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ABBY

Parent, MA



**@EIPLP #EIfaceToFace**

My son, Parker was born in April 2021. My husband, Ben and I were overjoyed with our new addition, but also understandably overwhelmed. The first two weeks at home were a whirlwind as we found our footing as parents.

As we started to settle into our new life as a family as three (plus two dogs!), we noticed Parker was favoring his right side. He seemed to always look to the right when in his car seat, and always slept facing the right. With that, he started to develop a slight flat spot on the right side of his head. When we brought it up to our pediatrician, she mentioned torticollis was very common among newborns because of the way they are positioned in the womb and referred us to Early Intervention.

We started the process of getting Parker assessed by Early Intervention around 5 weeks of age, and he was found eligible shortly after. At that time, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, visits were all virtual. I was happy that virtual was an option because my husband and I were not yet vaccinated due to the eligibility schedule, and of course, our newborn son wasn't either. The first few sessions with our service provider, Beth, were helpful, but as you can imagine, challenging with a small baby! I was unsure if I was doing all the stretches/exercises correctly but knew that we were doing our best.

Within a few weeks, Beth told us that home visits were going to be available. I knew that day was coming as the country started to open back up, but of course, I was still somewhat hesitant. Parker had not had any vaccines yet, and we had just spent the last year+ limiting our contact with people outside our family. The last thing I wanted was to unnecessarily expose my young son to COVID, or even the common cold.

However, Beth assured me that we would all be answering screening questions before each session to stay safe and would not meet if either of us had been exposed to COVID. Additionally, Beth and I would wear masks for more protection. By that time, my husband and I

were fully vaccinated, and Parker was starting to “wake up” to the world more, so I thought he would benefit from more hands-on sessions with our service provider.

I was right! Our first in person visit went great, and I felt like I got so much more out of it as Beth was able to show me the stretches and exercises with Parker directly. Though timing our sessions is a bit difficult with unpredictable naps, more often than not our home visits are extremely productive. I feel much more confident in my ability to practice in between sessions and feel like week to week, we are making real progress.

Overall, for us, the benefits of meeting in person outweighed the small risk. With torticollis and flat spots, the earlier it's caught and treated, typically the better. We wanted to make sure we were making the most of our time with our service provider for Parker's sake, and home visits have allowed us to do that. He's doing great and we are making great strides in his abilities. Without Early Intervention home visits, I'm not sure we would be in the same position today, and for that we are extremely grateful.