



## FHF Assists Parent in Navigating Complicated Service Systems

**by Raquel Castaneda**

The De Leon family recently received an autism diagnosis for their 5-year-old son, Mike. The family was having a hard time navigating the system and finding services, so they hired someone to help them with this task but it was beginning to become too costly for the family. Edilma, Mike's mother, came to us after her child's pediatric doctor referred her. By the time they reached out to us, Mike had already gone through the evaluation process for Orleans Parish Public Schools System Exceptional Services. Edilma did not know what else was out there for her son and how to begin to get services in place. She had trouble navigating the system and luckily, she came to the right place.

I helped the family understand what services they needed and guided them through the process. I got them connected with Metropolitan Human Services District Developmental Disabilities Community Services, which provides access to PCA services, self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, behavioral services, psychiatric care, Medicaid waiver programs, crisis assistance and more. I also connected them with Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy (ABA). ABA Therapy can provide Mike the needed interventions to help improve his behavior and ultimately end his self-harm tendencies. In addition, I provided them with information on SSI, Child Care Assistance, and additional resources available to her family in the community.

When the De Leon family came to us, they were unfamiliar of the supports Mike would need and unsure of where to find them. It was a pleasure assisting them through this process. Mike is now closer to receiving services and is already on the waiting list for ABA and waiver services. We all know that the sooner you get on the waiting lists, the better!

It is so important to get connected with services early on to promote the earliest interventions possible which leads to healthier growth and improved development outcomes for each child with a disability. Edilma says, *“Without the help of FHF Jefferson, Mike would not be getting these services and would have missed out on so much that I didn’t know was available.” “Thanks, Families Helping Families!”*

