

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**December 20, 2022**

### **Macaulay Child Development uses OTF Grant to build on support services for children with extra support needs**

**Toronto, ON** – In 2020, the Macaulay Child Development Centre received the welcome news in that it had been given a \$75,000 Seed grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to help build on support services for children with extra support needs and their families as well. The grant helped to bring onboard a Behaviour Resource consultant.

“I am thrilled that the Macaulay Child Development Centre, an integral part of my riding, will continue to build on the support they provide to children and families and help young children who face barriers, develop strong emotional and social skills,” stated Robin Martin, MPP for Eglinton-Lawrence.

This person provided consultation services to the parents of children aged two to six years from high need neighborhoods who are experiencing peer rejection and an inability to participate successfully in programs due to their behaviors. They do not benefit from community supports and services, and their families feel socially isolated. The parents benefit from consultation services and training from Macaulay’s front line staff. This service supports children with extra support needs by addressing concerns with their behavior, self-regulation, and facilitating timely referrals to other services that might benefit the child.

“As an agency with close to 90 years strengthening and supporting children and families in our community, we are thrilled to be able to offer this critical service to children with extra support needs,” said Trevor McAlmont, Executive Director, Macaulay Child Development Centre. “The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on children and youth experiencing poverty, racism or violence. With more than 39 per cent of Macaulay families living below the low-income cut-off, more than 74 per cent identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous or as a Person of Colour), and 26 per cent of children having an extra support need, this support is vital to improve the long-term outcomes for children in our community.”

Evidence indicates that the social, emotional and educational impacts of the pandemic, including prolonged isolation, repeated school closures, hours of screen time and increased stress and fears about the virus, have all had a dramatic effect on both physical and mental health in children and youth and are associated with disruptions to critical developmental milestones. ([Tombeau Cost et al., 2021](#); [Public Health Ontario, 2020](#), [Couturier et al., 2021](#)).

Currently, there are limited community based behavior resources for children with extra support needs, and those resources that do exist have lengthy wait lists and tend to be restricted to children with a confirmed diagnosis. Potential benefits of behavior programs and consultation are many including; improved behavior regulation and control, as well as, more successful participation and social interaction.

“We extend our deepest thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for this generous Seed grant, which has allowed us to develop and pilot this program,” added McAlmont. “Through this opportunity, we have established additional funding to continue providing this much needed support service and further our vision where all children reach their full potential within engaged families and equitable communities.”

Participants of the program noted improvements and/or reductions in their child’s behaviors upon completion of the program. Specific feedback from parents includes:

- “He is able to tolerate the mask wearing now. Able to wear it for 5 minutes now. Getting better at transitioning from highly motivating activities - particularly arts and crafts to Circle Time.”
- “Knows the calm down zone, participates more during class and listens as well.”

- “Improved eye contact and beginning to interact with other kids.”

Since 1932, the Macaulay Child Development Centre [www.macaulaycentre.org](http://www.macaulaycentre.org) has worked with community partners in the northwest quadrant of Toronto to provide childcare spaces and quality community-based programs and services for marginalized children and families.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario’s non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario’s economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit [otf.ca](http://otf.ca) to learn more.

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