

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Cecelia Hartley](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Monday, June 30, 2014 8:23:27 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2014 6:14 PM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Saturday, June 28, 2014 - 18:14

Agency: DEPARTMENT ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES DARS

First Name: Charity

Last Name: Bartell

Title: J.D.

Organization you are affiliated with:

Email:

City: Austin

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

As an active member of the Autism Society, mother of two boys with autism, and a mother of a nephew with autism, I am opposed to any cuts to this agency. My nephew, who will turn three in September, is currently receiving Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services from DARS. He only gets 4 hours a month of early intervention, and these are the only professional services that he gets to address speech delay and other delays caused by autism. Many parents of children under three with autism completely rely on ECI services, which are already inadequate. Budget cuts will just make the situation worse and cause more young children to be turned away. Ultimately, this is bad for the state because I expect that many, like my nephew, who is nonverbal, will not be rehabilitated enough to stay at home when they are older and will face eventual institutionalization.

The Children's Autism Program, operated by DARS, has a few centers around Texas to serve children aged 3-8 who are on Medicaid or who are otherwise without insurance to provide for Applied Behavior Analysis (basically behavioral services that promote independence and increase speech and IQ also). Children on Medicaid in Texas do not get ABA therapy, so even though the Children's Autism Program is not nearly large enough to meet the needs of Texans aged 3-8 with autism and without sufficient insurance to meet their needs, it's all we've got.

Since my own kids are young and doing well, largely thanks to me quitting my job to work with them and to private therapy, they are not using DARS programs. We also have insurance to cover ABA, speech, and occupational therapy. However, many people are not so lucky.

I also know that adults with autism need a lot more help from DARS in finding jobs and that just about every DARS program has more services than are able to be met.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Do not cut the DARS budget. The budget should be increased to meet the current demand for services.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree