

June 17, 2008

RR#3, Montague
Summerville, PE
C0A 1R0

Mr. Ian "Tex" MacDonald
Premier's Office
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 7N8

RE: Ennis Funding Proposal

Dear Mr. MacDonald,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to meet with us regarding our two preschool sons who are affected by Autism.

Both Brandon and Benjamin were diagnosed with Autism in 2006. Brandon is now five years old, and Benjamin is three years old. Our family has experienced many challenges raising our two special needs children over the past five years. Brandon has been enrolled in the Preschool IBI Service for the past two years. We have voiced concerns with the service over this time, but feel that after meeting with numerous levels of government, no changes have occurred.

We recognize that each province across Canada offers different various levels of funding and services to families affect by Autism. The PEI Preschool IBI Service has proven to be inflexible to our family's needs. Brandon and Benjamin have not received any programming from the Preschool IBI Service since December 2007 due to many reasons which we will go into additional detail during our meeting. It is our experience that the current service is only offered in one cookie cutter manner, and lacks policy to define its operation or how it will be implemented (other than from a funding perspective from the Disability Support Program). This in itself is very frustrating from a client perspective. We are not asking for the "best" early intervention program for our family. We are asking for an appropriate early intervention program that meets our family's needs.

We understand that the development of a PEI Autism Strategy is going to take time. Once developed, it will improve the services and supports for Islanders and families affected by Autism. During the past two years, we have come to realize that we will not be able to change the services in time to immediately help our children and family. Therefore, during the interim, we are asking the Government of Prince Edward Island to release the funding from the Disability Support Program so that we can contract an "out of province" Board Certified Autism Consultant to provide Intensive Behavioral Intervention (IBI) Therapy until August 31, 2009. Brandon only has 14 critical months before he is scheduled to enter Grade One and he will benefit from professionals who will be consistent during this time.

Speech therapy is another important therapy for children affected by Autism. Brandon and Benjamin have not had speech therapy since December 2007 due to staff shortages in the Montague Area. Again we understand the current situation and recognize that there is a shortage of speech language pathologists to fill the demand. There are private speech language pathologists available for contract, but without funding we are not financially able to provide this therapy for our children. Again, valuable time is being lost. We are asking the Government of Prince Edward Island to fund private speech therapy to our children until a speech language pathologist can be recruited to fill the open position in Montague.

Funding Breakdown

IBI Therapy Consultation

July 2008 – August 2009

Brandon: 61 weeks @ \$200.00 per week = \$12,200

Benjamin: 61 weeks @ \$200.00 per week = \$12,200

IBI Therapy Materials/Supplies

July 2008 – August 2009

Brandon: 14 months @ \$100 per month = \$1400

Benjamin: 14 months @ \$100 per month = \$1400

Speech Therapy

Brandon: 2 appointments per month @ \$75 per appointment = \$150 per month until position is filled.

Benjamin: 2 appointments per month @ \$75 per appointment = \$150 per month until position is filled.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, July 4th, 2008. This will allow us to move forward with our children's therapy. We can be reached via phone at (902) 620-1377 or by email at aprilennis@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

April Ennis

Robert Ennis