



**ONTARIO
AUTISM
COALITION**

876 Atwater Avenue, Mississauga, Ontario, L5E 1M1 (416) 451-8315

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2020

No Needs-Based Therapy After Another Year of Waiting

The Ford government has failed to deliver its promised needs-based program, one year after receiving [the OAP Advisory Panel Report](#). The panel, made up of parents, autistic adults, educators and other experts released their report as a guide for developing a needs-based system to serve children with autism in Ontario. One year later, nothing has changed.

In a [statement](#) released on the same day as the report, Minister Todd Smith boldly remarked “I am confident the panel's recommendations will serve as a strong foundation for the new Ontario Autism Program. Implementation of the new program is planned for April 2020.”

We now know this was a lie. Minister Smith announced that a needs-based program won't be fully in place until 2021.

The Ontario Autism Program budget was also underspent by \$174M. So, with an entire year before them and an unused \$174M, the government managed to accomplish nothing.

Many children have lost valuable time and families remain in crisis. Alina Cameron, OAC director and mother in Thunder Bay says “My family is in crisis. Our interim funding will run out long before our daughter, Fiona, has access to needs based therapy. She will be left with another massive wait for services, she will lose her spot at our therapy provider, and she will regress. Fiona cannot pause her Autism.”

Enough is enough. The time is now for a needs-based program that meets the needs of all children with autism in our province. There is no excuse. This government has had ample time and ample funds to get the Ontario Autism Program right, the only thing missing is the government's will to do so.

—30—

For more information please contact:

Laura Kirby-McIntosh, President, 416-315-7939

Angela Brandt, Vice-President, Research, 416-843-7403

Alina Cameron, Director, 807-632-2287

#AutismDoesntEndAtFord

The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.
www.ontarioautismcoalition.com