

Simpson Scenario

Ms. Simpson is a single mother of two. She has a daughter, Laura, who is three years old and a son Brian, who is two. Laura is a typically developing child who attends preschool five mornings a week. Brian attends the local Easter Seals program for his preschool experience. He has cerebral palsy, some developmental delays and is on seizure medications.

At the last IFSP meeting, therapies at a clinic were recommended for Brian three days a week in addition to what he receives at the Easter Seals program. Neither the clinic nor the Easter Seals program is close to the family home. Ms. Simpson works from her home. It is a constant struggle to make ends meet financially while making sure both children receive what they need.

Ms. Simpson feels constant pressure from the professionals working with her son and feels obligated to go wherever they suggest in order to get the help he needs. Not wanting to be labeled “non-compliant” by the professionals and afraid of losing services, Ms. Simpson spends a good deal more of her time driving to appointments than the actual hours of therapy for Brian. There is also little time left at the end of the day for normal family interactions. Lately, she has skipped some therapy clinic appointments.

Ms. Simpson wishes that some therapies could be provided in her home so she could help Brian learn to play and move around the house. She is also worried that her car, which is 10 years old, will give out and she will be left with no way to get Brian to his therapies and the Easter Seals program. When she tried to bring up these concerns last week with Mrs. Jones, her Service Coordinator, Mrs. Jones stated that she felt it was best for Brian to attend the therapy clinic because “they have specialized equipment that will improve his motor ability.” Ms. Simpson has watched Brian pull himself up to a rolling footstool and walk around the living room. He was very proud of his accomplishment. When she told Mrs. Jones about this, Mrs. Jones said, “That’s not really the same.” Ms. Simpson would eventually like to enroll Brian in a child care program for a few hours a day that is down the street from her house. The children at the center attend the local elementary school where Ms. Simpson hopes Brian will attend when he is older. When she broached this idea of having Brian attend the child care instead of the Easter Seals program, she was told it wouldn’t have the quality of the Easter Seals program and might jeopardize Brian’s progress to date.

Brian’s next IFSP meeting is next week and Ms. Simpson is dreading it. At the first IFSP meeting, she felt so overwhelmed that she didn’t say much even though she wondered how she would get Brian to all his services and continue to work at home. She feels discouraged that this one may be the same and wants to make sure the professionals understand her concerns.

Used courtesy of Dr. Susan Donovan, faculty member at the University of Central Florida.