



Disability Policy  
Research Program

kids  
brain health  
network



réseau pour  
la santé du cerveau  
des enfants

# Disability Policy in Canada: Provincial and Territorial Report

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# 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

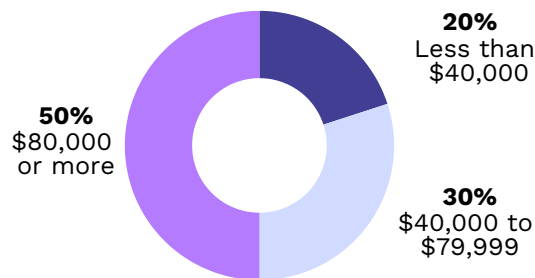
Males: 8%  
Females: 91%  
Non-binary: 1%

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

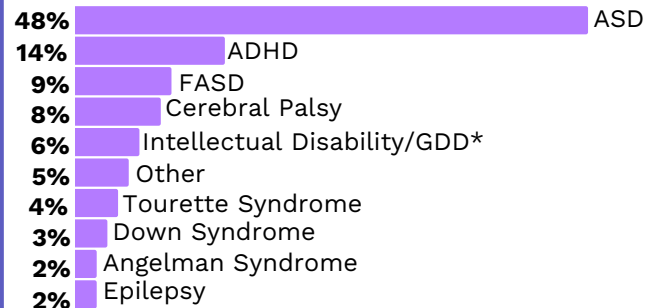
Participants

Youth

## Household Income



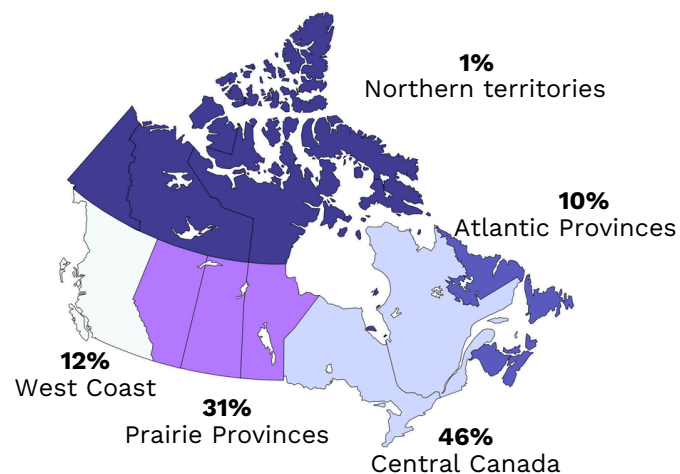
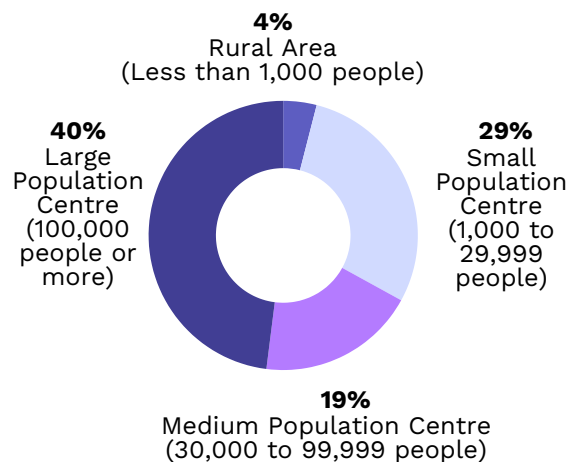
## Primary Diagnosis



**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
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- Logan Wong, IDEAA Perspectives Training & Consulting
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- Erika Cedillo, Inclusion BC
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- Michael Prince, University of Victoria
- Tim Stainton, University of British Columbia
- Brenda Lenahan, BC Complex Kids Society
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- Leanne Fenez, Abilities Manitoba
- Ken Pike, Inclusion New Brunswick
- Haley Flaro, Ability New Brunswick
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- Cynthia Anaba, University of Regina
- Haley Jones, parent and advocate
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# 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

# SASKATCHEWAN

## PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability</li> </ul>	
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible Saskatchewan Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act</li> <li>Saskatchewan Human Rights Code</li> <li>Education Act</li> </ul>
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Disability Issues</li> <li>Saskatchewan Disability Strategy</li> <li>Disability Employment Awareness Month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of the provincial Ombudsman</li> <li>Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth</li> <li>Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<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>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> <li>Caregiver Amount</li> <li>Active Families Benefit</li> </ul>

## Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



### Disability-Specific

- Early Childhood Intervention Program
- Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding Program
- Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD)
- Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS)
- Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- Saskatchewan Home Repair Program - Adaptation for Independence
- Early Childhood Intervention Program
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment
- ASD Individualized Funding Program
- Saskatchewan Home Repair Program - Adaptation for Independence
- Community Living Service Delivery

### Blended

- Services provided by Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living
- Individualized Funding for Home Care
- Family Health Benefits
- Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS)
- Social Housing Program
- Special Care Homes
- Special Support Program
- Supplementary Health Benefits:
- Accessible Parking Program

## ACRONYMS

CDS	Cognitive Disability Strategy
CLSD	Community Living Service Delivery
ECIP	Early Childhood Intervention Program
SAID	Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability
SRHS	Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement

## INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security
  Social Participation
  Equality
  Housing & Related Supports








The province of Saskatchewan provides an income support program specifically for persons with disabilities: The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program. Individuals 18 years of age and older with a significant, enduring, and permanent disability that impacts their activities of daily living can receive benefits under this program. A Disability Impact Assessment, which helps to identify the presence of a significant and enduring disability is required to apply for this program.

There are three main types of benefits provided under this program:

- The Living Income Benefit: A fixed amount of monthly income that varies based on where the recipient resides within the province. For a single adult, this amount ranges between \$991 and \$1,129.
- The Disability Income Benefit: Benefits to provide support for costs related to an individual's disability (\$70 per month).
- The Exceptional Need Income Benefit: Provides support to individuals for specific needs. For example, additional income can be provided to cover specific clothing items, special food items, and home care, among others.

Program recipients can earn up to a certain amount per year through employment without their SAID benefits being reduced. As of May 1, 2024, this amount is \$6,500 for single individuals, \$7,700 for couples and \$8,500 for families. Other financial benefits, such as the Northern Living Supplement, Household Task Benefit, and Activity Benefit, among others, are also provided to eligible individuals through this program.

## LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation  
 Health & Social Services  Public Education & Information  Education

The Accessible Saskatchewan Act came into force in December 2023 with the purpose of making the government and other organizations more accessible by removing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. The Act promotes accessibility by requiring that:






- The Minister promote accessibility by raising awareness of how barriers keep people with disabilities from participating in their communities.
- Accessibility plans are prepared describing how barriers will be eliminated.
- An annual progress report be made public.
- The Saskatchewan Accessibility Office be created. This Office will be responsible for providing education on accessibility, increasing public awareness, and monitoring compliance and enforcement.

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

- Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act. When a person lacks the capacity to make their own health care decisions, this Act authorizes someone else to make the decision on their behalf.
- The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code has the purpose of promoting the “recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and to further public policy in Saskatchewan that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to discourage and eliminate discrimination.” This includes individuals with disabilities, among many other characteristics.

- The Education Act outlines in detail the requirements of the board of education to undergo assessments of students with intensive or potentially intensive needs, the right of the student and their family to reasonable accommodation, and an appeal or review process for families that disagree with the school board's decision based on an assessment or requirement of an assessment.

## ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality 
  Public Education & Information 
  Accessibility 
  Social Participation  
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The Office of Disability Issues aims to make Saskatchewan a more inclusive province and to create opportunities for people with disabilities within their communities. The Office works towards this goal by connecting Government of Saskatchewan ministries, municipal governments, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, school divisions, the private sector, and persons with disabilities to advance initiatives relating to changing disability policy.

The Office was also the developer and lead for the Saskatchewan Disability Strategy, which provides the framework and vision for improving disability services and programs to meet the government's goal of making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for persons with disabilities. Released in June 2015, the 12 recommendations included in the strategy were developed by the Citizen Consultation Team in collaboration with the ministries of Social Services, Advanced Education, Economy, Education, Government Relations, Health, and Justice and Corrections. These recommendations were informed by public consultations (which occurred through public meetings, social media, an online survey, and written submissions) and research into best practices and disability strategies in other jurisdictions. Recommendations are sorted into six priority areas:






- Putting People Before Systems
- Safeguarding Rights and Safety
- Increasing Economic and Social Inclusion
- Building Personal and Community Capacity
- Creating Accessible Communities
- Becoming an Inclusive Province

The Government of Saskatchewan proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in 2023. During the month of October, the Government of Saskatchewan demonstrates the importance of and positive outcomes associated with employing persons with disabilities by acknowledging and highlighting organizations in Saskatchewan that have actively promoted disability inclusion.

Other offices in Saskatchewan related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- Office of the Provincial Ombudsman: This Office accepts complaints from people who think they have been treated unfairly by a provincial or municipal service.
- Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth: An independent officer of the Legislative Assembly that advocates for the rights, interests, and well-being of children and youth in Saskatchewan.
- Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission: Receives complaints from individuals who believe they have faced discrimination in accordance with the Human Rights Code.

## 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 Saskatchewan that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about Saskatchewan 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 \$10,405 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 \$10,405 for each dependent) 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 \$17,788.</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>



### Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

- 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.

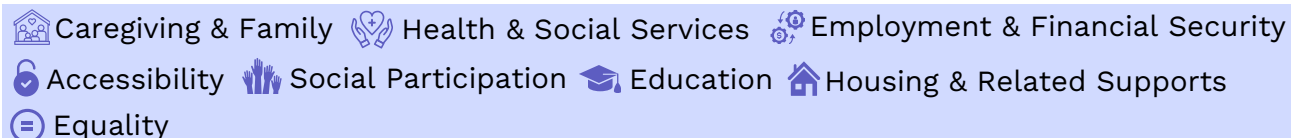
### Caregiver amount

- Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$28,175 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$10,405 for each dependent).
- This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

### Active Families Benefit

- Families with an adjusted annual income less than \$60,000 can claim up to \$150 per child born 2005 or later for costs that relate registering that child in an eligible activity (including sporting activities, cultural activities and recreational activities).
- Children eligible for the Disability Tax Credit are able to claim up to an additional \$50, for a maximum of \$200.

## SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



### Services for Children

For families of children under the age of six years who experience developmental delay or are at risk of developmental delay, the Government of Saskatchewan provides the [Early Childhood Intervention Program \(ECIP\)](#). This program is available to children without a diagnosis and families are encouraged to contact their local ECIP to apply. Consultants provided by ECIP are able to support families in addressing their child’s delay, use assessment tools to identify areas of delay, connect families to resources within their community, and assist with the transition to school.

Children under the age of 12 years with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis can access the [Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding Program](#), which provides parents with funding to pay for services and supports that best support their child’s needs. Funding must be used to purchase services or supports that are on the Ministry of Health’s registry.

### Services for Children and Adults

[Community Living Service Delivery \(CLSD\)](#) is a branch of the Ministry of Social Services that supports people with intellectual disabilities in accessing a variety of community-based services. Individuals can apply for this program through their local Community Living Service Delivery Office. Children and adults with a



## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Parent Experiences: Program Rejection

In Saskatchewan, 45 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and 11 parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. During both phases of the study, we asked participants about their experiences with rejection from disability programs.

**50%** of survey participants reported that their applications for disability programs had been rejected

When asked why they were rejected from programs, the most common reason shared by participants was that their income level prevented them from accessing programs. Often, participants reported that income cut-offs for various programs failed to adequately take into account the true cost of expenses associated with their child's disability. Many participants shared that they struggled to afford the cost of their child's disability-related expenses but did not qualify for government support at their current income level.

*"Our income limits how much help we can access, yet due to medical expenses we're working non stop to pay for his expenses"*

*"Income testing often unfairly excludes us from being eligible for many programs. There have been occasions where we have applied and met all criteria only to be told our income is 'too high'."*

*Quotes from Parent Research Participants*

diagnosis of intellectual disability with an onset before age 18 years are eligible for this program. Applicants require assessment documentation from a qualified professional to apply. Program recipients are assigned a Community Services Worker who helps connect the individual with services and support based on their needs. CLSD has partnerships with many service providers in Saskatchewan to which they can connect clients, including:

- Approved Private Service Homes – Provide a supportive family-living environment in a community setting for adults with intellectual disabilities.
- Group Homes – Staffed to provide personal care, supervision, and support for adults. They are located in residential neighbourhoods throughout Saskatchewan.
- Group Living Homes – People share a group living home and are responsible for paying basic shelter costs. CLSD provides funding for support staff as needed.

- Supported Living Programs – Provide adults living in their own homes with limited support and supervision so they can live as independently as possible.
- Day Programs – Support people to participate in work and leisure activities and develop life skills. Programs include job training, supported employment opportunities, life skills development, socialization and recreation.
- Family Respite Benefit - A monthly financial benefit for parents or guardians of a child with an intellectual disability under the age of 18 years to allow them to pay for short-term alternative or additional supervision and care of their child. Benefit amounts are based on family income level and the level of the impact of the child’s disability, as assessed by CLSD.
- Self-Directed Funding - Allows adults with intellectual disabilities to manage their own funding for residential supports, community inclusion supports and/or day programming with the support of the representative of their choice.

Additionally, the Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS) provides services to address the unmet needs of individuals with cognitive disabilities and their families. To be eligible, individuals must have an unmet need related to their disability that can be addressed by an evidence-based intervention and cannot be supported by another system. Through CDS, individuals and their families can access Cognitive Disability Consultants, who support families with the development of behavioural support plans, and the Cognitive Disability Benefit, a financial benefit calculated based on the impact of disability and financial need.

## Employment and Education

Inclusive education is delivered by school boards and individual schools in Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Education provides resources for teachers, parents, and guardians to help them meet student learning needs. Students with additional needs are supported by a collaborative, in-school team that includes their parents and guardians, education professionals, and other individuals who can help students reach their goals.

Post-secondary students with disabilities can access the Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment, which provides an annual grant for specialized education-related services and assistive equipment. Services covered under this program include the following: tutors, note-takers, interpreters, readers, assistive technology, and specialized transportation, among others. Individuals can receive a grant up to a total of \$22,000 (up to \$20,000 for the Canada Grant and up to \$2,000 for the Saskatchewan grant).

With respect to employment, the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities program provides funding for services for adults with disabilities (16 years of age and older) to help them participate in training or education that is needed to prepare for employment or to obtain and maintain employment. As part of this program, individuals are required to develop a career action plan or services plan that outlines career goals and the steps needed to achieve these

goals, and supports needed to overcome barriers to participation in education or employment. Employers hiring a person with a disability may receive support for disability-related accommodations through this program.



## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Parent Perspectives: Impacts on Employment

As discussed above, many participants of our study reported that they had been rejected from various disability programs in Saskatchewan. This resulted in impacts on many parents' ability to work. Many parents and caregivers had to take on extra work to pay for their child's expenses. Others had to leave their job to care for their child because they were unable to get support from government programs. This places additional burden and stress on parents and caregivers. To demonstrate this, we share the story of one participant below.

*“There is not enough financial help for single parents of special needs children who cannot work, due to their children’s high demand of needs. I tried to have a job, but was told my son was an inconvenience to the company with all of his appointments and bad days. The government needs to understand that this is not a life we chose, if we could be working, I’m sure we would be, but unfortunately, some of us are unable to. I feel like I am being treated like I am just lazy and choosing to sit at home and collect welfare. Caring for my son is literally a full time job. I only get \$250 to live off of myself per month, and that has to cover food, hygiene products, license plates, gas to get my son to his appointments, and more. The child care benefit and disability benefit don’t cover much, when you constantly are making trips to see specialists and for tests at the children’s hospital, and buying diapers, and other necessities. All in all, I barely get by, and it is very hard, and does not seem fair.”*

### Home Modifications

Low-income individuals that require accessibility modifications to the home they own or rent can access the [Saskatchewan Home Repair Program - Adaptation for Independence](#). This program provides a forgivable loan to make a home accessible for an individual with a housing-related disability. Needed home modifications must be identified by a qualified health professional and the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation must provide written approval before repairs are completed.

### Blended Programs

The Ministry of Health in Saskatchewan provides global funding to the [Saskatchewan Health Authority](#) for the delivery of health programs and services, including those for individuals with disabilities. For example, therapy services

such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language pathology services, hearing services, and specialized audiology services are all provided through the Health Authority. The Saskatchewan Health Authority, in turn, also provides some funding to community organizations that can provide support for individuals with disabilities (for example, the [Autism Resource Centre](#)).



## Did you know?

The Autism Resource Centre, located in Regina, provides a variety of programs for autistic adults aged 18 to 36 years, summer programs for children and teenagers, and year-round programming for teens. They also participate in community engagement initiatives and support autistic-led initiatives in the community.

Additional 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:

- [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living](#). This program provides people with physical disabilities and certain chronic conditions a basic level of coverage for disability-related equipment, devices, products, and supplies.
- [Individualized Funding for Home Care](#). This program provides funding to individuals or their guardians to arrange and manage support services for home care.
- [Family Health Benefits](#). This program provides health benefits for low-income working families. It includes coverage for hearing tests and hearing aids, dental services, eye exams, prescription drugs included in the Saskatchewan Formulary, medical supplies, and emergency ambulance services, among others.
- [Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement \(SRHS\)](#). Provides a monthly payment that helps families with low-to-moderate income access quality and affordable rental housing. Two benefits are available through this program – the Family Rental Housing Supplement, which support families with a child under the age of 18 years, and the Disability Rental Housing Supplement, which provides supports to single individuals, families, and couples without children who have supports in their household to accommodate a physical or cognitive disability-related need.
- [Social Housing Program](#). Provides housing and subsidizes the cost of rent for individuals based on their level of financial need. Priority is given to seniors (55 years of age and older), families with children or dependents, and individuals with disabilities who are in greatest housing need.
- [Special Care Homes](#). Provides long-term care services to individuals when their needs can no longer be met at home or in the community. Special care homes are run by the Saskatchewan Health Authority or operated by a provider that has a contract with the health authority.
- [Special Support Program](#). Provides support with the cost of prescription drugs for individuals with low incomes.

- Supplementary Health Benefits. This program is available to a range of individuals in various circumstances (including SAID clients) and provides assistance with non-insured health services. This can include support for medical supplies and appliances, prescription drugs, hearing services, dental services, emergency services, and medical transportation, among other services.
- Accessible Parking Program. Administered by SaskAbilities, this program provides a parking permit to allow individuals to park in designated stalls if they are unable to walk unassisted for more than 50 metres without great difficulty or danger to their health and safety. The application form must be authorized by a physician, occupational therapist, physical therapist, nurse practitioner, or chiropractor. Short term and long term permits are available based on information provided in the application.



## Support for Individuals and Families

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

- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- SaskAbilities
- Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities
- Inclusion Saskatchewan
- FASD Network