

COVID-19 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Children's disABILITY Services

As part of the COVID-19 response, Children's disABILITY Services (CDS) remains available to support children with disabilities and their families. Following guidance from public health, CDS has adapted the way services are delivered in order to protect the health and safety of families and staff, while ensuring the continuity of essential services. We are committed to keeping Manitobans informed of any temporary changes to the CDS program.

Service Delivery

While CDS has suspended all in-person meetings for now, CDS staff are still available to support families by telephone, email, and virtual meetings. Families can continue to reach out to their community services workers for help navigating and accessing CDS and other services. Families open to the child development, autism outreach and behavioural psychology services can contact their specialists to receive telephone consultations during this period. Families can call **204-945-5898** if they need help with finding the phone number of a CDS staff.

Families are encouraged to connect with service agencies and therapy providers to learn about how they are delivering their services during this period. All CDS funded agencies continue to provide service alternatives during this time. Families can also reach out to their case managers for support if they are having issues with accessing services from these agencies.

CDS has established a province-wide call centre to provide immediate assistance to families with critical needs during this period. Community service workers staff the call centre and it is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday (closed on statutory holidays). Families can contact the call centre at **1-844-805-0004** and ask for assistance with a critical need to prevent family breakdown or loss of employment due to disability-related child care needs when their community services worker is unavailable.

CDS staff have been proactively contacting families to review family supports where additional needs are identified. However, if you have not heard from your community services worker (CSW) and you need assistance, please contact your CSW or, if you require immediate assistance with a critical need, the CDS call centre mentioned earlier. Staff may conduct assessments for additional supports and make referrals to access other services based on the identified needs. Staff will strive to maintain regular phone contact to check-in

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on the well-being of families. Families are encouraged to reach out to their CSWs at any point if they feel they need additional assistance.

Family Supports

Family supports, such as respite and employment support for adolescents, remain available to many eligible families during this period. We encourage all families to make an informed decision if they want to receive services by learning more about COVID-19 and the precautions their service providers are taking to reduce their exposure, such as their social distancing and hygiene practices. Families are encouraged to speak to their CSWs about their changing needs, including if they are considering foregoing services as a social distancing measure or if their needs have increased due to the situation.

CDS is taking precautions to protect department-managed direct service providers (DSPs) and families by conducting screening assessments and providing DSPs with personal protective equipment. However, families are advised to cancel services if a member of their household is ill or at heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19. Families should contact the after-hours service at **204-945-0183 (Winnipeg)** or **1-866-831-5314 (outside Winnipeg)** to cancel their services or if the DSP does not arrive for their shift.

Due to a variety of factors including the limited availability of personal protective equipment, department-managed DSP respite services have become more difficult to offer to families during this period. As a result, these services are currently limited to families assessed with critical needs. Staff will reach out to families to review their need and the availability of department-managed respite services.

During this period, families can continue accessing their self-managed services and new self-managed service plans will continue to be approved.

Submitting Self-Managed Services Documents

Families are reminded to submit their self-managed invoicing documents for the month of April by May 10. Self-managed services documents may be sent by mail, delivered to an office and now emailed to CDS.

As a physical distancing measure and to reduce the administrative burden of self-managed services, email can now be used by families to submit their monthly invoicing documents, as well as their 2020-21 self-administered services contracts to the finance team in their region.

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Families are encouraged to speak with their community services worker for details on the program guidelines for emailing documents.

- **Central:** CentralRegion@gov.mb.ca
- **Eastman:** EastmanCds@gov.mb.ca
- **Interlake:** interlakecds@gov.mb.ca
- **Northern:** NorthernFinance@gov.mb.ca
- **Parkland/Westman:** CDS-Western@gov.mb.ca
- **Winnipeg:** cdsfinance.winnipeg@gov.mb.ca

Disability and Health Supports

The Disability and Health Supports Unit (DHSU) continues to receive and process requests for medical supplies, equipment and home/vehicle modifications. Requests should continue to be sent directly to the DHSU by:

Email: disandhealthsupports@gov.mb.ca
Mail: 102 – 114 Garry Street, Winnipeg MB R3C 4V4
Fax: 204-945-1436

For urgent requests, requestors are encouraged to contact the DHSU by telephone at 204-945-4393 or 1-877-587-6224 (toll free).

The Material Distribution Agency (MDA) will continue making deliveries of supplies and equipment during this period. Please contact MDA at 204-945-2105 or 1-800-561-8313 (toll free), if you have any questions about the delivery of your order. MDA is available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (closed for civil service observed holidays).

Child Care During COVID-19

Licensed child care services, along with inclusion support services for children with disabilities, can be accessed by all families during this time.

Families should visit the Manitoba's online portal at <https://eswchildcare.ca/> to find an open licensed child care centre. Families should contact facilities directly to arrange child care services. Note these child care arrangements are temporary for duration of the COVID-19 period.

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For further information or assistance with child care, families can contact the Early Learning and Child Care program by email at onlinechildcareregistry@gov.mb.ca or by telephone by calling 204-945-0776 in Winnipeg or 1-888-213-4754 toll free.

Families planning for regular permanent child care will continue to use the [Online Child Care Registry](https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/occr/index.html) at www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/occr/index.html.

Self Care and Protecting Each Other

COVID-19 has meant keeping our distance from each other, including acquaintances, friends and loved ones. This has caused stress and anxiety for all of us, including CDS clients, their families and support networks.

The Manitoba Government has developed a free and confidential online mental health therapy program to help manage the anxiety and stress caused by COVID-19.

Information about this tool, which can help with caring for family and community members, is available online.

Please visit <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html> for details about the tool.

We can protect each other from COVID-19 by following the advice of public health:

- maintain safe social and physical distancing;
- wash your hands for 20 seconds and as often as possible; and
- stay home to the greatest extent possible.

Anyone who is concerned about possible COVID-19 exposure should call Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or (toll-free) at 1-888-315-9257 to be screened to see if a test is required.

Please visit <https://www.manitoba.ca/covid19> for up-to-date and reliable COVID-19 information.

The CDS program will continue to provide you with updates as decisions about services are made. We are committed to working with you to get through this challenging time together.