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For immediate release

Autism Ontario Welcomes Funding for Canada Disability Benefit in 2024 Federal Budget

[Toronto, Ontario] Autism Ontario commends the federal government's decision to allocate funding for the new Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) in [Budget 2024](#), marking a welcomed first step. The CDB targets low-income working-age individuals with disabilities, potentially benefiting up to 600,000 eligible Canadians annually with a maximum of \$2,400, indexed to inflation and subject to clawbacks. This initiative signifies a direct investment of \$6.1 billion over six years and an ongoing annual commitment of \$1.4 billion to bolster the financial security of this demographic.

While Autism Ontario values this announcement, there is still much work ahead. We urge the federal government to expand the eligibility criteria for the CDB, ensuring that more Canadians with disabilities can benefit from this vital financial support. Additionally, individuals, families, and advocates are still awaiting an update on the National Autism Strategy, hoping it will consider individuals in urban, rural, and remote communities, supporting Canadians across the lifespan.

"The federal government's allocation of funding for the Canada Disability Benefit is commendable," expresses Lisa Vezeau-Allen, Autism Ontario's Board President. "However, we urge the expansion of eligibility criteria to ensure more Canadians with disabilities benefit. Equitable design and coverage for Disability Tax Credit costs are crucial. While this is progress from our Federal Government, the plan does not come into effect until next July of 2025, and \$200 monthly will still have many folks living in poverty and putting stress on much-needed community organizations to assist with housing and food security."

The design of the benefit program must be equitable for recipients, safeguarding their financial independence and preventing the clawback of family earnings. We advocate for an individualized benefit approach that recognizes the unique challenges and realities faced by Canadians with disabilities.

Autism Ontario also applauds the inclusion of coverage for the costs associated with applying for the Disability Tax Credit within the CDB framework, recognizing the importance of this program for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Moreover, Autism Ontario celebrates the introduction of the National School Food Program, the National Pharmacare Program, and investments in Indigenous health and mental health outlined in Budget 2024.

While there is still more work to be done, Autism Ontario views this budget, along with the establishment of the Canada Disability Benefit, as a promising initial step towards addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in Canada.

For more information, please email Autism Ontario's media team at media@autismontario.com.

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ABOUT AUTISM ONTARIO

[Autism Ontario](#) is the province's leading source of information and referral on autism whose mandate is to build a supportive and inclusive Ontario for autism. It provides autistic individuals and families across their life course with community-based access to meaningful supports, social learning opportunities, information, and connections. The organization's commitment to significantly and positively impacting the autism community is driven by its vision: Best life, better world, making autism matter!