

Committee Secretary  
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,  
Community, Housing and Youth  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No. 346  
(Inq into better support for carers)  
A.O.C. 1/7/08

STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON

25 JUN. 2008

FAMILY, COMMUNITY,  
HOUSING & YOUTH

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 am submitting to the Inquiry because...

I am a mother and a 'carer' to a boy with Autism. I believe very strongly that my role as carer is not diminished in any way because I am <sup>also</sup> a mother. That my role is vital in my son's life and future - and not a role that I had any choice in choosing!

More information is attached on a separate sheet

1. The role and contribution of carers in society

As a carer, I feel that my role ~~is~~ was thrust upon me - I had no experience in caring for a child with Autism - I had no formal training, no one guiding me - I am self-taught. My role as carer is never-ending - I will always be my son's advocate, his teacher, his financial advisor, his taxi driver, his communicator, his nurse, his physio, his O.T, his speech therapist, his nutritionist, the list is endless. I will have to be all these things to my son for a very long time.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

As a carer, I face the following problems ...

I can not work full-time - due to special school drop off and pick-up times. There is no before or after school care facility. Shopping is a nightmare due to excessive stimuli - so these trips are planned with precision! The family as a unit can't enjoy a dinner out, or the movies - so my other children can only go with one parent at a time. I feel my son's destiny is in my hands - I am the one who organises every aspect of his life.

It is financially draining and there is so much more I would like to offer him but am unable to do so due to the expense of it all.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ... my sons treatment and management of his Autism. Speech therapy must be subsidised, ABA must be subsidised - Any professional that is linked with the treatment of Autism must be accessible and affordable. Some services should be free of charge i.e. initial consultation with psychologists and Educational psychologists involved in teaching children in mainstream settings - or have 'x' amount free per year - or heavily subsidised.  More information is attached on a separate sheet

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

You must start helping us.

I think the Government can better help carers by ...

Recognising the financial impact I have for treating and managing my sons Autism. In monetary terms I would have spent \$25-\$30,000 - (in 3 years) that certainly meant going without things most families do i.e. holidays, going out to dinners, movies, theme parks etc. Find mainstream schools more effectively to cater for our children so we have more options of where to educate a child with Autism  More information is attached on a separate sheet

- DEMOLISH Special Schools - redirect specialised staff into mainstream settings along with their funding.
- Streamline application forms for various funding that we are entitled to.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely

- Recognise that Autism is lifelong (So why do we have to fill at the same forms every few years)
- Improve Autism services

- more affordable
- more accessible
- Increase awareness

JOANNE

Print your name

23/6/08

Date