



Five Counties Children's Centre ASD Diagnostic Pathway

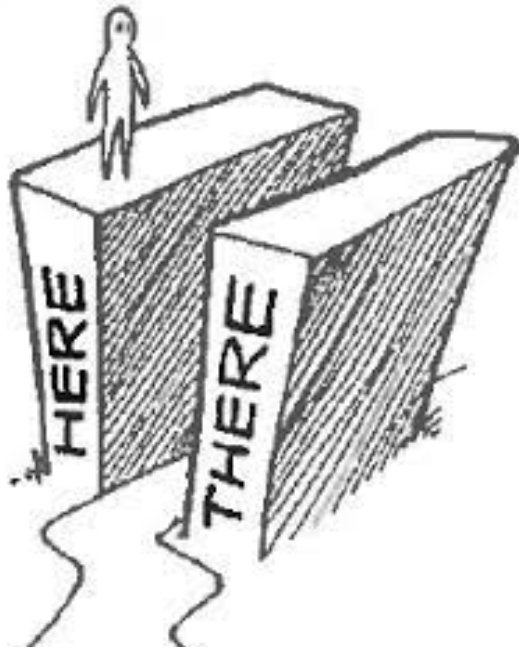
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Neurodevelopmental Ax Clinic (1-6 years)

- Pilot began October 2019 and was reviewed 2023
- Purpose: To provide comprehensive team assessment, early intervention and service planning for children with suspected neurodevelopment challenges (does not include CP)
- Service Delivery Model: Diagnostic block (up to 4-6 visits) which includes, early intervention, parent coaching and service planning
- Use of Developmental Assessment Clinical Observation Sheet
- Partnerships formed with Local Medical Professionals

Where We're At Now



FCCC continues to be an ASD Diagnostic Clinic through CHEO

Long referral chain for many children (Dr/NPs → Pediatrician → Diagnostic Hub) means accessing early OAP intervention can be difficult

Resource Limitations: Pediatrician/Doctor Shortages, Therapies etc.

The need for ASD Assessment has been growing (along with waitlists 12+ months)

Therapies through OAP program are well established and underutilized for children under 4 year or entering school

Shifts in diagnostic process and recommendations

ASD Diagnostics

The rising prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has created a need to expand ASD diagnostic capacity by community-based pediatricians and other primary care providers.

Although evidence suggests that some children can be definitively diagnosed by 2 years of age, many are not diagnosed until 4 to 5 years of age.

Most clinical guidelines recommend Multidisciplinary Team involvement in the ASD diagnostic process.

Although a maximal wait time of 3 to 6 months has been recommended by three recent ASD guidelines, the time from referral to a team-based ASD diagnostic evaluation commonly takes more than a year in many Canadian communities.



Autism Ontario: Getting a Diagnosis

If you think your child may have autism, there are two options to pursue a diagnostic assessment.

OPTION ONE

- Make an appointment with your family doctor or pediatrician. Some family physicians and even pediatricians are not as familiar with autism as one might hope or expect. If your family physician or pediatrician has only limited experience with autism, they may refer you to a specialist (e.g., a developmental pediatrician), ***or team of professionals for a developmental assessment***. A developmental assessment will look at your child's social, cognitive, communication, and motor skills. Autism Spectrum Disorder is not diagnosed based on only one factor or symptom but when a combination of specific behaviours, communication delays, and/or developmental disabilities is confirmed.

OPTION TWO

- To access information regarding a diagnosis before the age of 18 through the new Ontario Autism Program, please contact the [diagnostic hub in your area](#) or your local [Ministry of Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Regional Office](#).





AccessOAP

Current Ontario Autism Program Children <4 years*

- **OAP Caregiver Mediated Early Years programs (CMEY):**
For children ages 12 to 48 months by OAP invitation: These programs are individualized and play-based. The programs help children and caregivers to learn new skills and meet individualized goals.
- **Entry to School programs (ETS):** **For children eligible for kindergarten or grade 1 entering for the first time by OAP invitation** (ETS). Six-month, group-based, skill-building program, focused on helping children develop school-readiness skills in six key areas, also includes individual transition supports as they enter school.
- **Foundational Family Services (FFS):** Free caregiver workshops, individual caregiver coaching and support groups for caregivers and siblings.
- **Urgent Response Service (URS):** short-term service for children or youth who are currently experiencing an urgent need. Service is intended to prevent a crisis or reduce the risk of harm to self, others or property.



AccessOAP

Current Ontario Autism Program Children 5+ years*

- ❑ **Core Clinical Services funding:** funding for “core clinical services” based on a child’s individual needs. Funding may be used for applied behaviour analysis (ABA), speech-language pathology, occupational therapy and/or mental health services. A care coordinator from AccessOAP will complete a “determination of needs” process to determine annual funding allocation.
- ❑ **Entry to School programs (ETS) 3-6 years:**
For children eligible for kindergarten or grade 1 entering for the first time by OAP invitation
- ❑ **Foundational Family Services (FFS):** Free caregiver workshops, individual caregiver coaching and support groups for caregivers and siblings.
- ❑ **Urgent Response Service (URS):** short-term service for children or youth who are currently experiencing an urgent need. Service is intended to prevent a crisis or reduce the risk of harm to self, others or property.



What We're Doing

- ❑ FCCC ASD Community of Practice: Clinical Director, SLP, OT, SW, ECE (Resource Inclusion Coach) and Administrative Coordinator
- ❑ Our Community of Practice focusing on:
 - 1) Developing alternative pathways to support early diagnosis based on learnings from our Neurodevelopmental Clinic and ASD Hub
 - 2) Developing partnerships with our community practitioners
 - 3) Creating internal resources & an education plan to:
 - Support efficient and equitable service for children with ASD or traits of ASD
 - Continue to expand our internal capacity and clinical competencies to support early identification, diagnosis and treatment of children with ASD



What We're Doing 1-6 years

- ❑ All sites will have a Multidiscipline Assessment Team (SLP and OT) completing diagnostic, early intervention blocks for children presenting as Query ASD (at intake or referral source)
- ❑ OT: Clinical Competencies in the assessment and treatment of play, executive functioning, sensory processing, activities of daily living and motor skills
- ❑ SLP: Clinical Competencies in the assessment of social communication, comprehension, expressive language and articulation skills
- ❑ Diagnostic Therapy Block: Includes 4-6 joint visits with OT and SLP
- ❑ Information sharing with medical professionals

What This Means For You



Continue to refer to ASD Diagnostic Clinic



Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (SLP & OT) will likely see the child prior to the Pediatrician and will support you in providing a diagnosis if applicable



Early diagnosis will allow for OAP registration and expedited access to additional therapies



If expediated diagnosis is not possible or appropriate, clients will continue to wait on ASD Diagnostic Clinic waitlist (currently 12+ months)

Moving Forward Together

Community Practitioners

- Continue to refer to Five Counties
- If you provide ASD diagnosis, send a copy of diagnosis letter (as appropriate) to FCCC or with family
- Disability Tax Credit
- Medical follow-up and Referrals as appropriate (see references)



Five Counties Staff

- Provide a comprehensive developmental assessment
- Develop Therapy Plan with Family
- Internal referrals: PT, SW, RIC, Recreation Therapy, ACS
- Provide Observation Summary Data Package to Medical Practitioners or request ADOS referral
- Refer to ASD Hub Social Worker to Assist with:
 - OAP Registration
 - Special Services at Home (SSAH)
 - Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)
 - Access2 Card
 - Easter Seals Ontario: Incontinence Supplies Grant (needs to be signed by Dr or NP)
 - Jordan's Principle (if appropriate)



Observation Checklist, Diagnosis Letter & Key Resources

- FCCC Observation Summary Form
- FCCC Example Diagnosis Letter
- [Autism Diagnostician Resource Portal | Holland Bloorview](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\) | Canadian Paediatric Society \(cps.ca\)](#)
- [Ontario Autism Program | ontario.ca](#)
- [ASD Diagnostic Clinic - Five Counties Children's Centre](#)



Thank you!

Questions &
Feedback