

Hello,

My name is Katie Hayes and I wanted to tell you all how Early Intervention has changed my family's lives.

My son, Porter, has Autism Spectrum Disorder and began services at 18 months when we hadn't yet started speaking. We had in-home visits from Jenny Cunningham and Mary Jo Omafray. They worked with Porter, and with us, to learn how to better communicate with our son. Through these visits we gained so much knowledge about what he needed from us in order to learn new skills. Immediately, we began seeing results. We felt encouraged that we could, not only deal with his disability, but begin to see it in a new light. Without their help I don't see how we would've come to the wonderful place we are at with Porter.

He is a vibrant, brilliant, precious little love who is becoming more and more social every day. He is now in the Early Childhood Special Ed. program and has grown and flourished in that environment by leaps and bounds. I am so grateful that he's had this experience to prepare him for a typical preschool next year. If we hadn't had this help I'm not sure he would've been prepared, socially, for preschool and subsequently not ready for kindergarten when he turns five. But now, with this fantastic and proactive beginning for him, I feel that the future holds wonderful, positive things for him.

Jenny and Mary Jo empowered us as parents. The knowledge and skills they gave us made us better, and led to a closer more harmonious relationship with our precious boy. He loves school and all of his teachers and I know they love him too.

I can't begin to stress the importance of this program and it's funding. But I know what it's meant to our family. It has been life saving. It has been fundamental in the relationship with our son and his/our happiness. It has been a necessary experience for Porter and his overall well-being. It has been a blessing that I will forever be immensely grateful for.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warmest regards,

Katie Hayes
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