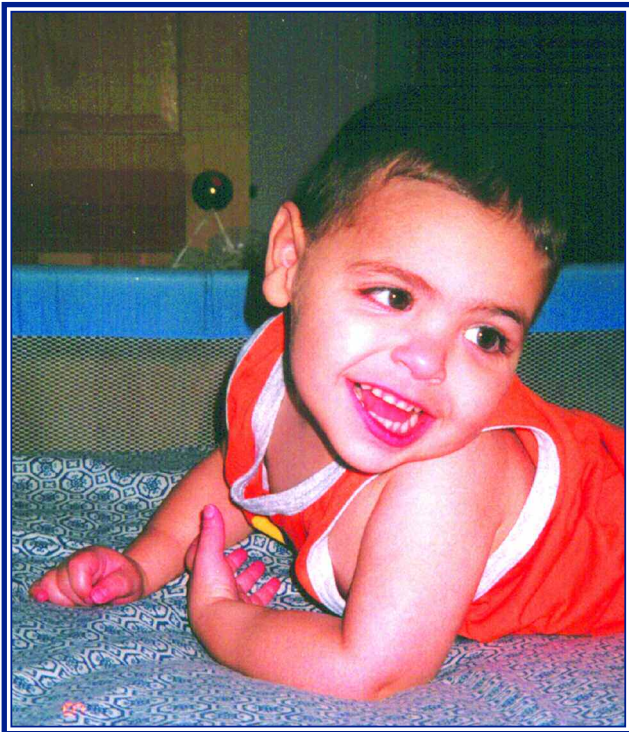


Facing the Challenge

A NEWSLETTER BY **maaps** TO INFORM YOU AND TO CELEBRATE OUR STUDENTS

Joey

When Joey was 2-1/2 years old, he was vomiting up to 40 times per day and was unable to sit, stand or communicate his needs. Now 3-1/2, Joey is diagnosed with global developmental delays, microcephaly, seizure disorder and significant communi-



cation deficits. He is fed hourly by a g-tube, and requires nearly constant medical monitoring. When it was time to transition from Early Intervention to a preschool program, Joey's parents, Lisa and Robert, investigated programs with their transition team and public school liaison. They knew that, for Joey, a preschool program would need to be flexible, with onsite medical support and a staff with experience working with children with complex medical and developmental issues.

“...such progress would be difficult without the small, individualized programs offered...”

The highly individualized preschool program available at the Professional Center for Child Development Day School proved to be the solution Joey's parents were hoping for. Working closely with the school's health coordinator and developmental pediatrician, a comprehensive medical care plan was developed to meet Joey's needs. His feeding plan includes g-tube feedings, oral-motor stimulation and the careful re-introduction of oral foods. Joey receives occupational and physical therapy services to address his motor delays and positioning needs. The Day School's education coordinator, along with the speech and language therapist developed a plan to address Joey's communication needs which includes augmentative communication systems, a computer with a touch screen and adapted, appropriate toys for play. Music and movement groups are also a part of Joey's day at the Professional Center.

“Small steps, but each step leads to progress.”

Today, Joey's big brown eyes and bright smile are just one indication that he is thriving in his new school. In just a few short months, Joey's trunk control has improved and he is making steady progress in increasing his physical stamina. Joey is learning the concept of taking turns during reciprocal play and is giving the staff “high fives” (a skill that requires both cognitive and motor abilities!) Using the computer, Joey is also learning “cause and effect” skills. Joey's parents believe that such progress would be difficult without the small,



individualized programs offered by the Professional Center's Day School. "So many services are available under one roof," says Lisa. "The school's staff has over 20 years of experience working with young children, and they offer intensive, integrated therapies." Another unique aspect of the school is that it offers opportunity for community inclusion. Children who attend the Day School can also attend

class with typically developing peers at the Center's Two by Two program. Parents can participate in support groups and workshops offered regularly.

Joey's special story is still unfolding, and he continues to develop new skills and grow stronger. As his mom says, "small steps, but each step leads to progress."

About Facing the Challenge

Facing the Challenge is published by the Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (**maaps**) which represents private day and residential schools approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education to provide highly specialized education and treatment services to over 6,000 of the state's most disabled and disadvantaged students. For more information contact **maaps** at 781-245-1220.

The Teacher Shortage is a Staff Crisis in Private Special Education Schools

When public school districts have a student with disabilities so severe that the district cannot provide an adequate education, the student is referred to state approved private special education schools. Cities, towns and the Commonwealth, ask these private schools to

educate the most disabled, most difficult and troubled students.

Ironically, the average teacher salary in these private schools is only \$27,000 compared to \$45,000 in Massachusetts' public schools. Salaries for other critical direct care staff are also far lower than public employee counterparts. This huge discrepancy has resulted in very high staff turnover rates over the past three years. The annual turnover rates for teachers are between 20% to 38% and for child care workers, 43% to 65%.

To make their students successful, **maaps** member schools need a well trained, experienced work force of teachers, child care workers and other professionals. **maaps** is committed to working with its members to ensure success for both its member schools and their students.



maaps

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