



Family Alliance Ontario

Representing people with disabilities, their families, and their friends

June 14, 2021

Honorable Todd Smith
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Legislative Assembly of Ontario
7th Floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Email: Todd.Smith@ontario.ca

Dear Honorable Todd Smith:

Re: Response from Family Alliance Ontario, (FAO) regarding the Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion, Developmental Services Reform Plan/Framework.

Our Board and members would like to thank Rupert Gordon and Laura Summers for taking the time at our FAO AGM to talk with our families about the above framework. We appreciated their openness and willingness to listen and hear from our families.

As you know, many of the FAO board members, members, and our affiliate family network leaders participated in the consultative process for this "*Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion*" reform plan. This was possible because we advocated and orchestrated our inclusion and participation in the process. Going forward, we expect people and family participation and voice to continue in all consultative processes to enable real choice and inclusion on an equal basis as service providers.

According to the 2021-2022 Estimates for Developmental Services 65% of the almost \$3B budget is identified to support approx. 20,000 people in 'residential services' with only 35% left to support approximately 70,000 other people. While we understand the fiduciary responsibility of the Ministry to continue to support the approx. 20,000 people in 'service', we ask where is the moral responsibility to adequately support the majority of people with developmental disability on an equitable basis?

Despite the input of people and families who are looking for adequate supports, **service** continues to dominate the dialog, text, direction and funding support in this sector. Families expected to hear more concrete plans for 'supports' through **individualized, fully portable budgets** for a whole life, especially important for the many aging people and families. We need

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timely access to funding ‘supports’ **now** to be proactive in implementing plans while there is still choice, rather than react to a crisis which may be detrimental to the well-being of the individual, the family, the system and society at large.

It is our belief that we can help move more people forward with **individualized, fully portable budgets** through a faster implementation of this funding model.

We respectfully wish to acknowledge the promises and good directions in this report such as the acknowledged support of family networks and the well-intentioned pillar of “Putting People First”.

However, we would like to share key areas of concern within this Reform Plan and identify areas of oversight:

1. **Ten more years is too long to wait:** People and families have been patiently waiting 15 years for promised transformation since the release of the 2006 “Opportunities and Action” document: (<https://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcass/publications/developmental/DSreport.pdf>). The further lengthy delay will lead to crisis which increases costs to the taxpayer and is traumatizing to people and families. The lack of immediate **individualized, fully portable budgets** will continue to reinforce the absence of choice and control that people experience on a day-to-day basis.
2. **Access to Support vs. Access to Services:** The framework focuses on the traditional service model rather than promoting opportunities and choices for people and families. This plan utilizes a one size fits all model. It fails to recognize the unique experiences of people and families across the province including but not limited to differences relating to regions, availability of community resources and capacity.
3. **People and Families are Ready:** Across Ontario, life plans have been developed to move forward with a regular life in community. However, they do not have access to adequate **individualized, fully portable budgets** to enable implementation of the full plan.
4. **Informing and Supporting People and Families:** People and their families stand in line for the DSO assessment process. While the assessment process identifies a person’s strengths and need, there is no follow up to this process. We need to take this information and

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support people with the next steps – planning for life in the community. This needs to be an active process, and part of a funded follow up to the assessment process. Families need to know what options are available for people with a developmental disability living in their community outside of an institutional setting. They need to know what their loved one's rights are, how they can best be supported in the community and how to integrate innovation as they plan for their family member's future.

We do not need more systems and structures to resolve this inequity – we need to start with the rights and needs of people and work with them and their support networks to build a regular everyday life. We need to shift to annualized **individualized, fully portable budgets**, so they have choice in how and by whom their needs are met.

Under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities, people have the right to “live in the community, with choices equal to others”. The government of Ontario has an obligation to “take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community”. See attached report “Fair Access to Everyone” report on March 24, 2009.

We look forward to discussing this with you and you can reach us at 705-783-3012.

Sincerely,

Carla O'Neill
President

Encl.

Cc: Rupert Gordon, Assistant Deputy Minister, MCCSS
Laura Summers, Director, MCCSS

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