

SB_244
Colorado Health and Human Services Committee
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My son Robert is 21 years old and was just recently diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder.

When he was in second grade teachers said he had a difficult time paying attention in class and suggested that he had AD/HD and recommended stimulant medication. We tried everything to help him pay attention in class-adjusting dosages, giving it to him at different times of the day, different medications. Such medication was not helpful and made him feel worse.

At one point, teachers in 5th grade simply let him sit in the hallway each day and read books by himself because they had no idea how to get him to attend and not be disruptive. Eventually a teacher from another class, who was a friend, called and told me what was happening. I spoke to the principle and this was the only solution they could offer. This was so frustrating to Robert, he would cry because he said he was trying so hard to be "good" in class. As his parent and not understanding what was really going on with him I felt that same frustration. As he continued through school we had numerous IEP's done. Teachers did not want him in class because they felt he was a disruptive influence to the other students that were "trying to learn". So they chose to keep him away from the other students. This isolated my son even more then he already was. As he got older other children and later teenagers noticed the difference in his behavior. This led teasing and getting picked on relentlessly.

Eventually Robert quit going to school after another student and his friends started physically harassing him and the school could not really do anything to protect him.

Robert was able to get a job through an acquaintance at a restaurant. He was fired and has not been able to gain employment since then. That was three years ago.

Robert was robbed because he's nervous and confused about keeping his money in the bank. He does not know how to communicate with others to

complete simple transactions such as returning something an item to the store if it doesn't fit. He will agree with whatever someone else may says because he thinks they must be telling him the truth.

He is a very smart young man who struggles daily with tasks that you would expect any other young man his age to have the ability to do. He is profoundly depressed and has got in trouble with the law. He stays at home all day unable to make any friends or successfully complete typical household tasks such as cleaning the kitchen.

This has put my family through a great amount of stress. I worry every day that my son will do something to hurt himself because he feels hopeless after years of trying to cope with this.