



It is estimated, that one in every 110 children is born with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Canada (CDC). There are approximately 200,000 Canadians living with an ASD. This figure does not account for the numerous family members and caregivers whose lives are affected by autism. For 10 years, SASKFEAT (Saskatchewan Families for Effective Autism Treatment) have been actively advocating for services and support for individuals living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs), their families and their communities.

Today, SASKFEAT is calling the Saskatchewan Government to action: This province must have a Saskatchewan Autism Strategy. The present 2008 Framework and Action Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders is "flawed." SASKFEAT demands that our province have a *Saskatchewan Autism Strategy* that addresses the lifespan needs of all individuals with ASDs and that ensures the rights and accessibility for all individuals living with Autism Spectrum Disorders to fully funded (not income tested), best practice, evidence-based treatments across this province.

**Quick Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), also referred to as autism, is a neurological disorder which causes developmental disability. Autism affects the way the brain functions, resulting in difficulties with communication and social interaction, and unusual patterns of behavior, activities and interests.

People with ASD are not physically disabled and "look just like anybody without the disability. "

The 'invisible nature' of ASD makes it much harder to create awareness and understanding.

Every person with ASD is an individual, and like all individuals, has a unique personality and combination of characteristics.

"The success of the child hinges on the success of the parents and their ability to cope with their child's diagnosis."

Cheryl Kelly

- **Let's Talk Autism** – It's a simple statement, but in your hands it can have a real impact. Saskatchewan's upcoming provincial election is an opportunity for our autism community to have its voice heard, and have its issues debated. To help you engage during the election we are providing you with this election 2011 toolkit. I hope you will take the time to review it, share it and get involved. As active members of our respective communities, we talk about autism all the time. It is time to engage our provincial politicians in this dialogue. Sincerely, Arden C. Fiala – Vice President, SASKFEAT
- **KEY ISSUE – The Reality in Saskatchewan is that access to best-practice treatments for ASD is limited, and for most individuals with ASD within our province, there are no best-practice treatments available. There is inequality of services and supports across all age groups and across Saskatchewan. The accessibility of these few services varies depending where you live in this province, and is based on availability, income of parents, IQ, and/or cost, not on need.**  
**Research demonstrates that early intervention for children with an ASD has the most positive effect in altering the impact of ASD on their lives.**
- **Access to diagnosis** – There is a shortage of diagnostic expertise in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders; therefore, families have to wait for a diagnosis for their children.
- **Access to treatment** – ASD treatment plans are **unique** to each individual and require the collaboration of different health care professionals.
- **Lifespan supports** – It is crucial to remember that children living with ASD grow up to become adults living with ASD. They are **citizens** with a need for continuous support that evolves over their entire lives.
- **Provincial standards** – There are no provincial standardized protocols for diagnosis, treatment and or professional qualifications. Specific **provincial standards** for accessibility and best practices in the field of ASD must be in place.

**\*\*CONTACT YOUR MLA**  
**\*\*ASK YOUR ELECTORAL CANDIDATES**

**www.saskfeat.com**

In regards to the 2008 Framework and Action Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders:

**Q: Would your government provide immediate individualized funding, which is not income tested, until an acceptable and proven *Saskatchewan Autism Strategy* is established?**

**Q: Where is the accountability for the 8 million dollars that has been spent to date?**

**Q: Why is the key factor for financial assistance based on income of the parents/guardians vs. need?**

**Q: Will the Plan expand to cover all individuals with ASDs, not just to the age of 19?**

**Q: When will there be equal access for all individuals with ASDs to evidence-based, best practice programming?**