

Chairman and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Kimberly Graham a Norwalk Parent Leader. I am a mother of a child with autism and I stand here today in strong support of raised bill #6666 section 7. The guidelines set forth in this bill will protect, enrich, and in many cases recover children with autism. My child is a perfect example of why voting yes for bill #6666 is critical.

At 21 months my sweet son Nathan received his Autism diagnosis at Yale University. Their recommendations focused on an early and intensive 30 hours a week of Applied Behavior Analysis programming, the only evidence based strategy for autism.

At Nathan's 3 year PPT transition meeting into Norwalk Public Schools, Nathan's ABA program was assigned to Stacy Lore BCBA owner of Spectrum Kids. Thrilled the school had recognized the importance of a BCBA we got started. Nathan responded quickly to the basic ABA question and answer programming, however, his therapists had no idea how to score or track his data. He was drilled with repetitive questions and quickly became rigid and robotic. He was forced to learn rote language with no meaning. Tantrums increased and scripting his programs became his only means of communication.

What is critical to understand is: Bad ABA is more damaging than no ABA. With my child's decline, I searched for answers. With one google search to bacb.org I found, Stacy Lore is not a certified behavior analyst as she claimed. In addition, a call to New York University proved Stacy had no acclaimed Doctorate, Masters, or course work. How could this happen?

With no autism guidelines for schools to follow, why would they bother looking into her past work experience? Who cares what her credentials and certifications are? With autism reaching epidemic numbers school systems settle for babysitters instead of behavior analysts. In 2008, 8 children in Norwalk Public Schools, and countless others in 5 other districts, fell victim to Stacy Lore. Many of those children, made no progress, my son and several others regressed significantly.

The business of Autism can be lucrative for a snake oil salesman like Stacy. How many other special needs predators are out there? Passing this bill will provide our well meaning school districts with much needed guidelines. Tax dollars will be spent responsibly on the appropriate education our children are entitled to.

With an appropriate ABA program for the last 10 months, my son has progressed leaps and bounds. Nathan's dedicated team of behavior analysts have successfully filled in his building blocks of learning. However, the robotic tone still lingers. His force taught rigidity has not waived. precious, irretrievable time has been lost for my son. I plead with you today, do not let another child's life be compromised. Vote in favor for raised bill # 6666 section 7.

Thank you for consideration.

Kimberly Graham

