

An Overview of Ontario's new

EXTENSIVE NEEDS SERVICE



What is the ENS?

The Extensive Needs Service, or ENS, is a specialized program that annually provides wrap-around clinical support to approximately 1,100 children and families with extensive neurodevelopmental health needs across three Ontario regions.

Why does the ENS exist?

Funded by the Ministry of Health and The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the ENS was established as a proof-of-concept initiative that has been jointly developed and implemented by three children's hospitals in Ontario: CHEO, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and McMaster Children's Hospital.

The program is designed to reduce barriers that families sometimes face navigating a complex health-care system, and provides access to timely, evidence-based and trauma-informed treatment for some of the most vulnerable children.

Children and youth under 18 years old with extensive needs have had to rely on care options that may not meet all of their needs, such as visits to emergency departments, avoidable acute care admissions, or repeat referrals to urgent or crisis services. While these options may address immediate or temporary needs, they have not provided the full spectrum of individualized care required.

How does the ENS help families?

Upon intake, families in the ENS are connected to an interdisciplinary care team to collaborate and develop personalized treatment plans aimed at improving abilities, mitigating challenging behaviours and addressing underlying health issues.

Services support the child or youth to build essential skills (e.g., communication, self-regulation, etc.), as well as support their siblings and caregivers, local service providers, educators — to learn skills and strategies to support the child in their home, school, and community.

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The ENS aims to build skills and improve meaningful functioning and participation in home, schools and communities. Examples include:

- Develop and implement integrated service plans that address behavioural, developmental, mental health and medical needs, as well as family and social vulnerabilities.
- Provide integrated and timely clinical services, such as assessment, treatment and supports.
- Support families to access other health services with the goal of preventing further deterioration of health (e.g., working with family and health-care providers to support behaviour in order to access diagnostic services).
- Reduce high-risk behaviours to reduce the likelihood of escalation to crises and family breakdown for children and youth with extensive behavioural, developmental, mental health, medical needs and social vulnerabilities.

Services provided

Services and supports include, but are not limited to:

- Specialized behaviour services
- Mental health assessment and treatment
- Social work, including supports for parents and caregivers
- Short-term respite services, concurrent with other services, as appropriate
- Discharge/transition support and planning (e.g., return to school, return to community core services, transition to adult services)
- Community services consultation to support the capacity of local services
- Support access to medical investigations and interventions (e.g., medical imaging, blood lab, dental appointment, etc.)
- Care coordination
- Medication management (including psychopharmacology*)

ENS multidisciplinary team

- Physicians
- Nurses and/or Nurse Practitioners
- Behaviour clinicians
- Mental health professionals (e.g., psychiatry, psychology, social workers, etc.)
- Pharmacists *
- Other health professionals (e.g., occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, dietitians etc.)
- Intake workers and outreach workers
- Service planning coordination

NOTE: Team composition may vary at each hospital.



“The goal of the ENS is to improve the quality of life for children and their families and to reduce the need for repeated Emergency Department visits and inpatient admissions.”

*May not be available at each organization