



ONTARIO  
ASSOCIATION  
OF CHILDREN'S  
REHABILITATION  
SERVICES

every kid matters



**Pre-Budget Submission 2014**

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The Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS) is pleased to submit this brief to the Minister of Finance and to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

OACRS and its members, the 21 Children's Treatment Centres (CTCs) across the province, strongly support an integrated system of pediatric service supports to help children, youth and their families reach their full potential.

We congratulate the Government of Ontario on releasing ***Ontario's Special Needs Strategy***, a plan to improve how families access the services they need, close to home.

This strategy presents an opportunity for children and youth with disabilities to receive services more effectively and efficiently through an inter-ministerial collaboration between the Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Education, Community and Social Services and Health and Long-Term Care.

The Government of Ontario has demonstrated leadership in connecting children and youth with the pediatric rehabilitation services they need as early as possible through this strategy by targeting 3 key areas: identifying kids earlier and getting them the right help sooner; coordinating service planning; and, making supports and service delivery seamless. Research confirms that early intervention and integrated service delivery leads to increased outcomes for children. Ontario needs a coordinated system of seamless supports to help children and youth with disabilities transition successfully throughout every stage of their lives. OACRS and its members believe that a single point of planning and accountability leads to a more efficient system for everyone. We are pleased to see this progress and look forward to learning more about the details, timelines and resources tied to this important initiative.

## Continuing the Journey

Young children with disabilities are benefitting from integrated full-day kindergarten supports that help them transition successfully into school. Designed by CTCs in partnership with school boards and other community partners, these integrated services are having a positive effect on children by helping improve their speech, language, literacy, fine and gross motor outcomes. Through these integrated models children are receiving: the pediatric rehabilitation services they need in the classroom; and, an opportunity to take advantage of the Full-Day Kindergarten initiative.

Nothing is more important than giving children the supports they need to start school.

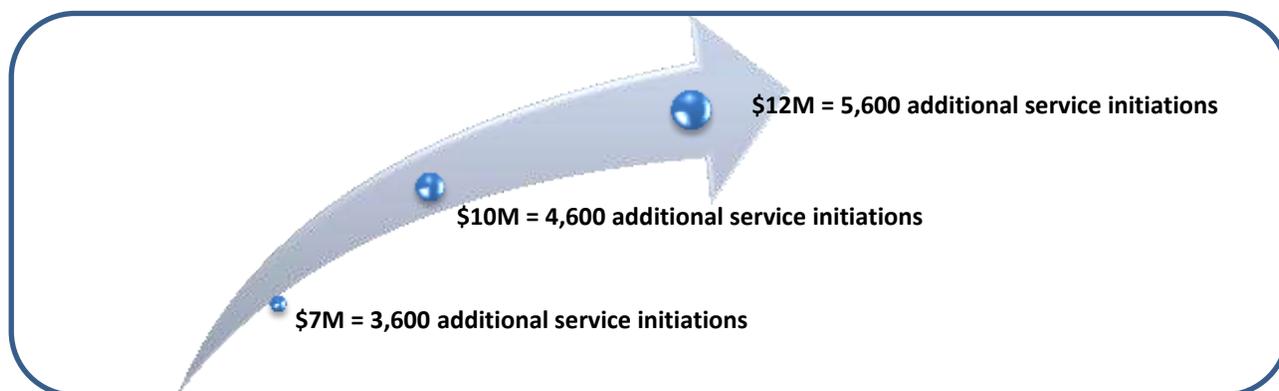
Our collaboration with key partners across the province has helped advance these innovative supports and we encourage the Government of Ontario to support these critical early transitions for 4 and 5 year olds with disabilities. For 2014, we urge the Government of Ontario to invest **\$5**

**million** in pediatric rehabilitation services for children entering kindergarten across the province. This investment will help children prepare for success by building a strong foundation during their early years.

## Recent Investments and a Chance to Grow

The Government of Ontario has demonstrated interest in supporting **all** Ontarians to work to their fullest potential through recent investments to our sector. With a **\$9 million** investment in 2010, over **3,000** children benefited and **100** jobs impacted.

Thanks to an investment in 2013 of **\$3.25** million focused on Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy, **2,600** services were provided. An investment of **\$1.5 million** to our sector helped advance the use of an electronic client record system to CTCs in Northern Ontario. This client record system is helping enhance our sector's reporting capacity and ability to produce data that helps coordinate a child's care plan, driving best practice and continuous quality improvement.



Children's Treatment Centres work hard to protect the investments made in children. We know that better diagnostic services and an increasing awareness of the importance of early intervention mean that wait lists and wait times continue to grow. We encourage the Government of Ontario to help sustain and build on these investments. An investment of **\$12 million** in core rehabilitation services will help **5,600** children and youth with disabilities receive the services they need. A **\$10 million** investment would result in **4,600** more service initiations. And, a **\$7 million** investment would result in **3,600** additional service initiations. This investment will help address the amount of time families must wait for service. As in past years, any investments made to our sector will be used as efficiently as possible to effectively provide family-centred services to the children and youth who need them.

## Imagine the Future

Children and youth with special needs require our support. We need to continue to invest in their futures. We know that a modest investment can have incremental benefits through a child's life.

For 2014, Ontario needs:

- An investment of **\$12 million** for core rehabilitation services to benefit **5,600** children and youth with disabilities
- An additional **\$5 million** investment to ensure children with special needs have the supports they need to ensure successful transitions into kindergarten
- Fully integrated family-centred pediatric rehabilitation services for families across the province through partnerships between the Government of Ontario and OACRS and its members.

Investments in children and youth with special needs improve short and long-term outcomes. For the 2014 Budget, we ask that the Government of Ontario demonstrate that "Every Kid Matters." Investing in the futures of our most vulnerable children will demonstrate the Government's commitment "to provide families with the opportunity to realize their full potential."

### The Voice of Children's Treatment Centres

Since 1978, the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS) has represented the interests of children's rehabilitation centres in Ontario. Through our services as a membership organization, we provide a powerful united voice for our member centres, influencing policy, programs and funding to maximize the potential for all children and youth facing physical, communication and/or developmental challenges. OACRS represents 21 children's treatment centres (CTCs) across Ontario.

OACRS is committed to advancing an integrated, inclusive, and family-centred sector. Our members provide innovative therapies and extensive treatment options to children in cities, towns and rural areas across the province.

Our partners in children's rehabilitation include the Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, Education and Health and Long-term Care. Together our members provide over \$185 million of services on a yearly basis.

