



Marisol's STORY

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY
SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT SO THAT THEY MAY REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL



In order to protect the privacy of the families who receive Healthy Development Services, stock photography has been used and names and certain details and identifying characteristics have been changed.

Sophia held her three-year-old daughter tight and closed her eyes, enjoying their closeness. It was only within the past year that Marisol would allow her mother to hug her or even touch her at all.

Marisol was born prematurely, and faced many challenges in her first years of life. She had some difficulty walking. She also had a very high energy level and was often upset. Sophia struggled to understand what Marisol was saying because her daughter talked so fast and mixed up sounds. Naturally, not being able to communicate her needs, Marisol would get frustrated.

Sophia knew that both she and her daughter needed help and remembered learning about First 5 San Diego services when she took a Mommy and Me class at an adult school several months prior. She called 2-1-1 San Diego, a community resource and information hub, to see if they could help her. 2-1-1 successfully connected Sophia to Healthy Development Services (HDS). A HDS care coordinator called Sophia to talk about her concerns. The care coordinator shared the different types of developmental and behavioral services available for Sophia and her daughter and worked with Sophia to prioritize their services.

Sophia started by taking parenting classes with a HDS provider located in her neighborhood. As her understanding about Marisol's development and behavior increased, she decided to pursue additional services to expand her skills and knowledge.

The care coordinator connected Sophia to other HDS providers to address Marisol's needs in speech and language and gross motor development, as well as behavior concerns. After successfully completing services, Marisol can now communicate her needs to her mother more easily. She can now walk, run and play like other children her age. Marisol also learned strategies to calm herself down, and she worked on accepting hugs from her mother. Now when Marisol gets anxious, Sophia is able to help Marisol manage her emotions.

When Sophia thought back on what was most valuable about the treatment, she said, "They taught me how to respect Marisol's emotions and really acknowledge them, rather than ignore them or try to change her."

Sophia hardly remembers the girl that had such a hard time adjusting. She now has a daughter who knows how to be more patient and wait for things. Sophia and Marisol are now able to play in a way that is more a satisfying and joyful experience for both of them.

I can tell when Marisol needs space, or when she needs more love and attention.

I FEEL LIKE WE HAVE A MUCH CLOSER RELATIONSHIP.

Sophia

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

First 5 San Diego's Healthy Development Services (HDS) works with some of the best and most trusted community agencies to provide developmental and behavioral services at no cost to children and their families living in San Diego County. HDS serves young children ages birth through five years with mild to moderate concerns who would not otherwise qualify for services from existing early intervention systems.

A baby's brain architecture, including speech, cognition, and hearing, peak during the first 3 years of life. Higher level brain functions build on these connections, so it is important to create a strong foundation.

By age 2, infants and toddlers in families with lower incomes, less education, or fewer social supports are more likely to be developmentally delayed.

Relationships with trusted adults, especially parents, teach babies and young children how they are valued and how the world works.¹

¹Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, 2012

RECOMMENDATIONS

Include payment for mild to moderate developmental and behavioral concerns in insurance plans.

Promote co-location of services which encourages cross-sector collaboration and improves families' access to services.

Increase funding to support a continuum of coordinated and integrated services so children and families receive the right treatment at the right time.

STRENGTHS OF THE HDS SYSTEM OF CARE

Care Coordination

Developmental and behavioral services that focus on the parent-child interaction

Relationship-based parent education and skill building



American Academy of Pediatrics,
California Chapter 3

For a list of resources and
additional information, please visit:
aapca3.org/familystories

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