

October 8<sup>th</sup> 2009

Honourable Mary Polak  
Minister of Children and Family Development  
Stn. Provincial Government  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Polak,

The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD) is extremely concerned about the proposed funding cuts for children with autism that will abolish the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) program.

We are writing in the hope that you will reconsider this decision which will have tragic consequences for children living with this disability who will be unable to receive this crucial treatment as a result.

We support the Autism Society of BC's (ASBC) position that the decision to take EIBI treatment away from all children is regressive, fiscally unsound and will result in a great human cost. For children in the program and those on the waiting list, the EIBI program is their best chance for living a productive, meaningful life. Without it, they will start school at a significant developmental disadvantage. Most will be unable to catch up.

As ASBC has noted, failure to treat autism early will ultimately cost the province significantly more than the cost of the EIBI program. According to your own ministry's data, the cost of EIBI for the 70 children currently in the program is approximately \$5 million per year (70 children at \$70,000 a year). Research indicates that each \$5 million invested will save British Columbians roughly \$175 million in future health care and social services costs.<sup>1</sup>

We respectfully urge you to reverse your decision to cut funding to this crucial program for children with autism in BC.

Sincerely,

Jane Dyson  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Cambridge Center for Behavioural Studies, EIBI programs save \$2.5 million per child; 70 children at \$2.5 million adds up to \$175 million.