

May 29, 2008

Dear RiteCare of Washington,

I am the mother of a beautiful 9 year old girl, Emma, who has overcome amazing feats in her short life span. Following an excruciating birth trauma, my daughter's quality of life was full of uncertainties. I will never forget the agony of not hearing my daughter's cries as she was delivered. She was quiet. She was not breathing. The doctor's and nurses immediately resuscitated her. All the while I was trapped in my hospital bed, asking over and over again..."what is wrong with my baby? Why isn't she crying?" My doctor tried to reassure me, saying that babies are so resilient. Once fully resuscitated my little baby girl cried incessantly. I knew deep in my heart that something was wrong. The doctor's and specialists informed me that only time would tell us how this trauma would impact our daughter's mental and physical development.

We spent the first years of Emma's life in and out of various pediatric medical specialist offices, exhausted with worry. All the while uncertain of what her future had in store for her. By her 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, she could only make a few unintelligible utterances. We were then referred to the birth to three years medical center for a full speech evaluation. My daughter received speech therapy there until her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. At this point Emma's speech and overall language skills were extremely delayed. She was diagnosed with severe dyspraxia, a neurological disorder that makes learning to speak and remembering words very difficult. Emma was put into the public schools special education system due to her developmental delays. Her inability to communicate had begun to negatively affect her social and emotional development as well.

I knew that we needed to be doing more for Emma. I ended up quitting my job of 10 years to stay home and provide more support for her, but financially we were struggling to pay for the endless amount of medical bills. The average fee for speech therapy is about \$125 per hour and there was no way we could afford that, let alone \$20 co-pays twice a week...for the handful of times our insurance would have partially covered the cost of speech therapy. I was feeling hopeless until we heard about RiteCare of Washington.

Not only did RiteCare take Emma in twice a week for the most amazing speech therapy ever, they provided free parent classes for me to learn how to communicate with my daughter in a way that would encourage her speech development. The therapists at RiteCare had me observe each therapy session and provided me with suggestions and feedback that would help my child make continued progress at home. Within the years while Emma was at RiteCare her language and confidence grew immensely. Because of this quality speech therapy, Emma has now moved out of the special education classroom, into a general education class with her peers. Though she struggles to learn to read and write due to her prolonged speech delays, she is still continuing to beat this uphill battle she has fought her entire life.

I am forever indebted to RiteCare for the difference they made in the quality of Emma's life. I am so grateful for the wonderful donations that made this program available to my daughter and gave us hope for the first time. RiteCare gave Emma the foundation she was so desperately in need of to carry on with her life. As a parent I will always have anxieties, but thanks to RiteCare, I can now spend my time worrying about scraped knees and spilled milk vs. whether or not my child will ever be able to communicate effectively, make friends, and be proud of who she is.

Sincerely Grateful,

Deana Metteer

