



CENTRAL VALLEY AUTISM PROJECT, INC.

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1317 Oakdale Rd., Ste. 800 Modesto, CA 95355 • (209) 521-4791 • (209) 521-4794 fax

DATE: March 5, 2009

TO: Parents & friends

RE: Protect services for children with autism

The severe economic problems at the national, state, and local levels threaten funding for all individuals with special needs, including children with autism spectrum disorders who receive intensive behavior analytic intervention.

Funding reduced by 3%. We have already been told that payment for our services from Valley Mountain Regional Center will be reduced by 3% through June 2010. This is because Valley Mountain Regional Center has had its own budget reduced. **This will likely directly affect your child's service.**

Please help stop any further budget cuts. VMRC is expected to cut their budget an additional 7.1% through June 2010. Service providers will be directly impacted by this additional cut as they may be expected to absorb the 7.1% cut in reimbursement rates for their services. **Please help stop any further budget cuts and potential eligibility standard changes. With further budget cuts, eligibility requirements may change and make it more difficult for children to obtain and sustain services (e.g. DDS entry eligibility, revision to Lanterman Act, enact assessments disqualifying your child from their program, etc.).**

1. **How can you help?**

Contact State Legislators, the Department of Developmental Services, and Valley Mountain Regional Center to protect funding for intensive behavior analytic intervention for children with autism as provided by Central Valley Autism Project, Inc.

When should I contact them? Right NOW! Today! Decisions and plans are being made right now that will impact funding to regional centers as they try to absorb the budget cuts. **Email letters directly to people listed below IMMEDIATELY as decisions are being made NOW.**

What should I say? Email a letter **IMMEDIATELY** advocating for your child's services to Dick Jacobs at VMRC before the board meeting on March 9th. Tell them about your child's needs and his/her progress within CVAP, Inc. Advocate for researched based services for your children. Ask them to protect funding for intensive behavior analytic treatment programs like ours so that services continue at the levels needed to produce the critical improvements in your child's language, cognitive, behavior, play, self-help, and communication skills which will improve the quality of your child's and families life. Urge family members, friends and members of the community to do the same. **Include in your statement that your letter "needs to be read at the board meeting".**

Dick Jacobs, Executive Director, Valley Mountain Regional Center

Phone: (209) 955-3217

E-mail: rjacobs@vmrc.net

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 692290
Stockton, CA 95269-2290

Who else should I contact with similar information?

Karen Bass, Speaker of the California Assembly
Phone: (916) 319-2047; Fax: (916) 319-2147
E-mail: Assemblymember.Bass@assembly.ca.gov e-mail
Mailing Address: Capitol Office
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

Darrell Steinberg, California Senate President pro Tem
Phone: (916) 651-4006; Fax: (916) 323-2263
E-mail: Senator.Steinberg@senate.ca.gov
Mailing address: State Capitol, Room 205

Terri Delgadillo, Director, California Department of Developmental Services
Phone: (916) 654-1989
E-mail: sarah.steenhausen@dds.ca.gov
Mailing address: P.O. Box 944202
Sacramento, CA 94244-2020

Kim Belshé, California Health and Human Services
Phone: (916) 654-3454; Fax (916) 654-3343
Mailing address: 1600 Ninth St, Rm 460
Sacramento, CA 95814

2. **PLEASE ATTEND** Valley Mountain Regional Center Board of Director's meeting on Monday 3/9/09 @ 6:00P.M. (address: 702 N. Aurora St., Stockton CA). Attend this meeting to speak and advocate for your child's services. Your voices need to be heard!

It is CRITICAL that your voices be heard. Advocates for many different kinds of services are making their concerns heard right now in no uncertain terms. For example, advocates for adult services may be requesting portions of monies that would otherwise be allocated to young children with autism. **Please make sure that local and state administrators and representatives also hear about the importance of evidence based intensive behavior analytic intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders, and how well your child is progressing.** The voices of parents and family members are **vital** right now for continued services.

Please keep informed about the effects of the California budget cuts on regional center funding.

Check out <http://www.dds.ca.gov/Director/PublicForum.cfm>. You can also receive updates by signing up for e-mail alerts of events and meetings at the California Disability Community Action Network at <http://www.cdcan.us>.

Contact us if you have any questions. Together we can help protect the vital services your child needs.

Sincerely,
Mila Amerine-Dickens, M.S., B.C.B.A.
Executive Director