey by [Health PEI](#) asked 1,860 individuals who care for children and youth with complex needs, including those with disabilities, about their experiences accessing health services in Prince Edward Island. We highlight their survey findings below to supplement our study data.

84%

*shared that they have difficulties accessing health service over the past year.*

97%

*of caregivers want services to help them navigate the system.*

### Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- [PEI Home Renovation Program](#). Provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners (with a property valued under \$300,000) to renovate their homes. Renovations made to increase accessibility of a home are eligible for grant funding of \$16,000, an increase from the \$12,000 grant available for non-accessibility-related renovations.
- [Employment Assistance Services](#). The Government of Prince Edward Island, through the SkillsPEI division, has partnerships with a number of external service providers that assist unemployed individuals to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. One external provider, [ResourceAbilities](#), provides support specifically for persons with disabilities.
- [Seniors Housing Program](#). Provides housing for seniors (60 years or older) without housing or who have difficulties maintaining their home. Notably, individuals with disabilities can access this program at a younger age (55 years) than those without disabilities. Some units are also specifically designed to accommodate individuals with a disability.
- [Long-term Care](#). Provides specialized nursing and personal care services to individuals who can no longer live on their own with family or home care supports.
- [Family Health Benefit Drug Program](#). Helps cover the cost of approved prescription medications for families with children under the age of 19 years (or under the age of 25 years if they are a full time student).

- Designated Parking Permit. Parking permits are for those "unable to walk more than 75 metres without serious difficulty or danger to safety or health" and allow permit holders to park in specially designated parking spots. This program is administered by ResourceAbilities.



## Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to Islanders with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB)
- The Learning Disability Association of Prince Edward Island (LDAPEI)
- Community Connections Inc.
- Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living (PEIACL)
- Easter Seals Prince Edward Island