

## The Miska Family Story

A child's early years often bring wonder and excitement for families! Children grow and change rapidly from birth to kindergarten entrance, and are learning everyday.

### **Some babies and young children need extra help to learn and grow.**

As parents watch their child grow and develop, they might notice when their child smiles, rolls over, sits up, walks, plays, coos, cries and talks. While all young children grow and change at their own rate, some children experience delays in their development. Special health conditions may affect children's development also. Because parents know their child best, they may be the first to notice that their child is developing differently than other babies or young children.

Scott and Stacy Miska of Watertown became connected with Help Me Grow Carver County (previously known as First Step) and Early Intervention Services when their twin boys, Drew and Jordan, were 18 months old. Stacy had a normal pregnancy and delivered at 38 weeks. She feels that their family has been lucky – both boys had good birth weights and have been very healthy. Her oldest child didn't begin to talk until she was 2, so she wasn't very concerned with the boys' lack of speech development. The doctor, however, was concerned and advised that at 18 months, if they weren't talking, they should speak to the First Step/Help Me Grow program. Their neighbors also had a son in speech services and encouraged the Miska family to contact the early intervention program.

Stacy Miska said, "The kids get very excited to see their therapist, Becky. They respect and enjoy working with her. At first they weren't talking at all and now within a year, the boys are speaking in 2-3 word sentences. The program made us understand how widespread early development services are within our community. These resources are out there to help families. It helped our children to have someone in addition to their parents work with them on their speech." The speech therapist also taught Scott and Stacy how to be more patient with the boys in their everyday life and how to use many different ideas to encourage their speech.

Stacy Miska continues, "We have referred another family to the Help Me Grow/Carver County program. The worst thing that can happen is not qualifying for services. It is great to be proactive and look into the program."

### **Free help is available**

Minnesota children from birth to five years old, who are eligible for Help Me Grow, can receive services in their home, child care setting or preschool. These services are free to eligible families regardless of income or immigrant status.

**Assistance from experts**

Early childhood specialists will work with eligible children and families to plan the services and supports they need. These may include: special instruction and other services, including speech, physical and occupational therapy; ways that a family can support their child's development at home; and connections to community services and programs. Early childhood specialists can help find other community resources and early childhood programs for those children not eligible for Help Me Grow.

Visit [www.MNParentsKnow.info](http://www.MNParentsKnow.info) for more information about how young children develop plus ideas to help your child learn and grow.

Call 952-368-0160 in Carver County or 1-866-693-4769 statewide if you have questions or concerns about your child's development.

