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LETTER -- Autism doesn?t end at age 5: MPP

On May 17th, the Wynne Liberals voted down a motion from the Ontario PC Caucus that called for the Government to provide support for all children with autism.

Our motion stated:

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario accepts that autism doesn't end at the age of 5;

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario accepts that Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) therapy is statistically effective at improving the development of autistic children of any age;

and The Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports restoring funding for IBI therapy for children over the age of 5.

Members from both the NDP and PC Caucus spoke in support of the motion and shared personal stories of families impacted by the Government's decision.

Currently, 85 per cent of children receiving IBI therapy are 5 and older. As a result of the Government's decision, approximately 3,500 children who are currently receiving therapy or on the waitlist will lose out on accessing this scientifically-proven therapy.

I am disappointed the Government ignored experts and thousands of parents and chose to vote down our motion to help our province's children.

Children over the age of five still have special needs the province must address, and IBI therapy has shown to help improve the lives of children of all ages, to allow them to communicate with their family, succeed in school, and thrive in our communities.

No child should be left behind in receiving the necessary support they deserve. That is why my Leader, Patrick Brown, has promised an Ontario PC Government will reinstate IBI therapy for children over the age of 5, because we know autism doesn't end at 5.

Sylvia Jones, MPP (Dufferin-Caledon)

Ontario PC Deputy Leader and Critic for Children and Youth Services