

## Sarah & Skip Miller

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### To Our Oregon State Legislators:

Our four-year-old daughter, Magdalene, has been enrolled in Oregon's Early Intervention program since she was 4 months old when our pediatrician confirmed that she had low muscle tone. I never wanted to be a part of Early Intervention. I didn't want a child whose needs required this type of support. And today, I am extremely grateful for these wonderful services provided to my daughter for the last 4 years.

I'll never forget the very kind physical therapist who first came to evaluate my daughter's abilities and milestones, which were lagging for her age. She conducted the evaluation with gentleness, kindness, humor and understanding. She even made herself available during the 2-month period we awaited a devastating diagnosis to speak with me about our daughter's progress.

Magdalene was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Type 1 at 6 months and her Early Intervention team now encompasses speech therapists, physical therapists and occupational therapists who show up to our house through a rotational weekly basis, working with our daughter and challenging her to grow, learn and develop new skills so that she might reach her fullest potential with the one shot at life she has been given.

Our daughter's limitations are extremely unique and her requirement of special equipment to sit, transfer, play, ride a bike, stand, and eat is hard to accommodate, let alone afford. Fortunately, Early Intervention and the expansive equipment pool have allowed our daughter's physical needs to be met so that she can join her peers at the pre-school lunch table while being tube-fed, to engage in age-appropriate activities while seated at a table in a chair suited perfectly to Magdalene's body, ultimately, these hard-to-find and hard-to-afford pieces of equipment serve our daughter to be more social and to maximize her potential.

This amazingly talented, experienced, well-educated, open-minded group of professionals have become positive influences on my daughter's life by way of the many therapeutic services they provide her. This brilliant team has helped my daughter learn to speak so she can be not only heard but also understood, to practice physical independence to the best of her ability and to reach milestones we never anticipated possible, ultimately preparing Magdalene for the life of independence we aim for her to have.

My husband and I alone could not do this. We are not trained professionals with years of experience in this field. We do our best and gladly welcome the support we have come to see yields great benefit to our daughter, to our family and ultimately to the greater community. It really does take a village – a village of really awesome specialists for really awesome kids like mine to thrive.

We ask that you not remove or make budget cuts to these invaluable services. They are a life line for our children that helps to maximize their potential and contribution to our communities.

With much gratitude,  
Sarah & Skip Miller

