



National Center for Cultural Competence

Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development
University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

The Story of Buda

By Margarita Niño

Buda was about seven years old when the school said they couldn't take his behavior at school anymore. I felt that there was nowhere to turn to, that I was the only one my son could turn to. My son couldn't control himself and he didn't know why he was doing what he was doing. We finally got a good pediatrician and she told me that Buda had some mental health behavior problems. She started treating Buda for ADHD, but the school was still having problems. Buda was having problems just walking to school and the school was only two blocks from home. The pediatrician finally decided maybe we should go to the local mental health clinic, Austin Travis County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center (ATCMHMR) for services. I was at my wits end. Buda was hurting himself and others. Child Protective Services (CPS) was at my house to see why he wasn't making it in school. I was ready to sign Buda over to Child Protective Services when we went to ATCMHMR's mental health clinic.

We were at ATCMHMR all day until about 7:00 p.m. When they finally saw us approximately two hours later they told me to take him to Shoal Creek Hospital, a psychiatric hospital. Buda was in the hospital for a week. I'm not sure how or who made the connection, but two weeks later The Children's Partnership came into our family's life. All this time I was pregnant with my little baby so it was very hard for me, the doctor

appointments and phone calls from school about Buda's behavior were overwhelming. The Children's Partnership helped advocate for my son; we worked with the school for changes so Buda that could work at his own pace. The school set up a special computer program that's working great for him. They helped us receive family counseling. Buda was given a great mentor, Jesse.

The help that we received in therapy, the mentor and the adaptations that were made in school, helped to change Buda's behavior. Daily, Buda was smiling and wanted to help around the house. He loved his new school. It was like having a new baby boy at home. He was more loving and he wanted to please people. He was looking forward to his mentor's visits. He was bringing schoolwork home and he was so proud of his success.

In our lives with Buda we take two steps forward and one step backward. We have good days and then there are bad days. Buda has problems with impulsive behaviors. We're trying to teach him how to control his behavior. It is very hard. Buda goes through days where he wants family to love him, then he goes and has days when he doesn't want to be looked at or talked to. The Children's Partnership taught me to advocate for my son and for myself. They taught me that I could ask the school to test my child and receive support at school. They taught me that the school had to work with my son and that my son did not have to try to fit into a diagram that wasn't made for him. They helped me find good doctors for Buda. They helped me in my time of crisis to keep my son home when I was ready to give him up to the state. I didn't know what was wrong with him or me. The Children's Partnership made me realize how close I came to giving up on my son. Because of The Children's

Partnership the relationship between my son and myself is stronger and we are both more open. I'll always say that little prayer for The Children's Partnership to keep helping families.