

Hi, my name is Carmen Corbin. I am the wife of an Oregon Public school teacher and a stay at home mom. I have two sons ages 10, Jones and 1 & ½, Harry here. When my 10 year old son, Jones was 4 & ½, he started having seizures which also came with a host of developmental delays. Countless hospitalizations and several years of feeling like a blind person navigating what resources are out there, we are here now to share with you, the largely positive effect that one of those resources has had for us. I accidentally stumbled onto our own state's program which included getting a county worker, which ended up being Tim here.

My son's cognitive delays have caused him a lot of marked difficulty with most tasks you and I usually take for granted. He needs assistance with everything from bathing to brushing his teeth and frequent reminders. In a lot of areas, he moves at the level of a four year old. Academically, he works at the skill level of about a kindergartener and a first grader depending on the subject. Generally his sentiment about school is that he hates it. Jones currently attends a self contained academic program at our local neighborhood school at PPS. He has an IEP which includes some speech, OT and Psychologist pull outs throughout the year. I wanted to share with you one example of how few hours there are to put towards my son's needs though our public school system. Jones was recently allotted an increase from 5-7 Occupational therapy hours PER YEAR! I know that there are all sorts of OT needs that my son has and could benefit from. This is an example of one of the things that this plan could potentially pay for. Currently we are also working on finding a behavioral specialist to help with the social stuff as well as a skills trainer to work on improving his basic life skills beyond what his father and I can help him with.

In addition to his academic difficulty, he has a very difficult time socially. He is not good at observing body language and non verbal cues and is significantly delayed in his reaction to what is being said to him. He doesn't enjoy school as it is very difficult for him, especially his reading and writing. As soon as the K Plan became available last year, Tim shared how it could help us by employing someone of our choosing to help us work with Jones on some of his deficient skills. I put an add in at one of the education programs at a local University and we found someone great to help us. Her name is Sami and I wish she could be here today.

Sami works with Jones up to 80 hours per month during the school year and 100 hours per month during the summer. She has been with us since last May working with Jones after school and some on the weekends. Sami is able to help us out with a host of different skills she brings to the table. She sometimes takes Jones to the park or movies to help him with social situations. She acts as an academic tutor and mentor. She is studying to be a public school teacher and brings those academic teaching skills to our living room. Sami provides something that we cannot in that she is an authority figure separate from his parents, associated with school, in his mind. She has the time to learn his idiosyncrasies. He is majorly affected by seizures and the medications to control them, constantly and it is very difficult, actually impossible for public school teachers to get to know him, his motivations and his perspectives. It is more effective with an outside person who is ally and an authority figure. It is good for him to have a safe person as an interpreter in the real world that we, as his parents just can't provide. Jones' health problems also cause him to miss a lot of school. Sami is able to bring school to us in that respect.

Since Jones has been working with Sami, he has shown us more confidence academically. He still has a hard time liking school completely since its not a video game, but he is getting better at it little by little. He seems to want to reach out to his peers more and more and really wants to improve himself overall. We are also facing the big scary transition into middle school next year and this plan has the resources to help us do it.

Thank you for your time and ear.