

**Contact:**

Dayna Giorgio | Strategic Communications Officer  
519.886.8886 ext. 1309 | [dgiorgio@kidsability.ca](mailto:dgiorgio@kidsability.ca)

For Immediate Release

## Statement – Following the Announcement by Minister MacLeod to Autism Reform Enhancements

Waterloo, ON, March 21, 2019 – In response to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Lisa MacLeod’s, announcement this morning regarding enhancements to the Ontario autism program reforms, KidsAbility issues the following statement:

“We are pleased with the enhancements that Minister MacLeod and her office announced today in regards to the Ontario autism program reforms. The removal of the income testing that had previously been required of families is a positive step forward in increasing access to much-needed services for children with autism spectrum disorder. The added investment of \$10 million in addition to the six-month extension to behavioural plans for all children who are currently in-service were also positive additions. KidsAbility believes that services should be based on a child’s needs, first and foremost, and we were encouraged to hear that Minister MacLeod and her office will be consulting with families and service providers over the summer months to find ways to meet the unique and diverse needs of children with a wide range of complex needs.

“Although the impact of today’s news on KidsAbility is unknown at this time, in the coming days, we will be seeking answers to some of the questions that we have regarding implementation plans and timing. In the meantime, KidsAbility will continue our work in ensuring that families will have a menu of options in which they will be able to purchase evidence based services with their childhood budgets delivered by our highly-trained, professional and passionate staff and ensure that transitions into this new system will be as smooth as possible.”

- Linda Kenny, Chief Executive Officer, KidsAbility

**Contact:**

Dayna Giorgio | Strategic Communications Officer  
519.886.8886 ext. 1309 | [dgiorgio@kidsability.ca](mailto:dgiorgio@kidsability.ca)

## Background Information:

Across our community, 7,975 children and youth with special needs receive the help that they need to realize goals important to them. It could be overcoming a stutter, strengthening muscles to take that first step or learning the social skills to make a friend—together, we make these firsts possible. With over 60 years of experience, KidsAbility helps children and youth with special needs and their families to achieve goals important to them at home, at school and in the community. Our goal is to get the right support to the right child at the right time and donations help to make that possible.

KidsAbility Foundation inspires and engages community partners, individuals and groups to help make a difference in children's lives. Demand for KidsAbility's services continues to exceed the resources provided by the provincial government. Through the annual Kids Can't Wait campaign, donations raised through our generous community fund new programs, innovation and equipment, and allow KidsAbility to serve an additional 1,000 children and youth with special needs each year. Without this generous support, more children would be waiting even longer to receive the care that they deserve and so desperately need. Presently, there are over 1,300 children waiting for services at KidsAbility.

With your help, we can help more children to live richer and fuller lives. Together, we can ensure that every child and youth has access to the services that they need where they live, learn and play to realize their full potential.