

Sent via FAX and by Double Registered Mail

June 24, 1998

Darcy Nord, Community Living Social Worker
Box 1860
Summerland, B.C.
V0H 1Z0

Dear Ms. Nord:

I am writing to formally request full reimbursement from your Ministry for the ongoing cost of medically necessary autism treatment -- currently provided by us for our son, Jeremy. Moreover, please consider this letter as our formal request that partial payment currently being offered by your Ministry under Ministerial Agreement #7930208, not be impeded by your department (authorized 03/31/98).

We fully expect your Ministry will protect our child by not allowing Ministry *restructuring of programs* to break the above referenced commitment so vital for the health of our son. (see attached correspondence, Dr. R. McIntosh).

As you know, Jeremy is a 4-year-old boy afflicted with autistic disorder, a neurological condition affecting 1 in 1000 children. He has communicative deficits, is lagging in his social adjustments, has no self-help skills and problem behaviors that are responding remarkably well to Lovaas autism treatment. All professionals who have evaluated Jeremy indicate he has an excellent chance of overcoming his disability, provided we continue the prescribed autism treatment. However, our financial situation is such that we cannot afford the expense of the required treatment. Failure of your Ministry to provide funds for this critical treatment will have devastating consequences for our son's neurological condition and his future well being.

The autism treatment we are providing is well established -- studies show it is the only effective treatment for autism. Sixty-three (63) licensed B.C. Psychiatrists deem the treatment to be "medically necessary" for children with autism. Our situation is urgent; the treatment works best when it is provided early -- when the child is young. Our son has fortunately been diagnosed early so we have an excellent opportunity to save his future -- if MCF supports us with an expense we cannot afford.

We are certain you will agree with Dr. John Millar, the Provincial Health Officer, when he states in recently tabled report to Government that, "the time from birth through age 5 is a critical window of opportunity for helping children receive a good start in life... it takes more effort to overcome developmental problems than to prevent them", (**emphasis ours**).

Dr. M.I. deLevie, a prominent Pediatrician in Vancouver with a focus on autism, says in reference to Lovaas autism treatment, "There is a successful treatment. If it is started early and is comprehensive, excellent results can be achieved."

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The autism treatment physicians prescribe for my son costs us \$2,767.00 - 3066.00 per month for 128 hours of intensive Lovaas treatment. We have been advised that Jeremy requires the full 40 hours per week or 160 hours per month as he is classified moderately to severely disabled because of his autism. (see attached correspondence, Dr. M.I. deLevie) The cost of 160 hours per week would run into \$3,267.00 - 3,467.00 per month. Currently the Ministry reimburses us for 25%. We clearly cannot afford this expense and reiterate our formal request to the Ministry of Children and Families for full reimbursement of our cost for this treatment, under the full range of MCF programs currently available.

Please confirm in writing that full reimbursement by MCF and that the Ministerial Agreement #7930208 will be honoured to maintain the current level of partial reimbursement of treatment cost.

In the absence of written confirmation by June 30, 1998, we will deem the Ministry to have renegeed on Ministerial Agreement #7930208 made on behalf of our disabled son and our request for full reimbursement to have been denied. We will also deem your decision to have been made with full knowledge of the harm done to the health, well being and future independence of our son.

Thank you in advance for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Rodrigues

Joe Rodrigues

cc: Mr. Doug Hughes, Community Living Services Manager
Mr. Rick Thorpe, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly
Dr. Sabrina Freeman, Director of F.E.A.T. of BC
Ombudsman of B.C. - File # pending
Children's Commission