

Accommodating learning problems often requires support beyond the capacity (in terms of both time and expertise) of classroom teachers. This means that in order to guarantee access to education for children with learning problems, schools must devote human, material, and physical resources specifically to the needs of these children.

The *Education Act* requires school boards to provide special education programs and services for students who require them and to implement procedures to identify such students. Pressure on public budgets is often particularly threatening to the allocation of resources to special-needs children.

Funding for Autism

Ontario

In response to the Ontario autism advisory panel's mandate to give advice and make recommendations for a new needs-based program that will serve as many children as possible, Ontario is moving from giving families a fixed amount of money determined by their income and their child's age toward a "needs-based" program.

In September 2020, it was announced that families in Ontario who are in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) would be provided with "foundational family services." The services would be available to those who are eligible, including if a child or youth is on a waitlist, is receiving a one-time reimbursement or a childhood budget, or has an existing OAP behaviour plan.¹⁶

CASE STUDY

Ontario's Autism Approach

After reviewing the highlights related to Ontario's approach to funding for autism, do you think that the Ontario government's most recent announcement will improve the lives of families dealing with autism?

identification, placement, and review committee (IPRC)

committee established within the Ministry of Education to assist in determining which students require and are eligible for special services

British Columbia

A British Columbia case was heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2004. The court determined that the province had the right to set its own priorities for health care funding and could not be forced to pay.¹⁷

When it becomes apparent to school staff that a student may have special educational needs, the student's case may be reviewed (following notice to the parents) by an **identification, placement, and review committee (IPRC)**. These committees are established within the Ministry of Education to assist in determining which students

16 "Update on the Ontario Autism Program—Foundational Family Services" (29 September 2020), online: *PooranLaw Professional Corporation* <<https://pooranlaw.com/update-on-the-ontario-autism-program-foundational-family-services>>.

17 *Auton (Guardian ad litem of) v British Columbia (AG)*, 2004 SCC 78.