



Our baby girl, Devan Elizabeth was born on the morning of April 29, 2008. Our doctor sat down with us within an hour of her birth to explain he was confident Devan had Down syndrome. Our minds went into hyper drive, adding to the large amounts of emotions that already came with the delivery of our first born. Our main question was “what exactly is Down syndrome?” We had no idea who would help us answer that question, so we were initially very nervous.

As the summer went by, we met with doctors, conducted lots of online searches, read books, and talked with other parents of children with Down syndrome. As they say, knowledge is power. At the same time we were adjusting to life as new parents and enjoying our time with Devan. Slowly our fear of Down syndrome faded, and we settled into the typical routines of parenthood.

Being connected with Family Outreach, The Cozy Nest, and Sullivan Speech Language Associates (all in Bozeman) has been our foundation of support for Devan, along with our families and the families of DREAM. Our biggest concern when we learned of her diagnosis was that we didn't have a clear understanding of what she would need from us and from her therapists. Family Outreach helped us map out the essentials, including the need for various early intervention therapies. Devan began attending physical and occupational therapies at the Cozy Nest early on, and we added speech therapy with Sullivan Speech Language Associates around age 1. While originally the idea of weekly therapies seemed daunting, it's actually become a highlight of our week. Devan loves seeing her friends, and we know her therapists are just as excited to witness Devan learn and grow as we are.

Devan is now almost 2 years old and she is the most amazing blessing. Down syndrome is a part of her, although that's not really something we think about very often. She is an incredibly smart, funny, loving and inspirational little toddler. Her smile and excitement for life always reminds us that she's exactly what we wished for while expecting our first born.

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