



DISABILITY RIGHTS
WASHINGTON

Formerly known as Washington Protection & Advocacy System

“Ashley’s Treatment” A Guide for Self-Advocates

The Disability Rights Washington Report
In-Brief



Who Is Ashley?

- Ashley is a little girl with a disability
- Her uterus and her breast buds were taken out
- She was given hormones so she would stay small and not get cancer
- Her body will never develop
- She will never grow breasts
- She will never develop sexually
- She will never be able to have kids



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Disability Rights Washington is

- A disability advocacy agency
- We are not part of the government
- There is an agency like ours in each State and US Territory
- The law says we have to promote civil and human rights for people with disabilities

Disability Rights Washington investigated because

- The law says we need to look closely if there might be abuse or neglect
- We read a report that talked about what happened to Ashley
- The report said “Ashley’s treatment” could happen to other children with disabilities
- DRW had many complaints



Ashley's parents did this because

- They said it would protect her
- They said it would make it easier to include her in family and community activities
- They said it would prevent future health problems

Children's Hospital did the surgery because

- The parents asked for it
- The doctors thought it was okay
- An ethics committee said it was okay
- The parents' attorney said they didn't need a court order
- The right policies were not in place to make sure Ashley's rights were protected.



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Removing a child's uterus means that person will never get pregnant and have kids. The operation to remove a uterus is called a hysterectomy.

The law says that before a child has a hysterectomy, a court order has to be done. A court order is a decision that comes from a judge, who has listened carefully to all sides of the story.

With a court order, Ashley would have had an advocate who could talk to the judge about her rights.

With a court order, the judge looks at a list of nine important rights for Ashley. A judge is supposed to think carefully about these rights before saying it is ok to take away a child's uterus. These rights include checking to see if there are other choices.

These checks never happened, because there was not a court order.

When the hospital did surgery on Ashley without a court order, they broke the law.



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Children's Hospital realizes that they broke the law. They have said they want to make sure there is a court order in the future. They are working closely with Disability Rights Washington.

Children's Hospital will make a policy, to protect children with developmental disabilities. They will make sure they have a court order before

- Doctors take out a child's uterus
- Doctors try to stop the child's growth

Children's Hospital will let Disability Rights Washington know

- when there is a request to take away someone's uterus
- when there is a request to stop someone's growth

Children's Hospital will include a disability advocate on their Ethics Committee, so that there is always a disability rights' voice when these types of decisions are being talked about.



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There is lots of work to be done so that people understand this issue.

Disability Rights Washington will work with self-advocates to help educate others.

Disability Rights Washington will

- Help the hospital find advocates for their ethics committee
- Go with advocates to educate others about “Ashley’s treatment”

Disability Rights Washington will work with advocates to educate

- Doctors who might be thinking about doing something like “Ashley’s treatment”
- Health insurance companies
- Other hospitals
- Students learning to be doctors
- Students learning to be health care workers
- Students learning to be lawyers
- Guardians and others who can advocate for children like Ashley
- Lawyers and other legal advocates
- Judges
- The disability community



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Disability Rights Washington will work with people on all sides of this debate, to join together. We want to make supports and services better for children with disabilities. We want to make supports and services better for their families.

If you have questions about this report, you can call

206-324-1521 (local call for Seattle)

1-800-562-2702 (toll-free in Washington)

206-957-0728 (TTY)

You can also email Disability Rights Washington at
info@dr-wa.org

Our web site address is
www.DisabilityRightsWA.org



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