

March 19, 2021

Immigrant Families Fight for Autism Services During COVID

"It is a time to care for one another"

By Agnes Collison

[Chinese version](#)



[Image description: Two young boys climb low tree limbs in dappled light and shade. They are both wearing masks.]

Photo caption: Bala Cynwyd resident Mei-Yun's two sons. She says ensuring autism services during COVID has been difficult.

As the mother of two children with special needs, Mei-Yun, who lives in Bala Cynwyd, is a pioneer. When her eldest son was first diagnosed with autism, she felt overwhelmed. Faced with this unknown disease, she began to try her best to educate herself and to seek as much knowledge as she could to help her children. But the outbreak took her challenge to the next level.

"I feel like it took years to get the benefits for my child to be discounted, and many of the doors that I tried so hard to open for him closed again. Adapting to online learning patterns has been difficult, and my child's special needs for autism are almost impossible to provide online. English barriers prevent me from communicating clearly with teachers and service teams. Not being able to be a strong spokesman for my children makes me feel very anxious and helpless."

The political climate in recent years has deepened the pressure on the new immigrant community. "I'm very concerned about my children's reaction to other people's critical comments about China and the outbreak. As an autistic person, he lacks the ability to interpret other people's negative language, which can cause great anxiety and confusion, leading him to shut down."

Despite these many difficulties, Mei-Yun is still hopeful about the future: "In this long year, I learned to spend time with my child's autism and treat it as a lifelong friend." Like a roller coaster ride, the road is bumpy, but it's full of surprises and rewards. It also gives us a look at the people around us who need help. Let us support each other and take care of each other through this unprecedented crisis."

If you have questions about your child's special education, Huaxuan Mutual Group is a group of parents and community members that can provide many useful resources. Follow 臉 "Chinatown Disability Advocacy Project" on the list. Or e-mail: 348775210tina@gmail.com, 陳 will be happy to answer your questions.