



# Elizabeth House Services

-Adapted from and replaces the Program Plan from 2005

## ABOUT ELIZABETH HOUSE

Elizabeth House is a treatment centre that offers a continuum of intervention and support services to families with children aged 0-5 years. Elizabeth House works primarily with young mothers and mothers-to-be who are experiencing serious difficulties adjusting to pregnancy or their role as parents. The approach to treatment is educational and therapeutic, focusing on the needs, and building upon the strengths, of the individual.

Services are provided to mothers and families through residential and external programs. Interventions focus mainly on the acquisition of parenting skills and life skills. Elizabeth House is equally concerned with optimizing children's development and facilitating the development of a long-term or permanent plan for each child.

Services are designed to serve the English-speaking community in Quebec and are generally offered in the greater Montreal area. Elizabeth House is funded through the Ministry of Health and Social services but relies on private donations to support programs and activities.

**Our Vision** is a world where children are safe, secure and loved and where parents are supported and empowered so that they all have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

**Our Mission** is to positively impact the lives of young children whose parents require intensive support and intervention to improve their capacity to parent.

**Our Values** –As an organization, Elizabeth House is committed to:

### Integrity

- in respect for all
- in embracing diversity
- in effective communication
- in our commitment to accountability and transparency
- in our ethical practices

### Excellence

- in compassionate, professional care and service
- in quality of service and risk management
- in management and decision making
- in promoting teamwork and encouraging leadership
- in fostering a learning environment and the continuation of education

### Innovation

- in responding to the evolving needs of young families and changes in society
- in developing and disseminating best practices
- in creating and evaluating new knowledge
- in embracing the reality of change

### Collaboration and Partnership

- in working with young parents and their families throughout the rehabilitation process
- in supporting transitions of care and service
- in valuing the contribution of staff and volunteers
- in building knowledge and capabilities
- in all our relationships

## **ABOUT THE CLIENTS WE SERVE**

Elizabeth House serves a client population with varied and complex needs. Some clients require the services of Elizabeth House to help them transition into parenthood due to their young age and limited life experience. Others experience a difficult transition due to personal limitations caused by an intellectual deficiency or mental health condition. Instability with respect to housing, financial problems, inadequate support networks, abuse and/or exploitation are other factors leading to vulnerability, which clients commonly experience. The experience of immigration can also result in social isolation and poor adaptation to parenting.

Some clients have had past involvement with Youth Protection, placements in foster homes and group homes. They may continue to be involved with Youth Protection in their capacity as parents. They are likely to have experienced some of the following situations during their childhood or adult life:

- Separations from primary attachment figures and/or disruptions in care
- The absence of protective fathers or father figures
- Family disorganization/dysfunction
- Inadequate guidance and family support
- Physical, sexual and/or psychological abuse
- Substance abuse
- Experiences with conjugal violence
- Emotional or mental health problems
- Oppositional thinking and behaviour
- Frequent moves and lack of stability in the community
- Susceptibility to exploitation

## **TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH**

Elizabeth House is committed to the well-being of its clients, recognizing their physical, emotional, educational, cultural, spiritual, and social needs. Elizabeth House can provide support and guidance to clients in need, from pregnancy until their child has reached five years of age.

Elizabeth House staff members adopt a neutral, non-judgmental position when helping clients make choices about pregnancy and family planning. Clients are assisted in making informed decisions, whether they intend to raise their child or wish to explore other options.

Elizabeth House is sensitive to the many challenges experienced by parents or parents-to-be; particularly young persons who may not be prepared for the responsibility of parenting due to their developmental stage, their level of maturity and/or previous life experience. Elizabeth House helps clients have healthy pregnancies and prepare for the arrival of their babies. Parents are given the opportunity to develop or improve the skills they require to become effective, successful parents.

Elizabeth House is concerned with optimizing children's development. Close attention is given to children's emotional, physical, social and cognitive needs. Given the vulnerability of young children, the needs and safety of the children are prioritized in all interventions and the clinical decisions that are made.

Clients are encouraged to reach out to family members and/or significant others and resources in the community. Fathers are seen as playing an important role in a child's care and development, as the child's primary caregiver, co-caregiver, or part-time parent. All programs place an emphasis on including fathers in activities and interventions, whenever possible.

Clients participate in developing plans for themselves and their children. This is done through an intervention planning process whereby treatment goals and objectives are recorded and revised periodically. Each client is assigned an educator who acts as case coordinator. The case coordinator is responsible for writing the intervention plans and helping the client identify strategies to help them meet their goals and objectives.

Clients are encouraged to use the continuum of services available through Elizabeth House as their needs and situations change. They are supported to take advantage of educational opportunities through Elizabeth House or other educational programs. Emphasis is placed on helping clients learn to be resourceful and to develop to their full potential, while decreasing their social isolation.

An integrated team approach is used at Elizabeth House. The team consists not only of the staff and clients of Elizabeth House, but may involve professionals from other organizations, family members and significant others. Emphasis is placed on transparency, collaboration, open and direct communication.

## **RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

Elizabeth House can accommodate up to eighteen clients (mothers-to-be, mothers and children) in its residence. The residence provides services and supervision twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. There are nine bedrooms. Each client has her own furnished bedroom which she shares with her child.

Accommodation can be made for a mother with more than one child, depending on the number of residents at the time of referral. The length of stay is not pre-determined, but is based on the individual's needs, abilities and progress. The average length of stay is six to nine months.

The residence offers a safe, structured, and supportive living environment for adolescents/women who are having significant difficulty in caring for their child. In situations involving Youth Protection, the services provide an opportunity to pregnant girls and women to demonstrate that they can stabilize their situation and adequately meet their child's needs. This opportunity is often pivotal in determining whether a child can be maintained in the mother's care, or reunited with the mother (in situations where children are placed in foster care or entrusted to another).

Note: Elizabeth House is licensed as a rehabilitation centre and an open custody facility for youth who are followed under Youth Protection and/or under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and require residential services and meet the Elizabeth House criteria.

Two programs are offered through Residential Services:

The **Pre-Natal Program** helps pregnant girls/women have healthy pregnancies, while developing a plan for the arrival of their babies. Most clients who are admitted to Elizabeth House have made the decision to keep their babies. Others may require counselling and support in order to reach a decision. The transition to

motherhood can be difficult for first-time parents, particularly adolescents who must balance their own developmental needs with the demands of full-time parenting.

Interventions and activities specifically focus upon helping clients:

- Access medical and prenatal care;
- Make/confirm the decision to parent or not;
- Establish a plan for the actual birth;
- Learn about nutrition;
- Understand how lifestyle choices have an impact on their pre-natal health;
- Prepare materially for the arrival of their babies;
- Develop a healthy support network;

The **Mother-Child Program** helps mothers to develop or enhance their parenting skills, and prepare for a successful integration or re-integration into the community. Clients who are in the Pre-Natal Program, and who need to transfer to the mother-baby program, go through a new contracting process.

Interventions and activities specifically focus upon helping clients:

- Arrange for health care services for their child,
- Establish a routine and pattern of care for their child;
- Understand and respond appropriately to their child's cues;
- Learn about their child's stage of development and the benefits of child stimulation;
- Learn about child safety and how to provide their child with age-appropriate supervision;
- Learn how to set limits with their child (if the child is a toddler or pre-schooler);

The residential educators work closely with the mothers so that their children may feel safe and secure and have their needs met in a healthy and predictable manner. Emphasis is placed on helping mothers balance their needs and the needs of their children. Brief periods of respite can be provided to mothers by volunteers, contracted by Elizabeth House, who care for children within the residence. Interventions and support are also provided to fathers, to address their individual needs and to help them develop or improve their parenting skills. Arrangements can be made for fathers to visit their children at Elizabeth House, unless there are contraindications or circumstances which prevent this.

All residential clients sign an initial six-week contract for the purpose of observation and assessment. An intervention plan is subsequently developed, based on the client's areas of strength, challenges, and personal goals. These plans are reviewed at least every three months, and amended as goals are attained and new objectives are set. Clients can have weekend leaves from the residence if they are deemed ready and have a safe environment where they can stay (barring restrictions such as conditions determined by the Director of Youth Protection).

All clients within the residential programs are encouraged to obtain services to address their medical and therapeutic needs during their stay at Elizabeth House; the premise being that adequate self-care leads to healthier pregnancies, responsible parenting and good role modeling for children. Clients are further assisted

in accessing services from the community to complement the services they receive through Elizabeth House, as well as day care for the child(ren), where applicable.

Clients are taught skills related to food preparation and making healthy food choices. They learn about organization and budgeting, as well as how to negotiate government systems and to fill out forms.

They are expected to participate in chores, cooking, groups and activities that are offered. They are expected to adhere to rules pertaining to safety and group living, curfews, and morning and bedtime routines. Certain rules may be individually tailored based on the client's age (e.g. adolescent versus adult) and/or the level of supervision they require.

Elizabeth House provides room and board for clients. Adult clients and minors with a child may be required to make a financial contribution for their stay at Elizabeth House. This contribution is determined by the *Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec* (RAMQ) based on the client's financial means. Clients who receive social assistance usually do not have to make a contribution. However, their social assistance payments are suspended during their stay at Elizabeth House; in exchange they receive an allowance from RAMQ to cover their personal expenses.

Pregnant minors are not subject to the Financial Contribution Program under RAMQ. Their parents or legal guardians are expected to provide funds for their personal expenses until their baby is born, at which point they are evaluated by RAMQ to establish their financial contribution. For pregnant adolescents who are followed under Youth Protection, the parental contribution may be managed by the *Centre Jeunesse* or youth centre.

Clients who are parents continue to receive provincial and federal family allowance for their child(ren). They are responsible to purchase items for their children, such as diapers, clothing and formula. They contribute to a savings account, managed by Elizabeth House, which is aimed at helping them learn how to budget and prepare for the future. Elizabeth House assumes the cost for client's prescription medication (with the exclusion of medications that can be obtained over-the-counter).

## **EXTERNAL SERVICES**

### **FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Family Assistance Program offers support and follow-up to families (mothers, fathers and couples) living in the community who require more intensive support and intervention than may be available through first-line services. Services are provided to clients in conjunction with their local CSSS or CLSC (*Centre local de services communautaires*) to avoid any duplication of service, and to ensure that the clients' needs are fully met.

The program is primarily intended to help clients who are leaving residential services make a successful transition to the community. Clients in the community may be self-referred or be referred by a first-line professional. Self-referred clients are connected with their local CLSC for assessment of their first-line and second-line service needs, and for the purpose of joint intervention planning.

Interventions and activities specifically focus upon helping the client:

- Access the first-line health and social services they require;
- Find resources to pursue their educational or career goals;
- Find appropriate housing and day care for their child;
- Develop a system of social support to decrease isolation;
- Develop and maintain independent living skills;
- Address issues related to parenting as their child reaches new developmental milestones;
- Address personal matters such as lifestyle choices, relationships, finances and family planning,

The Family Assistance educator is the case coordinator for the client(s) and the child and is responsible for developing an intervention plan with the client(s). Joint service plans may be established with service partners, where applicable. The educator works towards creating and maintaining collaborative relationships with different organizations and institutions.

### EDUCATION PROGRAM AND NURSERY

Elizabeth House offers an education program for teenagers who are pregnant and/or have a child in their care. The program is available to clients in the residential programs and in the community, who meet the requirements for entrance into a youth sector school and who are eligible for English education.

The program is run through a partnership with the English Montreal School Board, and offers core curriculum for Secondary I-V. A modified curriculum is also offered to prepare some students for a vocational or skills-related program. Clients have their own individualized education plans and work at their own pace.

Interventions and activities specifically focus upon:

- Enabling the adolescent mother or mother-to-be to continue her secondary education;
- Providing clients/students with “for-credit” curriculum related to cooking and nutrition, independent living, life skills and parenting, in addition to academic curriculum;
- Providing the opportunity for clients/students to be with other young parents so that they may benefit from mutual support and learning;
- Providing opportunities for clients/students to experience trusting relationships and success through which they can increase their competence and self-confidence.

The Education Program educator is the case coordinator for the client and her child and is responsible for developing an intervention plan with the client. The educator is available to provide counselling to clients as needed. The educator works to ensure that clients have access to the services they require, internal and external to Elizabeth House, and collaborates with other professionals and organizations involved.

Elizabeth House further supports mothers attending the Education Program by offering an on-site Nursery for children 18 months of age and younger. The staff in the nursery cares for the children while the mothers attend classes and groups. They assist parents in monitoring their children’s health and development and help them to address any specific concerns. The fathers of the children are given the opportunity to participate in certain events and activities, and to visit their child in the nursery, where deemed appropriate.

## SEMI-SUPERVISED AND TRANSITIONAL APARTMENT PROGRAMS (PATH AND TRACK)

Elizabeth House runs two independent living programs for clients who require assistance to transition into living in the community. The housing, which consists of two duplex apartments, is situated in close proximity to the main residence. Each location can support a parent and child(ren) or a couple and child(ren). The apartments are furnished and equipped with basic items.

The [Path Program](#) is intended for clients who are leaving the residential program yet still require daily intervention and support to consolidate the gains or progress they have made.

The [Track Program](#) is intended for Elizabeth House clients (mother, father or couple) who require independent living support, but of a less intensive nature. Clients must demonstrate the capacity to ensure the safety and security of his/her child(ren) on their own. They must have an income to support their living expenses.

The length of stay in a Path or Track apartment is generally up to six months. Path and Track clients are followed by an educator from Residential Services or the Family Assistance Program. They are expected to abide by rules in relation to curfews, visitors, and respect of the physical living environment. Clients make a financial contribution for their stay at Path or Track, simulating a real-life housing situation. They are expected to participate in a savings program, setting aside funds that can be used for their eventual transition into their own dwelling or for their personal goals.

## SUMMER DAY CAMP

The summer day camp offers Elizabeth House clients a unique opportunity to spend quality time with their children, taking part in child-oriented activities and benefiting from some teenage or adolescent time while children are cared for in the nursery. It provides much-needed respite for young parents and demonstrates to them how to balance their needs and their children's needs through the planning of family-centered activities, and through the friendships developed with other parents. For some parents it breaks the isolation they experience as single parents with limited support.

The day camp runs two full days a week; one day is dedicated to parent/child activities, while the other is dedicated to activities solely for the parents. The activities are supervised by the staff, while clients play a role in determining which activities they will take part in throughout the summer. Most activities are budget-friendly and consistent with what clients could afford to do on their own. Clients learn about their city and its surroundings, and how to take advantage of the numerous free or low-cost public events and activities that are held during the summer period.

## CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS AND GROUP WORK

The modeling of positive parenting and the use of “teachable moments” are the two forms of intervention most frequently used at Elizabeth House by all clinical staff members. The goal is to seize opportunities to assist clients in examining their behaviours and/or adapting their response to their child to better suit their child's needs. Staff members may, at times, assume a more directive approach, but this is usually concerning matters of client/child safety.

Staff members provide emotional support and counselling to clients. They are often engaged in providing advocacy, referral and accompaniment services. Many clients have difficulty accessing community services, articulating their needs and understanding what is being asked of them by government agencies. The goal of accompaniment/advocacy is always to empower the client and to “do with, not for.”

The clinical group work in the Residence and in the Education Program is focused on pre-natal care, the acquisition of parenting and life skills, and issues related to relationships and sexuality. The Terrific Toddlers parenting education program (Alberta Health Services) is used for teaching, as well as an independent living workshop for young parents designed by Elizabeth House.

Clients in the Mother-Child Program take part in child stimulation activities, so they may learn how to interact and play with their child, according to their child’s age and stage of development. Parents can be unaware of the importance of stimulation. They may also feel uncomfortable or self-conscious about engaging in certain activities with their child. The goal of the group is to work with and through the parent to promote optimal child development.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), published by Paul H. Brookes, is used in all programs. The questionnaire is a user-friendly tool which involves parents in the screening and monitoring of their child’s development. The objective for using the tool at Elizabeth House is to promote clients’ interest in their child(ren)’s development, and to help them recognize the benefits of child stimulation.

Guest speakers and students doing internships at Elizabeth House also provide numerous group activities and sessions for clients on varied topics, such as nutrition, healthy food and living, self-esteem, creative writing, gambling addiction, internet safety and safety in the community, conjugal violence, and legal rights related to child custody and access.

## **LOCATION OF ELIZABETH HOUSE**

Our residential services and administrative offices are located at 2131 Marlowe Avenue in Notre-Dame-de-Grace. The residence is one block north of the Vendome Metro station and three blocks east of the Décarie Expressway, just south of Sherbrooke Street. The Education Program is located at 1741 de Biencourt in Ville Emard and is close to Jolicoeur metro station.

## **GENERAL ADMISSION CRITERIA**

The client must:

- Be pregnant, or be the parent (mother or father) of a child between the ages of 0 to 5 years and be experiencing significant difficulty in assuming the parental role;
- Be motivated to work in collaboration with Elizabeth House and other service providers;
- Be able to effectively communicate in English;
- Require second-line services that cannot be provided on a first-line basis from another establishment or community organization;



## SPECIFIC ADMISSION CRITERIA

### RESIDENTIAL SERVICES (PRE-NATAL AND MOTHER-CHILD PROGRAMS)

The client must:

- Be female;
- Have reached the second trimester of pregnancy (for the pre-natal program);
- Have the ability to learn and apply new knowledge and skills;
- Be able to manage in a group living environment;
- Not have a condition that impedes her ability to function, such as an active substance abuse problem, or an untreated mental health problem;
- Have consent from her parent(s) or tutor if she is a minor (with the exception of certain clients followed under Youth Protection);
- Agree to receive social services from the CSSS Cavendish, if she does not have a social worker from another organization;
- Receive services from a *Centre de Réadaptation en Déficience Intellectuelle* (CRDI), if she has an intellectual deficiency.
- Have two valid pieces of identification.

### FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The client must:

- Be willing to receive first-line services from the local CLSC in conjunction with services from Elizabeth House;
- Be willing to include the child's other parent and/or other members of their household in interventions, when appropriate.

### EDUCATION PROGRAM

The client must:

- Be female;
- Be eligible to attend an English Youth Sector school;
- Be 18 years of age or under as of June 30th in the year of registration.
- Clients aged 19 may be accepted under certain conditions.

### REFERRAL PROCESS

For Residential Services: Clients may be referred by a social worker from a hospital centre, a *Centre de Réadaptation en Déficience Intellectuelle* (CRDI), a *Centre Jeunesse*, or a *Centre de santé et de services sociaux* (CSSS). In situations where the DYP have a legal mandate for the adolescent and/or the child(ren) being referred to EH, the *Centre Jeunesse* must support the request and agree to take part in the intake and planning process.

For the Family Assistance Program: Clients may refer themselves, or be referred by a health or social service professional.

[For the Education Program](#): The client must call the Education Program Clinical Educator directly.

\*\* The Request for Services forms for the Residential and Family Assistance Programs can be obtained by contacting the Clinical Program Manager. The referral package for the residential program must include a psycho-social assessment outlining the client's situation and service needs. Other pertinent assessments, such as psychological or medical reports, should be included if available.

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Intake meetings are required to evaluate the clients' needs and their motivation to participate in services. Clients may invite an advocate, a helping professional, a family member and/or significant other to support them through the process. The father of the child(ren) (if applicable) is encouraged to attend, where appropriate.

[For Residential Services](#): An intake meeting is scheduled upon receipt of the referral forms and supporting documents. The meeting is chaired by the Director of Professional and Rehabilitation Services or the Clinical Program Manager. The client must attend as well as the referring professional. Other professionals may attend with the consent of the client.

Clients who are accepted attend a second, pre-admission meeting accompanied by the referring professional to sign contracts related to treatment, rules regarding safety and security and exchange of pertinent information with other health and social service professionals. The client's admission to Elizabeth House is usually scheduled for a subsequent date. The client's case coordinator is present for both the pre-admission and admission meeting, where possible.

[For the Family Assistance Program](#): An intake meeting is scheduled with the client directly, or upon receipt of the referral forms if the client is referred by a professional. The meeting is chaired by the Director of Professional and Rehabilitation Services or the Clinical Program Manager. The client must attend this meeting as well as the referring professional, if applicable.

[For the Education Program](#): An intake meeting is scheduled with the client and the clients' parent(s) or tutor, if the client is a minor. The meeting is chaired by the Day Centre educator who oversees the client's school registration, if the client is accepted.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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