



Family Alliance Ontario

Hello Families and Allies:

FAO is meeting weekly with our family networks and families from across the province. This is a difficult and confusing time for everyone but weekly meetings help us sort through some of the confusion. We have been generating a list of ideas and suggestions from our families to present to the Ministry that families across Ontario are telling us will be helpful during this crisis. Each week we share these new ideas with the Ministry. We appreciate the Ministry's willingness to receive and listen to our concerns and ideas.

1. Families and FAO recommend Passport Funding and SSAH balances carried over into the next fiscal year.
2. We are hearing from older families that assistance programs that are being put in place for younger families be available to older families whose children are living or have moved back home during this crisis. We recommend that Provincial and Federal plans that are being put in place for families be of assistance to both younger and older families with children with disabilities.
3. We recommend that the province look at ODSP benefits as a means to get resources directly to these families in crisis. The ideas we have heard are: Families who currently receive room and board amount receive the full amount of ODSP; persons with disabilities who are not able to work during this crisis continue to receive their work benefit; additional financial benefit through ODSP to cover the additional costs related to managing during a pandemic i.e.. Cleaning supplies, hand sanitizers, costs relating to accessing food and medication, additional costs related to transportation and support (Seniors are receiving an additional \$200.00 per month).
4. Fast track/process \$5,000.00 to all persons who qualify for Passport who are currently not receiving passport.
5. People with disabilities and families are experiencing high levels of stress navigating the issues of the pandemic plus the rules regarding programs and services for people with disabilities. Please relax all rules to allow people with disabilities and families to meet their own needs during this pandemic. The financial and emotional cost of COVID is high for these Ontario families.
6. Work with your Federal counterparts to free up RDSP resources for people and families. Additionally, work with federal counterparts to work and ensure that senior families receive benefits similar to young families i.e. Advocate that people will not be financially penalized for using RDSP resources.
7. A vast web of family networks across Ontario continue to offer support to each other. This has been essential in helping us to weather this crisis. A key component of ensuring that this continues to happen is to offer funding this year to support autonomous family networks.

Families and Family Networks across Ontario commend our Provincial government for investing 40 Million in supports for Ontario's most vulnerable during this pandemic. Families who support their son and/or daughter with a disability at home feel like there is a big crack in the support plan. Families tell us that they would like the same considerations given to them that is being offered to service providers.