

To:

The Honourable **John Rustad**, MLA
Leader of the Conservative Party of British Columbia

From:

Darian Thomas

Parent and Legal Guardian of Bennett James Thomas

[REDACTED]

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Date: October 24, 2025

Urgent Request for Assistance – Unlawful Removal of My Son Bennett and Breaches of Duty by MCFD

Dear Mr. Rustad,

I am writing to seek your urgent assistance in addressing the serious misconduct, policy breaches, and procedural failures by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) that have resulted in the unlawful removal and ongoing mistreatment of my son, Bennett James Thomas, a six-year-old medically complex and autistic child.

On August 28, 2025, Bennett was apprehended under section 30 of the CFCSA, despite no evidence of immediate risk or neglect, and without judicial authorization for guardianship. The court did not grant MCFD's request for a temporary custody order, meaning I remain Bennett's legal guardian. Yet, I have been excluded from every major decision regarding his medical, educational, and therapeutic care.

Nearly two months later, my lawyer has still not received disclosure explaining the ministry's reasons for removal or the basis of their Family Plan goals. Despite this, I am being pressured to sign and agree to a Family Plan built on false and contradictory claims that disregard documented letters and reports from Bennett's medical and therapeutic professionals, all of whom have confirmed that my parenting and his care were stable, safe, and appropriate.

The Family Plan was developed by unregistered and inexperienced social workers—one a recent criminology graduate, the other psychology—under an acting Director of Operations who was a team leader temporarily filling that role, not the actual DOO, Michele Wong. These individuals lack training in complex medical and developmental

needs, and their decisions have overridden professional medical direction from qualified experts.

Their lack of training and understanding of complex medical needs has resulted in unsafe, uninformed decisions that have overridden professional medical direction and put Bennett's health and emotional stability at risk.

Since his removal:

1. His G-tube site has become red and irritated, with granulation tissue left untreated.
2. He has lost weight and looks visibly thinner.
3. I have seen bruises on his arms and legs on two separate occasions since being under the care of the Director, without proper incident reporting and medical follow up.
4. His long-standing therapeutic supports—including play therapy, OT, and behavioural intervention—have been discontinued.
5. He was removed from a specialized school and placed in a public classroom that overwhelms him.
6. Despite Bennett's documented fear and trauma history, his father — who has a record of abusive behaviour toward him — has been granted increased contact by the ministry, disrupting the long-standing biweekly supervised visitation arrangement that had been in place for Bennett's entire life. This decision was made without clinical consultation or consideration of Bennett's emotional and physical safety.

Letters from his pediatrician, psychiatrist and from other professionals—including his occupational therapist, behaviour consultant, and counsellor—confirm that Bennett was thriving under my care and that his medical management was appropriate and well-coordinated.

At every supervised visit and FaceTime call, Bennett tells me he misses me and wants to come home. His voice deserves to be heard in the decisions that affect his life.

These actions violate the Child, Family and Community Service Act, which requires the ministry to use the *least intrusive measures* and to act in the *best interests of the child*. They also reflect broader systemic issues identified by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who recently wrote a warning of widespread disclosure delays, failures to investigate injuries in care, and misuse of “medical neglect” allegations against parents of medically complex children.

Requested Action

I am asking for your help to:

1. Intervene diplomatically with the Minister and Deputy Minister of MCFD to review Bennett's removal, the absence of disclosure, and the ministry's ongoing policy breaches.
2. Ensure Bennett's immediate reunification with me, his primary caregiver since birth.
3. Hold MCFD accountable for their failure to follow law, policy, and medical advice in their treatment of a vulnerable child.
4. Reinstate Bennett's full circle of professional supports, including his weekly therapists and his pediatrician, who has followed him since 2022 but was recently replaced by MCFD without justification.
5. I also ask that an independent review be conducted into the ministry's handling of this case, including the qualifications of the workers involved and compliance with the Child, Family and Community Service Act, to ensure accountability and prevent future harm to other children.

Bennett's removal was not safety-based—it was a procedural and ethical failure that displaced a vulnerable child from the caregiver best equipped to meet his needs. Each passing day deepens his trauma and endangers his health.

I am asking for your help to **bring my son home** and ensure this never happens to another family. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or a member of your staff to review Bennett's case and discuss how we can work together to ensure his safe and timely return home.

Thank you for your time, compassion, and commitment to justice.

With respect and urgency,

Darian Thomas

Mother and Legal Guardian of Bennett James Thomas

