

## A Journey of Strength, Connection, and Community Support: Sara’s Story



*Stock photo & substitute names used for identity protection*

The story begins when a SPARK Parent Partner met Sara and her daughter, Brooke. From the very first visit, Sara and Brooke were warm, welcoming, and eager to collaborate. As the months went on, the Parent Partner and Sara built a strong, trusting relationship. They frequently discussed challenges and solutions, and Sara consistently applied the suggested learning strategies at home. Her dedication showed—Brooke’s progress was steady, joyful, and impressive. Each visit felt like a celebration of growth.

When SPARK families were invited to participate in a Parent Café, the Parent Partner immediately thought of Sara. She joined the sessions at a local Canton City School Elementary School and later at the Early Childhood Resource Center, embracing the experience with openness, honesty, and compassion. She quickly became a supportive presence for others in the group.

As the next Café approached, Sara was preparing to welcome her new baby. Even after giving birth, she was determined to stay involved. When the Parent Partner checked in, Sara shared that her newborn son, Danny, was facing serious health complications and would need open-heart surgery to repair his respiratory veins. Despite the fear and uncertainty, Sara remained hopeful and focused on advocating for her child. Thankfully, Danny’s surgery was successful, and he spent only a few weeks in the hospital recovering.

During that hospital stay, the final Parent Café session took place. Sara was saddened to miss it, so the Parent Partner arranged a video call to include her. It became a powerful moment of connection—

proof that community can reach families even in their hardest moments. Another SPARK family stepped forward with kindness, checking in on Sara and Danny and even offering clothes for the baby.

Soon after, it was confirmed that Sara qualified for concrete support. The Early Childhood Resource Center provided essential items for her family, easing some of the stress during an overwhelming time. The support meant a great deal to Sara and her children.

Sara’s experience reflects the heart of SPARK. Beyond preparing children for kindergarten, the program connects families to resources, relationships, and a caring community. The Parent Partner continues to cheer for this family and believes deeply that they made just as much of an impact on her as she did on them.