

**Child: Khayleb S**

**Age: 5**

**Diagnoses: ADHD, high functioning Aspergers**

**Referring behaviors: Verbal and physical aggression**

**Family dynamics:** Khayleb was adopted at the age of 3 by his biological grandmother and aunt, mother and sister of Khayleb's mother. Khayleb's mother has a history of mental illness that prevented her from caring for herself and her many children, who were also adopted by family members.

**Behavior:** Khayleb displayed verbal and physical aggression toward caregivers and peers. He was unable to express frustration in a healthy manner, so he resorted to hitting, kicking, biting, and screaming. This behavior occurred 3-4 times per day, and lasted 45-90 minutes. The intensity was high due to the high safety risk of the behavior. Upon graduation from TBS, Khayleb was able to use words to express his thoughts and feelings without resorting to physical and verbal aggression. He successfully graduated from TBS, after only 7 months of treatment.

**Creative intervention:** Khayleb was taught a series of self-calming techniques to utilize when he became angry or frustrated (e.g. taking deep breaths, taking space, coloring). TBS Coach taught Khayleb how to engage in appropriate eye contact through use of a toy held up to catch his attention, then transferring this interest and eye contact to the coach. He also learned effective communication strategies (using words to express when he felt frustrated). TBS Coach engaged with Khayleb by using continuous eye contact and by following his lead. Coach remained in close proximity and watched him for cues about his ideas and interests. Rather than attempting to change Khayleb's focus, the Coach utilized his interests to engage him in healthy interactions. TBS Coach utilized a "circle of interaction" (continuous flow of interaction between the child and coach) emphasizing facial expressions, gestures, words, and sounds to teach him the interactive skills needed for healthy relationships. TBS Coach utilized "big affect" (i.e. exaggerated facial expression, excited tones of voice, and faster pace) to maintain Khayleb's attention. Through these techniques, Khayleb was able to increase his social skills and ability to engage in relationships with others. This connection with others (caregivers and peers) supported Khayleb in reducing his aggression towards them. TBS Coach also frequently incorporated the skills of "stop, listen, think, and act" to teach him to express himself in a healthy manner.

**Incentives used:** Immediate positive praise was the only incentive used by TBS Coach and caregivers.

**Collaboration:** TBS Coach collaborated weekly with Khayleb's caregivers and his Kinship Center therapist Shelia Wright. Coach updated Shelia on techniques used while working with Khayleb, such as using circles of communication, eye contact, and

“big affect” to engage with Khayleb. TBS Coach modeled intervention techniques for the caregivers to use while engaging with Khayleb. Coach emphasized that Khayleb was learning to use words to express his thoughts and feeling, and taught caregivers how to reinforce this positive behavior. TBS Coach also collaborated with Mark Wenzler from Easter Seals Central California, due to Khayleb’s diagnosis of Aspergers Disorder. TBS Coach confirmed monthly that the cognitive and behavioral techniques this writer was using with Khayleb complemented his Easter Seals treatment. TBS Coach worked each week with Khayleb’s caregivers, role-modeling use of the circle of communication, eye contact, and big affect. TBS Coach also taught them how to give Khayleb healthy choices with limited options, so he could experience making good decisions and engaging in healthy, desired activities. TBS Coach assisted the caregivers in learning to read Khayleb’s cues (e.g. watching his eyes, gestures, body, words) to help determine his ideas and intent. Khayleb’s caregivers were highly invested in learning these techniques and skills and consistently participated in Coach’s weekly visits. Their commitment and participation contributed significantly to Khayleb’s successful and early TBS graduation.