

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

Room 102, State Capitol, Helena, MT
Friday, January 14, 2005, 8:00 a.m.

EXHIBIT 20
DATE Jan. 14, 2005
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"Where we were, Where we are, WHERE ARE WE GOING?"

August 8, 1990, my twin sons, Matthew & Christopher Smith, were born 3 ½ months premature, weighed just under 2 lbs. each. Approximately 6 months later, the twins began receiving Part C of IDEA (entitled Early Intervention Services for birth to 3 years old), when they came home from the hospital and were stabilized.

In 1992 - to present 2004: Christopher, 2 years old, began receiving Intensive Family Education & Support Services (IFES or "Medicaid Waiver Services").

In 1999 - to present 2004: Matthew, 9 years old, began receiving Intensive Family Education & Support Services.

In 1996, the twins were 6 years old and it cost, \$7,200 for Speech Therapy; \$2,900 Occupational Therapy; \$6,400 for Physical Therapy; \$1,000 for Disposable Pull Ups; \$7,700 for Home Health Nurses; \$11,000 for Oxygen and Medical Supplies; and \$15,000 for Medical Care. This was paid by a combination of private insurance, medicaid waiver and general fund.

	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Christopher</u>	
In 2003 approx:	\$18,969	\$17,172	Age 13
In 2004 approx:	\$18,263	\$19,305	Age 14
In 2005 approx:	<u>\$20,230</u>	<u>\$18,950</u>	Age 15
Approx. 3 yr. TOTAL:	\$57,462	\$55,427	

In comparison to these budgets for *providing services to support the twins in their home, in their community*, it costs approx. **\$75,000** (includes medicaid funds) for an adult with a disability to live in a community's Group Home with Day Program Services; and it costs approx. **\$125,000** (includes medicaid funds) for an adult with a disability to live in an Institution. It is crystal clear that providing services to support the twins in their home, in their community for **three years is more cost effective** than for an individual for **one year in a Group Home** and it is **2x more cost effective** than for an individual living in an **institution for one year**. In other words, roughly 6 years of Matthew's annual budgets would equal 1 year in an institution! And roughly 6 years of Christopher's annual budgets would equal 1 year in an institution!

The twins are now 14 years old, 8th grade at Helena Middle School. They will be graduating from Helena High School in Spring 2009. Roughly 4 ½ short years away. No more school and related special education services during the day from 8:00am to 3:00pm. The reality is that the twins will be put on a *waiting list for adult services*, supported living, supported employment. And they could be there a short time (months to a year), or a long time (years—like many families I personally know). It all depends on how much money is in the budget. Currently, there are 717 people on the waiting list for adult services. I don't want my sons to be 719.

An incredible amount of planning, hard work, time and money has been invested in my sons, Matthew & Christopher by IDEA Part C (Early Intervention Services); IDEA Part B (preschool, elementary and high school); by the State of Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Department of Health & Human Services Disabilities Services Division; by Family Outreach;

by great numbers of teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals, habilitation aids, respite care providers, health care providers; by their younger brother, 8 ½ year old Timmy; by me—their mother; and most importantly by Matthew & Christopher who thru this incredible support have been able to learn, grow, develop their abilities by overcoming their disabilities, and maintain their health and a wonderful quality of life.

Here's my point: Don't throw what's been invested in these young men away. Don't condemn them, or anyone, to a "waiting list" for adult services. Support them as adults as they were supported while they were growing up. **They still need support.** Everyone has worked very hard to get them where they are today, and if they aren't maintained, they will be lost. And I know that's true for every individual with a disability.

Keep the funding levels adequate to continue the support of babies and children with disabilities in their homes, with their families, in their communities; then extend and expand the funding levels to provide adequate support for adults with disabilities and their families, so that they may stay where they belong in their communities.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Vicki LaFond-Smith, Proud mother of Christopher, Matthew & Timothy
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