

1/31/2024

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of LD 2120 An Act to Fund the Delivery of Educational Services to Children with Special Needs as Required by State and Federal Law in Special Purpose Private Preschools.

When my son, Acer, was two years old he was diagnosed with a rare genetic condition that most people will never hear of in their life. With little research on something this rare we were handed a pamphlet and genetic results, we were told he would progress further, just really slowly and at some point he would plateau and stop gaining skills. For a long time, I found myself mourning the loss of the life our little boy would never be able to have. As time went on I learned to love and appreciate every little thing he did and each milestone became monumental moments of him overcoming this

When Acer turned 3 we started to notice a little bit of a plateau. Through the year he did gain some skills but it was getting slower and slower. He had gotten comfortable and we have gotten comfortable with his predictability and routines. Acer started attending preschool at Woodfords Family Services in September of 2023. He was able to start quickly due to more spots being opened up this fall thanks to the promised funding for the program. In just four months I have watched Acer transform quicker than I ever thought would be possible. I have watched Acer walk across rooms with no support, he interacts with toys he never looked twice at before. He is overcoming the physical limitations placed on him due to his condition. We have also watched his emotional intelligence transform entirely. Acer hugs and kisses, he expresses his wants and needs more. He has transformed into a little kid who plays with his sister instead of being indifferent to her presence. He motions to our hands and shows us what he wants us to do to help him. He is mischievous and helps his little sister get to things that she is too short to reach and he has created his own way to get my attention when he needs it. The support and care that Acer has been given at Woodfords has created a new vision for the life he will have. The unknown is a little less scary and after watching what just four months have done for him I can only imagine the skills he will gain continuing in this program.

Thanks to Woodfords we can now look into the future for Acer, and the sky's the limit to the skills and independence he will gain.

Thank you for your time,

Caroline Dyer