

## Right Help, Right Now 0-6 Clinic

Issue #9

The Right Help, Right Now 0-6 Clinic is designed to provide quick and barrier free access to families with very young children. Offered to families who already engaged with some of our Prevention and Early Intervention programs such as Speech and Language, this program provides early mental health consultation, referral and intervention for children who are experiencing social, emotional, behavior, learning, and/or relationship difficulties.

Young families do not have to wait! They are offered an appointment immediately at one of three locations in Etobicoke most convenient to them. They do not have to go through the typical lengthy intake process on the phone required for most clinical intakes, which can represent a barrier if language or scheduling is an issue. These families are offered a consultation with clinicians who are specialists in working with very young children and who are uniquely qualified to help them get what they need.

Habib was 3 years old when his mother brought him to the Right Help, Right Now clinic, desperate for help. His mother had fled from Nigeria two years before, escaping a plot to end her son's life because he was so "different". She arrived, terrified and alone, fearing that anyone who worked with her would harm her and her son on the orders of her tormentors. She had been referred to the Speech and Language program but did not attend appointments as she was so afraid.

Fortunately, her Speech and Language therapist had access to the 0-6 clinic and could arrange a meeting immediately. The clinician was able to connect with the mother and draw out her

story. The mother felt heard, comforted, and understood. The clinician was able to see that her son had serious developmental issues that needed assessment and helped the mother accept a referral to the GHC's developmental pediatrician for a formal diagnosis, which would open doors to other supportive services for him. The clinician also helped the mother accept a priority referral to counselling in the Community Clinic to help her manage her son's developmental needs. She also was reassured enough to re-engage with Speech and Language appointments to address his serious communication issues.

Habib is now attending regular Speech and Language appointments and making significant progress. Habib and his mother are also engaged with a Community Clinic clinician, receiving family therapy to address Habib's developmental needs, and helping the mother recover sufficiently from her trauma to be the stable, loving and consistent parent he needs. The family is much less afraid and utilizing all the supports that we have recommended.

It is these families – the families on the margins, who do not make it to services that are offered in a traditional way, who benefit most from the flexible, compassionate and skilled care that we provide through the 0-6 pathway.

