

## ADDENDUM

### Temporary changes to the Special Services at Home (SSAH) program For newly approved families in the fiscal year 2021/22

To support children with special needs and their families while access to community-based services and supports may be limited or unavailable, and while families remain at home practicing physical distancing, eligible expenditures in the SSAH program have been temporarily expanded to support greater flexibility.

These changes come into effect immediately and will remain in place while communities are under COVID-19 restrictions. SSAH recipients will be given as much advance notice as possible to prepare for the return of standard protocols, at a future date to be determined by the ministry.

#### Temporary Expansion of Admissible Expenditures

The following categorized list of expenditures are temporarily admissible until further notice:

##### 1. Sensory Items

- To support children and youth who rely on sensory items to alleviate anxiety/stress and/or support any clinical or behavioural plans.
  - e.g. multi-sensory related products and technologies.

##### 2. Technology

- Provide children and youth the means and ability to stay safe, connected, and engaged at home, including in virtual and online learning and skill development activities. These items include:
  - Laptops and tablets;
  - Online educational and e-learning activities and resources;
  - Videogames and videogame systems;
  - Webcams and microphones;
  - Media service subscriptions and platforms (e.g. Netflix, Xbox Live, Disney+) (NOTE: this will not include cancellation fees);
  - E-readers (e.g. Kindle or Kobo); and
  - Remote monitoring devices and medical alert services and devices.

##### 3. Items to support home-based recreation and fitness activities:

- Supplies to support **home-based hobbies and recreational activities** that would otherwise be accessed through school and other community-based programs. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Arts and craft supplies;
  - Hobby supplies;
  - Puzzles and games; and
  - Books for leisure/learning.
- Supplies to support **home-based physical activity and fitness**. Some examples may include, but are not limited to:
  - Indoor items and equipment (e.g. skipping rope, yoga mat, resistance bands); and
  - fitness/sport equipment and supplies that may be used on the individual's property (e.g. basketball net, frisbee, badminton set).

#### **4. Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies**

- To enable children and youth, their families and their support workers to be supported more safely at home or as required, in the community, which may be of heightened importance to children/adults who are immunocompromised. This includes items such as:
  - Gloves
  - Masks
  - Gowns
  - Cleaning supplies (e.g. disinfectant wipes, sprays, and hand sanitizer)
  - Goggles and face shields.

#### **5. Essential Service Delivery Fees**

- Where families are unable to leave their homes for groceries or pharmacy needs because of the vulnerability of their family member and/or because of their care requirements, service delivery fees for essential items such as groceries and medication will be an admissible expense. (Note: this does not include the actual cost of the groceries and/or medications, just the service fee for delivery).
- Delivery fees for takeout food from restaurants are not included.

#### **6. Behavioural Support Plans and Interventions**

- Behavioural supports and interventions intended to assist families to more safely support their child at home. This may include:
  - development of behavioural support plans and recommended interventions (delivered in person or remotely/virtually)
  - Support strategies to reduce challenging behaviours or potential crisis situations.
  - Note: This does not include physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy.

For SSAH, all other inadmissible expenditures as outlined in the Special Services at Home Guidelines remain in effect.

#### **Temporary Changes to Administrative Requirements for the SSAH Program**

To reduce the administrative burden on families, the following temporary administrative changes have been implemented for SSAH, effective immediately.

These changes support the ongoing administration of the program for families and agencies while physical distancing requirements remain in place.

#### **Claim and Invoice Signature Requirements**

As physical distancing is currently mandated by all levels of government, and as many individuals/families may not have access to technology to support an e-signature process, the signature requirements for SSAH and Enhanced Respite invoice and claim forms are now waived until further notice. This includes support worker signatures to confirm that a service was provided.

As accurate record keeping will be essential to help ensure program integrity, Regional Offices and agencies are required to maintain accurate records of verbal and email acceptances.