



Let's give those who support vulnerable children stable funding – not an expensive and uncertain competitive bidding process

The BC government is working to establish Family Connection Centres (FCCs) – a new centralized service model for kids with developmental disabilities. This is an important opportunity to improve services – but we need to increase funding and provide facilities with stable, long-term funding instead of making them compete in expensive and uncertain open bidding for contracts.

Family Connection Centres offer a chance to deliver better care to thousands of kids waiting for services

- Across BC, thousands of infants and children are waiting for early intervention therapy for physical, neurological, and developmental disabilities, including cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism, and other behavioural issues.
- Much of this is provided through Child Development Centres serving more than 15,000 children and families in BC. HSA members working at these CDCs include occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists, and supported child and infant development consultants.

We need to increase funding to reduce the wait lists

- Funding is very low, and these children are facing the longest wait times for public health care in the province. Many don't get help until it's too late in their development.
- Individualized funding doesn't include all kids, and thousands are left with no support at all. Family Connection Centres will help by offering centralized, comprehensive and inclusive support for all kids – including the kids now left out of the current individualized funding model.

Predictable, long-term funding is better than making facilities do competitive bidding

- The pilot program for establishing Family Connection Centres selected providers through a “request for proposal” (RFP) competitive bidding process – in keeping with outdated government procurement rules that normally apply to infrastructure like bridges and highways.
- RFPs are not a good way to fund health care and social services – it caused deterioration of care for seniors in long-term care, where for-profit companies were allowed to deliver substandard services.
- RFPs are costly and strain the already-limited resources of facilities providing services for kids in need. And the uncertainty of competitive bidding creates organizational instability that makes staffing shortages even worse.
- It would be better to return to how these services have been funded for decades -- direct funding transfers under agreements specific to the services provided and which can be modified over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase funding to reduce waiting times for kids who need help.
- Ensure stability of services through direct funding to appropriate facilities instead of competitive RFPs that create financial strain and uncertainty.