

## **Time Well Spent**

Will is a twin. There were signs at birth that twin to twin transfusion took place, and he has had struggles ever since. After numerous visits to specialists with tests ran, we decided to just wait and see how he would react when in an educational setting.

Will did well holding his own when he started school. However, as the years have gone on, he continued to struggle more. In second grade, we decided to look to a specialist again and Will was diagnosed with Auditory Processing Disorder – his ears hear fine, but his brain does not know what to do with the information correctly. (Will also struggled with sensory processing when he was younger.) We noticed more and more struggles showing up that lead us to believe his eyes might be having the same problem. We decided to have his vision system looked at also. We have learned that, again, his eyes can see fine, but his brain isn't always sure about what to do with the information. Will was skipping problems during Math, he was struggling with copying work from the board at school, and would say he read a whole chapter book in 15 minutes – but of course could tell you nothing about what he just read.

Dr. Joan evaluated Will and we decided to take on therapy to help him. We came to therapy twice a week for six months. The time that worked best in our schedule was from 7 AM until 8 AM. I would take Will to therapy every morning, and his grandma would take him to school when he was finished. He was late to school twice a week earning tardies, but he was not substantially late most days. We felt the therapy he was receiving was more important to his well-being than the first 15 or so minutes of school. We spoke with his teacher about if he was missing anything important and she would send home anything if we needed to do it with him.

In the evenings, therapy became part of a homework routine. As we finished homework and looked over it together, we went right on to therapy. We chose to do therapy in my bedroom. When we were there, the door was locked. His brothers knew they were not to come in and they also knew they had to find something quiet to do during this time. That way, Will did not feel he was missing out on something fun with them. I had papers taped to closet doors and strings hanging from dresser knobs for six months. We also kept a little basket in the room with

bean bags, eye patches, and any other materials we needed for therapy. Every once in a while, we did bring Will's brothers in to our therapy time. It was fun for Will to show them what we were working on. He could finally be successful in showing that he could do the activities and they struggled with them. Although, we did not do that often, all three boys enjoyed it. Will could show off what he could do, and the other two could see why it was important for them to stay quiet and let us work.

Will was making great progress through his therapy. He was moving up through activities and we were happy to see the success he was having. About 2/3 of the way through therapy, life happened. I could not commit the time at home that was needed to be as successful as we had been. Even though Will continued to improve, the rate of his improvement slowed down drastically. I am now a firm believer that if you want therapy to work at it's best, the time needs to be put in at home also. We saw the difference in progress with doing therapy every day and when we couldn't do it every day as required.

Will has finished therapy and we have seen major improvements. He will now sit and read a chapter book for almost an hour... and be able to tell us all about the story. He brings home math fact papers and he isn't missing half of them because his eyes couldn't see they were not finished when he completed it the first time. We still have struggles that related to the auditory processing, but his eyes are working much better together. Just the other day, he told me he could copy things better from his seat now because he doesn't see two of them anymore. I never knew he was seeing two of everything and he didn't realize there was a better way to see it!