



During pregnancy, we were told that our baby had a 1 in 2 chance of having Down Syndrome. Despite being afraid of how we would cope and uncertain of what the future held, we declined the offer of termination, knowing we would be able to provide all the love any child would ever need.

From the moment he was born, Josh provoked smiles in all who have met him. A room will literally light up in his presence.

Healthwise, there were some complications. As with many children with Down Syndrome, Josh had heart problems and we were put on a waiting list for something called a Ductus repair.

Only a couple of weeks later, Josh developed severe breathing difficulties and was rushed into hospital. It was the most frightening time in our lives.

Josh struggled with every breath until he was taken for the operation which saved his life. What we went through during that time will never leave us. We still cherish each day.

“Services are becoming greatly depleted and must be fought for. The sad thing is when you are looking after a child with disabilities it takes everything out of you. Caring for your child is relentless and completely consuming. The last thing you need is a fight.”

bibic 
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Josh didn't develop like other children and showed no inclination to talk. He was diagnosed with 'conductive hearing loss'. Professionals said, once he had hearing aids, he would soon catch up and would talk in his own good time. But, in my heart, I had the feeling that it was more than that. I guessed that he was autistic, but it was many years before he was diagnosed.

Choosing a school for Josh was very hard. The 'experts' all said that mainstream was the way to go, but we had our reservations so managed to get a dual placement for mainstream and a special school.

Josh was becoming more isolated and excluded in the mainstream setting. His communication needs were becoming more complex so we made the decision to move him to special school full time. We always thought Josh had more potential but had no idea of how we might help him achieve that. When Josh was 9 we learned about bibic's work with children with disabilities on an awareness day for carers.

We have visited bibic for help twice now. Josh absolutely loves it there and so do we! The specialist therapists manage to get Josh to do things we didn't realise he could do. They have all the experience and knowledge needed to teach us how to help Josh become more independent. It's made a huge impact on his self-worth, not to mention the feeling we get when he accomplishes something new.

The bibic therapy, advice, and strategies are also embraced at school, meaning that Josh is getting the best chance of reaching his full potential. Now, at almost 12 years old, Josh has developed in so many ways. He still doesn't talk but is able to communicate using tools. He has a lot that he wants you to know about! It still makes us smile when other parents say to their noisy children 'Why can't you be nice and quiet like that young man?'

Milestones continue to be met. He can now dress himself (mostly in the right order but does occasionally 'go commando') and is 98% toilet trained. These skills took a long time to master, but once he 'got it', it stuck.

At home, Josh does his bit and is a dab hand at loading and unloading the dishwasher. He also helps hang the washing out. His absolute favorite thing is going on holiday as he loves becoming a minor celebrity for the week and showing off his dance moves. At home, he attends two youth clubs and has regular meetups with his buddy group for parents and kids with Down Syndrome.

As you can probably tell Josh completely melts our hearts. We take each day as it comes and try not to look too far in the future. His cheeky grin and complete love of life and cake make it all worthwhile.

We have met some lovely people along the way, many have become life-long friends. Josh has taught us patience and resilience and shines a light on our hearts every day.

Sandra (Josh's mum)

Your donation will mean that everything that can be done, will be done to help Josh reach his full potential.

Your donation will fund specialist bibic therapists to assess every aspect of Josh's development. It will provide all the knowledge his parents need to know to make life better for him. It will deliver therapy to create new pathways in his brain to allow development.

Your donation will give Josh the very best chance of living the happiest and most rewarding life possible.