

The Autism Center Transcript

[Piano music plays lightly in the background]

Santa Reyes, Parent:

When my son was a year-and-a-half old, he was talking. He spoke words, and then suddenly, he stopped talking. I decided to bring him to the doctor so that he could be examined because truly he wasn't acting like an ordinary kid. His behavior was very different than that of other children. So, I took him to the doctor. He was evaluated, and it took about three months. At the end of three months, they told me that my son was autistic.

Julia Landau, Senior Project Director, Massachusetts Advocates for Children:

MAC launched the Autism Special Education Legal Support Center in 2002 because our phones were just ringing off the hook from parents, who have kids on the autism spectrum, because school districts were not providing the services that their kids were legally entitled to.

Santa Reyes:

One of the problems that I had when my child entered school was that he just wasn't receiving educational services. The school wasn't giving him the services that he needed. He wasn't speaking. He wasn't communicating. He wasn't socializing like other children. He had an aggressive behavior in the home and also at school. Basically, with a language barrier and also with our economic situation, I realized, truly, that we needed help. We needed help from other people to receive the services for my child.

Julia Landau:

The center uses MAC's multi-strategic approach. First, we work with individual families. Then, we work within the school district to try and change the policies that are barriers school-wide. We can work within Beacon Hill to effectuate and implement existing laws and working proactively to ensure that there are new laws and new practices that will ensure that all children in the Commonwealth obtain the opportunities they need to thrive and to function.

Hubie Jones, Founder, Massachusetts Advocates for Children:

MAC has always been guided by the powerful idea that through the voice of a child, the heart of a parent, a caring community, and a pursuit of effective laws we will have a day when all children regardless of their race, their special needs, will have an opportunity to succeed.

Santa Reyes:

Truly, I feel incredibly satisfied by the services that we've been given. Since we got involved with MAC, he's received great services. Truly, we are happy. He is socializing. He is able to speak. He understands everything that I tell him. He has changed one-hundred percent since he's been in these programs.

[Piano music fades away to a stop]