

AFFIDAVIT

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in the City of Victoria, in the Province of British Columbia, MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I have personal knowledge of the matters included in this affidavit except where statements are made based on information and belief, in which case I verily believe them to be true.
2. I am 36 years old. I have a four year old son who resides with me. I am his primary caregiver as a single mother. We live in Victoria and, while I have some family members in Victoria, they do not support me with parenting.
3. I have had major depression and anxiety for most of my life. My family doctor also suspects that I have Bipolar II Disorder. As a result, he has prescribed me and I take mood stabilizing medication.
4. From 2011 to 2012, I received provincial income assistance benefits. Since 2012, I have received provincial disability benefits because my mental health conditions impair my ability to perform daily activities. I have not worked since I began receiving social assistance. I also receive approximately \$700 per month in child support as well as federal children's benefits on behalf of my son.
5. In the winter of 2013, a number of external stressors were impacting my life and I was experiencing a great deal of stress. In addition, I was with my son 24 hours a day, seven days per week. He was a very clingy child and often would not sleep unless he was literally attached to me while breastfeeding. I was not able to do anything alone and I was feeling very overloaded as a single parent.

6. Someone I know mentioned that I might qualify for a medical childcare subsidy in order to put my son in to childcare to get some time by myself. Even though I could not really afford the approximately \$250 to \$275 I had to pay in addition the subsidy, I needed a break so I enrolled my son in a licensed childcare facility. I initially tried to register my son to attend childcare only four days per week to try to reduce the cost, but that would have actually cost me more per month because the maximum subsidy I could receive would have been lower so I enrolled him on for full time, five days per week care. I paid the additional cost for six months until there was simply no way I could continue to afford it.
7. When I went to give the manager of the childcare facility written notice that my son would be withdrawing, I explained to her that it was because I could no longer afford my portion of the cost even though I really needed my son to be in childcare. She asked if I had a social worker because the Ministry of Children and Family Development (the "Ministry") might be able to pay for the additional cost.
8. I made an appointment with my doctor to discuss whether I should contact the Ministry. The Ministry website indicated that it was appropriate to contact them if a person is concerned about a child being harmed, and I did not feel my son was at any risk of harm.
9. My doctor suggested that, as a single mother with no supports, if my mental health deteriorated to the point that I required hospitalization, then my son would not have anyone to look after him and he would be at risk.
10. My doctor and I agreed to contact the Ministry and arrange an initial voluntary meeting. We were very careful about the language we used, indicating that my son was not at risk of harm, but that I was in need of extra supports.
11. The Ministry agreed to pay the additional cost of my son's childcare for six months over and above what a childcare subsidy would cover so that there

would be no cost to me. At the end of six months, the Ministry volunteered to extend the arrangement for an additional six months.

12. I was also seeing a community counsellor during this time who attended at least one of the voluntary Ministry meetings with me. I think her positive comments about all the proactive things I was doing for myself, including publicly advocating and taking legal action for myself and for other single mothers on social assistance, also influenced how the Ministry treated and interacted with me.
13. I was very grateful that my son could receive childcare at no cost and I found interacting with the Ministry to be a positive experience, but I know it could have been very different if I did not have such a supportive doctor who was very careful about how phrased his concerns to the Ministry, or the support of my counsellor. I think it is a shame that parents have to wait until they are in a very bad state before the Ministry will help.
14. During the year that I received funding from the Ministry, my son attended a licensed childcare facility from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., five days per week. I was very happy with his childcare provider. He responded well to its very structured setting.
15. At the end of the 12 months of childcare assistance provided by the Ministry, I initially tried to keep my son in his childcare facility, again paying the \$250 to \$275 cost, in addition to a maximum subsidy, myself. After one month, I could no longer afford it so I pulled my son out of his childcare facility.
16. Taking my son out of childcare was a huge mistake. He stayed home with me from October 2015 to January 2016 and it was an incredibly difficult period. My son is very intense and can be very challenging to parent. I have ongoing concerns that he could have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, anxiety or fall somewhere on the Autism spectrum.

17. During the four months my son was not attending childcare, my relationship with him became increasingly negative. My son did not have the structured routine he had benefited from when he attended childcare and he increasingly sought my attention even if it was negative. I was unable to take him anywhere because he was very disruptive.
18. During this period, my mental health also gradually deteriorated. I lost time to myself to focus on my own mental health. I had no time to run errands without my son or do the self-care that helps me stay healthy.
19. I realized that I could not continue to have my son at home with me full time and that he needed to be back in childcare. The childcare facility he had attended previously had no spaces available and they did not anticipate that any spaces would open up in the near future, so I was forced to find him a new childcare provider.
20. Starting in February 2016, my son is attending a new licensed childcare facility from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., five days per week. Unfortunately, it costs \$925 per month, which is more expensive than his previous childcare facility. I now have to pay a parent portion of \$375 per month in addition to the amount covered by a maximum childcare subsidy of \$550 per month.
21. Since my son has been attending childcare full time again, my mental health has already improved. My son also appeared to improve with a renewed routine, although his new childcare provider is less structured than his previous provider, which I preferred.
22. In order to afford the additional \$375 per month, we are in the process of moving to a smaller apartment in our building. I have also been in touch with my son's biological father, who we have no contact with, to try to set up mediation to discuss his child support payments and his contribution to my


son's childcare costs. His income has gone up since our current child support order was made. So far, he has adamantly refused to pay any portion of my son's childcare in addition to his child support. If I have to, I will try to get a court order that he pay more to help with the cost. I believe it is his responsibility.

23. In early April 2016, my son's childcare provider contacted me to give me notice that my son will be withdrawn from care due to emotional/behavioral issues. I had been under the impression that my son was doing well in his new childcare facility and the provider had not mentioned any concerns previously.

24. I am now forced to decide whether to leave my son in his current childcare for the rest of April because I have paid for the care, even though it may be a detriment to him since he is clearly not doing well there. I am now also forced to find new childcare for my son for May to August 2016 with less than one months' notice. If I cannot find care for my son and he is home with me full time, I know that my health will suffer and I will become severely depressed again.

25. I consent to the use of this affidavit in any court proceedings.

AFFIRMED BEFORE ME at the City of
Victoria, in the Province of British
Columbia, this 11th day of April, 2016.


A Commissioner for taking Affidavits
within British Columbia

Zoë Macmillan
Barrister + Solicitor

