

30/6/08

Kim

Rec. 15/7/08

Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I wish to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into better Support for Carers.

I contribute to Australian society by being the full time carer of my son Dane who is now 11 years old.

Dane was diagnosed with Autism when he was about 3 years old. Since that time life has been very hectic, I was fortunate enough to acquire some help with interventions for Dane, He has done Speech therapy, Occupational therapy, and had the use of early intervention services when he was younger.

In December 2006 we received another blow when Dane was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. As you can imagine it is hard enough with one disability and now we have two!

The daily management of diabetes is quite time consuming and can be very stressful at times as it is a life threatening and chronic illness. Dane is lucky to have a school that takes the time to follow all the instructions and are keeping him in good health.

Dane's Autism is now becoming hard to manage as he has reached puberty and is having a lot of problems with school and behaviour. As he has gotten older the anxiety levels are very high and I am not coping well with the school always threatening suspensions etc. As a parent I have done my level best to improve his outcomes with every aspect of his life. He has funding from DADHC and they have given some help, but every step of the way is very slow with them.

That is a very brief description of Danes life.

As the mother of Dane I have to work, as I cannot live on the welfare payment alone that is given by the Government, so I work about 20 or so hours a week.

I do not get much respite as Dane's father sees him once a fortnight from Friday to Sunday and I am usually working on those weekends. I think there should be more respite services for people like me, so we don't get burnt out, because that is the way I am feeling right at the moment

It is very hard to access services and most of the time the waiting lists are long. I am worried about the future for my employment as once Dane is in high school I will not be able to place him in before and after school care, Vacation care and family day care, which are the services I use at the moment. I will still need to work and this is a concern to me.

I feel carers are contributing a lot of time and effort into their roles and it would be nice if some of their needs were met. If it wasn't for them the country would have to bear a huge cost.

I know there are always people worse off than me and I appreciate that fact.

I think if there were more support services and respite services, carers would be in better health both mentally and physically.

I would also like to see more support for parents like me with a child who is having behaviour problems at school. I have found that this is becoming my biggest stress factor (among others) at the moment. Because there are so many diverse problems at school with other children's behaviour I am finding that most teachers are not coping well with this.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I hope it has made some sort of contribution to your committee.

Yours truly,

Kim