

## Media News Release

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### **Budget pleases and disappoints families who have children and adults with developmental disabilities**

In contrast to the projected budget reductions of 10 – 15 % in services to adults with developmental disabilities originally being considered by the Alberta government, today's budget announcement is a vast improvement.

Families who have children with developmental disabilities are very pleased to see that the government has recognized the need for sustaining the Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program, a vital resource, by providing an increase in funding. The Alberta Family Supports for Children with Disabilities program is the most responsive program in the country and plays a critical role in helping families stay together so they can raise their children at home, further it supports the development of children with disabilities and supports their inclusion in community.

Given the challenges in child intervention services and the numbers of children with disabilities, including a disproportionate number of Aboriginal children with disabilities, the Alberta Association for Community Living is disappointed that funding for this area remains essentially the same when the need is so great. We are more than willing to work with this Ministry to better ensure children with disabilities in the child welfare system and parents with disabilities have access to the supports they so desperately require.

Families and individuals with developmental disabilities are deeply concerned about the reductions in expenditures that the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program will need to make given today's budget. The 2009-2010 budget for PDD was \$604 million but is now forecasted to be \$597, a 1% reduction. This reduction has been partially achieved by narrowing who is PDD eligible, creating waiting lists across the province and providing only a partial assistance in comparison to what individuals and their families actually require. These actions will push more individuals and families into crises.

Given the annualized cost pressures PDD must address in the forthcoming fiscal year, we estimate this will require an actual reduction of approximately 5% in funding to individuals and families. Wendy McDonald, AACL President, stated, " Unless this government is prepared to substantially reduce its administrative costs, costly operations and non-essential government personnel, then vulnerable individuals and families will continue to have supports cut while others will be denied access to services. We call upon the Alberta government to work collaboratively and openly with individuals and families to ensure PDD's primary responsibility to individuals and families is faithfully and truthfully realized. "

- 30 -

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