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| Equipment Policy | | Date Approved | January 2003 |
| Branch/Division | Disability and Specialized Services/ Community Service Delivery | Applicable to | Children’s disABILITY Services |
| Responsible Authority | Assistant Deputy Minister Community Service Delivery | Next Review Date | |
| Policy Owner | Director, Children’s disABILITY Services | Date Reviewed | December 2023 |
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1.0 Policy Statement

Children’s disABILITY Services supports families raising children with developmental or lifelong physical disabilities, to meet some of the additional disability-related needs they may have.

2.0 Background/Context

Families raising children with disabilities may have additional disability-related needs for their children that other families may not. Equipment can help children with disabilities to safely move through and interact with the surrounding environment, to help them with daily living activities as well as to communicate with others. Children enrolled in Children’s disABILITY Services may receive eligible equipment based on their assessed disability-related needs.

3.0 Purpose

Eligible equipment increases, maintains or improves the functional and adaptive capabilities of the child in order to meet his or her basic disability related needs regarding mobility, communication, daily living and immediate safety. Therefore, the categories of eligible equipment are:

- mobility equipment;
- augmentative and alternative communication equipment;
- aids to daily living equipment, and;
- safety equipment.

Eligibility for Children’s disABILITY Services does not mean that all equipment requests are approved; requests are subject to the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy and to the availability of program resources.

4.0 Definitions

Assessment Officer – DHSU staff person responsible for assessing, reviewing and processing equipment requests on behalf of Children’s disABILITY Services.

Community Service Organization – Non-government organization such as a charitable foundation that may fund equipment requests for children with disabilities.

Disability and Health Supports Unit (DHSU) – Unit responsible for assessing and processing all equipment requests for children enrolled in Children’s disABILITY Services.

Equipment – For the purposes of this policy, equipment refers to devices that increases, maintains or improves the functional and adaptive capabilities of children which meet their basic disability-related needs for mobility, communication, daily living and immediate safety.

Equipment Pool – The Manitoba government recycled equipment program which provides available recycled items available to meet the equipment needs of children enrolled in Children’s disABILITY Services.

Materials Distribution Agency (MDA) – The Manitoba government agency responsible for the procurement, delivery and maintenance of equipment purchased by the Disability and Health Support Unit.

Qualified Professional – For the purposes of this policy, qualified professionals refers to regulated health professionals with expertise to recommend appropriate equipment. Qualified professionals include, but are not limited to: physicians, nurses, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, registered psychologists and behavioural specialists.

5.0 Policy

5.1 Eligibility

Children open to Children’s disABILITY Services may be eligible for equipment based on:

- their assessed needs
- the availability of other resources to meet their needs
- the availability of program resources.

Eligibility for Children’s disABILITY Services does not mean that all equipment requests are approved. All criteria must be met for requests to be assessed as eligible.

5.2 Eligible Equipment

5.2.1 Mobility Equipment

Mobility equipment increases, maintains or improves mobility, assisting a child to move through and to interact with the surrounding environment, including the home and community. Mobility devices within the home ensure basic needs are met with respect to safety, sleeping and hygiene.

5.2.2 Augmentative and Alternative Communication Equipment

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) equipment assists a child who is unable to speak, in interacting and communicating with others in the home and community. To be eligible for Children’s disABILITY Services funding, the AAC equipment must be the child’s primary mode of communication. Software (applications) for AAC equipment that is recommended by a qualified professional is eligible for Children’s disABILITY Services funding at a basic and adequate level.

Home computers, tablets and other devices for use by other family members or for other uses than the child’s primary mode of communication are not eligible for funding as they are not considered within Children’s disABILITY Services AAC equipment category.

5.2.3 Aids to Daily Living Equipment

Aids to daily living equipment increases, maintains or improves self-help skills and functional abilities for typical daily living activities (e.g., dressing, personal hygiene).

Commercially available or common childhood items are not eligible aids to daily living devices.

5.2.4 Safety Equipment

Safety equipment includes devices that may prevent or minimize immediate and significant risks to the health and safety of a child and/or others. Requests for safety equipment will be individually assessed and may involve consultation with Children's disABILITY Services and DHSU management, Psychology Services and other members of a child's professional team.

5.3 Ineligible Equipment

5.3.1 Equipment Provided by Regional Health Authorities and Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Regional health authorities provide medical equipment to children who require it for medical needs. Therefore, medically necessary or life-sustaining equipment is not provided by Children's disABILITY Services.

Orthopedic shoes, prosthetic or orthotic devices, or hearing aids are available to eligible children from Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long Term Care's Ancillary Programs; therefore, these items are not provided by Children's disABILITY Services. Additionally, Children's disABILITY Services does not fund replacement hearing aid batteries or earmolds.

Wheelchairs are provided by the Manitoba Community Wheelchair Program; therefore, wheelchairs are not eligible for Children's disABILITY Services funding.

5.3.2 Common Childhood and Household Items

Common childhood items that are typically required by most children that have not been modified to accommodate the child's disability are ineligible. Examples include infant bath seats, potty chairs, pacifiers, toothbrushes, teething rings, infant swings and non-adapted toys.

Common household items such as cutlery and exterior door alarm systems are not eligible for funding through Children's disABILITY Services.

5.4 Recommendation from Qualified Professional

For all equipment requests, recommendation by a qualified professional with appropriate expertise is required. Recommendations are to be made using the *Medical Equipment Request and Justification form*.

5.5 Assessment and Approval of Requests

The Disability and Health Support Unit (DHSU) is responsible for assessing eligibility of equipment requests and for determining priority level for approved requests.

The DHSU will assess requests with the following criteria to determine their eligibility:

- the request was made by a qualified regulated health professional;
- the requested item is an eligible item as described in section 5.2;
- the requested item is directly related to the disability that established the child's eligibility for Children's disABILITY Services;
- generic, low-cost or no cost options that could meet the child's disability-related needs have been considered;

- other government programs (provincial and federal) have been explored and accessed where appropriate;
- the requested item is “basic and adequate,” which is the minimum required to meet the child’s assessed disability-related needs.

5.6 Basic and Adequate Support

Children’s disABILITY Services’ provides basic and adequate support to help families with some of the extraordinary costs of raising children with disabilities.

Basic and adequate is the minimum required to meet the assessed disability-related need.

Choices of an aesthetic or convenient nature that raise the price of the item with no demonstrable benefit to meeting the child’s needs do not fall within the definition of basic and adequate.

5.7 Sourcing of Equipment

Equipment is purchased by a procurement process that involves the standardization of products, which is both cost effective and allows for the provision of consistent equipment for all children. The Materials Distribution Agency (MDA) shall be used as the supplier for all new equipment purchased by the DHSU.

Equipment shall be provided from the equipment pool when appropriate items are available.

5.8 Ownership

Equipment provided by Children’s disABILITY Services is the property of the Manitoba government.

Equipment is loaned to families for the use of the intended children. Equipment may be borrowed for as long as needed by the children.

5.9 Equipment Repair

Repairs to equipment are the responsibility of Children’s disABILITY Services. However, families may be responsible for repair costs if it is determined that equipment is misused or abused.

5.10 Equipment Replacement

Replacement equipment will be provided only when:

- the child has outgrown it, or
- when it no longer meets the child’s needs.

Recommendation from a qualified professional using the *Medical Equipment Request and Justification form* is required for all requests for replacement equipment.

Used equipment should be returned before or when the replacement device is delivered.

Families are responsible for the safe use and secure storage of equipment. Equipment may not be replaced if it is broken due to improper use or lost due to being inappropriately stored.

5.11 Equipment Return

Equipment must be returned when no longer needed by the child to whom it was loaned.

The timeframe for the return of equipment following the death of a CDS-eligible child is based on the family’s readiness to part with the equipment. In these situations, the CDS case manager is the primary contact between families and the department for coordinating the return of equipment.

5.12 File Closure

Equipment may continue to be borrowed after the child is no longer open to Children’s disABILITY Services. The location of any equipment remaining in a family’s possession should be documented to facilitate the device’s return when it is no longer needed. Equipment must be returned by the family when it is no longer needed.

Any special arrangements for maintenance and repair costs cease to be in effect when children reach 18 years old. Families must make any necessary arrangements for maintenance and repairs to equipment with the relevant adult program, if applicable.

6.0 Core Supporting Standards and Guidelines

6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the procurement of equipment through Children’s disABILITY Services:

| Steps in the procurement of equipment | Family | Qualified Professional | Assessment Officer | Case Manager | Materials Distribution Agency |
|---|--------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Identify need for equipment | ● | ● | | ● | |
| Assess and submit request for item | | ● | | | |
| Use decision tree | | | ● | | |
| Consult on decision | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Prioritize need | | | ● | | |
| Send Letter of Decision to family | | | ● | | |
| Initiate purchase and coordination | | | ● | | |
| Provide <i>Medical Equipment Device Loan Agreement letter</i> to family | | | | | ● |
| Tag, inventory and adjust equipment | | | | | ● |
| Deliver equipment to family | | | | | ● |
| Provide or arrange training on use of equipment | | ● | | | ● |
| Follow-up with family* | | ● | ● | ● | |

* **Qualified Professional** – Follows up with family on suitability of the equipment based on assessed need, as part of services provided service

Assessment Officer – Explains decision on eligibility and refers families who have questions or concerns with their equipment to the proper service provider

Case Manager – Receives feedback in discussions with family regarding the suitability of the equipment in meeting their child's disability-related needs

6.2 Family Responsibilities

Families borrowing equipment shall:

- maintain the equipment in good condition and report any damage or defects immediately;
- comply with all accompanying licenses, agreements and instructions for proper care and use of the equipment;
- not alter, change or make any additions or deletions to the equipment unless expressly authorized by the DHSU;
- not remove any identifying tags or labels that may be attached to the equipment;
- not sell, give away or loan the equipment, as it is the property of Manitoba (MDA sticker states property of DHSU);
- allow trained technicians, wearing photo ID, to enter the home to inspect, repair or adjust the equipment as needed, and;
- return the equipment to MDA with all accompanying attachments, options or parts when no longer required.

All insurance costs including premiums, riders and deductibles for borrowed equipment are the responsibility of the family if they place the equipment on their homeowner or tenant's insurance policy.

Equipment that is replaced by an insurance claim remains the property of Manitoba and it must be returned to Materials Distribution Agency when it is no longer needed.

6.3 Medical Equipment Device Loan Agreement

At the time of delivery of the equipment, families will receive a *Medical Equipment Device Loan Agreement letter* that outlines ownership of the equipment and families' responsibilities with respect to the equipment.

If necessary, the DHSU will provide an additional letter to reflect any prior special arrangements with the family (e.g. repair and maintenance arrangements).

6.4 Private Medical Insurance

Families must use private insurance if available. Insurance will be considered by the DHSU before funding.

6.5 Additional Government Support

Families must access other government programs and equipment providers that can meet their child's equipment needs, if available.

6.6 Accessing Community Service Organization Supports

Some community service organizations provide support for equipment purchases, either through direct funding or long-term rentals. Families are encouraged to discuss options for accessing community service organization support with their qualified professional or with DHSU staff.

If community service organization supports are accessed, the family and the community service organization should determine ownership of the equipment and responsibility for the equipment's maintenance, insurance, repairs, replacement and return.

Children's disABILITY Services is not responsible for the repair and maintenance of equipment funded by a community service organization unless otherwise arranged between the DHSU and the family.

6.7 Tax Benefits

Disability-related equipment purchased without the use of government funds may qualify as eligible medical expenses with the Canada Revenue Agency. More information is available from the Canada Revenue Agency.