

Infant & Child Development: Jacob's Story

Jacob was born at Mount Sinai hospital at 28 weeks gestation weighing only two and a half pounds. Jacob remained in hospital for 2 months where he was fed by tube and received oxygen. A premature birth is traumatic for all; a frightening and emotional journey. When expectations of a full-term bouncing baby are changed, the strength of relationships and supports systems are tested.

Jacob and his young mom were referred to our **Infant and Child Development** program before he was actually scheduled to be born. Infant and Child Development provide a family centered therapeutic in home support program geared to child development. Out of this program, new support relationships are born. Jacob and his mother were also supported by Five Counties Children's Centre and Healthy Babies/Healthy Children. Jacob and his mother are blessed to have strong family and friend supports who are always willing and able to do whatever is needed. Jacob has grown into a bright and enthusiastic 3 year old. His proud mother is a shining example of determination as she and Jacob meet challenges and win. Jacob's story is one of many that reminds us that "it takes a village to raise a child".

I think it is safe to say that not many people have an ongoing opportunity to learn each day that they enter their workplace. Infant development provides that. Families come in many packages and we become part of that package; learning and growing, sharing their fears, successes, joy and sadness. It is not always easy. Sometimes the emotion gets the best of you, both happy and sad, but the trend of everyday learning remains. Along with that learning comes an amazing opportunity to grow and learn as an individual, become a better person, become a better support to our families, our own personal growth and development. That is what keeps us where we are. Congratulations Ashley and Jacob, proud to watch you both grow! Thank you for being a part of Infant and Child Development.

Everything is different when your baby is 14 weeks early. All the timelines are off. You don't know what to expect or when. I had to learn about Jacob's health issues and recognize symptoms and his need for immediate emergency care. I looked so forward to Kari's visits! She would bring Jacob new toys to play with and activities to help him meet his developmental milestones. She helped with developing his fine motor skills like holding a marker or a spoon. Jacob wouldn't be where he is today if it wasn't for Kari's help. It was so amazing having the help for Jacob but also emotional support for me and a friend I could trust with my feelings and struggles. Jacob is three now and will be starting school next Sept. He has now been discharged from 5 Counties and Healthy Babies as well. He knows his shapes and colours and is quite a character. Jacob and I both miss Kari's visits but are so grateful for the Boys & Girls Clubs and the Infant Development Program. I don't know what we would have done without them!

Thank you, Ashley (Jacob's mom)

Kari Kelsey
Early Interventionist,
Infant & Child Development



(L-R) Ashley, Jacob, Kari