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**ABA Support Network – The Voice of the ABA Community in BC  
Improving access to quality ABA services for children, youth and adults with autism**

To: Honourable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Health  
Honourable Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Education  
Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Children and Family Development

Date: January 1, 2010

Dear Honourable Ministers,

Services to children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have undergone important improvements over recent years. A concern remains regarding jurisdiction between Ministries that leads to fragmented and inefficient services for school-age children with ASD. As partners regarding the support for children with ASD, we are proposing that ABA behaviour consultant services be eligible (preferable through the Ministry of Health) for coverage when such services are provided to support school-based educational planning.

Presently, parents receive autism funding through the Ministry of Children and Family Development for home-based services, with such funds being restricted from use for school purposes. School districts provide district staff to communicate with the ABA behaviour consultants and translate these discussions into action plans at the school level.

Unfortunately, it is the families that have to pay privately for these coordinating meetings. As well, in the Surrey School District, numerous well trained ABA Support Workers provide in-school support to many of the children involved with ABA home programs. These ABA Support Workers, in many cases, will not continue to work with a child unless the parents provide training and programming through a qualified ABA consultant. This means that in order for a child to receive the support of an ABA Support Worker, the parents must privately pay for the consultant to design programs and support implementation by ABA Support Workers. This places a financial burden on the families.

As partners, we support the idea of having ABA behaviour consultants under a funding model that covers both home and school. A model that allows for integrated and coordinated services for children and a system that is also cost-effective. Ideally, if the Ministry of Health could incorporate ABA behaviour consultants within the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia, then consultants could receive billing numbers and be contracted to work in schools or in homes as needed. This would be similar to a child under the care of a psychiatrist or nurse.



From a parent's perspective, if the ABA behaviour consultants are covered under MSP, then the MCFD autism funding could then be used to pay for the front line therapists. In British Columbia, the vast majority of families spend far more money on their child's treatment programs than is covered by provincial funding. Relieving these parents of the need to cover consultant costs, would result in a significant increase in direct services to children. There are also many parents in British Columbia who choose not to provide ABA therapy for their child because they know they cannot afford to cover all the costs. These families often choose less intensive treatment options for their child who, in some cases, remain dependent longer and consume more resources over their lifespan.

We make this request with the realization that this is a complex issue and that this letter is intended as a discussion paper.

Please contact me at [nancy@abasupportnetwork.com](mailto:nancy@abasupportnetwork.com) or 604-538-8021 to arrange a meeting with all stakeholders listed below to discuss further.

Yours truly,

Nancy Walton  
Director  
ABA Support Network

Cc: Rick Ryan, Director of Instruction, Student Support Services,  
Surrey School District  
Dr. Glen Davies, ABLE Developmental Clinic  
Mike Lewis, Board President, Autism Society of BC