

Burnaby PCN Young Child Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Assessment High Needs Pathway

For Burnaby residents attached to Burnaby FPs/NPs

Please fax the completed referral form to Burnaby PCN Central Intake: **604-398-8257**

This pathway provides timely ASD assessment for **children 18–33 months** who show strong early indicators of autism and demonstrate significant social and financial need.

It is intended exclusively for families who cannot afford private ASD assessment (~\$4,500) and who require coordinated support to access care. Children will proceed into the Burnaby Primary Care Network (PCN) diagnostic process only if eligibility is confirmed through PCN screening.

The goal is to complete the full diagnostic process within three months through collaboration between participating Burnaby pediatricians, Fraser Health Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), and the Burnaby PCN psychologist, Dr. Erika Penner, supported by the PCN coordination team.

Please note: This pilot pathway has limited capacity (~20 patients per year). Referring providers are asked to manage expectations with families, as a referral does not guarantee acceptance. Eligibility is determined through the Burnaby PCN's social and financial needs assessment.

If the child is not eligible, the Burnaby PCN team will support the family with next steps and connection to appropriate resources. We ask that you carefully review eligibility criteria and submit only the most appropriate referrals to help ensure families reach the right place of care as quickly as possible.

To avoid delays in care for children who may not meet eligibility criteria, we strongly recommend submitting a parallel referral to Sunny Hill Health Centre at the time of this referral. Providers are asked to discuss with families the feasibility of private-pay assessments (~\$4,500), which offers more timely access for those who can pursue them.

Please refer to the **Detailed Referral Guidance and Alternative Options document** before submitting a referral.

Eligibility Criteria

Patient must **meet all eligibility criteria** listed below:

- Attached to Burnaby FP/NP
- Patient lives in Burnaby
- Age: 18-33 months at the time of referral
- Cannot access private-pay options
- Participation of at least one primary caregiver
- Nonverbal or minimal verbal skills (30 words or less)
- Demonstrates potential signs of autism, including **2 or more** of the following:
 - » Failure to respond to name
 - » Failure to meet language milestones OR loss of language skills
 - » Poor eye contact
 - » Limited or no interest in other children/more interest in objects than people
 - » Repeating words or phrases without appearing to understand them
 - » Difficulty with interactive games like peek-a-boo or hide and seek
 - » Repetitive movements with fingers, hands, arms, or head or full body
 - » Sensory sensitivities
 - » Very specific interests
 - » Needs to have things a certain way (e.g., always eating the same food)

Pathway Overview

- Pediatrician Developmental Assessment (coordinated by PCN through local network of participating pediatricians, or with attached pediatrician, if available)
- Speech and Language (coordinated by PCN with FH Burnaby Public Health SLPs)
- Autism Diagnostic Assessment (ADOS-2 and ADI-R, by PCN psychologist with child)
- Cognitive Assessment (by PCN team with child)
- Adaptive Assessment (by PCN Psychologist with at least one primary caregiver)

*Providers wanting more support in clinical screening may choose to complete the **M-CHAT scoring tool** with the family:*

www.autismspeaks.org/autism-screening

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PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT: By submitting this form, I confirm I have discussed with my patient's parent or legal guardian and they understand and agree that their child's personal information will be collected, used by, and disclosed to the Burnaby Primary Care Network—consisting of employees and agents of Fraser Health (FH) and the Burnaby Division of Family Practice—for the purposes of providing patient care and may be used for program evaluation. As part of this pilot ASD pathway, information will also be shared with participating pediatrician offices and Fraser Health Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) involved in the diagnostic pathway.

Referred By

Referral Date (dd/mm/yyyy):

Provider Name:

Specialty:

Office Phone Number (direct line preferred):

Office Fax Number:

*Burnaby Primary Care Provider (*required for referral)

FP/NP Name:

FP/NP MSP#:

Clinic Name:

Clinic Address:

Office Phone Number:

Office Fax Number:

Other Providers

Has the patient seen other providers for this concern? Yes No

Pediatrician Name:

Clinic Name:

Clinic Address:

Office Phone Number:

Office Fax Number:

Other providers – please specify:

Patient Referral Details

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Preferred Name:

DOB (dd/mmm/yyyy):

PHN:

Gender: M F Other:

Name of Parent/Guardian:

Name of Alternate Contact:

Primary Contact Phone Number:

Alternate Contact Phone Number:

Primary Contact Email Address:

Alternate Contact Email Address:

Patient Address:

City:

Postal Code:

Does the **parent/guardian** require services in another language? Yes No

Language:

Does the patient identify themselves as First Nations or Indigenous? Yes No If yes, does the person identify as status? Yes No

Additional details related to referral (please indicate and attach relevant medical history, social context, and current medications):

Labs/other tests Pertinent medical/consultative notes Current medications list # of pages attached:

Referral Next Steps: The Burnaby PCN will review your referral and confirm the patient's eligibility for the program. The patient's parent/legal guardian will be contacted directly, and you will be informed of whether the referral has been accepted into the pathway along with the appointment plan.

Detailed Referral Guidance

For Burnaby Primary Care Providers

1. Purpose of the ASD Early Diagnostic Pathway

The Burnaby PCN ASD Early Diagnostic Pathway provides timely, coordinated autism assessment for children 18–33 months who meet all of the following:

- Demonstrate early indicators of autism
- Have significant social and financial need
- Cannot afford private-pay ASD assessment (~\$4,500)
- Require PCN-supported coordination to navigate assessment and follow-up

Because private ASD assessments can be costly and because young children benefit from early identification, this pathway is reserved exclusively for families facing barriers to accessing care.

The PCN pathway is delivered through collaboration with:

- Participating Burnaby pediatricians
- Fraser Health Public Health Speech-Language Pathologists
- Burnaby PCN Psychologist (Dr. Erika Penner) and psychometrist
- PCN coordination team

The goal is to complete the full diagnostic process within **three months**.

2. Program Capacity & Managing Expectations

The pilot program has limited capacity (~20 patients per year). To ensure transparency:

- A referral does not guarantee acceptance.
- Children enter the PCN pathway only if eligibility is confirmed by PCN screening.
- Families who can reasonably pursue private-pay assessment are not eligible.
- Referrers are asked to manage expectations with families before submitting a referral.

If a child is not eligible, the PCN will still support families by:

- Explaining the outcome clearly
- Providing guidance on alternate assessment pathways
- Offering information on community resources and supports
- Ensuring families remain connected to appropriate care

No family is left without direction.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Children will be accepted into the PCN pathway only if all of the following criteria are met:

A. Residency & Provider Attachment

- Attached to a Burnaby FP or NP
- Live in Burnaby (as verified by address)

B. Age

- 18–33 months at the time the referral is submitted (once a child reaches 4 years old, additional testing is required that is beyond the current capacity of this pathway)

C. Clinical Indicators

- Nonverbal or minimal words (30 or fewer)
- Two or more early signs of autism, such as:
 - Lack of response to name
 - Loss of language or delayed milestones
 - Poor eye contact
 - More interest in objects than people
 - Echolalia without comprehension
 - Difficulty with social games (peek-a-boo, hide-and-seek)
 - Repetitive movements
 - Strong sensory sensitivities
 - Very specific interests
 - Highly rigid routines

D. Social & Financial Need

- Family is unable to pursue private-pay assessment (~\$4,500)
- Families will be triaged based on the following needs:
 - Limited income or financial strain
 - Limited ability to self-navigate systems
 - Limited English proficiency
 - Single caregiving
 - Housing instability
 - Other complex social factors

E. Caregiver Participation and Appointment commitment

At least one primary caregiver must commit to all required assessment appointments:

- 30 minutes developmental assessment by a participating Burnaby pediatrician (or an attached pediatrician if child can be seen within 3 months)
- 60-90 minutes assessment at Burnaby Public Health Speech and Language, Suite 105, 100-4946 Canada Way, Burnaby
- 1.5 days at our Burnaby PCN Hastings Brentwood Hub, 4445 Lougheed Hwy, Burnaby (pay parking is covered by PCN)

Detailed Referral Guidance continues on page 4.

Detailed Referral Guidance – Continued

4. Recommended Pre-Referral Screening: M-CHAT-R/F

Referrers are encouraged (not required) to complete the **M-CHAT-R/F** screening with families.

Online Scoring Tool: www.autismspeaks.org/autism-screening

If completed, please **attach the results** to the referral.

5. Required Referral Documentation

Please attach the following (when available):

- Pertinent developmental or medical history
- Social and financial context details
- M-CHAT-R/F results (if available)
- Recent SLP, OT, or pediatric assessments
- Medication list
- Relevant specialist notes
- Any community agency involvement
- Any concerning regression or rapid developmental changes

7. Components of the PCN Diagnostic Pathway

If accepted, the child will complete:

- Pediatric developmental assessment
- Speech-Language assessment by FH SLPs
- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2) (PCN psychologist)
- Autism Diagnostic Interview–Revised (ADI-R) with caregiver
- Cognitive assessment (PCN psychometrist)
- Adaptive functioning assessment (~90 minutes) (PCN psychologist with caregiver)

The PCN coordination team schedules and guides all steps.

8. PCN Referral Review & Triage Process

1. **Referral received** via secure fax
2. **Preliminary eligibility screening** by PCN team (from available documentation)
3. **Family contacted** for secondary screening, and to confirm details and participation

4. **If eligible:** child enters the PCN diagnostic pathway

5. **If not eligible:**

- Family informed clearly
- Provided alternate pathway options
- Supported with resources to avoid delays in care
- Referrer informed of outcome

9. Alternate ASD Assessment Pathways

These can be offered to families—particularly those who may not meet PCN eligibility.

A. Sunny Hill Health Centre (BC Children's Hospital)

- Provincial public ASD diagnostic service
- No cost
- Longer wait times
- *Strongly recommended as a parallel referral for every child*

B. Private-Pay ASD Assessments (Typical cost ~\$4,500)

- Wait times typically 1–3 months
- Families may be able to use extended benefits

Referrers may share examples from the below sources:

- [Autism BC](#)
- [Variety BC](#) (see “Variety Partner Provider” link)
- Local providers on [Pathways](#)

The PCN pathway is not available to **families who can pursue private assessment.**

C. Variety – The Children's Charity (BC)

- Provides grants for private ASD assessment for children ≤ 4 with combined family income up to \$85K
- Requires application
www.variety.bc.ca/support/assessments/

Contact for Questions

Burnaby Primary Care Network – ASD Pathway Coordination Team

Central Intake Team: burnabypcn@burnabydivision.ca

Clinical team: julia.lukacs@fraserhealth.ca