

Our son Will was born with a variety of complicated medical issues and has severe developmental delays. At four and a half, he is still dependent on a feeding tube for his nutrition and can't yet walk or talk. In spite of these limitations, he is a very social little boy who loves people, works very hard and smiles a lot.

In 2007, the year that Will turned three, we began our search for the "right" pre-school program. Will had been receiving many therapy services through the County Early Intervention Program. He had a great team of therapists who knew him well, so we approached the transition to preschool with some trepidation. We toured some of the local pre-schools with programs appropriate for Will's needs and were most taken by the bright, cheery classrooms, the integration of typically developing and special needs children, the kind and supportive staff, and especially the therapy pool (Will **loves** to swim!) at the Augustin Children's Center. We decided that this was the place for our son. Over the course of the next few months, we began the process of CPSE meetings and other discussions about Will's pre-school program. During this time, Martha Unrath and Pat Graff were very understanding and creative in coming up with a program that would meet the needs of a child as "complicated" as Will.

In September 2007, Will had his first day of school in Lisa's classroom. He boarded the bus and off he went, nurse in tow. We had some bumps those first few weeks as Will adjusted to his new surroundings and everyone got to know him, but within a month or two he was settled into the new routine and having a ball. He has a busy morning at school, with numerous therapies (speech therapy, physical therapy, music therapy, feeding therapy, occupational therapy, vision therapy, assistive technology – phew!) and other activities (gym, crafts, snack time, games, circle time, cooking, swimming, and the list goes on). Everyone makes an amazing effort to integrate Will into all of the activities so he can participate alongside the other children. Will thrives on this interaction and he has made some nice friendships. He brings home all kinds of craft projects; the pride on his face is so obvious when we pull them from his bag at the end of the day. And the progress that he has made is fabulous. Although communication is still limited and difficult for Will, he now has a system he can use to express his desires. This ability to communicate with our son finally lets us see inside a little boy who is so limited physically but still has a lot to say.

We have been so pleased with his therapists and because some sessions still take place in our home, we've gotten to know his teachers, keep up on how he's doing at school, and maintain a nice continuity between school and home. We are consistently impressed with the creativity, skill and compassion demonstrated by everyone at CP Rochester. Everyone is continually coming up with fresh approaches to Will's education and it is this adaptive process that pushes Will to achieve all that he can. He would not have made such great progress without these amazing teachers. It's clear that they love their jobs and the children that they work with. It is this dedication that makes Augustin Children's Center such a special place for all children.