

We always joked when Olivia was little about how you give her something to drink or eat and it was going to be spilled or how she would trip over nothing. She loved to sleep in. Olivia couldn't multi-task. When asked to pick up socks and take a cup to the sink. She would do the last thing we asked and forget about the first. We assumed this was just the way she was. We saw Olivia struggling in reading through preschool and kindergarten. It wasn't until first grade that we started picking up on more of what Olivia was struggling with. We started seeing her be fidgety and easily distracted when doing homework. She was reversing letters and numbers when writing or reading them. When reading, Olivia would lose her place often being on the line above or below, skip or pause on easy words like a, the, I, and would focus on more meaningful words. Towards the end of 1st grade we received a call from her teacher asking for our opinion on retaining Olivia. After much discussion we didn't feel like it would help Olivia and instead decided to have her tutored during the summer. It wasn't until our tutor started working with Olivia and having discussed what we noticed that she mentioned the Vision Development Center.

We did our research and filled out a checklist that we found on the Vision Development website. I also had the tutor fill out the checklist. We agreed on most of the same issues and with all the checks we decided to give Vision Development Center a call. When we called we were informed of exactly what would happen when Olivia got tested, what could follow, and how much everything would cost. When Olivia was tested we could see her struggle with certain issues like tracking and reversals and this was confirmed in the meeting after testing was done. Olivia needed help organizing things in her brain. It was suggested Olivia have 48 sessions and we chose to do it over a six-month period. We weren't positive, at this time, if vision therapy was the solution but seeing Olivia struggle and Dr. Joan's explanation of why she was tired, fidgety, distracted, and struggling with reading, all of it made sense.

Olivia had therapy on Tuesdays and Thursdays before school. We felt this was the best time for her. We felt after school she would be too tired and exhausted from working so hard all day. Homework was supposed to be done in a quiet area, with no audience, and done around the same time every day. This was a little bit of a challenge with four other siblings but we managed. Our bed room became the homework room. We had papers hung everywhere and a bag for therapy things. We tried to get therapy homework in six days out of the week. If we were gone over the weekend, we would make sure to get therapy in before we left and when we came home leaving Saturday for our day off. This seemed to work well for us. There were days we struggled but managed to keep to a schedule.

Progress was not something we saw right away and we didn't expect to. It took time and when we were struggling at homework time I would question if we were doing the right thing. We noticed things changing and realized there was always something to add to the list. It would reconfirm that we were doing the right thing. First things we noticed with Olivia was not fidgeting at homework time and she wouldn't get distracted doing homework. Then we noticed she wasn't spilling her drinks or snacks any more. One day I picked up her assignment book and noticed how her handwriting had gotten better. She was holding her pencil correctly. Her confidence was growing. She was picking up books and reading them on her own. A big one for us was when I asked Olivia to do three things and thought, 'I just asked her to multi task. She won't do everything I asked her to do.' She surprised me and did all three. I knew something was working. We weren't the only ones who were noticing things. Her teacher told us how Olivia was opening up in the classroom and making many new friends. She was starting to raise her hand to answer questions. Her teacher, as well as us, were so happy to see this. A month before Olivia graduated, a religion teacher asked us if we were doing anything for Olivia because she had noticed a huge difference in her in the last month.

She couldn't believe the difference in Olivia and her reading. Then again after Olivia graduated, I had run into her other religion teacher and she mentioned how much of a difference she noticed in Olivia and her reading since the beginning of religion. By this point we had already known we made the right decision in calling Vision Development Center but to have it confirmed by two teachers who didn't know what we were doing for Olivia was amazing.