

Summer Skill Maintenance Policy		Date Approved	December 2018
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	March 2019
		Date Revised	March 2019

1.0 Policy Statement

Summer Skill Maintenance is time-limited programming delivered during the summer break from school, intended to reduce the learning loss that research has shown occurs at a higher rate for children with disabilities. The intentional, skill-based programming is based on the individualized goals of the child and focuses on social, functional and/or academic skills.

2.0 Background/Context

Research shows that children who receive intentional, skill-based programming throughout the summer months have reduced summer learning loss. All students experience summer learning loss when they do not participate in activities that allow them to practice the skills they have learned. Students experiencing learning challenges and at-risk students, including children with disabilities, are more likely to experience summer learning loss. Additionally, key transition points such as the move from childcare to school, the onset of puberty and the move towards the age of majority are also points at which support and skill development become especially important.

3.0 Purpose

Summer Skill Maintenance (SSM) is intended to reduce summer learning loss for children with disabilities by providing opportunities that support skill maintenance. Timely and effectively targeted provision of support is known to contribute to better outcomes for children and families, having a significant positive effect for the upcoming school year and the years that follow.

Parents are responsible for their child’s overall learning and skill development; SSM is not intended to replace parental responsibilities.

4.0 Definitions

Adaptive Functional Assessments: Provide information on the domains of development and are typically completed by psychologists, therapists or other health professionals. These may include assessments completed by occupational therapists (OT), physiotherapists (PT), speech and language pathologists (SLP), clinical psychologists (CP) and school resource coordinators, with input from the family.

Assessment: A process that identifies specific strengths and needs of the child and family in determining an appropriate service plan.

Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP): A BIP is a written document that outlines a behavioural plan for students demonstrating risk to self or self-injurious behaviour or high levels of disruptive, inappropriate, aggressive or violent behaviours that interfere with or threaten the safety of the school or classroom learning environment.

Family-Centred Approach: An approach to service delivery in which the family is seen as the centre of decision making, and which respects, strengthens and supports the family in order to meet the needs of the child.

Formal Supports: Supports provided by government, agencies or organizations.

Functional Skills: Skills the child will use frequently in their life, such as communication, self-care, motor and social.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A written document developed and implemented by a team outlining a plan to address the individual learning needs of the child. An IEP summarizes what is known about the student (current level of performance); the programming that is being and/or will be provided (outcomes, instructional strategies, activities and materials); and the effectiveness of the programming (assessment, evaluation).

Informal Supports: Supports provided by family, friends, neighbours and others within a family's social network.

Respite: A temporary break for families in order to relieve parents or care givers from additional demands of caring for a child with a disability, provide parents or care givers with time to meet their own personal needs and allow parents to spend time with other family members and/or other children.

Supporting Documentation: Documents that provide information specific to the child, which may include current level of functioning, areas of strength, goals, activities for growth, effective strategies and accommodations. Examples of support documents include Individual Education Plans (IEP), Behaviour Intervention Plans (BIP), Adaptive Functional Assessments and reports from other professionals (school or private occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech language pathologists, psychologists).

Support Worker: Staff hired by Children's disABILITY Services or directly by families to work with the child on Summer Skills Maintenance goals and activities. This may include direct service workers or self-managed staff.

5.0 Policy

5.1 Service Description

Summer Skills Maintenance programming addresses the summer learning loss that research has shown occurs at a higher rate for children with disabilities and, consequently can have a significant effect on the upcoming school year and in years ahead. Through this service, individualized goals and activities for the child are identified by the child, family and/or school team. Children's disABILITY Services provides funding for support workers to deliver this intentional, skill-based programming to eligible children on a regular basis throughout the summer. SSM programming may be delivered by department-managed and agency support workers or by self-managed support workers hired by families. The provision of SSM services is dependent on a determination of a child's assessed needs and available resources.

5.2 Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for Summer Skill Maintenance, children must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Open to Children's disABILITY Services;
- Registered for and attended school (Kindergarten to Grade 12) in the academic year preceding the summer break; and

- Have identifiable disability-related goals in the areas of communication, functional academics, health and safety, independent living, self-care, socialization, employment and/or motor skills. Please see [Skill Definitions and Sample Activities](#) for examples of skill areas

Exclusions to Eligibility

Children are ineligible if ANY of the following conditions are met:

- Have not previously been enrolled in Kindergarten (or a higher grade);
- Currently enrolled in child care;
- Already accessing equivalent or duplicate government funded staff – i.e. individual child care or home tutor staff; and
- Already accessing another skill development program, for example, through a school division, community library or faith-based centre.

Eligible Summer Skill Maintenance Costs

Subject to available resources and assessed needs, SSM may fund:

- Support workers – Support children to participate in activities that facilitate development towards children’s individual goals. This includes funding for activities required before direct service begins with the child in July and August (for example, meeting with the school team or attending training).
- Transportation – Transportation costs may only be provided for medically complex, non-ambulant children who travel with medical equipment, when accessible transportation is not available to them.

**Note:

- Parents are responsible for their children’s transportation to and from SSM activities outside the home, except under the condition described above;
- SSM goals can most often be met through activities that take place in the home. Transportation to activities may not be necessary for children to work towards their identified goals; and
- Parents and school teams should consider children’s transportation needs when planning and choosing activities to work on SSM goals.

Ineligible Summer Skill Maintenance Costs

SSM will not fund:

- Program registration;
- Entrance fees for children, family members and/or support workers; and
- Additional costs incurred in the provision of SSM services (e.g. meals, activity costs).

5.3 Assessment

A comprehensive assessment is required to identify the current priority needs to have the greatest impact on maintaining and/or improving functional skills over the summer months. This will occur within the current available program resources.

Children’s disABILITY Services will consider:

- Disability-related needs;
- Intensity and nature of the child’s unique needs;
- Age of the child; and
- Availability of existing supports to meet the child’s summer learning needs.

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure the effectiveness of the SSM service, the following responsibilities apply:

Family Responsibilities:

- Engage in the SSM assessment process with their Community Service Worker;
- Connect with their child's school team to develop goals and activities (completion of the [Request for Information](#) form);
- Participate in overall planning for their child throughout the summer;
- Work with their child on their SSM goals throughout the summer;
- Implement the SSM service plan, if the service is self-managed;
- Provide the school team with the [End of Summer Report](#);
- Complete the [Family Feedback Form](#); and
- For self-managed SSM services only, follow self-managed service guidelines for support worker recruitment and invoicing.

Community Service Worker Responsibilities:

- Assess and prioritize the need for SSM programming;
- Work with the family to plan and support SSM programming, as required;
- Use past SSM experience and feedback to plan for the following year;
- Case note any goals and relevant correspondence in inFACT;
- Ensure support worker daily journal and end of summer reports are received; and
- Ensure SSM evaluation forms are received and submitted to the Program Manager.

Support Worker Responsibilities:

- Deliver the programming and gather resources to work on the child's individual skill maintenance goals identified in the parent and school forms;
- For every session with the child, complete the [Summer Skill Maintenance Daily Journal](#), outlining work on the goals and activities; and
- Complete an [End of Summer Report](#) that reflects the child's activities and progress.

6.0 Core Supporting Standards and Guidelines

6.1 Standards

SSM Service:

- Use a family-centred approach;
- Are provided according to assessed need;
- Are based on the individualized goals of the child;
- Incorporate engaging activities for the child; and
- Provide opportunities to transfer learning across various settings and situations.

Effective Programming:

For skill maintenance to be achieved, effective programming must include the following factors:

- Regular practice throughout the summer – SSM delivered as one or two isolated weeks* does not fulfil the purpose of this service when there is no plan for working on skill maintenance during the remaining seven to eight weeks of summer;
- High-quality instruction –the support worker is provided with clearly developed goals and activities, with opportunities to connect with Children's disABILITY Services if questions arise;
- Aligned with the individual's needs – the activities should be directly related to the child's individualized goals and work from the previous school year; and

- Engaging and rigorous programming – summer provides opportunities for transferring learning to varied environments, people and situations. Programming may extend past the child’s level of achievement during the previous school year, as appropriate.
- * A **portion** of SSM **may** be comprised of summer camp, if:
- There will be significant opportunities to work on the child’s goals during the camp;
 - The goals are directly related to the child’s functioning and success during the upcoming school year; and
 - There is a clear plan in place for regular and frequent practice of SSM goals throughout the remainder of summer.

Goal-Focused Service:

The goals identified by the child, family and/or school team are central to all planning and service delivery. Any activities and programming that are a part of SSM should be based on the individual goals for the child.

For effective skill maintenance opportunities to occur, there must be:

- Goals and activities that are clear, specific and individualized;
- A transfer of information from the family or school team to the support worker; and
- Regular, frequent opportunities to learn and apply strategies.

Receipt of School Team Recommendations and/or Documents:

The family, child and school team are central to the SSM planning process, with members of the school team able to identify key skills in their respective areas for the child to maintain during the summer. Please note that if families or Children’s disABILITY Services staff are unable to receive information from school team members or other supportive documentation from the past school year, it should not prevent children from accessing SSM services. While documentation from the school provides important information used in program planning, it is not the only source of information available to inform SSM programming.

Basic and Adequate:

Summer Skill Maintenance funding is subject to the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy and to the availability of program resources. The requested SSM supports must be considered “basic and adequate,” which is the minimum required to meet the child’s assessed disability-related needs. If two programs are otherwise equivalent in terms of addressing the child’s skill-related goals, the option with lower costs should be selected. Informal options that address skills should be considered, where appropriate, as an alternative to formal programs. However, there are individual circumstances where higher-cost supports may be appropriate. For SSM, basic and adequate can refer to factors such as the number of hours provided and the worker-child ratio.

Type of Service:

Each child who has been prioritized for SSM will be assessed to determine an appropriate level of service. For the purposes of skill maintenance, there is an upper limit of 80 hours of direct service with the child during the summer break from school. Additional hours required for meetings to discuss goals and activities or for training may also be funded. Please note that the level of service will vary based on the assessment of the child and family.

SSM funding must be limited to programming that will:

- Meet the skill maintenance goals and needs of the child
- Be physically appropriate based on the physical abilities of the child and developmentally appropriate based on the developmental stage of the child, and;

- Consider what is appropriate for the individual child (e.g. group or individual; integrated or cluster programming; self managed) and any challenges engaging with the programming.

Service Planning:

School teams can be an excellent resource for identifying the child’s goals, recommended activities and suitable community programs. Summer Skill Maintenance – Request for Information provides a brief chart for school staff to complete. It is recommended that the family lead this process; however, Children’s disABILITY Services can provide support as needed.

To guide in the process of identifying goals for the child, [Examples of Goals and Activities](#) provides a list of some functional skills with sample activities.

6.2 Guidelines

Goal Development and Service Planning:

SSM plans must focus on the individualized goals of the child. Additionally, goals should be detailed, specific, measurable and achievable. These factors help to create common expectations for what the program will deliver, how to get there, and what the child will maintain or achieve by the end of the program. [Examples of Goals and Activities](#) provides sample goals and activities.

Building Community Programming:

- **Cost Sharing** – For established programs in the community, regions may work with organizations on providing accessible opportunities for children with disabilities. In the event that support staff are not provided and multiple children are receiving funding from Children’s disABILITY Services to attend a specific program, regions may arrange partnership opportunities through Service Purchase Agreements (SPAs) to share support worker costs, as appropriate. This support sharing may also be a partnership between regions.
- **Partnerships with Other Programs** – Regions are also encouraged to build community partnerships and capacity to deliver SSM programming. This may include identifying employment and volunteer opportunities with local private and not-for-profit organizations.
- **Group Programming** – If there are multiple children with similar goals and recommendations, group programming or shared support may be organized.

Self-Managed Summer Skill Maintenance:

Families may be funded for self-managed SSM programming. The family will be responsible for ensuring all requirements for SSM are in place:

- Skill maintenance goals and activities are developed in consultation with the school team;
- The child engages in activities that address skill maintenance goals on a regular basis throughout the summer; and
- The support worker has suitable skills to meet the child’s needs and provides the service, as outlined in the self-managed contract.
- Families funded for self-managed SSM programming will follow Children’s disABILITY Services self-managed services guidelines related to recruitment and invoicing.

7.0 Documents

Skill Definitions and Sample Activities

Functional Skill*	Definition	Sample Activities **
Communication	Ability to understand and use language, apply appropriate conversational strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately communicate wants and needs • Learn to use adaptive resources, e.g iPad, pictures symbols
Motor	<p>Gross Motor – ability to use large muscles and includes movement such as running, jumping, skipping, climbing, sliding, riding, crawling</p> <p>Fine Motor – ability to use small muscles (hands and feet) and includes activities such as drawing, coloring, cutting, block play, water play, sand play, construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riding a bike • Making crafts with smaller items – for example, beading a necklace, using scissors, gluing items • Puzzles • Walking, swimming • Balance activities – walking on a line, curb or balance beam
Routine/ Transitions	Increasing predictability and expectations to reduce anxiety, increase independence and manage misbehaviour challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the day – verbal, visual, electronic • “If this, then” activities • Develop prompts – photo album to provide expectations and guide through the day
Academics	Reading, writing, numeric functions, self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling household items with words • Matching games • Cooking, measuring • Time telling • Work with money - paying admission
Health, Safety, Well-Being and Self-Regulation	Care of health problems, personal safety, stranger anxiety, traffic, medication, puberty, boundaries and relationships (sexual), recognizing and disclosing inappropriate behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe people to go to for help • Learning traffic safety – stop, walk • Rules of the road for riding a bike • Learn/practice strategies for managing anxiety • Learn/practice strategies for managing anger • On-line safety • Increasing length of time attending to an activity
Self-care	Learning how to look after themselves more independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress, eat, bathe, go to the bathroom, using deodorant
Socialization/ Social Skills	Engaging in behaviours appropriate for the social context - taking turns, sharing, having patience, offering assistance, responding when addressed by another, knowing when and how much to talk about yourself, listening to others, concern if other children feel sad or upset, make and maintain friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing games involving turn taking • Joining a group • Role playing • Standing in line • Peer-related activities
Life Skills/Home Living	Skills needed to live independently or contribute significantly to home living activities, including household cleaning, clothing care, cooking, household safety, transportation, using community resources, shopping, banking, telephone use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort and clean clothes • Prepare a meal, following a recipe • Phone skills • Using a schedule, plan and take public transit
Work	Factors of work skills/performance include being on time to work, work performance, work safety, interpersonal behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer at a community organization or business • Specialized group programming

Examples of Goals and Activities

Functional Skill	Goal	Sample Activities
Routine/Transitions - Organizational Skills	Prepare for the day or an event/outing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and make a list of items needed for an outing Prepare and pack items using the checklist
Gross Motor, Health and Well-Being	Engage in 10 minutes of continuous activity twice daily (maintain physical stamina)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in 10 minutes of continuous activity, twice daily (walking, cycling, swimming)
Academic - Reading Skills	Correctly identify five key ideas from non-fiction text (increase comprehension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is known about the topic and questions about the topic before reading List the new information learned after reading Categorize information Daily reading
Well-being, Life Skills, Self -Advocacy Skills	Describe his disability and name classroom setting and learning accommodations needed to all teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe his/her disability and what it means in a classroom setting and for learning Identify accommodations that can help to achieve maximum learning and full participation
Self-Regulation Skills	Use a variety of effective and positive strategies when angry (anger management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify personal triggers for anger and physical responses Discuss positive strategies to use when angry Practice talking with others about needs and wants
Academic - Math Skills	Accurately complete two digit addition and subtraction operations with integers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add and subtract integers Play games using integers Incorporate real life application of integers
Academic - Math Skills	Accurately measure substances and identify uses of measurement and volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure ingredients Measure fertilizer and water to care for garden
Life Skills	Maintain money management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a budget and plan expenditures Create a shopping list, using a flyer for sales Practice skills, such as counting money, making small purchases, balancing a chequebook
Communication Skills	Engage in conversations for 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice questions and responses for conversations Ask questions of others about topics they have initiated Sustain conversation for 5 minutes
Socialization/Social Skills	Apply social skills appropriate in a work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify common expectations in a work environment Volunteer at a community organization to learn more about specific workplace expectations and practice appropriate interactions

* For older children where the focus is transition to adulthood, there may be an opportunity to access summer day programs