

## Christian

My son Christian is now 14 years old and has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) which has some behavior issues like Autism.

The first few years of Christian being in the public school system were easy. By the time he was in 4th grade some behaviors started coming out and the school was not at all happy with him. Then came middle school where we were promised the world of changes for him and all he got was physical restraining and suspensions. My wife and I worked weekly with the school to try and help the situation but we were both ignorant to the IDEA laws. For so many years the school and the district was telling us that they knew what was best for our child and I am ashamed to say that we believed them. The funny thing was, we were not having problems at home, only at school. We continued to try and work with the school but all our request to get Christian help with extra services was turned down.

Nine months ago my wife quit her job, pulled Christian out of school and became Christian's full time advocate. We made the decision to pull him out of school when we picked him up one day and he was so out of control and upset that we were afraid he was having a breakdown. He has since been under a doctors care.

School districts need to know and understand that restraining a child is not going to help the behavior go away, it will only upset the child and make the behaviors worse. I am still trying to understand why children that have disabilities are punished because of behaviors when it is part of their disability. Isn't this discrimination?

Christian is doing much better today but we would like to get him back into the school system but it doesn't seem that there is a program out there in Palm Beach County to fit his unique needs and the district does not seem willing to help us find one. We are working with the FL Advocacy Center and getting ready to file a complaint with the State Education Department. I just don't understand why we all have to fight so hard to get an education for our children because they have special needs.

Regards,  
Gianni Musumeci  
Dad to Christian