

DaJuan

I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN HE WAS BORN! THE DOCTOR SAID HIS Apgar score was good but about 4 hours after he was born, he informed me that DaJuan was not breathing well on his own and had to be moved to ICU for observation and he had to be put on oxygen. He was there for 7 days and I cried every day. I was definitely on an emotional rollercoaster the day he was born.

He was not sucking a bottle and had to be fed with a tube. The sucking reflex did not come naturally to him. He used to gag a lot when eating and easily choked on certain foods. I had to watch him closely at every meal and cut up his food into small pieces until he was about 5 years old. Every blue moon, he chokes or gags on certain foods but for the most part, he has learned how to compensate. I am still angry that his pediatrician did not recommend him for speech therapy at birth!!! I didn't find that out until years later. Perhaps, I didn't ask the right questions. I don't have that problem anymore!! I ask A LOT of questions and then follow-up with my own research. He has had speech therapy since he was 3 years old.

He is in 3rd grade now, and in a class with "typical" children. He is doing well with academic work but needs a lot of redirection. I don't try to "sugarcoat" things for him. I just try to make him understand that he is unique in his own way. Being unique doesn't rub off! I have accepted that he will probably always need extra TLC, therapy and extra support in the classroom. I am and will continue to be his best advocate.

He enjoys riding his bike, playing video games and playing the drums.

He is friendly, very caring and has a heart of gold!!!

Mom