

## **A Caregiver's Perspective on Coordinated Support**

### **Written Testimony**

I am a foster and adoptive parent in New Hampshire. I am submitting this testimony to share my lived experience raising children with complex needs and navigating educational and support systems as a caregiver.

I am the parent of an adopted child from the foster care system who is congenitally blind and autistic. Before MTSS-B, his school plan largely existed on paper, and responses to his behavior varied widely across settings. Behaviors that appeared at school, but not at home, were often misunderstood as defiance rather than communication related to trauma, anxiety, or sensory overload. With MTSS-B in place, the adults involved were able to communicate, share expectations, and respond more consistently. As a result, attendance improved, regulation improved, and my child was better able to engage with peers and learning.

I have also cared for a foster teenager who did not have access to this level of coordination. In that situation, support was fragmented, and the responsibility for connecting schools, counselors, and services fell almost entirely on me as the caregiver. I spent countless hours on follow-up calls and emails, not because professionals did not care, but because there was no shared structure to support communication. Over time, both this child and I became exhausted, and despite everyone's best efforts, important needs were missed. She ultimately fell through the cracks.

From my perspective as a caregiver, the difference between these two experiences was not effort, concern, or commitment; it was coordination. When adults work together, children are more likely to succeed, and caregivers are less likely to become overwhelmed or burned out.

I ask you to consider what coordinated support means for families like mine, and the real consequences when that coordination is lost. Approaches that help adults communicate and share responsibility strengthen families, support educators, and improve outcomes for children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kym