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Support For Families With Autistic Children

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is again going to focus on autism and how our government is failing parents who need help. I spoke yesterday that my constituent has a three-year-old boy who has autism.

Mr. Speaker, autistic children do not cope well when faced with changes to their daily routine. My constituent has been trying to tell this to the Department of Health and Social Services, but to no avail. When it comes to speech therapy for an autistic child, why can't home therapy be an option?

It is next to impossible for my constituent to get her son to go to the half-hour per week session with a speech therapist. He is out of his element and begins hitting whatever he can, banging his head on the taxi and screaming incessantly. These out-of-home visits to speech therapy cause my constituent and her family a tremendous amount of stress each and every week.

An autistic child is usually diagnosed around the age of two. Between the age of two and four, a parent is virtually left to their own devices when it comes to the 24-hour care that is required to attend to the needs and safety of the child. The Department of Health and Social Services could offer a day aid to help, but the stipulation is that my constituent would have to leave the home with her two-year old daughter for the day. This scenario might help if there were two parents, both of them working. However, for a single mother living in social housing it's not an option.

I also mentioned yesterday the steady increase in the rate of autism being seen in our children today, and I believe it is time that the government take a serious look at the establishment of a day care type facility for children with special needs. Today there is no facility or dedicated services for preschool autistic children. As a government, I believe we can, and should, be doing more to address this special need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause