Parool first noticed something was different about her son, Nikhil, around 18 months. She couldn't quite put her finger on it.

Nikhil would look under the table, focused on the nails that kept it together. He would spin in perfect circles, but her husband said he was likely “just playing”. His speech was a bit delayed but a different language is spoken in the home so it wasn't a red flag.

Then, when attempting to potty train at the age of two, Nikhil developed a fixation with the circular motion that came when flushing a toilet. It quickly became his first priority. He did it several times a day and it was often hard to pull him away.

Parool always noticed Nikhil making eye contact and hugging. He was not displaying the classic symptoms of autism, yet his quirks and fixations remained. The pediatrician noticed his obsession with flushing toilets and suggested he seek further evaluation. Not long after, he received a diagnosis for mild autism.

At age four and a half Parool signed him up for social skills classes at the Center. She viewed this as a priority knowing one day soon Nikhil would enter school and begin to make friends. The social skills class gave both her and Nikhil the ability to interact directly and in real-time with other children Nikhil's age.

“The social skills class from The Center has really made the biggest impact. He has learned the importance of sharing and of perspective taking,” said Parool.

Now seven years old and in second grade, Nikhil has made immense progress and improvement in the social skills and social interaction department.