

Alberta Health Services rehabilitation staff are using a new approach in making decisions about rehabilitation services for school-aged children and youth. *Keys to Decision Making* is a practice resource that will help staff make clinical decisions based on consistent principles and current evidence. It aligns with the foundational strategies outlined in Action on Inclusion.

Keys to Decision Making (The Keys) was developed with input from staff, parents, teachers, partners, rehabilitation providers and other stakeholders. It encourages a person centred, strength-based look at life beyond the class and therapy rooms, while building interprofessional practice, shared leadership and responsibility. The Keys also support the AHS Informed Consent policy by providing support to involve families in decision making.

While *Keys to Decision Making* was developed for rehabilitation staff working with school-aged children and youth, it has broader applications for many health professionals in a number of service sectors. The Keys encourage staff to consistently consider the following factors in clinical decision making:

- **Child and Family Voice and Choice:** Emphasis is on listening to the stories, perspectives and priorities of children and families. This means fully involving them in decision making and service delivery.
- **Functional Assessment – Meaningful Goals:** All aspects of intervention, including assessment and goal setting, are strength based and focused on increasing client's involvement in relationships and activities that are important to them.
- **Environment and Supports:** Services will build on resources already available to the child and influence factors around them to create environments that support success for all children.
- **Collaboration and Capacity Building:** By strengthening relationships and partnerships, families and teams will learn from one another and work toward shared goals.
- **Transition and Discharge Planning:** Planning for successful transition and discharge right from the start will support children, families and partners to be involved, informed and ready to face the challenges moving forward.

The application of these ideas may seem obvious and intuitive. *Keys to Decision Making* is intended to support individuals and teams to more consistently and thoroughly embed these concepts into practice. Based on their context and current strengths, individuals and teams may use The Keys in a variety of ways. Staff are encouraged to set goals and talk to one another about their successes and challenges. A *Keys to Decision Making* – Knowledge Transfer Community will provide the opportunity for sharing stories across the province and for individuals to build leadership skills in relation to The Keys.

Visit <http://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/2171.asp> for a complete online version of *The Keys to Decision Making*. If you have comments or questions, send them to practice.consultation@albertahealthservices.ca