

INQUIRY INTO CHILD PROTECTION

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Child protection workers

- Child protection workers need to be trained. They need to understand what actual child protection is. For example, with my case, because I have a learning difficulty, I encouraged my son to read books on things he was interested in, such as Enid Blyton books. According to the caseworker from DOCS my son reading books was considered child abuse whereas in my view it was educational. I was told that reading books helps with their education and imagination.
- Child protection workers need to also have a better understanding of domestic and family violence. For instance, I was told by workers that leaving an abusive relationship was child abuse, whereas I thought leaving was doing the right thing. Workers did not also understand that my son was being abusive towards me, which was family violence.
- My son was diagnosed with ODD – Oppositional Defiance Disorder. There was no support provided by DOCS to me and my two boys. When he was diagnosed mid-2000, the paediatrician only gave me a script for medication, there was no other support. I had no idea what ODD was, there were no services or workers qualified with experience in ODD.
- Child protection workers need to tell the truth. When I was in Court, workers told the court that my house had mould in it and was cluttered. Both my boys were asthmatic so I didn't have any mould in the house. Workers did not have any proof to back up what they were saying in court and the judge didn't ask for any proof either.
- Workers also said in my court proceedings that I had a mental illness, yet no proof of this was provided. Judges didn't ask for any proof. The court doesn't listen to my side, they only heard DOCS side.
- If workers remove a child that should never have been removed in the first place they should be held accountable. If they had no proof they should be charged with lying to the court. They should be held accountable for putting the child and family through all that trauma and charged with child abuse themselves.

Foster care services

- Foster care services, like _____, are the same as DOCS. They like to abuse their power. They like to bully parents. I have felt bullied as they have asked me to agree to their lies. If I don't, I don't get to see my child. Foster care workers need to be trained as well. These workers feel like they can take their bad moods out on me, which is unprofessional. One said to me "All I had to do was twist your arm to get what I wanted".
- Foster care services also need to listen to what the child wants. They also need to stop using children against the parents to get what they want. For instance, if I didn't buy my son

something, he would go to the worker and say mum didn't listen to me etc. Instead of calling me to discuss the issue, they would respond to my son that that was correct when it wasn't.

- Foster care workers also need to work with both parents, not just one of them. In my case, the workers are working more with my ex-partner not me, which is showing my child that my ex-partner has more rights than I do simply because he is male. They are also teaching my child that it is right to lie and bully and abuse me and I have spoken to the caseworker about my son's behaviour in this regard, to which the worker has said it is ok for him to behave like that.
- Workers at some services also do not get enough support. I was told from an ex-worker of that he did not get support while he was there and he had to leave because a child assaulted him. wasn't impressed as someone from the public who witnessed the assault reported it to police. Apparently there are other workers who have left for similar reasons.

The Ombudsman

- The Ombudsman has been no help to me. They have done nothing. They keep saying to me that they will look into it, but they won't ask for proof when says they are working with me.

* Due to my learning difficulties, this submission was taken down with assistance from a staff member in the Legislative Council committees section.