

From: [Aimee Apt](#)
To: [JWMHS Exhibits](#)
Subject: funding services at the DD department
Date: Monday, February 11, 2019 7:01:34 AM

Hello Members of the Subcommittee,

I wanted to drop you a quick note as you consider funding services to individuals with significant disabilities. I have worked my entire career with this population in the Portland metro area, starting in 1994 working in group homes with adults. I went on to get a master's degree in special education and now work at the opposite age range-serving families with young children with disabilities from birth to 5 years old.

The entire system continues to be very minimally funded. Right now you are considering cuts to the programs for adults with intellectual disability, soon you will be looking at cutting the Columbia Regional Service program for students with low incidence disabilities up to 20% for the upcoming budget cycle (such as children who have Autism, Blindness, Deafness and Orthopedic impairments) and then your staff will also need to work to keep funding stable for the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education grant funded programs to serve children who are not yet school age.

As I said earlier, I have worked from direct care with adults to providing parent coaching and education, consultation to inclusive school settings, completing home visits and running both mixed ability and self contained special education preschool classes for 20 years in Clackamas county. I am worried about the families and the clients I serve. They are expected to shoulder most of the care of people who need way more support than average. Plus the costs of treatment and medical supplies are astronomical. Staff turnover at programs that serve clients with disabilities is problematic and well trained staff are few and far between. We are also seeing these problems in the head start centers where I consult to typical preschool environments with limited applicants and many open positions.

Vocational rehabilitation services are equally important. It is necessary for families to get respite, adults with disabilities to have social connection and something to fill their time and to have meaningful work and community inclusion whenever possible. I hope that senate bills 492 and 493 also work to protect and improve quality of life for these individuals.

As a professional working in the field of social service for my entire life, please realize that these programs are cost effective, worthwhile and needed. Please fully fund all the programs of individuals who rely on others to help support their needs. Oregon deserves to have better support, treatment and funding of individuals who happen to be born with disabilities.

I have adopted a child who used to receive special education services until he was 3 years old. Although he has permanent drug effects and some sensory differences, he is thriving in 7th grade with average grades and lots of friends. Through programs such as early intervention, we found the support we needed to give him a typical life despite the conditions he was born with. Other children never reach these anticipated outcomes due to significant developmental delays and physical conditions. Please help support the current programs and families who deals with this adversity by fully funding services to Developmental Disability programs across the age span. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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