

## **SUBMISSION FROM SUSANNE DAVIS**

1. My name is Susanne H. Davis and I hold a Master of Science Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts.
2. I am writing to offer "evidence" in support of the Autism Bill and its provisions for the citizens of Scotland. I feel very strongly about this subject and hope you will consider all bills that provide funding and services to people who need them.
3. With more than 24 years experience in the area of "special needs" education and training, I have had a long period to observe and interact with people labelled as autistic. My hands-on experience working in the homes' of individuals and their families, or in group settings in the community has allowed me the privilege of knowing some very wonderful people. The spectrum of autism, which includes Asperger's Syndrome, for example, has opened new areas of research and study. While important to our continued and future understanding of autism, it is imperative that individuals and their families have supports and programs available for children and adults to meet every day needs.
4. Many adults make transitions into what I call "mutual realities." A young autistic man, with whom I had the pleasure of working, described his world as having a film or opaque sheet between him and everyone else. It was difficult to permeate that barrier, but with time and patience, he was able to eventually live independently, have a full-time job, and enjoy quality relationships. "Daniel" was isolated and would only play alone, as a child. He did not like physical contact or loud noises. This is true for many children, but not all.
5. Autism can manifest differently in each individual, although we have identified cluster symptoms.
6. Trial and error is the path many families take to find what "works" or "gets results." Again, it will be different for each person. What is common to all people with autism is they need help and support to achieve their maximum potential.
7. I implore anyone who has the power to put help in the hands of those who need it most, to do so. I send my prayers and best wishes to my brothers and sisters in Scotland, the home of my Great-Grandmother, Mary McKillop. Stay the course toward education and enlightenment!
8. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of sharing this with you.

Susanne H. Davis  
8 September 2010