

One small boy goes from a diagnosis of autism to advocating for kids rights to treatment

Dear g dlemento

I do not like your rules. Because if children only get help until there six years old is not fair because if I had teachers until I was six I would of had lots of Austum to deal with for the rest of my life but because I'm nine now and I still have teachers. Now I've lost most of it but I still have some left AND I don't want other kids to have porblems with like my friend Steven. You will Spoil Canada if you go on like this. If you don't follow this letter I will get all the parents I can to try and stop you with my friends and me too. The Bad government should not get any more money until they use it properly. What use is Canada if the government arent being fair to the people. All Canadins except you are your ravils because you are doing this to us.

from: ANthoNy

This is the story of my son who is one of the child plaintiffs in the Deskin & Wynberg vs. Ontario lawsuit. It's about his journey with autism and his progress with IBI treatment. His journey takes him from being a child who was completely disconnected and unaware of his surroundings to a small boy on a mission to ensure other children with autism have the same chance to get well with treatment just like he is doing.

At the time of his diagnosis when he was three the psychological assessment placed him developmentally at a one year two month level with essentially no speech, today he is nine and is charging into the world of advocacy to tell the people in charge that he still needs his therapists and so do his friends. He wrote a letter to the government and testified in court because he wanted to speak for himself, he hoped that if they listened to a kid who has been in treatment and has gotten better that they'd understand that they just can't take away their teachers when they turn six... He said to me, "I still had a lot of autism when I was six, if I lost my teachers then I would still have a lot of autism to deal with... that's mean of them Mom! They just can't do that to kids, I have to tell them. If I talk to them they will have to see and then they'll fix it".

To share what lead to him writing his letter and later wanting to testify ... He has been in a home-based IBI program since he was 3-1/2. When he entered kindergarten he was extraordinarily fortunate to have a principal that believed in him and supported his acquired learning style and allowed one of his IBI therapists to shadow him in the classroom fulltime. In grade one with the school boards approval this continued. On entering grade 2 at the age of 8, because he had received appropriate support he no longer needed the fulltime support in class anymore, though we continued to work within his home IBI/ABA program to fill the gaps in his social skills. One of his friends was a little boy that had lost funding for treatment on his sixth birthday and he didn't think it was right that he might lose his teachers (therapists) because his Mom couldn't afford it on her own anymore. He said, "The government is bad to do that to a kid and it just isn't fair".

I told him the government wasn't bad, but they had made some bad choices. He wanted to know what he could do, I suggested he write them a letter and tell them what he had to say. I didn't seriously think anything would actually come of it as he sauntered off to watch T.V. Fifteen minutes later... he shouts up the stairs "Mom, how do you spell government?"

That was the beginning of his advocacy, here was a child who once needed advocating for and he was now taking it upon himself to speak for himself, his friends and other kids with autism.

Dear Government,

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