

THE CENTER FOR AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

Patient Testimonial, November 2017

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.



Additionally, Nikhil has enjoyed the various wellness programs offered through The Center, such as the Pacific Symphony Orchestra event. At first, he was sensitive to the noises and would cover his ears but eventually came to enjoy the performances.

Most recently, Nikhil had the opportunity to attend a Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim baseball game through The Center and placed the game ball on the mound before the first pitch. Parool was worried that Nikhil might be overcome with

nervousness and decide not to partake in the pre-game honor. To her surprise, Nikhil looked her in the eye and said, "No mom, I can do it".

Nikhil went by himself to the mound, his name was announced and he gave a big wave to a crowd of thousands.

"That is a huge accomplishment for him. A couple of years ago he would not have even been able to sit in a crowded stadium as a spectator. The noises would have overwhelmed him. He is a completely different person today. I believe that his social skills class has allowed him to blossom and become more comfortable in social settings," said Parool.

Parool also praises The Center for the support she has received.

"It can be really hard to talk to just anyone about having a child with autism. I've found employees of The Center to be a great source of support for me. They are willing to listen, make suggestions, and allow me to bounce ideas off of them," said Parool. "Their support has allowed me to focus on helping my son become a well rounded and happy child."

Testimonial was solicited from parent.



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