

Testimony of Jeff Baril, Field Coordinator

R.I.S.E. Inc.

Before the Committee for Health and Human Services

Testifying in Support of

LD 473 - Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program

Hearing Date: 3/29/2023

Rep. Margaret Craven, and members of the Committee for Health and Human Services. My name is Jeff Baril, Field Coordinator and BHP at R.I.S.E. Inc. In Auburn. I am testifying in support of LD 473 – Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program.

I wanted to take a moment to share my uncommon perspective. I have been working with people with Developmental Disabilities for 15 years in total, my first 13 years were spent working direct care in group homes and residential settings. The last 18 months I've expanded my horizons and moved into the children's specialized 28 services and have been welcomed into my company to grow my role to work hand in hand with several Board Certified Behavioral Analysts.

My career has been built towards helping people, teaching people, and working with people. Within my time working with the BCBAs, I've been able to see the evolution of skills, and increases in possibilities of the children I work with, each success being a momentous occasion! The gains, systematic increases, and generalizations that ABA nurtures.

I have a natural drive when I am working with any person, to give them all that I can give them to enhance their life. In my past working with adults, I used very unguided approaches, tested ideas, too a lot of chances, and received a lot of success in a majority of the life enhancing things I brought to my adults. Since moving to work with children, my approach never changed only my intentions, my phrases, and my basin of support to be successful at my job. When previously I would have to say, "trust me this is how I think it will work", now I can confidently state, "using this reinforcement, I can see an increase this, and this would be the next step after." It seems like they are similar in my mind because they both are using my experience, objective measurements, and drive to enhance, but the second one is systematic and has the highest long term success rate. It puts more value in something when you earn it, versus when it is given, I personally call it "skin in the game".

The asset of a BCBAs time was evident when I spoke to them, received the training, and learned how ABA works. It is a time consuming process with a lot of measurements, a lot of factors, and a lot of insights into the person and everything around them. It takes an inspiration amount of insight, patience, research, and understanding of the large overview of what is actually happening.

The reason I am in support of increasing the number of hours is because I can see now in hindsight how I wish I had the same guidance on certain key points of my career, I may have been able to continue some of the activities that we had to stop simply because I did not know how to regain momentum, and

although I was surrounded by good people supporting the people we were caring for, I lost my drive and accepted it simply because I could not figure it out on my own.

The systematic approach of ABA, could have guided me the one step back in order to take two steps forward, brought in some of the back to basics and the goals and reason I wanted to do what I was doing. It wasn't just going to a baseball game to me, there was many hurdles my person served, and I went through to make it happen, it was our reinforcement and our payoff for the large amount of work that we had done to get into that seat and enjoy the popcorn sounds and sights.

In the hands of a BCBA there is opportunity, there is assistance, and there is growth potential for any adult, myself included, to create these life enriching activities that may never happen if a Direct care worker gives up as I once had.

I Thank you all for giving consideration to my experiences and my words, and I implore you to all so see the value that I see in this small step towards the future of another person.

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