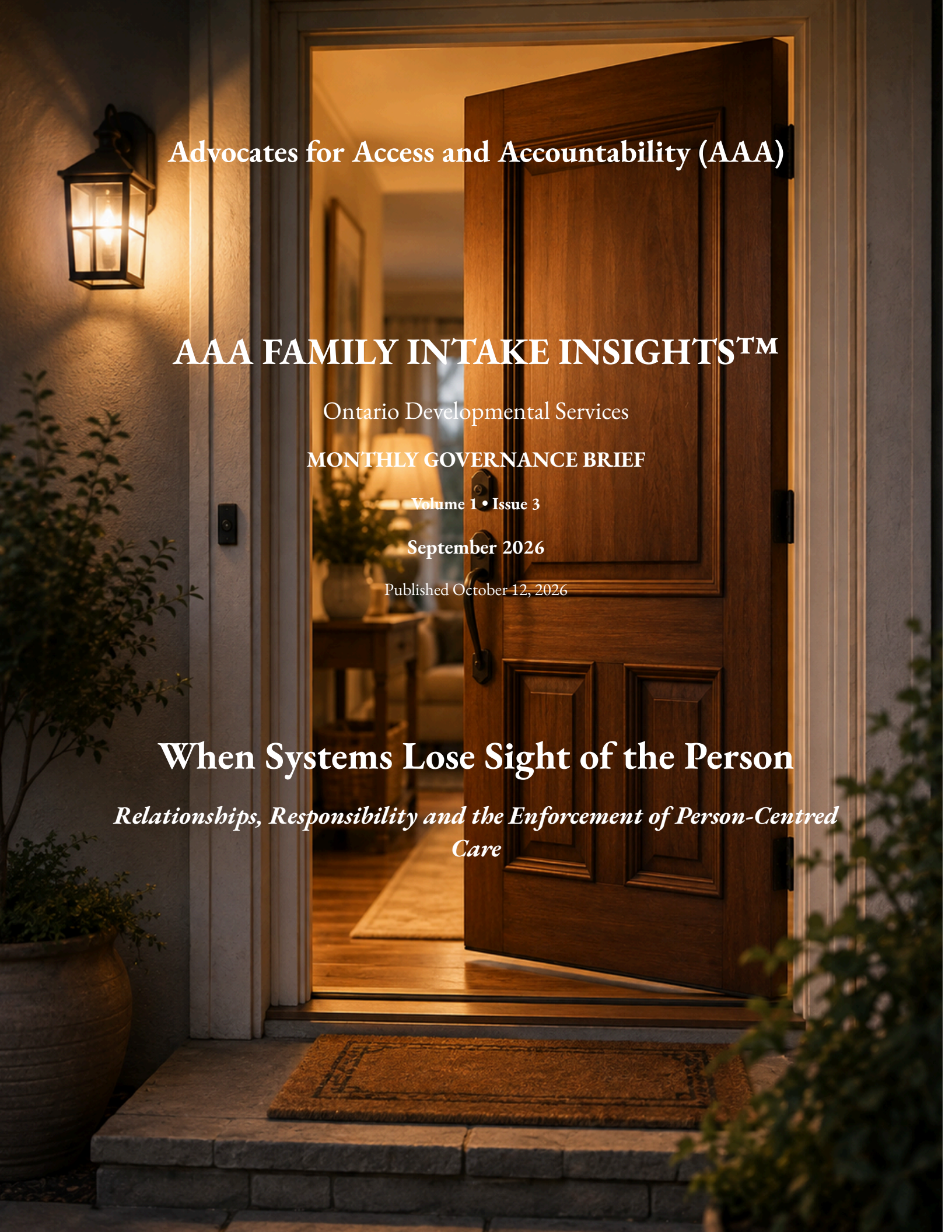




Advocates for Access and Accountability (AAA)

AAA FAMILY INTAKE INSIGHTS™

Ontario Developmental Services

MONTHLY GOVERNANCE BRIEF

Volume 1 • Issue 3

September 2026

Published October 12, 2026

When Systems Lose Sight of the Person

*Relationships, Responsibility and the Enforcement of Person-Centred
Care*

Dedication

To Harlan, and to the voices that have too often gone unheard.

To every family who has reached out in desperation, believing no one was listening—

You are not alone.

May these monthly observations ensure that your experiences are documented, your voices are respected, and your stories contribute to a stronger system of accountability.

Together, these reports will become the foundation of the inaugural AAA State of Family Accountability™ to be published on March 1, 2027.

Executive Summary

During September 2026, Advocates for Access & Accountability (AAA) continued to document observations arising from family intake, advocacy correspondence and experiences involving Ontario's publicly funded developmental-services system.

Although the circumstances varied, a common governance concern emerged: the potential disconnect between organizational decision-making, responsibility for publicly funded services and the lived experience of the individual receiving support.

Families and guardians described or documented concerns involving personal care and safety, recognition of lawful decision-making authority, continuity of support relationships, residential and service security, access to information, and the ability to obtain meaningful responses when concerns remained unresolved. These observations raise questions extending beyond the administrative availability of services.

For individuals who rely upon familiar caregivers, established routines, communication supports and trusted relationships, continuity is not merely an operational consideration. It can be fundamental to dignity, emotional security, participation, inclusion and quality of life.

Changes in frontline staffing, day programming, transportation arrangements or residential services may affect more than scheduling or service delivery. Without appropriate communication, individualized planning and meaningful collaboration, such changes can disrupt the relationships and safeguards upon which individuals depend.

The September observations also highlight the importance of recognizing the distinct roles of individuals, families, legally authorized decision-makers, frontline personnel and organizations responsible for delivering publicly funded care. Families and support networks may contribute essential knowledge about an individual's needs, preferences and well-being, while legally authorized decision-makers hold specific responsibilities that must be recognized in accordance with applicable law.

Where these roles and responsibilities are not effectively coordinated, gaps may emerge between organizational processes and the individual's actual care needs. A related governance concern arises when documented health, safety or service issues remain unresolved. Families may continue seeking clarification, corrective action or formal determination through multiple organizational and government channels. Yet the existence of policies, complaint procedures, regulatory oversight and public funding does not, by itself, demonstrate that an individual's needs have been addressed.

The governance question extends beyond who receives or reviews a concern. It includes who has the responsibility and authority to act, what mechanisms are available to require corrective action where warranted, and how the outcome is independently or appropriately verified.

September's observations further demonstrate the importance of collaboration among families and support networks. Informal information-sharing can help families understand available services, navigate unfamiliar systems and identify avenues for advocacy. However, essential knowledge about rights, services, decision-making responsibilities and accountability processes should not depend upon chance encounters, personal connections or a family's capacity to navigate complex administrative structures independently.

Person-centred care cannot be measured solely by whether a service is administratively available or publicly funded. It must be examined through the continuity of trusted relationships, recognition of lawful authority, dignity and safety in daily care, meaningful inclusion and belonging, and the individual's actual quality of life.

This third edition of *AAA Family Intake InsightsTM* examines six interconnected governance observations:

1. Personal Care, Dignity and Lawful Authority
2. Continuity of Relationships Is Continuity of Care
3. Families and Guardians Are Partners in Care
4. Residential Security, Service Continuity and Belonging
5. Administrative Silence, Enforcement and Public Accountability
6. Family Networks, Information Sharing and the Right to Navigate Services

These observations are not findings of fact concerning individual organizations or service providers. They identify emerging governance questions arising from documented experiences and are intended to support informed discussion, service improvement and public-policy development.

Relationships are not incidental to care. They are part of care itself.

Publicly funded developmental services carry responsibilities that extend beyond administrative compliance and the availability of funded programs. Meaningful accountability requires identifiable responsibility, respect for individual rights and lawful decision-making authority, timely action where concerns warrant intervention, and verification of outcomes.

The ultimate measure of a person-centred system is not simply whether services are funded, policies are followed or concerns are processed. It is whether the individuals these systems exist to support experience safety, dignity, meaningful inclusion, belonging and an improved quality of life.

Intake Snapshot

About the Evidence

AAA Family Intake Insights™ documents recurring observations arising from confidential family intakes, advocacy correspondence, consultations and documented experiences involving Ontario's publicly funded developmental-services system.

The September 2026 reporting period builds upon concerns identified in earlier editions, including family involvement, personal care and safety, lawful decision-making authority, residential and service continuity, administrative accountability and access to meaningful resolution.

Rather than treating continuing concerns as new or independent occurrences, this edition examines their interconnected governance implications and the potential consequences for individual dignity, relationships, inclusion, belonging and quality of life.

The observations are qualitative and do not measure prevalence across Ontario's developmental-services system. They are not findings of fact concerning individual organizations or service providers. A single experience may involve multiple governance themes, while continuing correspondence may concern matters first documented in earlier reporting periods.

AAA distinguishes between reported experiences, available documentation, ongoing administrative matters and broader governance analysis. This approach supports responsible evidence-building, protects confidentiality and contributes to informed public-policy discussion.

September Intake Snapshot

The September reporting period continued to examine six interconnected areas of concern:

1. Personal care, dignity, safety and lawful decision-making authority.
2. Continuity of support relationships, staffing and service transitions.
3. Family and guardian participation in care and service decisions.
4. Residential security, funded service arrangements and continuity of support.
5. Administrative responsiveness, enforcement and public accountability.
6. Family collaboration, information-sharing and access to service navigation.

These observations build upon the July and August editions of AAA Family Intake Insights™. **The significance of September's evidence lies not solely in the number of concerns documented, but in the relationships between those concerns and the governance responsibilities they bring into focus.** The following Emerging Observation considers whether publicly funded services are being evaluated primarily through administrative processes or through the actual experiences and outcomes of the individuals they exist to support.

Emerging Observation

The administrative availability of publicly funded services does not, by itself, demonstrate that individuals are experiencing person-centred care, meaningful inclusion or continuity of support.

The September observations raise questions about how organizational decisions concerning personal care, staffing, residential arrangements, lawful decision-making authority and service delivery affect the individual receiving support.

Where trusted relationships are disrupted, responsibilities remain unclear or documented concerns continue without meaningful resolution, the consequences may extend beyond administrative delay. They may affect an individual's safety, dignity, emotional security, sense of belonging and quality of life, while placing additional responsibilities and strain upon families and support networks.

These observations highlight an important distinction between maintaining a publicly funded service arrangement and ensuring that the individual experiences appropriate, continuous and responsive care.

The governance question is therefore not simply whether services are funded, policies exist or organizational procedures are followed. It is whether the publicly funded system protects individual rights, recognizes essential relationships and lawful decision-making responsibilities, responds effectively to identified concerns, and provides mechanisms through which corrective action can be required and verified where warranted.

Relationships are not incidental to care. They are part of care itself.

Governance Observations

AAA Family Intake Insights™ documents recurring family observations to identify emerging governance patterns within Ontario's publicly funded developmental-services system. These observations are not findings of fact about individual cases or service providers. They are presented to keep recurring governance questions visible and contribute to informed discussion, accountability and continuous improvement.

1. Personal Care, Dignity and Lawful Decision-Making Authority

The September observations raise questions concerning how frontline care practices, organizational decisions and legally authorized decision-making responsibilities are coordinated.

For individuals who rely upon others for personal care, communication, mobility or health-related support, dignity and safety require consistent attention to individual needs, preferences and applicable decision-making arrangements.

Governance Question

How do publicly funded service organizations ensure that everyday care practices respect individual rights, recognize lawful decision-making authority and provide safe, dignified and person-centred support?

2. Continuity of Relationships Is Continuity of Care

Changes in staffing, day programming, transportation or residential arrangements may affect familiar routines, trusted relationships and the continuity of essential support.

For individuals who depend upon familiar people to communicate preferences, recognize changes in well-being or navigate daily activities, service transitions require appropriate planning and communication.

Governance Question

How are essential relationships, individualized support needs and safe transitions protected when personnel, programs or service arrangements change?

3. Families, Guardians and Lawful Participation in Care

Families and trusted support networks may provide essential knowledge concerning an individual's history, preferences, communication and well-being. Legally authorized decision-makers hold distinct responsibilities within the scope of their authority.

Meaningful participation requires recognition of these different roles while preserving the individual's own rights, preferences and autonomy.

Governance Question

How do publicly funded service organizations recognize the contributions of families and trusted supports while respecting individual autonomy and the responsibilities of legally authorized decision-makers?

4. Residential Security, Service Continuity and Belonging

Residential arrangements can provide more than accommodation. They may represent an individual's home, established relationships, community connections and sense of belonging.

Where disagreements or organizational changes affect residential arrangements, the distinction between physical occupancy, tenancy where applicable, funded residential placement and developmental-service delivery becomes important.

Governance Question

How are an individual's rights, residential security, sense of belonging and continuity of appropriate support protected when organizational decisions or disagreements affect living arrangements?

5. Administrative Silence, Enforcement and Public Accountability

Families may pursue documented concerns through service providers, organizational leadership, government departments and external oversight mechanisms without obtaining a clear determination or resolution.

The existence of complaint pathways does not, by itself, demonstrate effective accountability. Governance requires clarity concerning who has authority to determine whether corrective action is warranted, who must act and how outcomes are verified.

Governance Question

When documented concerns remain unresolved, which organization or public authority is responsible for determining the appropriate response, requiring corrective action within its mandate and verifying the outcome?

6. Family Networks, Information Sharing and Access to Service Navigation

Families and support networks may rely upon informal information-sharing to understand services, identify available supports and navigate administrative processes.

Such collaboration can strengthen knowledge and advocacy, but essential information concerning individual rights, available services, decision-making responsibilities and complaint pathways should be accessible without dependence upon personal networks.

Governance Question

How can publicly funded organizations ensure accessible service information, meaningful family collaboration and transparent accountability pathways without transferring institutional responsibilities onto families?

Governance Considerations

The recurring observations documented in **AAA Family Intake Insights™** during September 2026 raise broader questions concerning person-centred care, relational continuity, lawful decision-making authority and public accountability within Ontario's publicly funded developmental-services system.

These considerations are not intended to assign responsibility, determine findings of fact or establish non-compliance in individual cases. Rather, they identify opportunities to strengthen organizational governance, service delivery, administrative oversight and public policy, with the individual's rights, dignity, preferences and quality of life remaining central.

1. How Is Person-Centred Care Demonstrated in Practice?

When developmental services are publicly funded and administratively maintained, service availability and regulatory compliance do not, by themselves, establish whether an individual is receiving safe, dignified, responsive and appropriate

care. Meaningful evaluation should consider the individual's experience of relational continuity, participation, inclusion, belonging and quality of life alongside the organization's documented service obligations.

Governance Question

How should publicly funded developmental services demonstrate that person-centred care is being achieved through the individual's actual experiences and outcomes, rather than measured solely through service availability and administrative compliance?

2. How Are Essential Relationships and Lawful Decision-Making Responsibilities Protected?

Changes in staffing, day programming, transportation or residential arrangements may disrupt trusted relationships, established routines and essential knowledge concerning an individual's care and communication needs. Effective continuity requires appropriate planning, communication and recognition of the individual's rights and preferences, trusted support relationships and the responsibilities of legally authorized decision-makers in accordance with applicable law.

Governance Question

What safeguards should publicly funded developmental-service organizations establish to protect relational continuity, transfer essential care knowledge and ensure lawful decision-making responsibilities are recognized during service changes and transitions?

3. Who Safeguards Residential Security and Continuity of Funded Services?

Disagreements involving families, guardians and residential service providers may raise questions concerning the individual's rights, residential arrangements and continuity of support. Physical occupancy, tenancy, funded residential placement and developmental-service delivery are distinct considerations. Decisions affecting these arrangements require appropriate authorization, documentation, communication and adherence to the applicable legal and administrative framework.

Governance Question

When disagreements or organizational changes affect residential arrangements, which authorities are responsible for protecting the individual's rights, determining the status of funded services and ensuring continuity of appropriate support?

4. Who Is Responsible for Enforcement When Concerns Remain Unresolved?

When documented concerns involving health, safety, personal care or service continuity remain unresolved, individuals and families may continue navigating multiple administrative, organizational and oversight processes without a clear determination or corrective outcome. Effective accountability requires identifiable responsibility, access to appropriate intervention mechanisms, reasonable timelines and verification that corrective measures have been implemented where warranted.

Governance Question

When publicly funded service providers do not resolve documented concerns, which authority is responsible for determining whether corrective action is required, enforcing applicable obligations and verifying that the individual's health, safety, rights and service needs have been addressed?

5. How Can Information-Sharing and Family Collaboration Strengthen Accountability?

Families and support networks often exchange information to understand available services, navigate complex administrative systems and identify opportunities for advocacy. Such collaboration can strengthen organizational learning, transparency and accountability. However, access to essential information concerning services, rights, decision-making responsibilities and complaint pathways should not depend upon informal networks or a family's capacity to navigate the system independently. Families and guardians must also be able to seek information and raise good-faith concerns without fear of adverse consequences.

Governance Question

How should publicly funded developmental-service organizations ensure accessible information, meaningful family collaboration and safe opportunities for advocacy while retaining institutional responsibility for service navigation, transparency and accountability?

These considerations highlight the importance of connecting public funding, organizational responsibility and oversight with the actual experiences of individuals receiving developmental services. **Public accountability must be demonstrated through the protection of individual rights, fulfilment of responsibilities, timely corrective action and verified outcomes—not administrative compliance alone.**

AAA Governance Analysis

The September 2026 observations examined through **AAA Family Intake Insights™** highlight a fundamental governance challenge within Ontario's publicly funded developmental-services system: the distinction between maintaining organizational processes and demonstrating that those processes protect the rights, dignity and quality of life of individuals receiving support.

Across the six areas of observation, a common question emerges: **Who is responsible for ensuring that publicly funded care achieves its intended outcomes for the individual?**

From Administrative Compliance to Individual Outcomes

Administrative requirements, service agreements, organizational policies and reporting mechanisms establish important expectations for publicly funded service delivery. However, their existence does not independently demonstrate that an individual's needs are being met.

A person-centred accountability framework must also examine the consequences of organizational decisions for individuals, including continuity of support, personal safety, communication, autonomy, meaningful participation and belonging. The relevant governance distinction is not between compliance and care, as both matter. It is between demonstrating that a process was followed and verifying that the individual's rights and needs were appropriately addressed.

Relationships as a Governance Responsibility

Trusted relationships can be essential to an individual's communication, emotional security, daily routines and participation in community life. Staffing changes, program transitions and alterations to residential or transportation arrangements may therefore have consequences extending beyond scheduling or administrative coordination.

Where individuals depend upon familiar people to understand their preferences, recognize changes in well-being or support communication, relational continuity warrants explicit consideration in individualized service planning, transition

arrangements and organizational oversight. This does not mean that every change in personnel or programming represents a failure of care. It means that the potential impact upon the individual should be assessed, communicated and appropriately addressed.

Relationships are not incidental to care. They are part of care itself.

Lawful Authority and Institutional Decision-Making

Effective governance requires clarity concerning the individual's own rights and preferences, the scope of any legally authorized decision-maker's responsibilities and the authority exercised by service organizations. These roles are not interchangeable. Where responsibilities overlap or disagreements arise, organizations should have transparent processes for identifying the applicable authority, communicating decisions and ensuring that the individual's rights and interests remain central. The existence of a disagreement should not, by itself, obscure responsibility for maintaining appropriate care and addressing identified risks.

Continuity of Publicly Funded Support

Residential arrangements, physical occupancy, tenancy rights where applicable, funded placements and developmental-service delivery may involve different legal and administrative relationships. Governance oversight must recognize these distinctions, particularly when organizational changes or disputes affect an individual's living arrangements or access to support.

Decisions concerning one aspect of an arrangement should not be assumed to resolve the status of another without an appropriate determination. The central accountability question is how continuity, individual rights and necessary supports are protected while administrative or legal matters remain under consideration.

From Escalation to Enforceable Accountability

The July and August editions of **AAA Family Intake Insights™** examined family participation and the distinction between escalating a concern and achieving resolution. September extends this analysis by asking whether accountability mechanisms can produce timely, verifiable corrective outcomes when concerns remain unresolved. Complaint pathways, internal reviews and external oversight processes serve important purposes. Their effectiveness must also be assessed through the clarity of decision-making responsibility, the availability of intervention under applicable authority, the timeliness of responses and the verification of corrective action where required.

Service providers retain responsibility for fulfilling their applicable obligations, while government funding, regulatory and oversight bodies exercise distinct responsibilities within their respective mandates. An accountability system cannot be evaluated solely by the number of concerns processed. It must also consider whether identified problems are appropriately determined, addressed and resolved.

Families, Information and Shared Accountability

Family members, guardians and trusted support networks may contribute essential knowledge about an individual's history, communication, preferences and support needs. Peer networks can also help families understand complex service arrangements and identify available advocacy or complaint pathways. These contributions should inform organizational learning and service improvement without transferring institutional obligations onto families. Accessible information, transparent decisions and meaningful opportunities to raise concerns are therefore important elements of a responsive publicly funded system.

AAA Governance Position

The September analysis supports four interconnected governance principles proposed by AAA for evaluating publicly funded developmental services:

1. **Protection of individual rights:** Respect for dignity, autonomy, preferences, safety and applicable lawful decision-making arrangements.
2. **Continuity of person-centred support:** Recognition of essential relationships, individualized needs and appropriate transitions.
3. **Clear institutional accountability:** Identifiable responsibility for decisions, service obligations, oversight and corrective action within applicable mandates.
4. **Verification of outcomes:** Evidence that concerns have been appropriately addressed and that required actions have produced meaningful results for the individual.

These principles are interconnected. Administrative compliance is necessary where required by law or policy, but it is not a substitute for examining the quality and consequences of care.

Compliance does not measure care. Outcomes do.

The purpose of public accountability is not simply to demonstrate that systems are operating. It is to ensure that those systems fulfil their responsibilities to the people they exist to serve.

Closing Observation

The September 2026 edition of **AAA Family Intake Insights™** reinforces a fundamental principle: person-centred care must be understood through the experiences, relationships, rights and quality of life of the individuals receiving support.

Public funding, organizational policies and administrative procedures are important components of service delivery. Yet their existence alone cannot establish that appropriate care has been provided, essential relationships have been protected or documented concerns have been meaningfully resolved.

Accountability extends beyond the organizations retained to deliver publicly funded developmental services. It also requires scrutiny of the responsibilities exercised by public authorities entrusted with administering, funding and overseeing these programs within their respective mandates. When individuals, families and legally authorized decision-makers raise documented concerns, the absence of a substantive response from responsible institutions becomes part of the accountability record.

Silence is also data.

Silence does not, by itself, establish wrongdoing or non-compliance. However, documented periods of non-response, repeated referrals and the absence of clear decisions may reveal gaps in administrative responsiveness, transparency and ownership of resolution.

These gaps warrant examination, particularly where unresolved concerns may affect an individual's health, safety, dignity, rights or continuity of care. Families should not be left indefinitely documenting concerns while responsibility for determining and addressing those concerns remains unclear.

Documentation therefore serves a purpose beyond preserving individual experiences. It establishes an evidence base through which recurring concerns can be examined, institutional responsibilities identified and meaningful corrective action pursued.

For AAA, this is where social justice must connect with service accountability.

We must continue documenting—not simply to demonstrate that concerns were raised, but to establish whether they were acknowledged, appropriately determined, acted upon and resolved.

Documentation must also inform action. Where intervention is warranted, accountability requires identifiable decision-makers, appropriate corrective measures and verification that those measures have addressed the concern.

Transparency requires that decisions and responsibilities can be understood. Integrity requires that public institutions act consistently with their obligations. Accountability requires that actions and outcomes can be examined and verified.

The September observations reaffirm that trusted relationships, lawful decision-making responsibilities and continuity of support are not peripheral considerations. They are integral to the dignity and well-being of individuals who depend upon publicly funded developmental services.

Relationships are not incidental to care. They are part of care itself.

As AAA continues building its cumulative evidence record, the objective remains clear: to connect the voices and documented experiences of individuals and families with the governance responsibilities of publicly funded institutions.

Social justice demands that people are heard. Transparency demands that decisions are explained. Integrity demands that responsibilities are fulfilled. Accountability demands that outcomes are verified.

We see. We document. We act.

About AAA Family Intake Insights™

Families experience publicly funded systems one interaction at a time. AAA documents those experiences one observation at a time. Over time, those observations become patterns. Patterns become evidence. Evidence informs accountability. Accountability strengthens public policy.

AAA Family Intake Insights™ is a monthly governance brief. The publication documents anonymous recurring observations reported by families, guardians, caregivers, and community members navigating Ontario's publicly funded developmental services system. Its purpose is not to investigate individual cases or determine findings of fact. Rather, it seeks to identify emerging governance patterns, encourage informed discussion, and contribute to transparency, accountability, quality of care, quality of life, and continuous improvement.

Grounded in AAA's practice model of See • Document • Act, each Monthly Governance Brief contributes to a growing body of evidence that will inform the inaugural AAA State of Family Accountability™ – Ontario Developmental Services Annual Report, to be published on March 1, 2027, and future public policy work.

Share Your Experience

Families, guardians, caregivers, and community members are invited to confidentially share their experiences through the AAA Intake Form.



Advocates for Access & Accountability (AAA)

See • Document • Act

Observe consistently. Publish concisely. Build cumulatively.

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AAA Family Intake Insights™
Ontario Developmental Services
Monthly Governance Brief

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Published

October 12, 2026

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lori Ann Comeau", with a stylized, flowing script.

Lori Ann Comeau
Founder & Executive Director
Advocates for Access & Accountability (AAA)