

LIFE  SPIN

Assistance for Children
with Severe Disabilities
(ACSD): Application
Guide



Fall 2023



Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)

APPLICATION GUIDE

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ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES (ACSD) APPLICATION

In order to apply for ACSD you will need to fill out the application, either online or by mail (see below for mailing address and online link).

Explanation of Program

The Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program provides monthly financial support and benefits to eligible families, to help with the **extraordinary costs** associated with the care of a child under the age of 18 who has a **severe disability** and is living at home with you.

Application Process

Who Fills Out the Application?

- The applicant must be the child's primary caregiver, who is the child's parent, guardian, or any person primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of the child.
- You must fill out the application for yourself, spouse (if applicable), and child.



What Are the Parts of the Application?

Personal Information

Financial Information

You will have to disclose your financial circumstances, other assets, and debts including whether or not you receive assistance from Ontario Works or ODSP.

Medical and Functional Questionnaire

- The Medical and Functional Questionnaire gathers information about your child's medical condition and disabilities, current treatment(s) and interventions, and your child's ability to function in daily living activities
- You must upload documents to support your application, or include copies, if you are mailing your application.
- Examples of supporting documents:
 - Functional assessments

- Hospital records/medical reports
- Reports from doctors outside the hospital (e.g. your child's family physician)
- Specialists' reports
- Psychological reports
- Identification Placement and Review Committee Report (IPRC), through your child's school.

You will also have to fill out how your child's disability affects different aspects of their life. Examples: at school, in the community, if your child experiences behavioral issues.

Disability Related Expenses

- You must provide an estimate of your extraordinary costs
- **Extraordinary costs** represent the expenses directly associated with your child's disability, as opposed to normal costs of maintaining/caring for your child at home.
- Examples include transportation to medical appointments or to a special program(s) related to your child's special needs, costs of family relief, costs of earning and developmental equipment, medical supplies, etc.
- You may be eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$618 per month on behalf of your child, if they have a severe disability or disabilities.
- Examples of disability-related costs: transportation, clothing, sibling care.

Documents

You must upload, or mail to the Ministry:

- Your immigration status/citizenship
- Your proof of residency
- Your child's immigration status/citizenship
- Your child's health card
- Your child's medical and supporting documentation
- Your CRA Notice of Assessment for the year prior to the one in which you are applying
- Your spouse's CRA Notice of Assessment for the year prior to the one in which you are applying
- Your Canada Child Benefit (CCB) details

Application Process

You can apply using either of these options (find QR codes for both on the last page):

1. online using this link: <https://www.app.grants.gov.on.ca/indiv/#/acsd>

OR

2. You can print out a paper copy of the application form here:
https://www.app.grants.gov.on.ca/indiv/assets/ACSD_Form_en.pdf

You will then mail or deliver this to your local ministry Regional Office. You should make a full copy of whatever you mail or deliver, and you should record the date on which you put the application in the mail or delivered it to the Regional Office. The London office information is below.

London Regional Office:
217 York Street, Suite 203
PO Box 5217
London, Ontario
N6A 5P9

Tel: 519-438-5111
Fax: 519-672-9510
Toll-free: 1-800-265-4197
TTY: 519-907-0205

You can also contact the Regional Office with any questions regarding the application, or if you require assistance with it. If you contact the Regional Office, you should get the first name of the person you deal with.



After the application is submitted, if you need to make a change, you must contact the Regional Office as soon as possible, to update your file.

After your application is received, a special agreements officer will review it, and may contact you if additional information is needed.

Once your application is reviewed, you will receive a letter notifying you as to whether or not you are eligible or not to receive ACSD.

Eligibility

Am I Eligible?

You must be a parent, guardian, or the primary caregiver, of a child who is under 18 years of age (17 and under), who lives at home, and who has a severe disability.

Other Possible Factors:

- Your household income
- The size of your family
- The severity of your child's disability
- The extraordinary costs related to your child's disability (see above)

How Does My Household Income Affect My Eligibility?

Your family's income level will be compared to your child's extraordinary expenses and functional limitations.

What Constitutes a Severe Disability?

- The extent to which your child is **severely limited** in activities pertaining to normal living, including, but not necessarily limited to, the ability to walk, communicate with others, feed or bathe themselves.
- Tribunals may take into account:
 - Ability to walk, run, and jump without mobility aids
 - Ability to communicate with others
 - Integration in a classroom
 - Requirement of support at school, including in class or in extracurricular activities, or while eating lunch (whether or not the child has 1-1 support, assigned educational assistant)
 - Ability to feed, dress, go to the bathroom and bathe themselves
 - Ability to think, perceive and remember at an age-appropriate level
 - Level of requirement of constant supervision

The definition of a "severe disability" is not clearly defined in the application, or in the legislation that authorizes the ACSD allowance.

The ACSD website states: A **severe disability** is a mental, developmental or physical condition that severely limits the child's development and/or functional capacity to perform tasks and activities necessary in their daily life.

Functional loss refers to a major loss of ability, delay in developmental milestones or in the ability to engage in any age-appropriate activity considered necessary to normal living; examples

include, but are not limited to, mobility, communication, social interaction, self-feeding, dressing, hygiene, and learning.

Apply online to the ACSD program here: <https://www.app.grants.gov.on.ca/indiv/#/acsd> **OR** Scan the QR Code on the last page.

How Does the DTC Definition of Disability Relate?

The Federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC) under the Federal Income Tax Act, defines disability in two categories: marked restriction, or significant limitation

If there is a **marked restriction** in **one** of the following, **OR** a **significant limitation** in **two or more** of the following, then your child may be eligible for the DTC:

- Walking
- Mental functions
- Dressing
- Feeding
- Eliminating (bowel or bladder functions)
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Vision
- Life-sustaining therapy



Your child's situation may qualify for the DTC as a **marked restriction OR a life-sustaining therapy** if:

- Your child is unable to do the activity, or it takes 3 times longer than a child of similar age without the impairment, even with the use of appropriate therapy, medication, and devices
- This restriction is present all or almost all the time (generally at least 90% of the time)
- The restriction has lasted, or is expected to last, for a continuous period of at least 12 months

Your child's situation may qualify for the DTC as a **significant limitation** if:

- Two or more limitations exist together all, or almost all, of the time (generally at least 90% of the time)
- If the limitations were combined, their cumulative effect (combined impact) would be **both** of the following:
- Equivalent to being unable, or taking three times longer than someone of similar age without the impairment, to do an activity in one of the categories above (walking, dressing, etc.) **AND**

- Present all or almost all the time (at least 90%), even with the use of appropriate therapy, medication, and/or devices.

Based on cases from the Social Benefits Tribunal, a child's eligibility is based more on the severity of the child's limitations, rather than if the disability itself is "severe." See, for example, *SBT 1602-01312* (1 June 2017; Van Delft), 2017 ONSBT 2888 (CanLII) [CRO No. SAS-D-32885].

ODSP Policy Directive 1101-01 [CRO No. SAS-G-00326] provides guidance on the meaning of "severely disabled resulting in functional loss":

"Severely disabled resulting in functional loss" refers to an ongoing mental or physical condition which results in a major loss of ability or capacity to engage in any substantive activity commonly necessary and appropriate to normal daily living. This definition is not intended to specifically include or exclude any type of disability. It is intended to clarify that a disability must constrain normal daily living and also provide a standard by which the severity of that disability may be judged.

In applying the definition, consideration should be given to disabilities which could be made less severe with the use of prosthetic devices, e.g., hearing aids. If the use of a prosthetic device reduces or eliminates the incapacity of an otherwise disabled child to engage in activities of normal daily living, then the child's disability as well as the extraordinary costs associated with it are likely to decline. Under these circumstances, the child is likely to be ineligible for ACSD, formerly HCB.

1506-06335 (Re) 2016 ONSBT 23 (CanLII): This case shows that circumstances where children display behavioural issues will likely not be enough to constitute a severe disability.

What Counts as an Extraordinary Cost?

- Educational aids in classroom
- Supports in extracurricular activities
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Medication costs
- Costs of parental relief

Note: Consideration will be given to disabilities that can be made less severe with the use of prosthetic devices (i.e. hearing aids). If the use of an aid reduces or eliminates the incapacity of the child, they will likely not be eligible for ACSD.

What Will I Receive?

If your family is found to be eligible, you may receive between \$25 and \$618 a month, to help with costs such as:

- Travel to doctors' appointments, hospitals and other appointments related to the child's disability
- Special shoes and clothes
- Costs of parental relief, such as respite

In addition to getting monthly financial support through the ACSD program, children with severe disabilities may also receive coverage for:

- An assessment for an assistive device and/or the consumer contribution for a device provided under the Assistive Devices Program
- Batteries and repairs for mobility devices
- Prescription drugs through OHIP+
- Dental care through Healthy Smiles Ontario program
- Hearing aids and vision care, including eyeglasses

What Happens Next?

The Ministry will review your application to determine if you are eligible for the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, and notify you in writing of the Ministry's decision regarding your application.

A Ministry representative may contact you for clarification, or to seek additional information, including supporting medical documentation, if required.

How Do I Appeal My Decision?

1. If you disagree with the decision, you have the right to ask for an **internal review** within 30 days of receiving the decision. Your decision letter will have information about how to request an **internal review**. You must send the request to the Regional Office in the area where you live.

You should receive a letter telling you the result of the **internal review** within 30 days of your request being received.

2. If you disagree with the result of the **internal review**, then you may appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal. The letter informing you of the result of the **internal review** will also have information about how to request an Appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal.

Note: 1703-02211 (Re) 2019 ONSBT 1060 (CanLII): If the judgment in this case makes it clear that if you submit to the tribunal for a wrong decision, you must provide proof that the decision should be changed. This can include medical reports indicating your child's ability in areas of feeding, dressing, toileting, or bathing themselves.

On the Appeal Form, be sure to quote the Ministry file number, which will be on the decision letter.

If you do file an Appeal, the Tribunal will schedule a hearing. A hearing is a meeting held by the Tribunal, in which you can explain why you disagree with the decision that was made. A Tribunal member will listen to both sides, and then make a decision.



You may be self-represented, represented by a person licensed by the Law Society of Upper Canada, or by an unlicensed person where permitted by the Law Society Act and its regulations and by-laws.

If you would like advice from a community legal clinic, you can contact Legal Aid Ontario. **In London**, Neighbourhood Legal Services may be able to assist you with your

appeal, and can be reached by telephone at 519-438-2890.

If you would like to make an appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal, you need to complete an Appeal Form. You can get the form from:

The Social Benefits Tribunal

Send the completed Appeal Form to the Social Benefits Tribunal.

You can mail or fax the form to:

Social Benefits Tribunal
15 Grosvenor Street, Ground Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2G6

Fax: 416-326-5135
Phone: 416-326-0978
Toll-free: 1-800-753-3895

OR

E-mail the Appeal Form to: <https://tribunalsontario.ca/sbt/> **OR** use the QR Code on the last page.



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ACSD Online



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Need More Help?

Book an appointment with our Community Advocate

English: <https://form.jotform.com/221304055872248>

Arabic: <https://form.jotform.com/221675674032254>



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