



SPOTLIGHT

on transformation

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A message from the minister

A few short months ago, Premier Kathleen Wynne asked me to lead the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and I was honoured.

This is a role I am very passionate about. As an MPP and a long-time municipal politician, I know what a difference good quality programs and services can make to an individual's life.

I have had the opportunity to meet and speak with many families, individuals and community partners already and I look forward to continuing to reach out and work with you, and others in the sector, in the coming months.

I share your commitment to building supportive and inclusive programs and services for people with a developmental disability. And while we face many challenges, I know we can solve them if we work together.

I also understand the crucial role our community agencies play in supporting people with a developmental disability and helping them lead fuller, more independent lives. Thank you for all the incredible work you do for individuals and families across Ontario.

Recently, the Ontario legislature passed the 2013 Budget, adding \$42.5 million a year in funding for developmental services. This will help more than 1,000 adults and their families with new or additional supports, and bring our total annual spending on developmental services to more than \$1.7 billion.

But we know that even this level of funding will not fully meet the growing demand for developmental services. As a society, we need to do more to help our communities truly embrace people with a developmental disability and work to create more opportunities for all.

Government has an important role to play in this, of course. That is why we continue working to make Ontario's developmental services system more responsive, fairer and financially sustainable.

As we move closer to our vision, we will continue to look to you for advice and collaboration. We've had a lot of success together, and I look forward to continuing our relationship as we take the next steps in our journey.

— Ted McMeekin

About our new minister



The Honourable Ted McMeekin
Minister of Community and Social Services

Ted McMeekin was re-elected into the riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale in 2011 for a fourth consecutive term. He was appointed Minister of Community and Social Services in February 2013. Previously, he served as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Minister of Consumer and Business Services.

Ted has a long history of community service. He served as Mayor of Flamborough from 1994-2000 and Hamilton City Councillor from 1977-1981. As MPP for the riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale, Ted has been a powerful advocate for seniors, children with special needs, farm risk-management programs, strategic infrastructure investment and our local environment.

Ted is a driven volunteer. He has worked to make a difference with many local organizations including the Hamilton Mental Health Association, Wesley Urban Ministries, the Five Oaks Christian Workers Centre, the Circle of Friends and Operation Lifeline. Ted served as President of both the Hamilton and Burlington YMCA and the Hamilton-Wentworth Lung Association. He has acted as an overseas volunteer, a church youth group leader and a baseball and soccer coach.



2013 Budget highlights



- Investing more than \$42 million annually in additional funding to help adults with developmental disabilities and their families in urgent need, reduce waitlist pressures and better support those with complex needs.
[Learn more.](#)
- Helping young adults with developmental disabilities currently receiving youth residential services move to more appropriate adult services and supports.
- Reforming social assistance, including the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), to improve incomes, promote better employment outcomes and increase fairness.
- Promoting Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs) and encouraging ODSP recipients and other people with disabilities to establish RDSPs.
- Increasing ODSP rates by one per cent, effective September 2013.
- Working with corporate leaders to establish a Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities to champion the hiring of people with disabilities.

Community Living Day at the Legislature

On May 13, 2013, Minister Ted McMeekin celebrated Community Living Day at the Legislature alongside more than 100 individuals, families and member agencies of Community Living Ontario.

Earlier in the day, he made a statement to the Ontario legislature applauding Community Living Ontario members for their tireless efforts to help change public attitudes about people with a developmental disability and for inspiring government to join them on the journey towards a truly inclusive society.

“Community Living Ontario envisions a society where people who have an intellectual disability belong and feel respected,” said Minister McMeekin. “It’s a vision we, as a government, share. From education and employment, to recreation and daily living, we strive to encourage full inclusion for everyone. And together, with the support of our communities, we can make it a reality.”

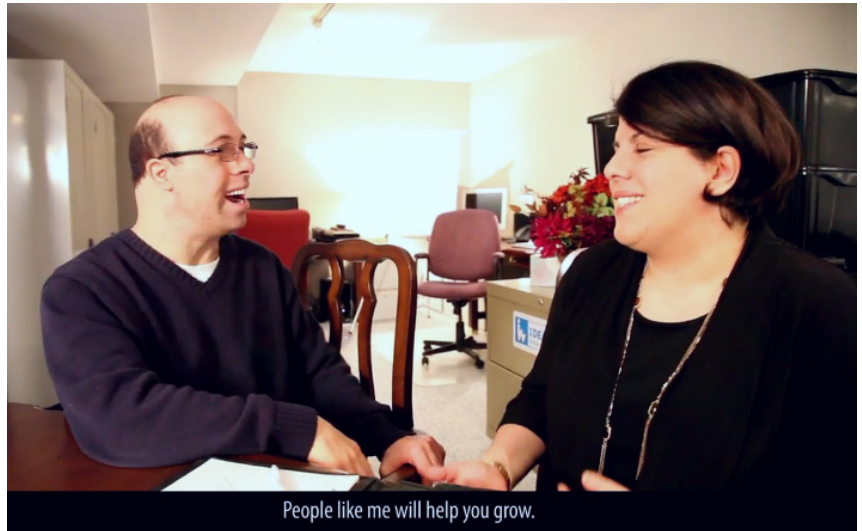
To learn more, visit ontario.ca/budget

New videos

Just see Robert

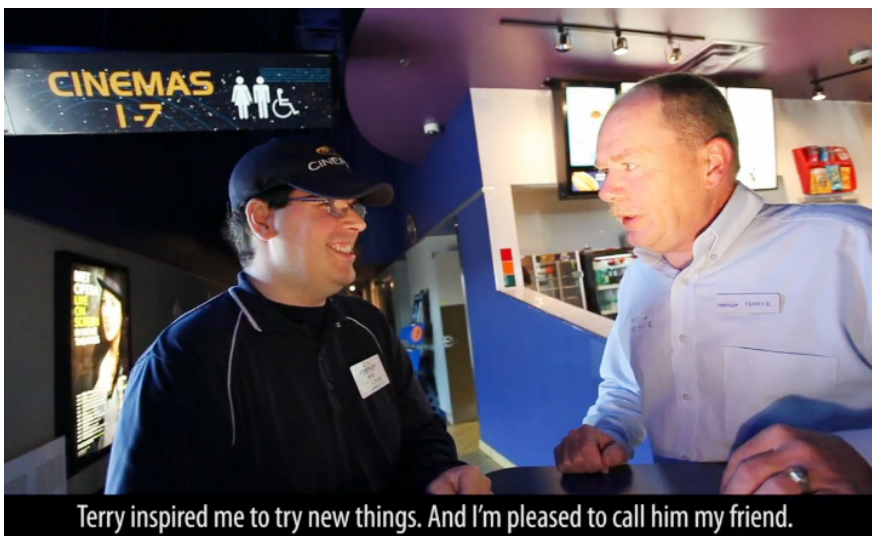
At 35 years old, Robert has already lived a life fuller than most, despite early predictions from doctors that he wouldn't even be able to walk or talk.

"They said I would not do what other kids do," Robert says. "They painted a very sad picture of my life and my future."



Robert's life has been anything but sad. As the founder of a charity that raises awareness about people with a developmental disability, he is a voice for his peers. [Watch our video about Robert](#) and see for yourself.

More than a big screen and popcorn



People in North Bay are flocking to the movies, but not just for the thrilling plots, big stars and buttery popcorn. One extra-personable employee at Galaxy Cinemas plays a leading role in keeping customers coming back.

So, dim your lights and [watch our video about Michael](#). It's a great story about tapping the talents of people with a developmental disability.

For more videos about developmental services and people with a developmental disability in Ontario, visit www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/about/videos/developmental.aspx.

Changes to Passport

In [October 2012](#), we asked individuals, families and agencies to comment on proposed changes to the [Passport program](#). We heard what you said and as a result two major changes are being made to Passport effective immediately. These changes include adding caregiver respite to the allowable expenses under Passport and removing restrictions to the current program.

Change # 1: caregiver respite

Caregiver respite is now an eligible support under Passport. Examples of caregiver respite are:

- Supporting the person with a developmental disability while the caregiver is taking time away from caregiving to take care of personal or household needs, or
- Helping the person with a developmental disability with activities such as eating, grooming or tending to health care needs.

The primary purpose of caregiver respite is to give the main caregiver relief or a break from caregiving.

Indirect respite is **not** an eligible Passport expense **except** in some circumstances.

Depending on the situation, [Passport agencies](#) can approve the temporary use of Passport funding for indirect respite. Individuals and families should talk to their Passport agency for more information.

Example

Under the new rules, people can use their Passport funding to arrange a break from caregiving in their own home, or at a different location. This could include hiring someone to help with support for, or personal care of, the person with a developmental disability.

They **cannot** use Passport funding to pay for expenses that are **not** directly related to supporting the individual (e.g., care for other children in the home, housekeeping, property maintenance, etc.) unless they get approval from the Passport agency in advance. (This is called indirect respite.)

Grace period for adults who transitioned from Special Services at Home to Passport before April 1, 2013

People who transitioned to Passport from Special Services at Home before April 1, 2013 can continue to spend their Passport money on indirect respite until March 31, 2014. After that date, they will not be able to spend it on indirect respite unless their Passport agency has approved their request as an extenuating circumstance in advance. They will have to spend these funds on other eligible Passport expenses.

Changes to Passport (continued)

Change #2: removing restrictions

We have changed Passport so that people who are:

1. Eighteen years of age may now be considered for Passport funding while they are still in school.
2. Receiving (or eligible to receive) Ontario Disability Support Program [Employment Supports](#) may now be considered for Passport funding.
3. Participating in a ministry-funded day program may now also receive Passport funding at the same time.

What lies ahead: new Passport guidelines

At this time, the ministry is not making the other changes to Passport that were proposed in the fall of 2012. We are taking time to reflect on the feedback that people provided, and to ask for more input, before making any changes in these areas.

We will continue to work with a broad range of stakeholders to fine tune the Passport guidelines to:

- Clarify the kinds of expenses that are eligible for funding, as well as those that are not, and
- Streamline the process for reporting expenses.

We will post the new guidelines ahead of time to give individuals and families time to learn about them.

Learn more

About Passport. [Read the guidelines.](#)

About the changes to Passport.
[Read the addendum to the guidelines.](#)

Minister visits new Reena Community Residence

In May, Minister Ted McMeekin toured the new Reena Community Residence for people with a developmental disability in Vaughan.

During his visit, the minister visited the greenhouse to help residents care for seedlings provided through a partnership with local environmental non-profit group Shoresh.

(From L to R in the foreground)
Minister Ted McMeekin, residents
Ryan Garnet and Allan Thay, and
Reena staff member Matthais
MacLean – in the greenhouse.



Reena resident David Estrada gives Minister
Ted McMeekin a tour of his apartment.



He also visited resident David Estrada who was excited to show off his new home – one of 60 apartments in the building, which can support up to 84 adults and seniors with developmental, physical, cognitive or mental health needs.

“Reena’s new residence is a prime example of how, with the support of our communities, we can provide greater opportunities for people with a developmental disability to participate in the community and lead more independent lives,” said Minister McMeekin.

Photo credits: Barry Shainbaum

Funding for new research projects

In April, we started funding six projects through our Developmental Services Research Grant Fund, which we created last summer.

After announcing the fund's first call for proposals, such as in the [July 2012 issue of Spotlight](#), we received 28 proposals from across Ontario. A committee of experts in both research and developmental services assessed the proposals using several criteria, such as relevance to ministry priorities, scientific merit, budget and timelines.

The successful projects will be up and running for the next eight months to two years and will help improve knowledge across the developmental services sector.

The projects are looking into important topics, such as:

Working together to support transitions

Researchers are examining the experiences of people with a developmental disability as they transition from school to adult life, from parents' homes to other residential options and from developmental services to seniors' services. This will help us understand the types of support needed in times of transition.

Reimagining parenting possibilities

This project is exploring how people with a developmental disability experience and imagine becoming parents. The researchers also want to know what people with a developmental disability expect from parenting supports and programs in Ontario.

Social enterprise as an employment option

Social enterprises are businesses that aim not only to make money, but also to improve communities, for example, by creating jobs for people who have often had difficulty joining the labour force. Researchers are gathering information about current social enterprises to write a guide on creating and managing social enterprises that promote inclusion, choice and independence for workers with a developmental disability.

Forecasting service needs for youth with autism

This project is examining the support needs of youth with autism who are transitioning to adulthood. With this information, the researchers will develop a model to forecast service needs.

Funding for new research projects

(continued)

Parent supports intervention project

Researchers are studying two types of coaching and mentoring programs aimed at helping parents of children with a developmental disability navigate the developmental services system. The first builds a sense of empowerment in parents as they get services for their child. The second empowers parents and teaches parenting skills. Researchers will identify programs that can improve a parent's ability to support their child.

Building community capacity through person-directed planning

Researchers are engaging adults with a developmental disability, family members, agency staff, planners and community members to identify how person-directed planning – an approach to helping people with a developmental disability build everyday lives in the community – can be used as a tool to educate the broader community about how to more effectively meet the needs of people with a developmental disability.

We'll keep you informed about these projects in future issues of [Spotlight](#).

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