

March 19, 1998

Marge Hankey
Ministry for Children & Families
Box 1860
Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0

Dear Ms. Hankey:

This letter is in response to your verbal offer from your supervisor of March 17, 1998.

Let me state what it is that we require for our son. What is deemed '**medically necessary treatment**' by **63** licenced British Columbia Psychiatrists. Below are summaries of findings which support this method of autism treatment as the intervention of choice in our case.

The condition of children with autism has been proven to significantly improve when they receive early, intensive autism treatment of the Lovaas type. * In the landmark study done at U.C.L.A. (1987), 47% of those children receiving intensive behavioral intervention achieved normal intellectual and educational functioning. Forty percent (40%) were assigned to classes for the language-delayed, and 10% were placed in segregated classrooms or schools. In contrast, of the children who received the normally available services, 2% achieved normal educational and intellectual functions, 45% were put in language-delayed classes, and 53% were put in segregated classrooms or schools. At age 11-1/2, a follow-up study of the children who received Lovaas intensive behavioral intervention showed that 44% were indistinguishable from average children on test of intelligence and adaptive behavior. The Lovaas method of Autism Treatment was the subject of an airing on the "Nature of Things" in which David Suzuki arrived at the following conclusion:

Once it seemed like a life sentence. Now we know that that sentence can often be commuted, even lifted. Now we know there is hope. As long as we intervene early enough, intensively enough, we can rescue many children from the solitary confinement of autism. But the schools we have just seen are the exception not the rule. Somehow, we have to find the money to help children with autism in those crucial preschool years. If we don't, the cost to all of us of caring for an untreated adult will be far greater, reaching into the millions. The cost in terms of human suffering is not to be measured.

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* Available upon request

March 19, 1998
Re: Jeremy Rodrigues
Page 2

The cost of setting up this program is as follows:

3-day Initial Workshop - 700.00 (U.S.) per day, plus accomodation, car rental & food @ 5,000.00 Canadian

40 hours a week of therapy at 10.00 per hour = 400.00 per week, 1,600.00 per month.

Please consider this letter a formal request for the full benefits available to our child from any of the programs you have available. We will require these funds sent directly to myself and I will pay my therapists with it.

Please advise in writing on the disposition of our request for this funding. As this is a matter of great urgency for our son's future independence and well being, we would like to request your decision by March 27, 1998. In the absence of correspondence by this date, we will consider our request to have been declined.

We look forward to hearing from you soon and thank you again for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Rodrigues

Joe Rodrigues

cc: Rick Thorpe, Member of the Province of British Columbia
Legislative Assembly
Dr. Sabrina Freeman, Director of F.E.A.T. of BC.
Rhonda Garside, Director of the Autism Society of B.C.