

6330 Clay Furnace Rd.
Sharpsville, Pa. 16150

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MAY 4 1973

cc: Taylor

Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth,

I would like to let you know, I am with you 100% of the way you handled the situation at Polk School.

I am a mother of a mental retarded child who is in school for 2 years now. He is ^{almost} 4 years old. I would never send him away to a school or an institution. (Never.) With the way things are now a days. I can't and won't trust none of them. You never know what they are doing when you are not there. Of all things (cages) I can't even cage an animal up, let alone ^{one} person. This is terrible.

As far as P.A.R.C. It is tops. My son went to school for 1 1/2 yrs. down at Westmoreland County Association for the Retarded. They are wonderful. They taught him how to eat, wash, dress, brush his teeth, sit his table, ride a bike, and etc.

We had a 5 hour day school, using speech therapist, it was just wonderful.
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But since I moved up here now, He goes to Mercer County Association for the Retarded. And I must say I do not like it. You can have the M.C.A.R.

The teachers we have, does not have the kind of love or care for them. There is too much attention shown to certain kids and not the others. Some will get cookies at snack time and some get two and some won't. We have to have a 5 hour day school down here, because they aren't learning much at all in 2 1/2 hrs. We have to have 2 classes to separate the kids. Some are faster than others, and some are bored and won't do anything. So the whole ^{class} has to stop and wait till the child makes their mind up to come and sit down. This is losing precious time, which we don't have.

All the mothers down here agree. But what can we do. We need help.

P.S. Some don't get any cookies at all.

I wished there were some way I could

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talk to you. I also wished you could come and talk to all of us mothers.

I also wished we could having busing.

We don't get any progress report (like a report card) letting us know how the children are doing in school. The teacher hardly ever tells us what they are doing and what we can do to help.

All I can say is, Westmoreland County Association for the Retarded is the best school there is. The teachers and staff are tops.

But up here, they are way behind. Everything up here, my son has learn down at Westmoreland when he first started to school. M.C.A.R. is not up to date.

If you have the time I would like for you to write me a letter or call if possible, and let me know what can be done. I would like to talk to you. I can explain better than writing.

Another thing, the people that are doing all the complaining of you fraing
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Dr. McClelland, probably doesn't have any mental retarded children, or they wouldn't be complaining. If they did, they sure would understand how we feel having the retarded penned in cages. A lot of people are sure complaining, and I bet most of them don't even understand or know what is going on. In my opinion, we do not need politics in the Association of the Retarded. If we got all the politics out, things sure would be better. If the politicians wanted to do any good, they could see we got the money to run the schools, get buses for us, speech therapists, and teachers who loves and care for this children. We need people who cares and understand, and want to help them learn. Not people who just wants headlines, or their pay checks. Doesn't any one know these children are special. The people in this world are all wrong. They have wrong ideas about the Retarded Child. And this is a shame.

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Nobody has any consideration for the retarded.

What I can't understand is why I can not get any life insurance on my son. Nobody wants to insure a mental retarded. Do you call this fair? I sure don't. I don't think the Retarded People are being treated right. I am concerned about this.

Another thing Mrs. Wohlgemuth, we ~~have~~ have a color girl in my son's class. And there sure is a racial problem. The teacher shows she doesn't care or doesn't want her there. She ignores the little girl at times. And most of the time she ignores her mother. You can see this plan as day. But the mother will not take her out of school. And I sure don't blame her. She also is one of the children that gets a cookies once in awhile. If she doesn't say cookie she doesn't get one. It is not fair to give to one and not the other. We are all equal. And should be treated so.

Our teacher loses her patience to fast.

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She pulls them by the hands or arms to hard. There are some children that gets corrected the wrong way. I don't think she knows what she's doing. If she does, she does not belong in this kind of school. She does know what she is doing, when she loses her patience.

There has to be some changes down here at Mercer County.

I am so sorry for such a sloppy letter. I do hope you can read. And I want to thank you for taking time out to read it. If possible I would like to know your opinion of my letter, and see what can be done.

Thank You
Mrs. William Besser
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