



To Whom it may concern:

My name is Sandy Bogart and I have a daughter, Jamie, who is 5 years old. She is a sweet, beautiful, smart little girl who also happens to have Down syndrome.

As parents of a child with Down syndrome, one of our primary concerns for Jamie is speech. Since many people consider speech to be a measurement of intelligence, it was important to us that we give Jamie as many opportunities as possible to gain the much needed speech skills. We feel that speech is the cornerstone of many opportunities for Jamie. If she speaks well, there is no limit to the amount of advocating she can do for herself. There is no limit to what she can learn, if it is taught the right way.

In July 2007, Jamie entered the preschool program at the Down Syndrome Research Institute (DSRI) in London, Ontario. This program was everything we had hoped it would be. Under the supervision of Mr. Andy Loebus, the staff at DSRI were able to teach Jamie many new skills. The school is completely speech based and all of Jamie's new skills were learned during play.

Some of the things Jamie learned during the month at DSRI include:

- Singing songs**
- She could recognize her name**
- She learned school routines**
- Taking turns**
- Simple puzzles**
- Increased attention span**

- Beginning and Final consonant sounds**
- Cutting with scissors**
- Proper pencil grip**
- Social interaction with peers**

These are just some of the things that the staff accomplished with Jamie in just a very short time. We can only imagine what progress Jamie would make if she were in DSRI all summer long.

The staff at DSRI were excellent in every way. Each and every day Jamie was blessed with the experience of a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a communications disorder specialist, a licensed teacher and many important volunteers. Nowhere in the public school system would she get this one on one therapy every day. They were professional at all times. They were very open to suggestions and most of all they loved what they did. This was obvious by the tears that were shed on the last day of school.

We could see the change in Jamie's speech and social skills by the end of her time at DSRI. More importantly, numerous other people have seen a noticeable difference in Jamie as well. She speaks in longer sentences and her speech is more intelligible than it was prior to DSRI. We feel that DSRI helped to boost Jamie's confidence too.

By the end of her time at DSRI, Jamie had learned all of her classmate's names. She had really grown to love her classmates and enjoyed her time spent with them. The atmosphere at DSRI has much to do with its success. It is an atmosphere of genuine caring. It was obvious to me that for the staff, this was truly a labour of love.

We plan to enroll Jamie in DSRI again next summer and we are certain each year will bring some new and wonderful people into our lives. We thank Mr. Andy Loebus for having the courage, the vision and the passion to start this wonderful school. He and his wife Jennifer are truly inspiring.

Sincerely Yours,

Sandy Bogart