

April 8, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I would like to share our experience with the Child Development & Rehabilitation Center Craniofacial program, and how it has benefitted our daughter, Katherine Schenk. At our 20 week ultrasound, it was determined that our baby, Katherine, would be born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate. At that point, our perinatologist referred us to CDRC to meet with the team, for a prenatal consultation, prior to our daughter's birth.

Immediately after the birth in January 2008, we began meeting with our team (Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Orthodontist, ENT and Surgeon) to address feeding issues, as well as begin lip-taping treatment followed by the NAM. Our daughter's lip repair was done at about 4 1/2 months of age, and her palate was closed and ear tubes put in, shortly after her first birthday. In July 2011, she had a furlow palatoplasty- to lengthen her palate for improved air pressure, and another set of tubes for her ears. In July of 2012, she received an appliance through the Dental School, which covers a small fistula in the roof of her mouth, to provide better oral pressure. This has allowed her to vocalize better sounds and have proper oral placement, while covering the fistula, which will be repaired around the age of 8. The addition of the appliance has improved her speech, as we prepare for her to enter kindergarten in the fall.

All of these services have been critical to Katherine's health and well-being. It has allowed us to support her, as we move through surgeries and "therapies" together. Katherine's hearing and speech have both been tracked since birth, as well as her overall health. Speech in particular, has been a key component and area to work on, to prepare for kindergarten. As we prepare for Katherine to enter school, her hearing is within a normal range, and her speech has made significant gains, to the point where we may be able to exit speech therapy. These improvements in speech and hearing are the result of strong tracking and advocacy by our craniofacial team, for our daughter's medical needs. The results are that everyone can understand Katherine, not just her family and the medical professionals she works with!

As a result of 5+ years of experiences at CDRC with the Craniofacial team, we have become strong advocates for our child, as well as support to new parents coming along our same path. We have been able to advocate for additional speech services for our child, through the information and support that we received. As we look toward the next steps in Katherine's treatment plan, we feel confident in our team's ability to guide us through the next phase.

Please let me know if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,

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