

PONDA Network

Physicians of Ontario Neurodevelopmental Advocacy Network

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Letter of Introduction

PONDA is a representative physician's network from across Ontario who work with children with special health care needs. These children have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioural, or emotional condition and also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.¹

PONDA seeks to optimize services and maximize the function and participation of children with special needs in accordance with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health framework for Children and Youth (ICF-CY).²

PONDA was established in 2011, meets biannually and has an elected steering committee. Members include clinicians, researchers and leaders in the fields of general and developmental pediatrics, pediatric neurology, child psychiatry and mental health. We have ongoing collaboration with the Canadian Pediatric Society - Developmental Pediatric Section, the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS) and the OMA Section of Pediatrics.

There are many strengths in the service system of Ontario and also many challenges. These challenges have recently been documented in a ministry report from March 2013 by the Honourable Tracy MacCharles.³ As a key stakeholder, PONDA is uniquely positioned to contribute to discussions with policy-makers, professionals and caregivers to address the challenges in caring for children with special needs and their families. We are available to participate in discussions and contribute with our vision to improve the experiences and outcomes for the special needs population.



Dr. Ronit Mesterman
Chair of the PONDA Network

¹McPherson et al, Pediatrics 1998; 102: 137-140

²World Health Organization, International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health – Children and Youth, 2007

³MacCharles, T. Available at
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/specialneeds/PAreport.pdf>