

To Whom it May Concern,

The first time I met Jose [name has been changed for confidentiality], I arrived at his house for my scheduled speech-language evaluation. Except no one was home and his elementary school aged sisters were sitting on the steps of the apartment saying they were locked out. They were hesitant to talk to a stranger, but after I explained myself they said their mom is sometimes home and sometimes they have to wait. I asked if they knew where their mom was, and they said they never know. Eventually after calling and texting Jose's mom about the appointment, she showed up 25 minutes late with Jose (18mo) and a 2 month old baby. Upon seeing Jose with his mom outside their apartment I was concerned for his well-being. He was being pushed in an umbrella stroller with no shoes and a messy face. The bottom of his feet were black and his nose was so impacted with dried boogers that he was only able to breathe through his mouth. Jose qualified for speech services that day but also a report for DHS was made by me that evening. I included that the two young sisters were locked out and Jose was clearly not being cared for. When DHS emailed me the summary of my report, they indicated they would not be following up as there was not enough information to investigate. For the next 8 weeks I saw Jose in his apartment with his mom and sisters present. Jose continued to have black feet, a messy face, and impacted boogers limiting his breathing. I made a second report to DHS the second week I was in the home for the same reasons but again was told there would be no follow up. After 8 weeks of services, Jose's mom selected to discharge him from services against medical advice although Jose continued to qualify and have profound communication needs. DHS again did not follow up when I reported the discharge.

Jose is one of several stories of me being in a home, seeing something concerning, reporting my concern, and seeing very little follow up from my concern. Additional services, follow through, and support for families like Jose will be paramount for the children like Jose in Oregon.

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