

# Keeping Families Together



## Family Snapshot: Michelle & Her Sons

After years of struggling with poverty, drug abuse and being forced to live in one family homeless shelter after another, Michelle pulled her life together. With the help of Keeping Families Together, Michelle finally had a stable home in a sunny, two-bedroom apartment where she hoped to build a new life with her three young sons.

But unexpectedly, crisis struck.

One of Michelle's sons, Donovan, now 13, has serious behavioral and emotional problems, including oppositional defiant disorder and attention deficit disorder. He can be physically aggressive and beyond reason.

One night, Donovan attacked his mother with a broom. The only way she could defend herself was to strike back.

The next day, Donovan reported his mother to school officials for hitting him. The city's Administration for Child Services (ACS) opened a child welfare case against Michelle. Suddenly, she was in danger of losing all three of her sons because of Donovan's behavioral challenges.

Michelle's case manager, Denise, immediately stepped in and interceded on Michelle's behalf so that Donovan could remain with his mother while receiving proper treatment and medication.

Donovan is now in psychiatric day care, getting the help he needs, and Michelle's family has stayed intact.

"I don't know what I would do without the services here," Michelle says of Keeping Families Together. "Sometimes when you need support, you need it right then—not tomorrow or next week."

