

A CLOSER LOOK AT SPEECH

Five-year-old Greyson—known as Gracie—was diagnosed with CdLS at five months old. Her parents, David and Christine, were in touch with the CdLS Foundation shortly after the diagnosis, and Gracie and her father attended their first conference last summer in Dallas.

Before attending conference, David and Christine discussed the various professionals available for consultations, and both felt it was important Gracie be evaluated for speech. “Gracie understands everything we say, but we couldn’t hear much tone in her voice,” says David.

At school, Gracie received speech therapy twice a week and used the PROMPT technique to help get her mouth in place for proper speech. In addition to speech therapy, David and Christine looked into purchasing a communication device to help her communicate with her family (which includes three siblings), as well as at school. They were surprised to learn that the device costs \$7,000—quite a huge investment.

One of the three professionals they met with at conference was speech-language pathologist Marjorie Goodban, Ph.D., C.C.C.—S.L.P. David says Dr. Goodban was very impressed with Gracie, who imitated the “B” sound when shown toys beginning with the letter—something her parents had not heard before.

Encouraged by this, Dr. Goodban said she believes Gracie has the ability to develop speech and recommended she continue one-on-one speech lessons, further development of signing, and learn techniques for a child with Apraxia of Speech (a motor speech disorder).

The first few months after conference, Gracie continued with speech lessons and signing, but there was not much improvement in her speech. David and Christine felt she needed additional help and decided to research communication devices again.

David remembered that while at conference he spoke with another family about the Apple iPad/iPod application Proloquo2go and its significant improvement to their son’s ability to communicate. “The combined cost of an iPad and the application was just a little under \$1,000, far more affordable than what we were contemplating,” says David.



Christine started researching the application. “Once I reviewed what it had to offer, I started to cry,” she says. “It was exactly what Gracie needed. It felt like a good decision because if Gracie couldn’t use it, one of our other children could use the iPad, and we didn’t have to spend \$7,000.”

Within a short time, Gracie learned to use the iPad quite efficiently and maneuvered through multiple screens to communicate her wants and needs. She takes it to class, and it is an interactive part of her communication with her classmates and therapists. “I joke that she is the only five---year---old that I know who has an iPad,” says Christine.

“We hope one day Gracie will develop speech, but in the meantime, the iPad has been a wonderful extension of her communication.”