

Access to Health Care and Coordination of Care for Children and Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- Children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities often have more **complex health needs and challenges** than those without disabilities.
- Canada has agreed to follow the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1991), which says all **children have the right** to access health and support services and have the right to the highest possible standard of health.
- All children and youth should have **fair access to quality healthcare**.

Key Challenges

- **Primary care providers** often lack the knowledge to support the health needs of children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and are difficult to access, especially in rural and remote areas.
- Families often navigate a mix of **programs that aren't designed to fit their needs** or the healthcare needs of their children and youth. This can cause problems, like needing emergency or mental health care, especially during transitions like starting school or moving to adult services.
- Without **timely access to assessments**, diagnosis, and developmental screening, important therapies like Early Intervention Therapies are delayed. On top of that, long waitlists for Early Intervention Therapy programs mean children miss out on support and start kindergarten before receiving services.

How to Make People's Lives Better

Better Meet the Needs of Children, Youth, and Families

- **Create a pediatric health strategy** to meet the health needs of children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including:
 - A needs-based, family-centered, inclusive and universal service delivery and funding model to access nursing services and other specialized care.
 - Funding for early and timely assessments and diagnoses.
 - A strong process to support the transition to adult healthcare.

Improve Access to Healthcare for Children and Youth

- Establish a **workforce strategy** for training, recruitment, and retention.
- Develop regional health strategies that **respond to the unique needs** of rural and remote areas of BC.

Position Statement: Access to Health Care and Coordination of Care for Children and Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

[Technical Version](#)

[Plain Language Version](#)