

# Three Years and Counting

## Alberta's FSCD and PDD Crisis: What Happens When the Same Government Fails Children, Adults, and Their Parents Simultaneously

A Fact-Based Submission from Alberta's Disability Community — April 2026

***THIS DOCUMENT IS FREE TO SHARE. Send it to your MLA, MP, Premier, and Minister. Every figure is sourced. Every quote is attributed.***

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many AISH recipients are also parents. Their children have the same rare genetic syndromes, the same severe autism profiles, the same complex medical needs that contributed to the parent's AISH qualification in the first place. For these families, the collapse of AISH is not happening in isolation. It is happening at the same time as the collapse of two other programs those families depend on: Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD).

The Alberta government administers all three programs through the same ministry — Assisted Living and Social Services. That ministry has cut caseworkers, frozen hiring, and imposed backlogs across all three simultaneously. The result is that some of the most vulnerable families in Alberta are being failed by the same government three times at once.

**THE COMPOUNDING CRISIS:** *Families waiting 3 years for FSCD. Adults with developmental disabilities invisible on an unreported PDD waitlist. AISH parents facing income cuts and reassessment. All three programs run by the same ministry. All three in documented crisis. All three affecting the same households.*

This report documents the specific failures of FSCD and PDD, the intergenerational impact on families whose children will one day age into the same broken system, and why these three program crises cannot be treated as separate issues.

### SECTION 1: FSCD — THE THREE-YEAR WAIT

#### 1.1 What FSCD Is Supposed to Be

The Family Support for Children with Disabilities program provides funding for supports and services for Alberta children under 18 with severe disabilities. It is the primary support system for children with ASD,

genetic syndromes, intellectual disabilities, and complex developmental profiles. It funds respite hours, EA-equivalent home support, therapy services, and equipment. For families managing multiple children with severe disabilities, it is not a luxury — it is the mechanism that makes daily life survivable.

## 1.2 What FSCD Actually Is in 2025–2026

In October and November 2024, Inclusion Alberta surveyed 540 families from 79 of Alberta's 87 electoral districts about their FSCD experience. The findings document a program in functional collapse.

FINDING	DATA	SOURCE
<b>Average wait for FULL range of FSCD services</b>	3 years after applying	Inclusion Alberta FSCD Survey Report, January 2025 (540 respondents)
<b>Families reporting negative effects from going without supports</b>	58%	Same survey — effects include job loss, missed developmental windows, physical and mental health deterioration
<b>Families with only FSS (minimal services) waiting for CFS (child-focused services)</b>	Average 13.5 months and counting	Same survey — 85% of these families have still NOT been assigned a caseworker
<b>FSCD caseworker caseload — documented case</b>	One caseworker: 400+ families	Hold My Hand Alberta, September 2024
<b>Recommended maximum caseworker caseload</b>	100 families	Hold My Hand Alberta standard reference
<b>Temporary FSCD caseworker contracts not renewed</b>	7 contracts ended September 2024	Government confirmed — Ministry of SCSS statement
<b>Government's own auto-reply on caseworker assignment timelines</b>	"There are currently delays in caseworker assignment, and we cannot provide any timelines at this time"	FSCD auto-reply email, posted by Hold My Hand Alberta co-founder Sarah Doll, 2024
<b>FSCD budget increase (Budget 2025)</b>	3.61%	Alberta Budget 2025
<b>Population + inflation growth rate (2024)</b>	7.3%	Inclusion Alberta — Budget 2025 analysis
<b>Gap between increase and need</b>	-3.69% in real terms	Calculated: 3.61% increase vs 7.3% required

Sources: Inclusion Alberta — “Experiences with Family Support for Children with Disabilities” (January 2025); Hold My Hand Alberta (September 2024); Alberta Budget 2025; Inclusion Alberta Budget 2025 media release

### 1.3 The Three-Stage Maze — How FSCD Actually Works

In 2023, the government changed the FSCD access process to a three-stage system. Understanding this system explains why families wait years before accessing the support their children need.

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	WAIT TIME (SURVEY DATA)
<b>Stage 1: Apply and wait for eligibility decision</b>	Family submits application with medical documentation. A Disability Application Processing unit reviews it and issues an eligibility decision.	Variable — but Stage 1 alone can take months
<b>Stage 2: Family Support Services (FSS) agreement</b>	Eligible families receive a minimal FSS agreement covering some respite and basic supports. This is NOT the full program — it is a holding pattern.	Average 10 months after eligibility decision before FSS is offered
<b>Stage 3: Wait for caseworker and Child Focused Services (CFS)</b>	Families requiring full individualized support — EA hours, therapy coordination, specialized services — must wait for a caseworker to be assigned and an Assessment of Needs completed.	Average 13.5 months after FSS — still waiting, 85% without a caseworker
<b>Total time to full services</b>	3+ years from application to full range of support	Inclusion Alberta FSCD Survey, January 2025

Source: Inclusion Alberta FSCD Survey Report, January 2025; Alberta.ca FSCD eligibility and how-to-apply pages

*“It’s not worth it.” — Anonymous FSCD survey respondent, describing their decision to stop trying to access services after more than two years of waiting for minimal support. Inclusion Alberta FSCD Survey, January 2025.*

79% of families who are stuck in Stage 2 (FSS only) have identified Child Focused Services as what they actually need. They are being given partial service, told to wait, and given no timeline. Many give up.

### 1.4 The Auditor General Said This in 2022

The problems in FSCD are not new discoveries from the 2024 survey. The Auditor General of Alberta examined FSCD in 2022 and found:

*“Eligible families should receive program supports and services based on their needs, not on who their caseworker is. But because guides, training, and oversight are inadequate, families may not receive the supports and services they qualify for.” — Alberta Auditor General Report on FSCD, 2022*

*“The training program is not being effectively delivered. Oversight processes of caseworker performance are ineffective.” — Alberta Auditor General Report on FSCD, 2022*

The government received these findings in 2022. The caseworker caseloads have since been reported at 400 families per worker. Seven temporary caseworker contracts were not renewed in September 2024. Budget increases fall below inflation. The problems identified by the Auditor General in 2022 have not been fixed — they have worsened.

### 1.5 What Families Are Actually Being Told

When families contact FSCD to ask when their caseworker will be assigned, they receive the following automatic reply:

*“There are currently delays in caseworker assignment, and we cannot provide any timelines at this time.” — FSCD auto-reply email, posted publicly by Hold My Hand Alberta co-founder Sarah Doll, 2024*

This is the program’s official response to families waiting years for services their children need. Not an apology. Not a timeline. Not an escalation path. An automated reply that says: *we cannot tell you anything.*

For a parent of a non-verbal child with documented safety needs, no consistent EA coverage on unpredictable school days, and behavioural support requirements that exceed current allocations — the knowledge that FSCD “cannot provide any timelines at this time” is not administrative inconvenience. It is the government telling that parent that they are alone indefinitely.

## SECTION 2: PDD — THE UNREPORTED WAITLIST

### 2.1 What PDD Is

The Persons with Developmental Disabilities program supports adults aged 18 and over with developmental disabilities that were present before age 18. It funds residential support, employment support, community access, and individualized care planning. For adults with ASD Level 3, intellectual disabilities, and complex profiles, PDD is the primary support system after they age out of FSCD at age 18. It is the end point of a system that has been failing them since childhood.

## 2.2 The Numbers the Government Has Stopped Reporting

PDD currently supports more than 13,000 adults in Alberta. The program's waitlist — the number of adults who are eligible for PDD but not receiving services — has not been publicly reported by the government in three years. Inclusion Alberta has formally requested this information. It has not been provided.

**THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT REPORTED HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR PDD SERVICES IN THREE YEARS.** *The last published waitlist data is from 2021. Inclusion Alberta surveyed 540 PDD-connected individuals in late 2024 specifically because the government will not say how many people are waiting.*

PDD FINDING	DATA	SOURCE
Adults currently receiving PDD services	13,000+	Inclusion Alberta, January 2025
Last time government publicly reported PDD waitlist numbers	2021 — 3+ years ago	Inclusion Alberta PDD Survey Report, January 2025
Respondents still needing to meet caseworker to develop outcome plan	70%	Inclusion Alberta PDD Survey, October–November 2024
Respondents who say supports they eventually receive aren't helping	41%	Same survey
PDD budget increase (Budget 2025)	5.94%	Alberta Budget 2025
Population + inflation growth rate 2024	7.3%	Inclusion Alberta Budget analysis
Real-terms gap	-1.36% — not keeping pace	Calculated
Advocacy organizations serving PDD families that lost funding (March 2026)	3 — funding ended 12 months early; first closure now confirmed (see Section 2.4)	CBC News, January 2025; Inclusion Alberta; primary source documentation, April 2026

Sources: Inclusion Alberta — “PDD Current State: Critical and Urgent” (January 2025, 540 respondents); Alberta Budget 2025; Inclusion Alberta Budget 2025 media release; CBC News January 23, 2025

*“Respondents describe valuable years of life being squandered for adults who remain isolated at home, their skills unused, potential untapped, dreams fading, and health declining.” — Inclusion Alberta PDD Survey Report, January 2025*

### 2.3 The Transition Gap — What Happens Between FSCD and PDD

Children eligible for FSCD lose that eligibility at age 18. They then become eligible for PDD. This transition is not seamless. It involves a new application, a new assessment (requiring a registered psychologist's report), a new eligibility determination, and then — if eligible — joining the same waitlist whose numbers the government will not publish.

The application for PDD can begin at age 16, with services beginning at 18. But the gap between losing FSCD and receiving PDD services is not zero. It is however long the PDD waitlist takes — which the government has not disclosed in three years.

AGE	PROGRAM AVAILABLE	REALITY
0–17	FSCD (Family Support for Children with Disabilities)	Average 3-year wait for full services. 85% still without caseworker after partial services begin.
16–17	Can apply for PDD (services begin at 18)	Requires new psychoeducational assessment (\$2,000–\$4,000 privately if not school-provided), new application, new process
18	FSCD eligibility ends. PDD eligibility begins — but service is not immediate.	Gap period: zero services until PDD waitlist clears. Government will not say how long this takes.
18+	PDD (Persons with Developmental Disabilities)	70% still need to meet caseworker. 41% say supports they receive aren't helping. Budget below inflation.
18+	AISH (for income support)	Under ADAP: income reduced \$200/month. Appeal rights removed. Forms requiring physician signature needed.

**FOR PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE CURRENTLY IN FSCD:** *The FSCD-to-PDD transition is not optional. It happens automatically at age 18 for every eligible child. The system that will be responsible for adult care for thousands of these children is inadequately funded, has not reported its waitlist in three years, and has lost the advocacy organizations that help families navigate it. AISH parents — already on income support, already facing income cuts under ADAP — will be expected to manage that transition while their own program is destabilizing. For many of them, no second person exists to share the load.*

## 2.4 Confirmed Closure: A Documented Pattern

The closure of disability advocacy organizations during the AISH-to-ADAP transition period is no longer a forecast. As of April 1, 2026, the first of these closures has been documented in primary source.

### Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta — Closed April 1, 2026

The Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta, operated by EPSS, posted the following public statement on April 1, 2026:

*“As of 01 Apr 2026, EPSS will not be operating the Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta. All FRC supports are now provided by easterseals.ab.ca... It has been our distinct pleasure to serve Central Alberta's families for the past 5 years. We will leave this page up for a few days and then we will be deleting this Facebook page.” — Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta Facebook page, April 1, 2026*

Documented facts:

- The organization served Central Alberta families with disabilities for five years.
- Closure took effect April 1, 2026 — the same period in which provincial advocacy funding ended.
- Families were redirected to Easter Seals Alberta — a separate organization with its own waitlists, intake processes, and capacity constraints.
- The Facebook page was deleted shortly after — removing the public record of five years of service.
- No provincial announcement accompanied the closure. Families learned through a social media post.

### Community response — documented

The closure was identified immediately by affected families as a government funding decision, not an organizational one:

*“Looks like the UCP government has cut funding again for another agency that gave support and hope to families with children/adults with disabilities. They were a service that helped us and so many others. I feel sorry for that person who made that decision. Obviously they lack compassion and empathy.” — Betty Smith, AISH Related Community (The ARC), April 6, 2026*

This response is significant as community documentation, not anecdote. Affected families identified the closure as a government decision before any media reporting. The loss was felt directly by those who had relied on the service.

### The pattern, on the timeline

- **December 9, 2025:** Bill 12 passed — independent appeal rights removed.
- **March 2026:** Provincial funding cut to advocacy organizations supporting PDD families — contracts ended twelve months early.
- **April 1, 2026:** First confirmed closure (Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta) takes effect.
- **July 1, 2026:** AISH-to-ADAP mandatory transition date — 79,000 recipients require navigation support.

The families who most need help navigating the transition have lost — and will continue to lose — the organizations that would have helped them do it. Removing advocacy organizations during the highest-urgency period of a major program transition is not a budget coincidence. It is a documented pattern, now confirmed by primary source.

## SECTION 3: WHY THESE THREE PROGRAM CRISES ARE ONE CRISIS

AISH, FSCD, and PDD are administered by the same ministry: Assisted Living and Social Services (ALSS), formerly Seniors, Community and Social Services. The same minister — Jason Nixon — is responsible for all three. The same caseworker workforce serves all three. The same hiring freezes and budget pressures affect all three. These are not three separate crises. They are one crisis with three faces.

### 3.1 The Same Ministry. The Same Cuts. The Same Families.

- Caseworker positions axed across AISH, FSCD, and SCSS simultaneously (AUPE, February 2024 and September 2024)
- Temporary contracts not renewed across all disability service streams in the same fiscal period
- Hiring freeze applied across the ministry — affecting AISH workers, FSCD caseworkers, and PDD workers simultaneously
- Budget increases in FSCD (3.61%) and PDD (5.94%) both below the 7.3% population-plus-inflation benchmark — meaning real cuts despite nominal increases
- Three advocacy organizations supporting families navigating PDD had their funding ended 12 months early in March 2026 — at the same time the AISH/ADAP transition is creating the highest demand for advocacy support in years. The first of these closures has now been confirmed by primary source: the Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta, operated by EPSS, ceased operations on April 1, 2026 after five years of service (see Section 2.4).

### 3.2 The Households the System Falls Through

Consider the households the system has created across Alberta: AISH parents whose own qualifying conditions overlap with their children's diagnoses, raising children with complex disabilities while their own program is being destabilized. These households are simultaneously:

- Waiting for full FSCD services while managing children with severe disabilities — including non-verbal communication profiles, cardiac monitoring requirements, flight-risk behaviours, behavioural crises requiring specialist intervention, and complex medication regimens — on minimal allocated respite hours.
- Preparing for the AISH-to-ADAP transition with no individual caseworker, an inaccessible call centre, appeal rights removed, and program regulations still being written.
- Facing a future where their children will age out of FSCD between ages 11 and 18 — into PDD, where the waitlist is unreported, 70% of eligible adults still haven't met their caseworker, and the advocacy organizations that could help navigate the transition are being shut down (see Section 2.4).
- Managing this in a healthcare system where general practitioner shortages, multi-year specialist waits, and physician-completed forms required for every program interaction add cost and delay to every step.
- Carrying the full weight of this — medical appointments, school advocacy, formal complaints, medication management, behavioural crises, infusion schedules, cardiac monitoring coordination — often with no co-parent, limited family support, and no consistent backup.

These are not hypothetical households. They are the documented reality of thousands of AISH recipients in Alberta who are also parents of children with complex disabilities. The government's response has been to cut their income, remove their appeal rights, starve the FSCD program their children depend on, hide the PDD waitlist, and cut funding to the organizations that help them advocate. All at the same time. Through the same ministry.

### 3.3 The Intergenerational Cost

The children in these households are aging into a system the government has allowed to deteriorate. Children currently receiving FSCD services — those with severe autism profiles, confirmed genetic syndromes, complex medical needs, intellectual disabilities at the lowest measured percentiles, non-verbal communication requirements, and behavioural support needs that already exceed what current FSCD allocations cover — will transition to PDD at age 18. They will need residential support, employment support, and continuous developmental care for the rest of their lives.

Their parents will still be there. Those parents will be older. Their disabling conditions — including immune disorders, degenerative musculoskeletal conditions, and the cumulative physical toll of decades of caregiving — will have progressed. Their ability to carry the physical and emotional load will be reduced. And the system that is supposed to take on more of that load as the children become adults — PDD — is the system whose waitlist the government will not publish, the system whose budget falls below population-plus-inflation growth, and the system whose advocacy organizations are being shut down at the moment the load is increasing.

Cutting FSCD, hiding the PDD waitlist, and reducing AISH income are not three separate budget decisions. For these families, they are three cuts to the same lifeline — made simultaneously, by the same government, through the same ministry, to the same people.

The government is not managing three programs. It is managing many families' survival. And it is failing.

## SECTION 4: WHAT WE ARE ASKING

### Regarding FSCD

- Fund FSCD at a level that matches actual population growth plus inflation — a minimum of 7.3% — and commit to eliminating the current waitlist within a defined, publicly stated timeframe.
- Immediately rehire the caseworker positions axed in 2024 and end the hiring freeze for FSCD workers. One caseworker managing 400 families is not a staffing model — it is a guarantee of failure.
- Eliminate the three-stage access system that is the primary mechanism creating the 3-year wait. Eligible families should receive assessment and CFS access within a defined, maximum timeframe — not an undisclosed queue with an automated reply.
- Publish monthly caseworker caseload data by region, as a public accountability measure. If the government claims caseloads are appropriate, the data should be able to demonstrate that.
- Stop cutting funding to advocacy organizations that support families in navigating FSCD and PDD. These organizations reduce the burden on caseworkers, reduce errors, and reduce crisis escalations. Cutting them costs more than it saves.

### Regarding PDD

- Immediately publish the current PDD waitlist — the number of eligible adults not receiving services, broken down by how long they have been waiting. The government has not published this data in three years. Families, advocates, and elected officials cannot address a problem the government has decided not to count.
- Fund PDD at or above population-plus-inflation growth rate. A 5.94% increase in a 7.3% growth environment is a real cut.
- Establish a clear, maximum wait time standard for PDD outcome plan development. 70% of survey respondents still need to meet their caseworker. This is not a functional program.
- Restore funding to disability advocacy organizations cut in March 2026. The first confirmed closure (Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta, April 1, 2026) demonstrates that the predicted impact has begun. The timing — during the highest-urgency period for AISH/ADAP transition navigation — is not coincidental to the families affected.

## Regarding the Transition Gap

- Develop and publicly commit to a formal FSCD-to-PDD transition protocol that eliminates the service gap at age 18. Children do not stop needing support when they turn 18. Parents do not stop needing relief.
- Ensure that the AISH/ADAP transition framework accounts for the reality of AISH recipients who are also primary caregivers of children and future-adults with severe disabilities. ADAP's employment framework is not applicable to a person whose full-time caregiving obligation will not end when their children turn 18 — it will intensify.
- Recognize that the intergenerational cost of inadequately supporting children with complex disabilities today will be borne by PDD, AISH, and the healthcare system for the rest of their lives. Investment now reduces cost later. Disinvestment now compounds cost indefinitely.

## SOURCES AND REFERENCES

1. Inclusion Alberta — “Experiences with Family Support for Children with Disabilities” (FSCD Survey Report). January 2025. 540 respondents from 79 of 87 electoral districts. [inclusionalberta.org](http://inclusionalberta.org)
2. Inclusion Alberta / ALIGN — “PDD Current State: Critical and Urgent: Experiences with Persons with Developmental Disabilities.” January 2025. [alignab.ca](http://alignab.ca)
3. CBC News — “Provincial support delays are hurting disabled Albertans and families, reports find.” Bellefontaine, M. January 23, 2025. [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca)
4. Hold My Hand Alberta / The Albertan News — “Some Alberta caseworkers that help disabled children have 100s of clients.” September 16, 2024. Documents 400+ family caseload; standard 100.
5. DiscoverAirdrie — “Local parents on provincial program: We can't wait indefinitely for the support we desperately need.” October 4, 2024. Documents 2-year waits, caseworker cuts.
6. Inclusion Alberta — Media Release: “Budget 2025 leaves 1000's of children and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families in crisis.” February 28, 2025. Documents FSCD increase 3.61%, PDD increase 5.94%, vs 7.3% required.
7. Alberta Auditor General — Report on FSCD, 2022. Quotes on caseworker training and oversight failures.
8. Autism Calgary — FSCD program overview and three-stage process explanation. [autismcalgary.com](http://autismcalgary.com)
9. Alberta.ca — FSCD Eligibility, How to Apply; PDD Eligibility, How to Apply, Supports and Services. Official program information.
10. AUPE — “Vulnerable children suffer because government axes vital jobs.” January 2025. Documents 12,000 families waiting, some 14+ months; 30–40 temporary hires axed; new hiring freeze. [aupe.org](http://aupe.org)
11. Able Canada — Alberta Disability Services & Benefits. [ablecanada.ca](http://ablecanada.ca). PDD waitlist context; budget analysis.
12. FSCD auto-reply email — posted publicly by Hold My Hand Alberta co-founder Sarah Doll: “There are currently delays in caseworker assignment, and we cannot provide any timelines at this time.” 2024.

13. Family Resource Centre of Central Alberta — public statement, Facebook page, April 1, 2026. Primary source documentation of closure of EPSS-operated advocacy organization after five years of service.
14. Betty Smith — AISH Related Community (The ARC) Facebook group, April 6, 2026. Community documentation of public response to FRCCA closure.

---

**SEND THIS DOCUMENT TO:**

Your MLA: [contact.assembly.ab.ca/mla-finder](https://contact.assembly.ab.ca/mla-finder)

Your MP: [ourcommons.ca/members/en/search](https://ourcommons.ca/members/en/search)

Premier: [premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca)

Minister ALSS: [alss.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:alss.minister@gov.ab.ca)

---

**The Alberta Disability System Breakdown — Advocate**

St. Albert, Alberta | April 2026

[albertadisabilitybreakdown@outlook.com](mailto:albertadisabilitybreakdown@outlook.com)