

Our story began a little differently than most. Through a course of events completely unrelated to vision therapy, I found myself in a phone conversation with Dr. Joan. Throughout the dialogue, Dr. Joan mentioned the phrase “what I do” several times, so when our conversation about the matter at hand concluded, my curiosity was piqued about “what she does,” and my inquiring mind had to know. What followed was a lengthy question and answer about the basics of vision therapy, indications of needed therapy, and treatment protocols.

You see, we have a daughter who is very diligent in her studies as a seven year old but takes a very long time to process and master skills. We are a homeschooling family, so the frustration and tears over homework assignments and concerns over not keeping pace with classmates were not an issue since we can move at Nora’s pace. With that being said, I had been perplexed for a year or two about how to accommodate Nora’s lack of understanding in math. There were many other concerns over the years—she ran into door frames as a toddler, became easily frustrated during a game of kickball or catch, walked down steps two feet at a time (at the age of seven), was unable to zip a jacket, went into crying fits while trying to construct Lego creations. Then there were the mounting concerns over her academic abilities, like skipping words in sentences, skipping or rereading entire lines in books, being unable to recognize words later on a page that were just seen two to three lines prior, poor handwriting as if the lines on the page didn’t exist, and the unhinged rage that came with learning math facts. I was troubled to say the least.

Thankfully I try to be in constant communication with God through prayer about how to best teach and parent our two young children, so I immediately recognized the chance phone conversation with Dr. Joan as a divine intervention. I promptly went to the website and completed the checklist, and it became obvious that we needed the services Dr. Joan was offering.

Nora’s initial exam was scheduled shortly thereafter. The two exams were painful for me as a parent—to understand for the first time that Nora could not see the world the way we do, which significantly hindered her daily routines and ability to learn. After the parent conference, Nora began therapy twice a week, which included daily home assignments. These assignments were simple for me to lead but very challenging for Nora as she was pushed into uncharted territory and proved to be very uncomfortable at times. In our situation, Nora performed best when we did the assignments in the morning, but not every day was ideal. She preferred complete silence during most of the activities in order to put her full concentration into the task. The more consistent I was with the homework, the better Nora’s results at her therapy appointments, which lead to quicker progress through the program.

However, there were times that Nora seemed to hit a plateau in her progress, but diligence proved fruitful. During those times of little progress, it was stressful for me—always thinking I should be doing more, wanting to get the most benefit from each valuable therapy session. Nora’s expansive list of diagnoses indicated an initial 48 sessions of therapy, which stretched into 16 additional sessions. This was tough for our family as the time, effort, and financial commitments were wearing on us. Thankfully though, we remained committed to the process, and Nora made tremendous progress in nine months.

At Nora’s exit exam, Dr. Joan was nearly speechless at the remarkable—almost unbelievable—improvements Nora gained in her visual system. The changes in Nora’s daily life are equally as remarkable. To name a few, Nora has much more confidence in every area; she smiles now—real, genuine smiles; she laughs heartily; bike wrenches are **almost** a thing of the past. Everything seems to be easier, from dressing to playing to academic pursuits. Her math work comes much easier now. I honestly believe that she lacked the ability to visualize *anything*

before she began vision therapy, which was a severe impediment to every aspect of life—especially math.

As the weeks and months went by, Nora was better able to articulate her thoughts and think more independently, and as her vision changed, we learned what life was like for her before therapy. When asked if she was glad to be taking vision therapy or how things looked different, she would report that things weren't fuzzy anymore, words didn't move on the page as she read anymore, or, "Now I don't see two of things." She began walking foot over foot down the stairs. Learning these things was heartbreaking for me—knowing that life was always difficult for her and we had no idea. No more though. I will be forever grateful to the good Lord above for the chance phone conversation I had with Dr. Joan.

I feel this story would not be complete without bragging on the entire family at Vision Development Center. We were always greeted with a warm welcome from Miss Stephanie. She is so very professional, yet warm, with the children and accommodated every need we had from schedule changes and insurance questions to getting answers about home assignment instructions. Some of the dearest times at the office were our visits during Nora's therapy sessions.

Dr. Joan was very thorough in her exams and explanations of every aspect of the process, spending as much time as we needed to understand. She was very patient with Nora during exams.

And finally, Nora's wonderful therapist, Miss Rebecca. Her personality was a perfect fit for Nora, which always renewed her vigor for pushing forward when the going was tough. She was immensely patient with Nora and changed course when progress halted. The confidence and encouragement she gave Nora is priceless.

Most sincerely,

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