



**Media Release**  
For Immediate Release  
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## **FAMILIES STILL WAITING FOR DETAILS ON NEW AUTISM PROGRAM**

On November 27th 2019, the Hon. Todd Smith released a statement on Twitter regarding the Government's efforts to create a sustainable, needs-based Ontario Autism Program. While the Ontario Autism Coalition (OAC) is pleased with the ongoing commitment to a needs-based program and appreciates the due care and consideration needed to create such a system, our members were unimpressed with the lack of detail in the statement, and are concerned at how long it is taking to get information about what the new program will look like.

Since the introduction of Lisa MacLeod's failed Childhood Budget program over nine months ago, our community has been waiting for a program that responds to individual needs. Although the new Minister has committed himself to that goal, our community is still in crisis. The Autism Advisory Panel released their report a month ago, and we still don't know whether the government is going to accept all of their recommendations or not. Families are tired of waiting.

Minister Smith needs to tell the autism community as soon as possible whether he will be accepting the recommendations of the Autism Advisory Panel, when he will be announcing the new program, and when he will be appointing the Implementation Committee recommended by the panel. Until the new program is in place, we urge the Minister to do more to help families who have still received no support whatsoever from the government. The "interim plan" in place right now is really just the old Childhood Budget plan. This is not acceptable. The April 2020 implementation deadline is fast approaching and families should not be asked to wait without clear information of what is being done. Transparency and accountability are needed in order to restore trust within the community.

The OAC will continue to advocate for needs-based therapy that is timely and accessible for all while holding the government to account.

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*The OAC is a province-wide organization that advocates for Ontario's autism community.*