

I wanted to take this opportunity to share with all of you the story about my son Jonathan. I want to share our experience with Early Intervention and Sunny Days Academy as well as the incredible women that helped make this such a special story. I couldn't be more excited to share this with all of you.

I took my son to his 2 and a half year check up this past January to our pediatrician Dr. John Tedeschi from Advocare Pediatrics. I had arrived with my sons milestone questionnaire filled out and had some concerns in mind to discuss. At this point Johnny was lacking social skills. He didn't call anyone by their name including not calling me "mommy" or my husband "daddy". He never made any kind of request. He would simply lead me by the hand to show me what he wanted or I would have to make an educated guess. He was very to himself and rarely approached anyone. He didn't respond to his name when called. He spoke a lot of words but never towards anyone. He had a lot of general anxieties towards doctor appointments and even getting a haircut. Johnny was rather withdrawn and he seemed to be in his own little world a lot of the time. It turned out that Johnny tested in the grey area of the questionnaire. Dr. John took notice of all of this and expressed to us that Johnny may be showing signs of some developmental delays and or some form of autism. He recommended that I contact Early Intervention and have him tested right away. I left the office that day in tears and with a lot of questions running through my mind. As a mother no matter what issue your child is having it is never easy to swallow. The unknown is unsettling.

The next morning I contacted Early Intervention and started the process of getting my son the help that he needed. Within a couple of weeks Johnny was tested and found eligible for services. I was assigned to Kathy Villanueva as my service coordinator. Kathy came out to my home on several occasions to meet with our family and to better understand us and our needs for Johnny. Kathy took a lot of time to listen to my concerns and answer my questions. She was so kind, compassionate, and caring. She made every effort to help me feel comfortable with our future endeavors of attaining help for Johnny. She assured me that she would help me every step of the way to find the right services for Johnny. Kathy set out on her mission to help our family and help Johnny.

Kathy did more than just keep her promise. Kathy found me the perfect fit, and that was Tiffany Stanley from Sunny Days Academy. Johnny was scheduled for therapy with Tiffany, 3 days a week and I was eager to start. Tiffany was truly a God Send. I immediately connected with Tiffany and more importantly, so did my son. She took the time to listen to my concerns about Johnny and gave me guidance every step of the way. Tiffany and Johnny connected on a level that I have never seen him connect with anyone before. Tiffany took the time to get to know Johnny's strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. She proceeded to build their therapy sessions accordingly. He was always eager to sit down at our dining room table and begin to work with Tiff. She would always make it fun for him with tickles and spins along the way. She strives to constantly keep his attention which could sometimes be a struggle. Through her kind words of encouragement, I saw my son's self esteem begin to soar. He grew to adore Tiff, while I watched him find a friend for the first time. I will never forget the time when he waited by the bathroom door for her until she was finished or the time when she left for her next appointment and he said "where are you?".

After just a few short months of therapy I started to see Johnny in a whole new light. He calls me Mommy and knows everyone's name in our family. He expresses his needs with words. His social skills have improved greatly within our family. His gross motor skills have improved. He listens when I call his name. Tiffany broke him out of his shell. She has given him so many tools that he is now using in his every day life. She has given our family an understanding of Johnny that we didn't have before. The most important thing Tiff left with me is that no matter what diagnosis Johnny may get in the future, he will always be Johnny, an amazingly sweet and intelligent little boy. She assured me time and time again not to worry and that everything was going to be okay.

It takes a very special person to work with children. I would know because I used to be a teacher myself. Tiffany Stanley has gone the extra mile as far as I am concerned. I didn't want to let her efforts go un noticed. She has had such a big impact on my son in such a short amount of time and I will never be able to thank her enough. My son has grown by leaps and bounds and everyone that knows Johnny, can plainly see this. I know my son may have a long road ahead of him, but this experience has been a fantastic foundation for him. I would like to express my gratitude towards Early Intervention and Sunny Days Academy for hiring people like Kathy Villanueva and Tiffany Stanley to be apart of their team. They will be missed.

With Thanks