

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and accompanying standards is to provide clarification on the process used to determine the service priority of families who request Family Support Services, At Home Program Respite Benefits, or staffed residential or family care arrangements.

2. POLICY

Urgent and Emergency requests are handled outside of this policy. Further information is provided in Section 6 of this document.

For Family Support Services:

A Priority for Service Tool assessment will be administered for all families upon request for Family Support Services, and re-administered upon request to enhance services.

For At Home Program Respite Benefits:

A Priority for Service Tool assessment will be administered for At Home Program Respite Benefits if funding is not available to fulfil the request at the time benefits are requested.

For Staffed Residential and Family Care:

A Priority for Service Tool assessment will be administered for staffed residential and family care arrangements if these arrangements are requested through either a voluntary care agreement or special needs agreement, and are not immediately available at the time they are requested.

Note: The Priority for Service Tool is **not** to be administered in situations where there is a child protection concern (e.g. it is believed that not placing the child in care would jeopardize the child's health and safety)

3. ELIGIBILITY

For eligibility information, see the Eligibility for Family Support Services Policy and/or the Eligibility for the At Home Program Policy.

4. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Family Support Services is an umbrella term that describes a range of programs intended to support parents to care for their child or youth with special needs in the home. For further information on these programs, see the Family Support Services Program Descriptions.

The At Home Program provides Medical Benefits and/or Respite Benefits to assist parents with some of the extraordinary costs of caring for a child with severe disabilities at home. A child may be eligible for both benefits or a choice of one benefit.

Staffed residential and family care arrangements offer specialized care to a child or youth with special needs outside of the family home. Staffed residential arrangements include both residential facilities in which support staff work on an hourly paid basis, and family care homes that employ more than one full-time (40 hrs/week) employee. Family care arrangements include care by either a family or person approved by the director as mandated in the *Child Family and Community Services Act*. These arrangements are provided on a temporary basis - during which time the child's parent(s) maintain all legal decision-making responsibilities - through either a voluntary care agreement or a special needs agreement.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Priority for Service Tool means the assessment by which a family's priority score for Family Support Services and/or At Home Program Respite Benefits is determined. The Priority for Service Tool (PST) assesses the family's support needs based on nine specific areas of consideration, plus one category for 'other' considerations. The PST produces a numerical score (the priority score) that summarizes the family's need for support. The PST is presented in the *Priority for Service Tool* document.

5.2 Priority Score means the numerical score produced for a specific family through the administration of the Priority for Service Tool. The priority score allows the support needs of one family to be compared to those of other families in their region, on a consistent basis.

6. STANDARDS

Priority for Service Tool Administration Standards

1	<p>The organization confirms the child's eligibility for Family Support Services and/or At Home Program Respite Benefits before administering the Priority for Service Tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility is confirmed, as appropriate, in accordance with at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility for the At Home Program Policy Eligibility for Autism Programs Policy Eligibility for Family Support Services Policy
2	<p>The organization, in collaboration with the family requesting services, completes the Priority for Service Tool to determine the family's Priority Score</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family is given an explanation of the purpose of the Priority for Service Tool (PST), and how it is used to determine priority for services The PST is administered during a face-to-face meeting or, if this is not possible or appropriate, over the telephone The PST is administered in accordance with the criteria set out in the <i>Priority for Service Tool</i> document The information derived from the administration of the PST is corroborated through other assessment reports, school reports etc.
3	<p>The organization informs the family of their Priority Score, and how this affects their service request</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family is informed of the factors that led to their priority score, upon request The family is informed of what their priority score means in terms of their service priority relative to others in their community/region The family is informed of other factors that may influence service priority
4	<p>The organization informs the family of other programs and services available in their community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All families, regardless of whether they are immediately able to access Family Support Services and/or At Home Program Respite Benefits, are informed of other supports and services for which they may be eligible, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Children and Family Development programs for children and youth with special needs Disability-specific community supports such as parent support groups, advocacy groups, etc. Generic community supports and services such as recreation programs

5	The organization re-administers the Priority for Service Tool on an annual basis, at a minimum, to ensure services are provided to those families with the highest current level of need
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Priority for Service Tool (PST) is re-administered on an annual basis for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ families who are not currently receiving services ○ families who are currently receiving ongoing services • The PST is re-administered when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ families who are currently receiving Family Support Service(s) request another type of Family Support Service ○ families who are not currently receiving services request a reassessment because they feel that their support needs have changed significantly since the PST was last administered

Urgent or Emergency Service Request Standard

1	The organization distinguishes urgent or emergency service requests and manages such requests outside of the Determining Priority for Children's Services Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent or emergency service requests are approved on an individual basis by the Team Leader, or equivalent, for a child or family in an extenuating or critical situation requiring immediate service provision (e.g., significant risk of physical harm to self or others; death, illness, or incapacity of primary caregiver) • The family is informed that the service(s) are being approved on an exceptional basis to ensure health, safety, and well-being • The family is informed that once the urgent or emergency situation has stabilized, their priority for services will be determined through the administration of the Priority for Service Tool

Support Planning Standard

1	<p>The organization, in collaboration with the family requesting services, complete a Service Request and Support Plan for Family Support Services when requested supports are equal to or more than \$5,000 per year</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Service Request and Support Plan is to include the following components:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The child's and family's strengths and goals○ The child's disability-related challenges and support needs○ The family's support needs arising from their capacity to meet the child's disability-related challenges○ A description of the informal family supports and generic community resources that are being, or will be, accessed by the child and family○ A description of how the requested supports will meet identified needs and support the achievement of goals○ A description of how and when progress toward identified goals will be evaluated• The Service Request and Support Plan is not required when the family's request is for At Home Program Respite Benefits only, or for staffed residential or family care arrangements