

The Mills Family

- o Susan Mills, age 9, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the age of 3.
- o Her parents, Justin and Karen Mills, both actively participated in seeking an adequate diagnosis and assessment of Susan, and both attend her education, treatment planning and medical appointments.

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The Mills Family Cont.

- o Susan lives with her mother during most of the week, although she is with her father from the close of school on Wednesday to Thursday morning and on alternate weekends.
- o Karen devotes much of her time to overseeing services for Susan and has become a parent advocate for other disabled children.

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The Mills Family Cont.

- o Disagreements have emerged about the severity of Susan's symptoms and her readiness to participate in a broader range of activities.
- o Justin believes that Susan would be able to participate in a community recreation program and proposes enrolling her in a team sport or art program since he believes she likes both.
- o He would like to gradually increase his parenting time so that he could ultimately take a short vacation with Susan.

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The Mills Family Cont.

- o Karen believes that Susan is unable to handle interaction outside of a special program and that Justin is pushing Susan too hard.
- o She further states that Susan is exhibiting greater stress after her overnights with Justin and believes that Justin is not following the structure and daily routine that has been established for Susan.

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The Mills Family Cont.

- o The parents disagree as to which of Susan's routines have been recommended by the school and which have been established by Karen.
- o Justin feels controlled and micromanaged by Karen and believes that she is stifling Susan's development and attempting to marginalize him as a parent.
- o Karen alleges that Justin has become insensitive to Susan's needs because they do not fit into his lifestyle.
- o Each parent has found web sites, articles or professionals to support his or her opinion.

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The Mills Family Cont.

- o An initial attempt at mediation, with a mediator not sophisticated with children's special needs, resulted in no agreement.
- o Scott is now requesting increased parenting time or, in the alternative, appointment of a parenting coordinator or family therapist to resolve these issues.

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