



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES UNVEILS NEW SITE IN BROOKLYN OFFERING THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FOUR – A CRUCIAL TIME FOR CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & PARENT-CHILD ATTACHMENT**

*ACS's Group Attachment-Based Intervention (GABI) Program Offers Parents Clinician-Facilitated Playtime to Enhance Parent-Child Attachment and Peer Support*

*Brooklyn Program is co-located at a Neighborhood Clinic in BedStuy That Now Offers ACS, DOHMH, & H+H Services to Families With Young Children; Cross-Agency Collaboration Aims to Strengthen & Provide Critical Support to Local Families*

**NEW YORK, NY** – Today, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced the official opening of the Group Attached-Based Intervention (GABI) program in Brooklyn. The GABI program, which is now available in all five boroughs, helps caregivers build strong bonds with their young children and foster their healthy development. The GABI Brooklyn program, which serves families with children under the age of four, is co-located with other essential services, making access to other supports more seamless. The site includes a Health + Hospitals clinic and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) programs for families with young children.

GABI is a research-informed therapeutic intervention developed by Dr. Anne Murphy, Director of the Rose F. Kennedy Under Five Trauma Services Program at Montefiore Medical Center. GABI serves families who have experienced significant trauma, housing instability, mental illness, domestic violence, and other challenges that make parenting a very young child difficult. The program provides clinician-facilitated play therapy, allowing parents to strengthen attachment with their children, which research demonstrates reduces the risks of child maltreatment. The program also provides parents one-on-one clinical sessions and peer support through parent groups. Additionally, GABI provides families with concrete goods such as diapers and baby wipes. Overall, the GABI program aims to help families manage life's challenges, increase their social support network and improve parent-child relationships.

"Especially during such a challenging and unprecedented time for many families, we're excited that the GABI program is now available to families in all five boroughs," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "GABI is a unique program because it blends trauma-informed therapy with the everyday joys of being a parent, which includes spending quality time playing with your child. With this new GABI site, families with young children in BedStuy will have easier access to wraparound support, including services from DOHMH, H+H and now, ACS."

“The opening of this new GABI site in Brooklyn demonstrates New York City’s support and commitment to families in need. In partnership with DOHMH and H+H, ACS will make vital resources and health-related services more accessible to families in Brooklyn,” **said Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog.**

“When parents build close bonds with their children, families and communities are healthier,” **said Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi.** “We’re proud to support this innovative model.”

“Providing families with the care and help they need to overcome challenges—including trauma, poverty, isolation, and mental health issues—is critical to keeping children both safe and healthy,” **said NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz, MD.** “We are excited to work alongside ACS, the Health Department, and the Brooklyn community to bring them the resources they need to help each and every family thrive.”

"GABI helps parents achieve their wish to be a “different kind of parent” so their children feel special, loved and protected. To accomplish this goal, this quote from John Bowlby guides our work: *If a society values its children it must cherish their parents,*” **said Dr. Anne Murphy, Director of the Rose F. Kennedy Under Five Trauma Services Program at Montefiore Medical Center.** “The GABI team holds every parent in our hearts so stresses subside and love and protection already inside every parent can shine through embracing their children with warmth and affection”

The GABI program first launched in July 2017. As of today, there are a total of six GABI sites citywide: Staten Island, Queens, Manhattan, South Bronx, North Bronx and now, Brooklyn. With the launch of the Brooklyn site, GABI can now serve families from across the entire city.

The location for the Brooklyn GABI program was carefully selected by ACS and is conveniently co-located in a clinic that offers health-related services relevant to young children. For instance, the multi-service site houses the Nurse Family Partnership (DOHMH), Newborn Home Visiting Program (DOHMH) and Bedstuy Pediatric Clinic (NYC H+H).

GABI seeks to improve children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, decrease their exposure to trauma and maltreatment, reduce stress, and boost parental social support and mental health. GABI is offered on a “drop in” basis, allowing parents the flexibility to attend two-hour GABI sessions up to six times per week as their schedules allow. GABI is a group-based intervention, which means that several sets of children and caregivers receive the same session simultaneously, allowing parents to connect with others experiencing similar challenges. The program begins with a group introduction on the floor which includes a welcome song for children and parents. Clinicians then encourage parents to join their child in playtime and to reflect on their interaction. The next component is when the group diverges into a parent-only therapy session and a child-only play session, each facilitated by clinician. The program ends with a closing song.

At each GABI group, families are also offered: diapers, warm meals and transportation (MetroCard or car service). At the parents’ request, GABI also provides strollers, breast pumps, newborn baby items, and pack & plays. Once a year, GABI holds a holiday gift drive where families are provided with toys and clothing.

While all GABI's services are center-based, GABI is currently providing services to eligible families via Telehealth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. GABI sites remain open for face-to-face services as needed with COVID protocols and social distancing in place.

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