

# To Whom It May Concern and Those That Can Help

**I** HAVE AN 8 YEAR OLD SON, HIS NAME IS PAUL AND HE'S BEEN diagnosed as autistic. I carry around a lot of guilt just being his father, but more so because I didn't know anything about autism. The more I find out about autism, the more I am convinced that early intervention is the main key to overcoming autism. Paul did not receive early intervention because I didn't know about those services and could not afford, hence, the guilt.

Now let's talk about the bureaucrats. In order for a child to be diagnosed as autistic, he must demonstrate certain behaviors. These are some things that led to my son's diagnosis of autism:

1. delayed language
2. lack of social interaction
3. restricted diet
4. self-stimulation
5. fearlessness
6. high tolerance for pain
7. restricted interest

One or more of the above behaviors can be diagnosed as autism. Paul demonstrates all of them, and was diagnosed as having mental retardation. This meant he didn't get early intervention and the correct therapy. The school saw the same behaviors, and that Paul was being warehoused, not educated, and took no steps to change. Their excuse, "he was mentally retarded."

Through my support group, I found out there were law firms that would represent Paul and bill D.C. Public Schools, but they have their own agenda. I don't think they wanted results too quickly. I do believe early intervention and the correct therapies can and would save a lot of money and enhance a lot of lives.

In conclusion, Paul is making progress due in large part to the information and resources we have received from the Male Caregivers Advocacy Support Group (MCAS). Thank you, HSC Pediatric Center.

*Mr. Joseph H. Bryant*