

Early Start Family Stories Video Transcript – Episode 3

- Well, I'm a single mom. First time mom. I was 41 at the time when I had Haven. So a little bit older. And I am very blessed to have two loving parents, my dad, Bob Smith, and my mom, Judy Smith. And they're from Mississippi, so they traverse across country multiple times a year to help me out. And I'm also a US veteran. I served in Afghanistan. Haven Greyson was born on New Year's Day of 2019. He was a micro-preemie. He was born at 25 weeks six days. He was the smallest baby born at Lucile Children's Hospital in 2019. And because of his extreme prematurity, he had less than a 10% chance at life. So it was quite a scary ordeal. He spent the first eight months of his life in the hospital. And he's a little miracle baby. Yeah, at the very beginning he received early intervention. And that was a lot of play-based therapy. And he also received physical therapy because he had spent so much of his life in a hospital bed. He really didn't even have the functionality of sitting up. And then later on as he grew, he got diagnosed with autism. So he was speech delayed and we got speech therapy and an OT therapist, who was amazing, who taught me a lot of the sensory stuff for my Son since he also has sensory processing disorder. I didn't really quite know how to help my Son in a lot of ways. And so through early intervention and physical therapy, the therapist helped me learn how to help my Son. And so it was very empowering as a parent to have that resource and just kind of educate me on what's the next step for Haven. Working with the therapist, he was eventually able to sit up. They taught him how to roll over. They taught him how to crawl. And my Son, the miracle, is actually a walking and running toddler now. And that's all because of Early Start intervention. And they even referred us on to Medical Therapy Unit for my Son to get AFOs and SMOs and that's all because of their advocacy. You know, without Early Start, I probably wouldn't have a son that has advanced as far as he has advanced. He has a lot of medical complications, and it can be quite daunting as a parent to know what to do next. But with that Early Start early intervention, he will be able to have a functioning life. He will be able to go to school. He's about to start preschool. And he'll be able to hopefully make friends. And those are all things that they didn't think was possible for my Son when he was first born. They didn't think he would talk or walk or maybe even survive. So the fact that I'm even talking about development now is amazing. It has absolutely made a difference in his life and it's compounding. And I think that's what people forget is if you are doing intervention in these early years, these most pivotal years, it compounds on itself. So if your child misses out on this early development, it's only gonna get harder as they get older to meet those milestones. So it really is imperative that parents give this a try. Yeah, I would just like to really thank Early Start for the difference and impact that they've made on my Son's life. I can't be thankful enough for the difference that these therapists have made in my Son's life.

- The other day he says, "I love mama."

- For the very first time.

- And it was just a miracle, you know. And you know, it's just... That's wonderful.

- Yeah. That was the best Christmas gift ever.

- [Narrator] If you are having concerns about your child's development or would like more information about California's Early Start program, please call 1-800-515-BABY. That's 1-800-515-2229.