

The CBC's flagship news broadcast, The National, recently aired a magazine segment showcasing the Milton and Ethel Harris Research Initiative (MEHRI) and our work with children with autism.

The CBC has now made the segment available online. We are pleased to share it.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2MZw7Ugccw&feature=youtu.be>

*Note: Once the video appears on the screen, click on the bottom right hand corner of the video box for a full-screen view of the video.

The segment highlights some important findings from our clinical research. A team of therapists trained in MEHRIT, a DIR-based intervention, worked with parents to support their child's motor capacities, sensory capacities, biological regulation, emotional regulation, and communication capacities. All of this is done within the context of play-based, parent-child interactions.

Significant findings from our research include:

- Evidence from our neuroscience lab showing that the brains of children with autism can be changed through MEHRIT: the areas that sub-serve social and communicative functioning become more active, while the areas that impede social engagement become less active.
- MEHRIT served to enhance the children's social and communication skills. They demonstrated a marked improvement in their ability to initiate, sustain and enjoy interactions. This is highly significant, as social deficits are a core feature of autism.
- Parent satisfaction with our therapeutic approach is exceptionally high.

MEHRIT focuses on understanding each child's individual differences (strengths, challenges and interests) and joining the child in a manner that is developmentally appropriate and fosters an intrinsic motivation for continued interaction. We help parents to strengthen their child's capacities by...

- identifying and reducing the stressors that cause children to become overwhelmed and as a consequence to shut-down social interactions;
- scaffolding and providing challenges that are "just right" for each child to develop and expand their capacity to interact
- helping parents create experiences that are joyful, meaningful and engaging of the child.

We are continuing our research and generalizing our treatment approach to help a broad range of children, beyond children with a diagnosis of autism.

For more information on MEHRI, please visit our website: www.mehri.ca