

January 16, 1999

Nancy Bell, Complaint Officer
Children's Commission
PO BOX 9207
Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Ms. Bell:

Re: Jeremy Rodrigues
File #19982 [REDACTED]

We are in receipt of the letter from Lauri Balson, Acting Team Leader stating that the Children's Commission will be investigating our complaints against the Southern Interior region Ministry for Children and Families. For this we are very grateful. It was stated that we should contact you in the event of further information regarding our son's case.

We would like to reiterate our stance and our complaint against this Ministry. We were receiving partial funding through the Supported Child Care 'in home daycare' program for a period of six months. We used this funding towards our son Jeremy's Lovaas autism treatment program. The contract was up for renewal in September 30, 1998. On July 20, 1998, we received a memo from our social worker, Darcy Nord, stating that the Ministry would pay for the equivalent of a full time aide. Then we were told by Doug Hughes in a letter dated October 14, 1998, that the Ministry did not have authority for granting individualized funding for Lovaas autism treatment due to a 'memo' sent out from Victoria. Mr. Hughes latest letter dated December 8, 1998, now seems to infer that this is a restructuring move and I was aware of this move all along. Yet other areas and families in the lower mainland continue to receive this 'in home daycare' funding along with a preschool and a aide at preschool. We are aware of families in at least three different regions in the lower mainland whose funding for 'in home daycare' has been renewed in the last two months.

In yet, the latest atrocity concerning this region's MCF office, I received a form letter from Lynn Middleton stating that the Community Living Services Program is now conducting a 'survey' regarding their services. In an attempt to waste more valuable resources they have hired someone to conduct this survey. My mother was wondering if they do not notice me picketing their office??? Apparently it is the Community Living Services for Children's mandate to *provide support services to children and youth with special needs so that they can reach their maximum potential.* This regional office is in direct violation of that mandate! Our son's doctors letters clearly state what Jeremy requires to reach his maximum potential.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing a copy of the memo sent by Darcy Nord, (social worker) and the latest letter from D. Hughes dated December 8, 1998, the most recent form letter from the Team Leader Lynn Middleton.

I am also enclosing the very important and should be MOST important letters from Jeremy's doctors stating that he requires this treatment, that he is showing amazing progress on this treatment and that this Ministry should provide him whatever funding they can. I am also enclosing a progress report showing the great improvement in our son's condition and abilities since starting his Lovaas program. We want to make it clear that Jeremy showed no increased abilities and actually regressed in all Government programs which in our opinion amount to nothing more than warehousing and babysitting our child. The mere fact that Jeremy's doctors have both stated that he is showing improvement in this treatment program and that it should be continued is reason alone those involved in the Southern Interior region of the Ministry for Children and Families should be reprimanded and we are calling their actions "neglectful" of a severely disabled child. This Ministry is willing to waste MORE money on ineffective and costly programs and personnel yet will not allow us to continue on with the subsidy we were receiving and use it towards our son's future and well-being.

We believe this is a simple case. The facts include, we were receiving money (individualized funding) which amounted to 20% of our son's therapy costs from a 'daycare program'. The money was used towards our son's treatment cost. Our son showed dramatic improvement on the program we are implementing and paying the majority of (now the total) cost of. His doctors were pleased with his progress. Our son's quality of life was improving, his temper tantrums decreased considerably, he was able to sleep through the night, he was able to understand language, increased eye contact, social skills, awareness. His self stimulatory behaviors decreased. The Government has NOTHING to offer in lieu of this treatment program but babysitting services. The money is THERE, it was being used BEFORE for this treatment program, it SHOULD and it MUST be continued to be used for this treatment program. This Ministry could have just renewed the funding with our son's Doctor's letters as justification and we would of all been better off, most especially our son. Other regions have renewed their families 'in home daycare' funds just via the mail and let the families get on with the already overwhelming tasks of living, raising and teaching their autistic children. We also will require that our funding be returned retroactively as we have been without ANY funding, support or help from the Ministry for a period of four months as of this date. We find this reprehensible conduct for a Ministry that was designed and created to stop the abandonment and neglect of our children. Especially a child with an official diagnosis of not only 'autism' but who is classified as 'severely disabled'.

We thank you for looking into this very grave matter and we too, look forward to this matter being resolved on behalf of Jeremy, in the best interest for Jeremy. Because somewhere along the line Rick Childerhose, ROO, Doug Hughes, CAM and Lynn Middleton, Team Leader forgot that the most important thing they should be doing is helping this little boy and doing what is best for him.

Barbara & Joe Rodrigues

Parents and Advocates for Jeremy

A little boy who does not yet speak....but whose voice will most surely be heard