

Jacob, The Conqueror

Blog Written by: Susan Paige (Mother)

Jacob is a very happy 8 year old, he was diagnosed with autism at 3.5. He was completely non-verbal at 3 years old and frequent tantrums because he could not communicate with exception of a little bit of sign language. Jacob said his first word 2 months after we put him in ABA Therapy and speech therapy. Jacob is an only child so it was harder for him to learn social skills than other children with siblings. When Jacob entered kindergarten he only had a handful of words, but being around typical children and having a few close friends, by January/2012 he started speaking short sentences, and the last year and a half has become quite the chatty little guy and quite involved in conversations. He has had the same support worker with him at school since kindergarten and they have an amazing rapport with one another. He can be quite bashful and shy with people he does not know or see often but he opens up to his parents and his support worker.



Jacob is a very active boy and we keep him busy with sports in the community either through adaptive lessons at the city of surrey or through Canucks Autism Network. He has also been taking horseback riding lessons for the last 3 years at PRDA and rides a cute little horse called Lady Bug. During jacob's spare time he enjoys reading, playing video games and watching tv as well as bugging me for playdates with friends.

We enjoy being a part of the FIT Network and hearing the guest speakers each month or the coffee nights where we get to mingle with all the families. Jacob enjoys the family events especially the FIT Picnic at the water park.

Acacia, my daughter

Blog Written by: Patti Biber (Mother)

It's hard to believe my journey began nine years ago when my beautiful daughter Acacia was born. My world was changed forever on the day she was born, not only because she was my first born and I had to adjust to life as a new mom, but I found out by surprise that she was born with Down syndrome. Later that day we found out that she had a rather large hole in her heart that went through both the atrium and the ventricle. The doctors told us that she needed open heart surgery sometime between the ages of 3 – 6 months. When she was 6 months old we got that call that she had a surgery date. At 6 months she had open heart surgery, and at 9 months due to a complication with the heart surgery, she had a pacemaker implanted. She has had over 5 other surgeries to put tubes in her ears and one surgery to put a tube in her eye. Despite these challenges, Acacia has done remarkably well and she continues to amaze us every day. She had had over 200 signs when she was 2 years old and now she is very verbal and she can communicate to us very well. It's even better now since she got a hearing aid a couple of months ago.



Everyone who works with Acacia tells me what a wonderful, positive little girl she is. She has a great sense of humor and she brings joy to everyone who knows her. She loves all animals, working on puzzles and art work, and she really enjoys reading. Another accomplishment that we are so proud of! Acacia has taught me so much in her life so far. She's

taught me that it's not about what you do, but it's about what can be done through you. She's taught me that accomplishments are all relative and that's not what makes you happy. Look past all the junk, live in the moment, and accept people for who they are. Bringing a smile to someone's face is more important than scoring a goal, or getting a good grade.

~ Patti

Logan, my lil' man!

Blog Written by: Cathy Piso (Mother)

I am a mom of an adorable, happy go lucky 4 year old little guy named Logan. Logan was diagnosed with Autism in December of last year. We realized when he was about 2 and half years

old that his speech was not increasing. He was sick numerous times with ear infections and sore throats from age 6 months until 2 and half years. We assumed that he was behind due to all his illness. All his other milestones were normal until then.

When I asked my friends they told me not to worry. I repeatedly heard: "Cathy, he is a boy. Boys are late with talking". Then when preschool came I really noticed how far he was behind and when I saw how he was at school he seemed so different. We started to ask the question: Could it be Autism? But when we looked it up, Logan didn't seem to have all the "classic symptoms".

But at school he was quiet, focused only on trains and/or cars and not socially aware of anyone in the room and he had very little or no eye contact. At school he used little or no words. At home he played with many things. He gave us some eye contact and at that time had little signs of the symptoms of an Autistic child. As months passed more and more symptoms appeared. Eye contact decreased, hand flapping increased, anxiety had increased and getting him out of his "own world" was very difficult.

A little about Logan. He is very sweet. He loves to cuddle and he loves to be affectionate. He does like to flap his hands or jump when he gets excited. Just think when you get excited you like to scream, shout out in excitement or tell someone about your news, well this is his way of getting that energy out without using words. When I first saw Logan do it I knew it was a sign and feared seeing it. Now I appreciate it as it makes me see how truly excited he truly is.

Logan loves to play in sand and dirt. He loves trains, cars, jumping on the trampoline, playing with playdoh, catching bugs. Logan loves to chase & play with his sister. He loves to play outside and he loves his teddy bear that he sleeps with at night and also he loves his Ipad and it is sure

amazing what he can do on it!

I think our house is just a little quieter in comparison to house of another 4 year old. To us he is "normal", but he is our normal. And he is amazing. We appreciate every word, every expression, and every accomplishment as we know it is hard for him, and every day he amazes us.



Logan has begun therapy in March, and since then, we have seen such a huge change in him. We are so optimistic and see tons of potential in our lil' man. We decided to try a new form of therapy called R&R, (Reference and Regulate). It's a type of social thinking therapy. I knew ABA was also an amazing type of therapy as well, but when we heard about this type of therapy we were eager to try it. Since therapy Logan has become hugely socially aware. You call his name and he responds. He has gained way more words and sentences. He is using prepositions, has expressive words and "sees" the world around him. Logan now says way more words without prompting him. He plays with other kids and actually seeks playmates out now. His eye contact now is amazing. It is like his world finally opened.

I have had many people tell me they had no idea he has Autism,

but I know the general public's understanding of Autism is so limited, just as mine was before we had Logan. Yes he is not "cured" and has a long way to go, but the changes Logan has gone through in the last 7 months are amazing. We have learned to be patient, to appreciate, to love even more, to cherish and to enjoy every second and most importantly to NEVER underestimate.

If you are new to the diagnosis, do not mourn the child you thought you were "supposed" to have, and enjoy the child you DO have, and with you being a proud supporter, they can get through anything and it can be truly life changing for him and yourself as well.

We have a poster above my son's bed, which he loves of course as it's a train, and it says "Full Steam Ahead to Possibilities" I truly believe he has amazing possibilities ahead of him, I truly do and I do feel he is a blessing and he is what makes us smile each and every day!

Cathy Piso,

Owner of Kids Vancouver

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