

## Jones charges cutting IBI therapy forces families out

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones and her Progressive Conservative colleagues are not pleased with the government's decision to cut autistic children older than five off from IBI therapy.

That was the main issue raised by Tory caucus members last Thursday during Question Period in the legislature.

Jones highlighted that families are being forced to consider leaving the province to receive support for their children, as a result of the Premier's decision.

"A family in my riding is considering leaving the province entirely to get the support their daughter needs," Jones said in her question, according to Hansard.

"These parents only want the best for their children and will do anything for them," she added.

Jones's question was addressed to Premier Kathleen Wynne, but she passed it on to Children and Youth Services Minister Tracy MacCharles.

"I think we're in agreement," MacCharles replied. "I would say to the critic from the opposition (Jones), that we want the best for these children. We want these children to reach their full potential."

"That is something I hear from parents all the time," she added. "I'm meeting with parents on a continuous basis. Many of them have told us what this new program should look like. That feedback has been incorporated, but there are additional opportunities to hear parents' voices, and to hear children's voices, too, as this program transitions over the next couple of years."

"Families are deeply upset by the government's decision," Jones said later, observing a rally was held at Queen's Park last Thursday calling on the government to reverse its decision. "Officials from both opposition parties as well as leaders from CUPE, OSSTF, ETFO, OFL and OPSEU were in attendance to show their support for the thousands of families impacted by the government's decision."

"Ontario PC Leader Patrick Brown also spoke and assured families that a PC government would fund IBI therapy after the age of five," Jones added.

"It's never too late to do the right thing," she observed. "The Premier and the Minister should show leadership and reverse their decision and restore IBI therapy for children over five."