

Child Development Center in Wilmington teaches children a second language

By *WWAY*

Created *Oct 14 2008 - 12:48pm*

[Child Development Center in Wilmington teaches children a second language](#)



Preschoolers at the Child Development Center in Wilmington do not know it yet, but they are learning a second language, sign language, through music.

Speech therapist Sue Coffey said, "When we sign with children, it gives them more visual input as well as the auditory input because we are doing both."

For many of the children, learning sign language may actually give them a voice. A number of students at the Child Development Center deal with a wide range of disorders from Down syndrome to autism. One of these students is Jacob.

When Kelly Chambliss adopted Jacob at 13 months old from Guatemala, doctors knew something was wrong. But Jacob was misdiagnosed with cerebral palsy. A speech therapist eventually diagnosed Jacob with apraxia, a speech disorder under the umbrella of autism.

First there were the questions.

"Will he talk," and she said I don't know," said Chambliss.

After the questions came the concerns for Jacob.

"He may never have peers, he may never go to college, he may never have typical job, he may never move out. Everything went flying that this child was going to be trapped in his own body," added Kelly.

Kelly then turned to sign language and a kids program called [Signing Time for Help](#). For a child therapists said may never speak, Jacob now knows over 200 words in sign.

Kelly said, "We found out that his favorite color is red and that he loves cars. He loves to play with trains so we started to find out who Jacob was."

To Kelly's surprise and shock, signing has now given way to speech. Jacob is also beginning to say the words he signs. A success story Kelly said happened because sign language and speech go hand-in-hand.

Chambliss said to help Jacob along, her entire family is now learning how to use sign language to communicate with each other.



Disclaimer: Comments posted on this, or any story are opinions of those people posting them, and not the views or opinions of WWAY NewsChannel 3, its management or employees. You can view our [comment policy here](#).

[News](#) [New Hanover County News](#) [Child Development Center](#) [Sign language](#)
