

**FRASER PATERSON**

*Petition*

Mr R.F. Johnson presented the following petition bearing the signatures of two persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, bring to your attention the situation of Fraser Paterson and his parents and younger sister Charlotte. The family lives in the suburb of Dianella.

Fraser is a delightful little boy. He is only five years old. He has a very inquisitive mind, and is academically advanced for his age. However, socially he is very immature. He is not yet toilet trained and continues to need help with all his daily needs. He is also extremely active, being “on the go” all day long. Until January this year his parents thought he was a “wilful” child. He has recently been diagnosed with “High Functioning Autism”.

Fraser cannot be left alone with Charlotte, his younger sister. If his parents leave the room they have to put Charlotte in her high chair because Fraser may hurt her. He is like a “bull in a china shop”. He doesn’t appear to realise that she is there and he just “runs through her”. She is a quiet child and, with Fraser being so very demanding, her needs have to take second place.

After Fraser had been diagnosed his parents felt that a load had been lifted from their minds. At last there was an explanation for the difficulties they were experiencing with their son. However, then came the next hurdle, obtaining the services that Fraser needs. Fraser’s parents are acutely aware of the importance of early intervention. Learning over these years is crucial to Fraser’s longer term adjustment and eventual independence.

At this time the family only receives one hour of therapy for Fraser each week. Fraser will be at Pre School next year where he will need a full time aide to assist him to keep on task. His parents believe that he needs more input now to prepare him for school. They worry that if he does not receive this he will be “set up to fail” at school next year.

Fraser’s parents are under an enormous amount of stress. Caring for Fraser is “full on”, constant and extremely demanding. They are both extremely worried about not being able to access the support and assistance that they know is critical for Fraser. They are worried that the amount of time they spend on Fraser is taking its toll on Charlotte. She is not yet speaking and has some gross motor delay. Fraser’s parents need some respite so they can have some relief from the ongoing demands of Fraser’s care. They also need to be able to spend some time with their daughter, focusing on her needs and encouraging her speech. The lack of suitable respite and therapy are pushing this family to the “brink”.

The timely availability of intervention and support for children like Fraser and their families is critical for the development of the child and for the survival of the family. The cost of dependence and family breakdown surely outweigh the cost of providing the support needed.

Now we ask that the Legislative Assembly give urgent attention to:

The provision of the respite services needed by the estimated 950 people with disabilities and their families in Western Australia currently unable to access the respite they need.

The provision of the therapy support services needed by Western Australian children with disabilities currently unable to access the support they need to provide them with the opportunity to develop their potential.

[See petition No 246.]