

## **New Pilot Program Will Better Connect Disabled Children and Youth with Specialized Care**

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*The information in this article comes from a press release by the provincial government. Click [here](#) to read the original source.*

The Ontario government is investing \$97 million over three years to launch a new pilot program that will start sometime next month.

The Integrated Pathway for Children and Youth with Extensive Needs pilot program will be offered at McMaster Children's Hospital (Hamilton), Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Toronto), and Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (Ottawa).

This program will help children and youth with disabilities — including developmental and intellectual disabilities, mental health concerns, chronic conditions, and physical disabilities — get connected to the individualized and specialized care they need.

The families that will participate in the program will be connected to a team of professionals, including physicians, social workers, and behavioural consultants.

The team will work together to provide tailored support based on the individual needs of the child or youth and their families, including but not limited to:

- adjusting medications,
- creating personalized behaviour support plans,
- assessing and treating mental health concerns,
- providing counselling for parents and caregivers, and
- providing specialized interventions to support children and youth learn how to better communicate and self-regulate.

There are two ways to get involved in this program:

1. The three participating hospitals will work closely with local agencies serving children and youth to identify and contact families who may be eligible.
2. Parents and caregivers can speak to their service provider to find out whether services and supports delivered through this program would be appropriate for their child.

This program complements the government's ongoing investments in front-line supports and services for children with special needs and their families. The funding for this program is

separate from and in addition to the \$240 million investment over four years to help reduce waitlists and increase capacity for early intervention and rehabilitation services.

The government has also removed barriers for parents who have concerns about their child's development by ensuring that all Children's Treatment Centres and Surrey Place can assess children without a referral, which helps children and youth get connected to services sooner.

"Our government is taking action to expand supports for children and youth with complex medical needs so they can lead healthier, happier lives. We are investing in creative and innovative solutions that will improve the lives and outcomes for our most vulnerable children and their families," said Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

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If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, take the self-assessment at [www.ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://www.ontario.ca/coronavirus). Follow all directions from your medical provider or your local health unit at the following phone numbers:

Health Connect Ontario: 811

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Toronto Public Health: 416-338-7600

Peel Public Health: 905-799-7700

Durham Region Health Department: 905-668-7711

York Region Public Health: 1-877-464-9675