



ONTARIO AUTISM COALITION

333 Glen Shields Avenue, Vaughan, Ontario, L4K 1T4 (416) 451-8315

September 15, 2016

Hon. Michael Coteau,
Minister of Children and Youth Services
56 Wellesley Street West, 14th floor,
Toronto, ON
M5S 2S3

Dear Minister;

The Ontario Autism Coalition is very disturbed by the [facts presented by Andrea Gordon in yesterday's Toronto Star](#). Over the course of our [#AutismDoesntEndAt5](#) campaign, we stressed that nothing in the Clinical Expert Panel's report justified the imposition of an age cutoff on the IBI program. During our campaign, Dr. Ian Dawe, former chair of the expert panel, stated in one tweet that "what the government has funded was not what we recommended" and, in another, he advised a parent of a child over 5 to get IBI. Like Ms. Gordon, our members had conversations with committee members who refused to step forward, cowed by the non-disclosure agreement (NDA) that they had been required to sign. We now know that committee members did, in fact, speak out to the government in emphatic terms, on paper, and they were ignored.

There are many troubling aspects to yesterday morning's news, not the least being the imposition of another non-disclosure agreement (NDA) on the implementation advisory committee for the new program scheduled to be in place next year. The signing of the agreement was a requirement for participating in committee activities, and was of great concern to OAC members. In the end, we placed greater value on participation and set aside our reservations. Our nervousness has now turned to very justified worry and anger.

There have been serious trust issues between autism parents and professionals and this government, issues which extend back to before your time as Minister and before this Premier's tenure. Premier McGuinty's letter to the mother of a child with autism during the 2003 election campaign saying that he believed age cutoffs were "unfair and discriminatory" and that he would end them was belied when he filed an appeal of a court order to do exactly that. Afterward, the IBI program seemed like a sales flyer picture that carried the words "product may not be exactly as shown." The culmination came earlier this year with your predecessor's attempt to re-enact the age cutoff. It was no wonder, then, that some parents refused to sign agreements to accept the initial offer of \$8,000 funding, and that many continued to refuse to trust the Ministry's actions even after the offer was raised to \$10,000 funding installments. What trust that may remain has been seriously shaken yet again by the news that a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) was used to enable your government to promote and disseminate a false version of expert advice.

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#AutismDoesntEndAt5

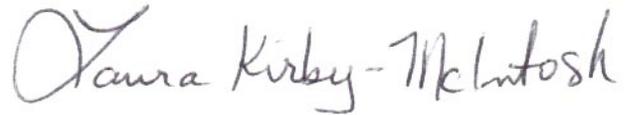
The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.
www.ontarioautismcoalition.com

On behalf of the families of the Ontario Autism Coalition, we call on you today, as Minister, to waive the non-disclosure agreements that have been imposed on members of your Ontario Autism Program Advisory Committee. It's time to restore some trust between the government and the autism community by permitting a full and open discussion about how we help kids with autism in Ontario. We've heard you say that the words 'accountability' and 'transparency' matter. It's time to live up to that statement and to give those words meaning for the families and friends of children living with autism in Ontario.

Respectfully,



**Bruce McIntosh,
President,
Ontario Autism Coalition**



**Laura Kirby-McIntosh,
Vice-President,
Ontario Autism Coalition**



**Sharon Gabison, B.Sc, B.Sc.P.T., MSc., Ph.D. Cand.
Director,
Ontario Autism Coalition**



**James Porter, Ph.D., C.Psych., BCBA
Clinical Advisor,
Ontario Autism Coalition**



**Anne Jovanovic,
Policy Advisor and Alliance Liaison,
Ontario Autism Coalition**

cc: Hon. Kathleen Wynne
Hon. Tracy MacCharles

#AutismDoesntEndAt5
