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	Program	Disability Support Program	
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Effective: October 1, 2001 **Revised: March 26, 2010**	**Authorized by:** **Deputy Minister**		**Page 1 of 3**

1.0   PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1   Program Description

1.1.1   The Prince Edward Island Disability Support Program (hereafter referred to as DSP) is a program designed to assist Islanders who have a qualifying disability to overcome barriers, to attain a satisfactory quality of life, and to strive to achieve financial independence.

1.1.2   The DSP may assist children and youth with disabilities by offering support to them and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

1.1.3   The DSP is a social program with a financial component. The program offers support planning assistance to help develop a plan of action and to help determine supports that are necessary. The program may also provide referrals to other agencies where complimentary services may be obtained.

1.1.4   The financial component of the DSP is not intended to provide a living allowance, for which other programs exist, or to duplicate existing funding sources. The financial component of DSP pertains only to disability-related costs: to fund services and supports necessary to enable an individual with a disability to live as independently as possible or to obtain and maintain competitive employment, or to help a family with extraordinary child-rearing support needs directly related to their child's disability.

1.2   Program Authority

1.2.1   The DSP has been approved by Executive Council and it falls under the Ministry of Community Services, Seniors and Labour. Disability Supports fall under the *Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act* and the *Social Assistance Act*. The portion of the program that covers Employment and Vocational Supports is subject to a Federal/Provincial agreement, which is partially funded by the Federal Government.

1.3   Primary Principles

1.3.1   In the administration and delivery of the DSP, the following statements and beliefs act as guidelines in which to place a context around the relationship between the individual with the disability and/or his/her family, the Disability Support Worker, and the Department.

   a) Every person with a disability has the right to seek support in attempting to overcome barriers, to attain a satisfactory quality of life, and to achieve financial independence.

b) The dignity and value of the person should not be compromised in the individual's seeking of services.
   c) If a person with a disability earns an income they may still qualify for assistance through this program.
   d) Most individuals prefer to be self-sufficient rather than dependent, and services provided should be directed towards that end.
   e) To facilitate growth toward independence, Disability Support Workers must avoid taking on tasks that can be completed by the individual and/or family.
   f) Generally, families are open and prepared to help other family members, and service intervention should not erode this traditional practice.
   g) Individual persons or families usually know what their issues are and wish to be directly involved in making decisions on how best to resolve those issues.
   h) Disability Support Workers are expected to work with the individual and/or family to develop a support plan with goals and actions that outline supports necessary to achieve the goals.
   I) In seeking support, the individual and/or family has the responsibility to comply with the expectations and obligations of the service process.
   j) Information obtained by the Department while providing services is confidential and may be shared only with other government departments or private agencies when necessary to expedite required or requested services only when permission has been obtained (Refer to Section 3.0, *Confidentiality*).
   k) The quality with which any service is rendered is contingent upon the attitude, life experience, training and confidence of those staff who are the primary deliverers of the service.
   l) Public and community perceptions and views with respect to any public program are powerful influences; hence, a sensitivity to these perceptions is necessary.
   m) Resources (budget allocations, staff) to deliver the program are limited; hence, in order to ensure that those in need are assisted, program management must manage the program efficiently.

1.4   Program Objectives

1.4.1   The DSP has three components. The objectives of each are as follows:

   a) *Child Disability Supports* - To provide a range of disability related supports and services to families who have children with qualifying disabilities, according to their individual needs, to assist with extraordinary child-rearing support needs directly related to their disability.
   b) *Adult Disability Supports* - To provide a range of disability related supports and services to people with qualifying disabilities according to their individual needs and requirements to help them achieve a higher level of independence.
   c) *Employment and Vocational Supports* - To provide a flexible range of measures that include assessment, training, skills development and pre-employment in an individually-focussed program which will result in competitive, long-term employment, or supported employment, if appropriate.

1.5   Program Emphasis

1.5.1   It is understood that every individual is unique, with his or her own values, beliefs and coping styles. As such, the Department believes that each person's individualized needs are best met using a person-centered planning approach. Intrinsic to this method of program delivery is a respect for and acceptance of racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, physical and intellectual diversity.

1.5.2   The Department is committed to supporting the family unit and recognizes that families caring for children with special needs may require support to enable them to remain together as a family. Supports must be accessible, flexible, and designed to respond to the child's assessed unmet needs. Families with children with disabilities may require supports that are not solely financial, such as direction to community resources.

1.5.3   Person-Centered Approach - The person-centered approach to service delivery is based on a philosophy that puts the person "at the center" of all interaction directed at enhancing his or her quality of life. A person-centered approach to service delivery combines efficiency, commitment and empathy with the individual and/or family being a prominent partner in the service delivery process. A person-centered approach means:

   a)   providing customized supports to individuals and families;
   b)   the individual and/or family defines the situation from their viewpoint;
   c)   the individual and/or family actively participates in and coordinates their service; and
   d)   the individual's and/or family's strengths and resources are reviewed.

1.5.4   Needs versus Entitlement - The P.E.I. DSP focusses on the *needs* of the individual and/or family rather than entitlement (Refer to Section 5.5.1). This allows for more flexible planning with individuals and families. The DSP will endeavour to ensure fairness and accountability in programs which best respond to individual needs.

1.6   Referrals

1.6.1   Self-referral is preferred, however, referrals may come from a variety of sources. If a referral comes from a source other than self referral, an individual and/or family must be aware that the referral has been made, and must consent to it before the application can proceed.

1.7   Applicants' Right to a *Review Process*

1.7.1   Any applicant who is not satisfied with a decision made with respect to their application may follow the *Review Process*. This process is described in Section 17.0.