

Family sues ABC for 'failing to support' boy [AU]^[1]

National, The Age

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

A severely disabled Melbourne boy is suing ABC Learning for failing to provide him with adequate support while in its care, despite receiving additional Federal Government funding to do so.

The boy's father believes his son was entitled to one-to-one care. Even though an additional carer was employed with funds secured by the family through a rigorous process, none of his carers were trained to meet his specific needs. The additional carer was often helping other children at the centre or performing menial duties such as cleaning.

The case is believed to be the first in Victoria where a child-care centre has faced action over the quality of care for a disabled child.

The boy's father is bringing the case after the boy spent six months at a southern suburban ABC centre where the father says he was poorly treated and discriminated against. The father alleges ABC did not train its staff to communicate with his son. He also alleges ABC failed to use programs that would help the boy and did not fit his foot orthotics properly.

The statement of claim in the Federal Court, in Melbourne, alleges that ABC Learning received funding for a trained carer to help the boy, then aged 4. It alleges that neither the aide supplied nor any other carer working with the boy was adequately trained to meet his specific needs.

"I felt it was a great opportunity which was lost for my son to socialise with other children, but in the end the children knew more about signing (language) than any of the carers in the room because I taught them," the father said.

...

He said the father had disagreed with the course of action for the boy, which was at odds with ABC Learning's specialist advice.

The father's complaint is a common one. Both Parents Victoria and the Association for Children with a Disability report escalating complaints about the care of children with a disability.

Association for Children with a Disability chief executive officer Michael Gourlay said the association had received more than 300 complaints about child care, kindergarten and schools where the parents believed their child should be receiving one-to-one dedicated assistance.

- reprinted from The Age

Tags: quality^[2]

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