

Lopez, Maria [COB]

From: ji young kwon <goodtime0111@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 10:11 AM
To: COB_Response
Subject: Public comment for agenda item #10 on 9/15

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Letter of Support for OCAPICA and PROJECT FOCUS

My son, Peter, has been participating in PROJECT FOCUS for the past four years, from the age of 10 until now at 14.

The first time I took my child to a psychiatrist was because he said at school that he wanted to die.

In addition, he suffered from a severe hand-washing habit that started after the pandemic. His hands were always red, cracked, and looked as if they were burned because he used too much soap and hand sanitizer.

When he got too angry or stressed during class, he would stomp his feet against his desk or have trouble breathing.

When his stress was very high, it was hard for him to speak. His teachers had to make communication cards with pictures so he could point to what he needed.

I did not understand why a child who was so smart and happy at home was experiencing such terrible stress at school. Right after he talked about suicide, we met with a doctor and did some tests. The results showed that he has both Autism (ASD) and Anxiety.

After his diagnosis, I spent three months desperately searching for help.

I called the Regional Center and every other service center within an hour's drive of our house. Out of all those places, fewer than ten answered the phone directly. Most calls went straight to voicemail, and only two or three places ever called me back.

Even when someone did call back, they had no open spots for Peter. The need for these services had exploded after the pandemic.

Just as I was feeling completely exhausted, I found information about OCAPICA on the GGUSD website and contacted them immediately.

For the first time, a person answered the phone with a very kind and happy voice.

They listened to my story and promised to do an evaluation as soon as possible. It was the first time I felt any hope.

Because we already had the doctor's diagnosis, they moved quickly.

They even found a counselor for us who speaks Korean—something that was impossible to find anywhere else.

This was PROJECT FOCUS, provided by KCS (Korean Community Services).

This program is not for children with minor challenges; it is designed for children who need deep, special care and intensive support.

That is why I was very shocked to hear that this program might close.

PROJECT FOCUS is a lifeline for children who need high levels of help. The program understands our children deeply because of the shared culture and language, and they communicate easily with parents to support the family.

Over the past five years, inside KCS and PROJECT FOCUS, my child learned how to control his stress, communicate with others, read emotional cues, talk without getting angry, and—most importantly—build trust.

OAPICA also gave me parent education and mental health support to help me take care of myself while caring for my child.

A counselor, Yujin Park worked closely with the school counselor to check on Peter regularly, and they helped us set up a 504 Plan to lower his stress at school.

While my child is not completely ready to leave the program yet, the 10-year-old boy who wanted to die is gone.

In his place is a 14-year-old who talks about his problems, goes to counseling, and keeps moving forward.

This is a major achievement made by a dedicated counselor, a case manager, Peter and myself working hard together.

My child is just beginning high school. If this program disappears, I am terrified that he will start thinking about suicide again.

Please continue funding OAPICA and PROJECT FOCUS so they can keep providing these life-saving services.

Sincerely,

Ji young Agnes Kim-Peter Kim's Mom

GGUSD Member of Parents Advisory Committee

GGUSD Voting Member of Community Advisory Committee

GGUSD Representative for District Level English Learner Advisory Committee

Alamitos Intermediate School PTO Treasurer / Member of School Site Council / President of English Learner Advisory Committee

제 아들 피터는 10살 부터 14살인 지금까지 PROJECT FOCUS와 함께하고 있습니다.

처음 아이를 정신과닥터에게 데려간 이유는 죽고싶다는 말을 학교에서 했기때문이였어요.

그외에도 팬더믹이후에 생긴 손씻는것에 대한 강박증상으로 손은 너무 많은 손세정제와 비누 사용으로

다 화상입은 것처럼 빨개지고 찢어지고.

수업시간에 너무너무 화가나면 발로 책상을 쿵쿵찬다거나 과호흡이 오거나 하기 일수였죠.

너무너무 스트레스를 받을때엔 말로 표현하는것도 힘들어해서 선생님들이 뭘 원하는지를 나타내는

카드를 만들어서 주시고는 손으로 포인트하게 하셨어요.

너무너무 똑똑하고 집에선 편안하게 잘있는 아이가 학교에선 왜 그렇게 극심한 스트레스를 받는지

몰랐었는데 자살이야기를 한후에 바로 정신과의와 만나고 테스트를 해보니 ASD와 Anxiety 모두

가지고 있는 것으로 나왔죠.

그 후부터는 3달을 서비스를 찾아헤맸습니다.

리저널센터를 포함해서 집에서 한시간내에 갈 수 있는 모든 센터에 전화했어요.

그 중에서 전화를 바로 받으신건 10건도 안됩니다.

거의 모든 경우에 음성사서함으로 바로 넘어갔고 그 중에 콜백은 2~3건 뿐이었어요.

그 와중에 콜백이나 전화를 받더라도 갈 수 있는 자리가 없었어요. 팬더믹이후 수요가 폭발적으로

늘어났기 때문이죠. 점점 지쳐가고 있을때쯤 GGUSD 웹사이트에서 OCAPICA에 대해서 정보를

알게되었고 바로 연락을 했습니다.

처음으로 누군가가 굉장히 밝은 목소리로 전화를 받아주셨어요.

이야기를 들어주시고 가능한 빨리 이벨류에이션을 해주겠다고 하셨죠. 처음으로 희망이보였어요.

이미 의사의 진단서가 있어서 조금 빠르게 진행해주셨고 다른 곳에서는 생각도 할 수 없었던 한국어

가능한 선생님까지 만날 수 있었습니다.

KCS에서 제공하는 PROJECT FOCUS였어요.

이 프로그램은 경증의 아이들이 아닌 조금더 세심하게 도와줘야하는 아이들을 위한 프로그램입니다.

그래서 이 프로그램이 없어질수도 있다는 소리를 들었을때 너무너무 놀랐어요.

PROJECT FOCUS는 강도높은 도움을 필요로 하는 아이들을 위한

프로그램입니다.

같은 문화 언어권에서 아이들을 깊이 이해하고 부모님들과의 원활한 의사소통을 통해 아이들을 돕는

프로그램입니다.

지난 5년간 아이는 KCS가 제공하는 PROJECT FOCUS안에서 스트레스를 조절하는법, 다른 사람과

의사소통하는법, 다른 사람의 감정을 읽는법, 화내지 않고 대화하는법 그리고 제일 중요한 신뢰를

쌓는법을 배웠습니다.

또한 OCAPICA를 통해 부모교육과 아이를 직접 돌보는 제 정신건강에 도움이 될만한 교육도 함께

진행해주셨습니다.

아이의 상태도 학교 카운셀러와 연계해서 지속적인 상태 공유를 통해 세심하게 살펴주셨고 아이의

스트레스 레벨을 낮추기 위해 504 플랜을 세팅할때도 함께해주셨습니다.

아이가 아직 완전히 프로그램에서 나올정도의 상황은 아니지만 너무 힘들어서 자살하려던 10살꼬마는

이제 없습니다. 힘들어도 함께 이야기하고 상담하고 나아가는 14살 짜리 아이가 있을 뿐 이예요.

헌신적인 상담선생님, 케이스 매니저와 부모인 제가 함께 열심히 노력해서 아이와 함께 이루어낸

성과입니다.

이 프로그램이 없어진다면 이제 막 고등학교를 시작하게 될 제 아이가 다시 자살을 생각하게 될까

너무너무 두렵습니다.

부디 헌신적으로 서비스를 제공해온 OCAPICA 와 PROJECT FOCUS 를 계속 유지할 수 있도록

지속적인 펀딩을 부탁드립니다.

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