

5/17/2021

My child was in Head Start and he started having behavioral and emotional issues, along with having some developmental delays (as I like to say, doing things on his own timing), which ended up becoming too much for the 3 teachers in his class with I believe a total of 20 something kids, and about 15 kids turned out to have some special needs (I learned this later).

My son started having meltdowns and tantrums. When he didn't want to do something, he would become detached from what was going on, wanting to plant his feet and not move, cry when I would drop him off or cry about something he wanted. They couldn't understand what he needed. Then I started getting calls that he needed to be picked up early frequently. Then I was told he was not able to come back till we had a meeting. They were able to schedule a meeting by the next week. When I showed up, I was informed that the meeting couldn't happen because one of the specialists (Multnomah Early Childhood Program) wasn't able to make it. Mind you I work a full-time job so I am missing work due to not having anyone else to really help keep my son.

I kept calling trying to see when the next meeting could take place almost 3 weeks later of getting the runaround I had to call and tell the Head Start special ed coordinator and MECP Supervisor that I would go to the News about what was going on if they didn't give me a date for a meeting and all while listening to my 3 year old asking why can't he got to school, saying he missed his friends.

I missed almost 3 weeks of work with no PTO to cover me being off because they suspended my child, which had a trickle down effect of me being short on my rent and bills. I'm already low income as it is but make a little too much to qualify for state child care. Once we had the meeting, I ended up meeting Mary Ann, MECP Behavior Support Specialist, who was able to come in and help guide the process along and set up a plan to get my son back in school the next day. She was able to come up with a support plan for my son and I and the teachers that ended up being really effective, and my son was not suspended again. His behaviors started to improve once proper training and support was put in place for him. I am beyond grateful for her because I truly believe in my heart if it weren't for her, my son would have never been let back into school.

I feel in my heart there has to be other ways to support our kids and teachers so we as parents are not trying to explain to our 3 and 4 year olds that they can't go back to school. It was one of the hardest conversations I have had to have with my child.

Thank you for your time.

Quiana Gill