



IRM Independent Review Mechanism for the Autism Intervention Program

When you receive written notification that your child is ineligible for, or is being discharged from, the Autism Intervention Program (AIP), you may request an independent review of that decision. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) has developed an Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for the AIP which is coordinated by Contact Niagara, a non-profit agency funded by the Ministry. In addition to coordinating the provincial IRM, Contact Niagara is also the single point of access to Ontario government-funded services for children in the Niagara community.

The IRM process includes:

- A mandatory internal administrative review conducted by the regional AIP Provider; and
- An optional external review conducted by an independent reviewer selected by the IRM Coordinator.

The request for a review must be made in writing to the AIP provider within 20 business days of receiving the written discharge or ineligibility decision. You may review case file materials relevant to your child's decision before submitting the request.

Internal Administrative Review:

This step is an internal review of the process by which the ineligibility or discharge decision was made, and also gives you and the AIP provider an opportunity to further discuss how the decision was made. If you wish to provide any additional information about your child's care and treatment that is relevant to the decision under review, you must submit this information at the time you request the review. This could include information about your child's diagnosis, behaviours, or other treatments or assessments made outside of the AIP.

The internal administrative review phase of the IRM will be completed within 13 business days of receiving your written request for a review.

After the internal review is completed and your AIP provider has notified you of the outcome, you may decide to request the second level of the IRM process—an independent review. This request must be made in writing to the AIP provider within 5 business days of completion of the internal review. With your consent, your child's case file materials will then be sent to the IRM Coordinator.

External Independent Review:

If you request an independent review, the IRM Coordinator will send your child's case file materials to an independent reviewer within 7 business days. All identifying information will be removed. Independent reviewers are selected by the IRM Coordinator, are psychologists and psychological associates with extensive knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and have expertise and experience in the field of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) and/or Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI).

The independent reviewer will determine if the AIP's decision is consistent with the information in the case file materials based on his/her clinical judgment and the AIP Guidelines. The independent reviewer's written decision and explanation will be sent to you and the AIP provider within 30 business days. The decision made by the independent reviewer is final.

If the independent reviewer determines that the decision of ineligibility is inconsistent with the case file materials, your child will be placed on the waitlist for IBI based on the date of the original referral to the AIP. If the independent reviewer determines that the decision to discharge your child is inconsistent with the case file materials, the AIP provider responsible will take appropriate action to comply with the independent reviewer's decision. The full review process can take no more than 55 business days to complete from the date you request the review.

The Independent Review Mechanism Guidelines can be found on the MCYS Website at: www.children.gov.on.ca.

For more information about the IRM process, please visit our website at:

www.contactniagara.org or call Contact Niagara at:

1-866-416-1023 or 289-273-4627 or e-mail us at:

IRM@contactniagara.org.

