

**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR**

**Date:** May 4, 2020

**CIRCULAR NUMBER COVID#:2020-68**  
**CDS#:2020-06**

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**TO:** All CDS/ADS Staff

**Subject:** **CDS-CLDS transition planning and use of the WASI-II for urgent CLDS referrals during the COVID response**

**Program:** **Children’s disABILITY Services / Adult Disability Services**

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**Type:**       Policy                               For Internal Reference Only  
                  Procedure                               Information Only

**Effective Date** Immediately and in effect until further notice

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As a result of social distancing measures taken as part of the COVID-19 response, many face-to-face community clinical appointments have been rescheduled or are being delivered using alternative communication technology. This has affected the timely provision of psychometric assessments by registered psychologists or school psychologists (qualified clinicians) required to support age of majority planning for Children’s disABILITY Services (CDS) participants, and to determine participant eligibility for the Community Living disABILITY (CLDS) Services program.

This circular is intended to support the continuation of age of majority planning with participants and their families between the CDS and CLDS programs during the period of the COVID-19 response, and to establish protocol on the use of the WASI-II for urgent CLDS referrals

CDS-CLDS Transition Planning

Effective immediately and until this circular is deemed unnecessary by the Directors of CDS and CLDS due to the resumption of most face-to-face clinical service appointments, the following process will be followed when supporting age of majority planning:

- Children enrolled in CDS will continue to be supported during their transition to adulthood by their CDS community service worker (CSW), in collaboration with the CLDS CSW or other government or community service providers as appropriate for their individualized transition plan;

- CDS participants who are turning 18, have been referred to CLDS, and whose eligibility for CLDS is supported by an approved psychometric assessment will be enrolled in the CLDS program upon closure to CDS; and
- CDS participants who are turning 18 and, due to social distancing measures related to COVID-19 have not been able to access a psychometric assessment to determine CLDS eligibility, may continue to be enrolled in the CDS program beyond the age of 18 on a temporary basis.
- In these circumstances:
  - o Staff from CDS and CLDS will endeavour to determine with the family and participant the most appropriate next steps given any uncertainty resulting from the absence of a psychometric assessment;
  - o The participant's CDS program manager will notify the CDS and CLDS program specialists of the potential for a temporary service extension;
  - o In consultation with the Department's Senior Psychologist, an interim consensus model of assessment will be explored where this approach is considered appropriate; and
  - o If a temporary extension of CDS services is deemed appropriate and approved by the director of CDS, the CDS program manager will provide clear written communication to the participant's family indicating that the extension:
    - is temporary only;
    - is related to access to clinical services due to the COVID-19 response; and
    - a full psychometric assessment will be required as soon as possible in order to determine CLDS eligibility.

### COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

In situations where an applicant cannot complete testing because of provincial travel restrictions, then these circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the provincial senior psychologist.

### Use of the WASI-II for Urgent CLDS Referrals

As a result of social distancing measures taken as part of the COVID-19 response, in urgent referrals (ie: hospital referrals), CLDS will accept an assessment in which the WASI-II was completed if a qualified clinician is unable to complete a more comprehensive assessment due to COVID-19 social distancing measures. CLDS will only accept an assessment based on the four subtest version (FSIQ 4 which includes Similarities, Vocabulary, Block Design, and Matrix Reasoning subtests) in order to establish short-term, time-limited approval for services until such time that a more comprehensive assessment can be completed. These cases must be reviewed with the Department of Families Senior Psychologist.

Consistent with the definition of a vulnerable person in [The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act](#), CLDS would consider applicants who score in the extremely low range (two standard deviations below the mean) on the FSIQ 4 of the WASI-II. However, some individuals may demonstrate variability in their performance across these 4 subtests, with some subtests higher than the extremely low range and some that are lower. In these situations, CLDS will rely on clinical judgment in interpreting the FSIQ.

The use of the WASI-II would ideally include a recognized measure of adaptive behavior. If this is not possible, then CLDS would accept information about adaptive behavior based on a clinical interview with a knowledgeable informant (family member, social worker, or other support person) who can provide valid information about the person's adaptive behavior in all three areas of functioning: conceptual, social, and practical domains.

In these unique cases where the WASI-II is used for a temporary time-limited approval for services, the status in inFACT will remain in "intake" and the referral source (participant, family, etc.) will be advised that formal eligibility for CLDS will be determined once a more comprehensive assessment is completed at a later date. This could result in the individual not meeting the eligibility requirements of CLDS.

For any questions related to this circular, please contact CLDS Program Specialists Russ Kathler (204-945-8183) or Marylea Mooney (204-945-3360) or CDS A/Program Specialist Andrew Donachuk (204-794-6016).

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