

Chloe Meckel

14 years old

Chloe was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 18 months. She did not make eye contact and showed signs of obsessive compulsive tendencies. Chloe is nonverbal, has severe meltdowns and requires constant care as well as one on one attention in school and at home.

Over five years ago Chloe's mom filed due process against the school as they were not meeting her needs. Due to the open interpretation of Section 504 (Free Appropriate Public Education), no progress was made.

Over the years several incidents occurred and Chloe's needs continued to be neglected. The school agreed during due process to have an aid for my daughter and an OT for her sensory issues. A year later, she lost her female aid because of budget cuts. Shortly after that they took away the OT stating that Chloe didn't need an OT because that was for children with severe physical disabilities.



The incident that resulted in my family seeking the assistance of building blocks for kids was not the first but was the most physically damaging. On March 24th Chloe's school called to say that she had crushed her hand and that she needed to be picked up as soon as possible. The staff's story at that time was that Chloe was in the weight room with the male aid and that she had crushed her hand in some weights on one of the machines.

She would not let anyone look at her hand once she got to the hospital and she absolutely refused to let them remove the band aids that the school nurse had supplied. She was so determined to not take off her band aid that they had to do the x-ray with them on. Eventually the ER doctor shared that Chloe had three fractures, two in one finger and one in the other. One of her breaks was above her joint so she would need surgery the next day and probably pins.

Before Chloe went to bed that night, her mom changed her and washed her hair. She then noticed that Chloe had fresh bruises on her chest which looked like finger prints. They were fresh bruises so her mom took pictures and texted her teacher to see if anyone has restrained Chloe during this incident and the teacher said no. Her mom became very

concerned and the next day prior to the surgery she informed the staff and a social worker was brought in. The social worker took pictures and was also concerned and reported the school but no investigation followed.

Chloe is right handed and had a cast from her elbow to her fingertip. Chloe is very creative and loves to color and draw and make things which were impossible with her cast. She was also unable to eat or bathe on her own. This inability to do things on her own and her being unable to be creative caused many violent meltdowns.

Since this incident occurred the schools story has changed three times. The week before this situation had occurred Chloe tried to jump off the back of the bus and on many occasions she has run from the school. This incident was a wakeup call for Chloe's family and her mom refused to send her back until she was convinced that it was in Chloe's best interest. A meeting with the school proved useless. Chloe's mom received no apologies and the school treated the entire situation as if it were minor and not a big deal.

After that, Chloe's mom requested an IEP meeting three times and was denied each time. At this time, her mom was given the contact information for Inclusion Advocates to help her deal with the school and Building Blocks to help her with the cost of the advocate. Ellen, Chloe's advocate, told Chloe's mom how to request the meeting and her recommendations worked. However, the school refused to produce Chloe's records and were still fairly unwilling to work with her mom.

Ellen, well versed in special education and IEPs, reviewed 14 years of IEPs and correspondence and incident reports. She then worked with Chloe's mom in order to ensure that Chloe would be in a safe environment and would receive a proper education.

September update from Ellen: After several lengthy mediation sessions and visits to alternative placements that could meet Chloe's needs, I am happy to say that her current school district agreed to place her in a new school that provides the type of intervention that she needs and she is off to a fantastic start! We are currently working with the new team to administer needed assessments and update her IEP, but interim plans and increased services have already been put in place and Chloe's family is quite optimistic that she is finally in a school that can help her move forward and reach her potential. As we complete the transition, I anticipate there will be an ETR meeting followed by another IEP meeting to incorporate the updated findings and recommendations, after which we hope to sit back (for a while!) and watch Chloe benefit from all that she is able to receive at her new school. Gotta love a good ending!!!