

Partnership Funds Help Child with Social/Emotional Concerns

Vivian Adi was frustrated and desperate to understand why her 2-year-old was being disciplined for acting out in his toddler classroom. At first, she thought these difficulties were reactions to transitioning from the home--- where Kabuza was with Adi for the first 18 months of his life --- to the child care center.

Adi said Kubuza is a well behaved child when he is alone with another adult, however teachers told Adi her son would lash out in group settings when he was with other children.

A few months after Adi enrolled Kubuza, his biting and other aggressive behavior resulted in his expulsion from the child care facility. Adi was shocked and stressed because she couldn't afford to stop working and had to scramble to find alternative care for Kubuza.

She pursued another child care setting for Kubuza where she learned about a program funded by Durham's Partnership for Children. The program, called Early Childhood Outreach Project (EChO) is delivered through Exchange Clubs' Family Center and consults with parents and teachers in the child care setting to manage children's challenging behaviors which often may stem from social/emotional concerns or other special needs.

"It was a Godsend because I finally got the help I needed to understand his behavior and I had someone who could advocate on his behalf and work with me and his teachers to manage temper tantrums and other challenges Kubuza had in the classroom," Adi said.

BJ Fusaro, an EChO consultant, began working with Kubuza and his teachers at his second child care facility. Although the boy made progress and his teachers

received technical assistance to manage tantrums, Fusaro observed that noises and other group activities agitated the toddler and used information from a developmental evaluation administered previously and received suggestions from EChO's Occupational Therapist Consultant. Kubuza began occupational therapy to help with visual

special needs.

Fusaro worked with the teachers to transition Kabuza to The Enrichment Center on the Durham County side of Research Triangle Park. His family made sure the change was viewed as a positive, by calling it "big boy school." Fusaro made a book about his

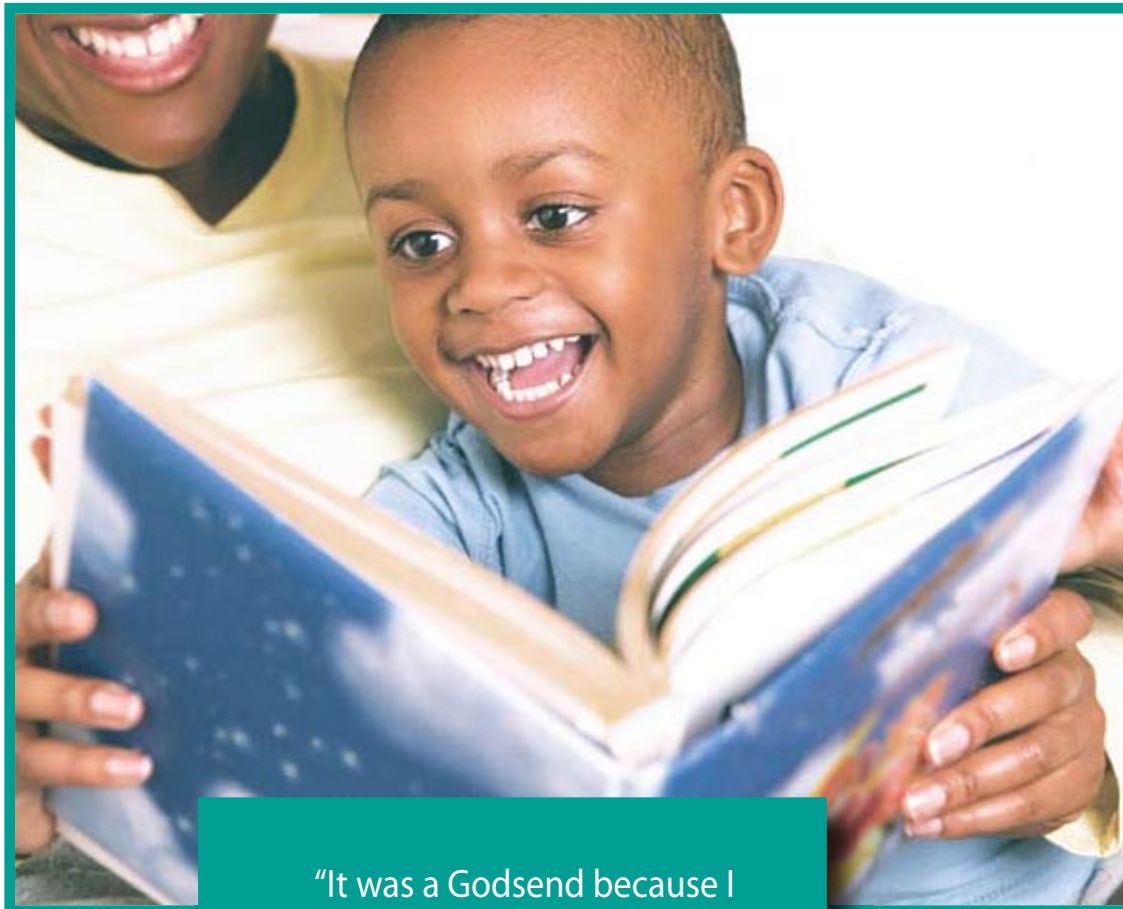
new school with photos of his classroom, teachers and classmates. Kabuza visited a few times before his first day and was made to feel welcome.

According to Sandy Stevens, director of The Enrichment Center, the consultant worked with the teachers to notice situations that triggered Kabuza to react.

Stevens said that the EChO consultants, like Fusaro, are invaluable to helping to develop consistent strategies to support children with challenging behaviors.

"EChO consultants support the professionalism of the early care and education field by introducing child-centered strategies that are developmentally appropriate and create lasting change that not only affect the child with behavior concerns, but also enrich the whole classroom," Stevens said.

In fiscal year 2005-2006, Durham's Partnership for Children investment in EChO helped 90 parents with one-on-one consultation and/or crisis intervention. The Partnership's investment also enabled 70 children with challenges, like Kabuza, to be in a stable quality child care environment and, if needed, linked them to early intervention resources to address a developmental delay or other special need. These efforts will help children and families succeed in school today and in the future.



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motor integration, motor planning and possible sensory integration problems.

Although Kubuza began receiving occupational therapy, the childcare facility was unable to handle behavior associated with his emotional outbursts. The EChO consultant worked to find a child care center that was more equipped to handle Kabuza's