



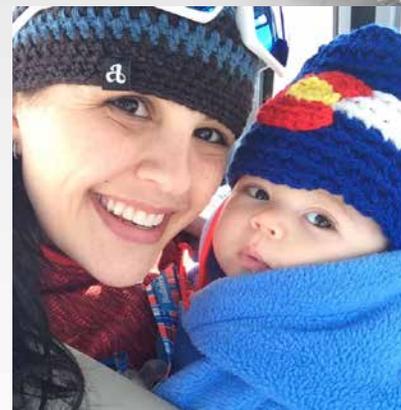
My name is Patty and I'm asking you to donate to Horizons' 2017 **Little Points of Light campaign**. This campaign raises funds for Horizons' Early Intervention and Family Support programs. Early Intervention provides therapy to children from birth to three years old. Family Support provides direct financial reimbursements to families for expenses related to the care of their child with developmental delays or disabilities. Your contribution to Little Points of Light will help families like—and unlike—mine.

When our son Thatcher was 18 months old, he started to react to certain acute sensory and social emotional situations. My husband Joe and I shared our observations at Thatcher's well-child checks, but our concerns weren't significant enough and didn't fall under specific diagnostic labels. We accepted that every child follows his own unique developmental path, but we watched Thatcher's development closely.

At his two and half year old well-child check, Thatcher failed the fine motor portion of his Ages and Stages Questionnaire and he wasn't particularly verbal. His doctor recommended Early Intervention. We were nervous about putting a label on our son. We didn't want him to be confined by the limitations of a diagnosis. We were relieved to know we could find help locally.

With weekly occupational and speech therapy appointments, we utilized sensory integration to help Thatcher overcome the overwhelming impact that daily life had on his senses. Jodi Glaisher, Horizons' Occupational Therapist, discovered issues that Joe and I had never even noticed. Thatcher explored the world with his fists closed tightly, for example. Kate Doyle, Horizons' Speech Therapist, found Thatcher's language development to be age appropriate, but she noticed he lost all verbal communication when his senses were overloaded. The first weeks of therapy were exhausting for Thatcher, but it didn't take him long to love and adore the two women he knew were changing his life.

All the little things we had noticed over Thatcher's first two years were symptoms of his social emotional development (the experience, expression, and management of emotions) and his sensory processing (the transformation of sensory information to motor and behavioral responses). What we thought were meltdowns were actually expressions of sensory overload. With assistance from Horizons' Family Support program,



During the first few years of life, ongoing interaction between genes and environments shapes the developing brain. The foundation is laid for a child's physical and mental health, affecting the lifelong ability to learn, the competence to adapt, and the capacity for resilience.





All aspects of child development are interconnected. A child's ability to learn is influenced by his ability to interact appropriately with others and his ability to control his immediate impulses.

1 in 6 children have sensory processing issues.



we purchased a weighted blanket as another means for Thatcher to cultivate a sense of calm. His first full night of sleep ever was because of his new weighted blanket!

Without knowing the why behind the various symptoms, Joe and I weren't able to help Thatcher grow, interact, or communicate. Horizons helped guide us—parents of a child who needs a little extra help—in the right direction. We have effective strategies and a new-found confidence in our parenting. Horizons appreciated that Thatcher never fit perfectly into any category, and while that has presented challenges, it has also been one of the traits we love most about our son! Jodi and Kate set out to empower Thatcher; they didn't set out to fix him.

Early Intervention was a miracle for us and we are so thankful. In only six months, Thatcher has progressed so much. Children develop 85% of their brain structure in their first five years of life, and social emotional skills are critical to success in relationships, school, and life. Early Intervention helped Thatcher implement tools and find his own way of reaching developmental milestones, even without a proper diagnosis. As a pediatric nurse, I can attest to how common this is—how obscure the gray area can be, how hard it can be to connect symptoms with causes, and how consequential it can be when things don't align.

Thatcher is unique, just like the rest of us. **Your donation to Horizons' Little Points of Light campaign will help children, similar to Thatcher, be their own kind of extraordinary.**

*Thank You,
Patty, Joe, Thatcher (3), and Huck (1)*

To qualify for EI, a child without an established condition must test at least 25% below typical development in 1 domain: adaptive, cognitive, communication, physical, or social emotional.

**Donate online at www.horizonsnwc.org
or send a check to:
Horizons Central Office - Little Points of Light
PO Box 774867 ■ Steamboat Springs, CO 80477**