

Our daughter Shelbie was 3 years and 3 months old when she went to SLCD for the first time. At the time Shelbie was having speech, OT and Special Ed services at home through the early intervention program with Nassau County. She would say very little, could not make eye contact, easily distracted and was a late walker. Once Shelbie started at SLCD we could see the change in her immediately. We communicated with her teachers, Ms. Amy and Ms. Rosa through notebooks so we are all on the same page. Shelbie loves routine. She loves puzzles, games, art, learning her ABC's and 123. We still have the day when Shelbie wrote her full name at the age of 4. She wasn't even potty trained and she was writing her name! Since failing her hearing tests we had Shelbie evaluated and both the school and doctor agreed to have ear tubes placed in her ears. Within two weeks she was chatting up a storm! It was great to hear Shelbie starting to get noisy in class. I loved reading that Shelbie did not nap today because she was talking to Julia.

In August, 2004, it was time for Shelbie to leave SLCD and go to kindergarten. My husband Grady and I were heartbroken. We tried not to show Shelbie to get her upset. At the time of our evaluation we were told that Shelbie has a high IQ and could not be put in the Special Ed class, or the inclusion class, but were to be mainstreamed into a regular class and had been declassified. After much objection, we sat down and crossed our fingers. All the while knowing she can do it. We will help her along the way, hoping Shelbie would progress further.

Shelbie had to adjust to her new class, and had some quirks that we tried to work out with the school teacher and psychologist. My two other children had a wonderful teacher for first grade and I wanted Shelbie to have her. After many discussions we decided Shelbie would have the same teacher. Mrs. Jakobson was a perfect match and a god send for Shelbie. She combines school with hugs and feelings while encouraging Shelbie to try new things. Shelbie had excelled in her class. It was during this time that Shelbie had gotten glasses. She looks even cuter and now she can see.

At the same time, we had found activities to keep Shelbie busy with social skills. We tried soccer, Girl Scouts which she still is in, and cheerleading. When Shelbie was in kindergarten Grady took her to a football game and Shelbie eyes lit up when she saw the cheerleaders, which she said to Grady, "Daddy, I want to do that!" It was one of the first times Shelbie told us what she wanted. During one Girl Scout sing-a-long at Christmas time, Shelbie started to sing in front of a large group of people and just started shaking and crying. She came off the stage just as the song had begun, yet a year later, Shelbie joined our church choir and on Christmas Eve, when church is filled beyond capacity, our Shelbie came out in front of the microphone, in the choir loft, which over looks the church and sang Silent Night.

At the present time Shelbie is in second grade and loves her teacher and friends. She is very bright and as her current teacher says "she is always happy, about anything. Even if we do 4 hours of math, she thinks it is great!" She had over come many things and needs to focus on a few things, but is well on her way to being a happy, healthy, well adjusted child. For that we will always thank SLCD for bringing us our Shelbie.