

<b>Legislation</b> <b><i>Supports for Persons with Disabilities Gen. Regs. 8(1)(c)</i></b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Social Programs</b>	
	<b>Program</b>	<b>AccessAbility Supports</b>	
	<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Sensory Tools</b>	<b>Policy #</b> 2.9
<b>Effective Date: January 15, 2025</b>		<b>Authorized by:</b>  <b>Deputy Minister Teresa Hennebery</b>	

## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide financial support for sensory tools to eligible applicants of AccessAbility Supports (AAS).

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Applicant:** a person with a disability by whom or on whose behalf an application is made for supports or Assured Income (AI).
- 2.2 **Assured Income (AI):** a component of AccessAbility Supports (AAS) that provides monthly financial supports to eligible applicants with disabilities to use towards securing basic needs.
- 2.3 **Health Care Practitioner:** includes an audiologist, (ii) a dietitian, registered under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, a medical practitioner, licensed under the *Medical Act*, an occupational therapist registered under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, an optometrist, licensed under the *Optometry Act*, a physiotherapist, registered under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, a psychologist, registered under the *Psychologists Act*, a registered nurse or nurse practitioner, registered under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, and a speech language pathologist.

- 2.4 **Sensory Tools:** products that provide sensory input to help regulate the nervous system and improve focus, attention, and behavior.
- 2.5 **Support Plan:** a written account of an intended course of action to identify supports that may assist in meeting one or more of the unmet needs directly related to the applicant's disability and/or the basic AI needs of an applicant. The Support Plan is a collaboration between the applicant and the Supports Coordinator and explains in detail what needs to be done, when, how, and by whom.
- 2.6 **Supports Coordinator:** a staff member that provides direction and case management support in delivering a range of social benefits and services to applicants eligible for AAS.

### 3.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 AAS provides funding for sensory tools under the provision of personal supports.
- 3.2 Sensory tools are intended to alleviate anxiety or stress and to support an applicant's ability to self-regulate.
- 3.3 Funding for sensory tools is to assist an applicant to purchase disability specific supports not available through other means of support, other government departments or agencies, or elsewhere in the community.
- 3.4 Funding for sensory tools shall not be used to purchase, replace, or serve as an alternative to standard costs of living or household responsibilities.
- 3.5 An applicant is eligible to receive financial benefits to purchase sensory tools to a maximum of \$600 annually.

- 3.6 An applicant must have the requested funding available within their monthly funding ceiling level to be eligible for sensory tool funding.
- 3.7 Sensory tools may include:
- sensory toys;
  - noise cancelling headphones;
  - chewelry;
  - body socks;
  - sensory hair clippers; and
  - seatbelt strap covers;
- 3.8 Sensory tools do not include:
- supports not directly related the applicant's disability-related needs;
  - restraints;
  - sporting, recreational, or playground equipment, such as trampolines, swings, pools and hot tubs, etc.;
  - household items, electronic equipment, devices, and products intended for everyday use and entertainment, such as furniture, musical instruments, turntables, appliances, televisions, and photography equipment such as instant cameras or drones;
  - clothing and personal goods and services such as toiletries, spa treatments, aesthetic or cosmetic services;
  - videogames and videogame systems, including virtual reality systems.
- 3.9 An applicant's eligibility for funding for sensory tools will be determined by the Department based on the following factors:
- a written recommendation from a health care practitioner;

- the applicant's support plan;
- the self-assessment of the applicant; and
- input from the applicant's Supports Coordinator.

3.10 A health care practitioner's written recommendation is required for all sensory tool requests. A written recommendation must demonstrate how the request relates to the applicant's disability-related needs, and where possible, must clearly demonstrate evidence of a trial period with beneficial results.

3.11 Where an applicant did not exhaust their annual funding for sensory tools, unexpended funds cannot be carried forward to be spent the following year.

#### **4.0 REFERENCES**

4.1 *Supports for Persons with Disabilities Gen. Regs. 8(1)(c)*

4.2 Personal Supports Policy (Policy #2.1)