



Wiggles and Giggles Therapy

Gracie's Story: Helping a Child Blossom

"They gave me back my child." That's the way Vanice Dawson describes Wiggles and Giggles Therapy for Kids. "I knew I had this beautiful flower that couldn't grow," she adds, "but through her therapy at Wiggles and Giggles, I have this very happy child who is blossoming."

In 2010, Vanice's daughter, Gracie, was receiving help at school for reading and had qualified for vision therapy. Vanice talked to her niece, an occupational therapist, who suggested that Gracie would also benefit from a therapy called "Interactive Metronome" and the closest was at Wiggles and Giggles Therapy for Kids in Columbus.

PERSONALIZED EVALUATION AND THERAPY

"Gracie was 8 years old when she came to us for an occupational therapy evaluation in March 2010," says Jill Zaruba, Occupational Therapist and Director of Wiggles and Giggles. "Gracie had been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD). Loud noises and crowds of people frightened Gracie. Despite being very smart, she was having difficulty engaging in the world around her and in school."

An occupational therapy evaluation at Wiggles and Giggles, revealed that Gracie's brain was having difficulty processing information. Her vision was perfect, but her brain was having trouble understanding the information her eyes were sending to it, which caused Gracie to have problems with reading, handwriting and reading comprehension. Gracie's muscles were strong and limber, but her brain was having difficulty planning her movements and a simple task, like tying her shoes, was taking longer for her to learn. She was able to smell, taste and hear just like other children, but her brain was causing her to feel these sensations in an unusual way, which led to distress, confusion and discomfort. Gracie's family began making the more than two-hour weekly drive to Columbus

for occupational therapy at Wiggles and Giggles. Her therapy program primarily focused on using the Interactive Metronome® and Therapeutic Listening. The Wiggles and Giggles therapists receive special training and certification in order to provide both of these therapy tools.

A NEW WAY TO PROCESS INFORMATION

The Interactive Metronome "trains the brain" to plan, sequence and process information more effectively through repetition of interactive exercises. Patients synchronize a range of hand and foot exercises to a computer-generated reference tone heard through headphones and then attempt to match the rhythmic beat with repetitive motor actions, like clapping their hands or tapping their foot. The program often results in children demonstrating increased attention and focus, improved motor planning, better moods, greater tolerance to noise, improved sleep, better handwriting, fewer tantrums and less anxiety.

After approximately four months of therapy, Gracie had made great strides. Scores on all of her initial assessments had improved from significant delays to age-appropriate scores. Her mother reported Gracie to be a "completely different kid."

Gracie has been discharged from therapy and is thriving among her peers. She "started" for her 7th grade volleyball team and has earned a purple belt in taekwondo. "Even after three years, I am still seeing the benefit of Wiggles and Giggles. As one of her homework assignments, Gracie was asked to create a timeline of her life. The only events she noted in her younger years were the births of her brother and sister," says Vanice. "But the timeline began to fill in after the point she received therapy. It seemed like her life before Wiggles and Giggles was a blur, and now she can see and experience everything."



Top photo: Gracie as a "starter" for her 7th grade volleyball team. Middle photo: Gracie and therapist, Jill Zaruba. Bottom photo: The staff of Wiggles and Giggles Therapy for Kids.

Wiggles and Giggles has been a part of Columbus Community Hospital for 11 years and through their various programs completes more than 500 therapy sessions each month. The highly trained occupational, physical and speech therapists have numerous specialty certifications. The combined experience of the 10 therapists totals more than 100 years of providing pediatric therapy.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Vanice has gone into the school system to talk about Gracie's experience and the results of her therapy. "The staff at Wiggles and Giggles is so great. I recommend them to everyone."

To find out more about the Interactive Metronome or the many other therapy options offered at Wiggles and Giggles Therapy for Kids, call 402-562-3341. ♦