

From: Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services POV eSubmission Form
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Sent: Saturday, 20 February 2016 9:57 AM
To: FCDC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I am the parent of of 17y/o daughter who was recently diagnosed with ASD.

It took seven years to get this diagnosis - that is too long; it effected her education (ie she dropped out of secondary college for 12 months), it has effected her social life (ie: she rarely leaves the house and has no friends).

For seven years my daughter saw various counsellors, psychiatrists, and psychologists. None of these people had the skills, experience or understanding of aspergers in girls to recognise my daughter's condition. We tried seeing psychiatrists but their fees are mercenary.

It was not until we saw a neuro-developmental pediatrician via the public health system that we found some-one who knew what they were on about.

At school she was at times given various instructions and useless suggestions, the most destructive was "to be resilient"; when in fact it was the inadequate training of teachers (a very few of which actually bullied her); conversely we had compassionate teachers attempt to make her time at school bearable, yet neither they nor we knew what we were dealing with.

Throughout this entire time her twin-brother has been her primary care giver, whilst this has had positive implications on his personal development as a person it has also weighed heavily on him in other ways.

For some children on the autism spectrum school can be a place of intimidation and bullying; via some students, some staff, and the very nature of the school environment. I work in a primary school and see the same things.

Some suggestions:

- 1) introduce in to all teacher training recognition of conditions that may afflict students which are often misinterpreted as bad behaviour, not fitting in, etc;
- 2) allocate areas in schools specifically for children who need respite; somewhere to lay down, somewhere quiet;
- 3) class sizes and a culture in some classrooms that accommodates their needs. For example: a normal noisy classroom would take its toll on my daughter, as one of the aspects of her Aspergers is a high intolerance for noise;
- 4) easier and affordable access to diagnostic professionals and care for those on the spectrum;
- 5) a raised awareness of how ASD is display in girls, it is still largely a 'boys'condition;
- 6) wider promotion of the Distance Education Centre (DECV) as an alternative schooling for children who suffer social anxiety. Our daughter enrolled with DECV in 2015, this year she is commencing her Year 12 with them; once we did not expect her to complete VCE, but she is on the path to doing so, getting excellent results. **NOBODY TOLD US ABOUT DECV OR THAT IT CATERED FOR STUDENTS LIKE OUR DAUGHTER - NOBODY.**

Please hold a hearing in Ballarat.

with thanks
graeme drysdale

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File1:

File2:

File3: