

Partnering with Parents part of Molly Corrigan's “village”

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When Molly Corrigan heard about the Partnering with Parents program that strives to make parenting easier through home visiting, group activities, and other related supports, she was intrigued but wondered if it was something she needed.

“I had just given birth to my third child at the time, so this was not my first rodeo,” laughs Corrigan, who now has four children.

While Corrigan was a seasoned parent, her new baby Jack had special needs that her other children didn't. Jack was born with Down syndrome and Corrigan had to navigate an unfamiliar set of challenges. Through the Partnering with Parents Program, Corrigan received the help of a parent educator to guide her.

Through a combination of personal home visits, family groups, resource access, and development check-ins, a parent educator:

- Help parents learn more about early childhood development and parenting
- Make sure that parents catch developmental delays or health issues early on
- Get children ready for when they start preschool or kindergarten
- Help build strong families and promote positive parent-child interaction and relationships
- Improve children's health and development
- Provide support and information around discipline, nutrition, safety, sleep, and transitions/routines

While Corrigan received all of these benefits, she also got help finding resources tailored towards children with special needs like educational recommendations and therapy contacts. That support went a long way.

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the time,” says Corrigan who is an adult occupational therapist. “As an OT, I am aware of disability and how it affects families, but I’ve never worked with kids, so I didn’t know all the resources in the area. Having that extra support from Partnering with Parents was awesome and frankly, sometimes it’s just nice to have the company!”

Corrigan also received support from her parent educator on how to acclimate the family to life with a new member who has a disability, goal-setting, and developmental expectations. But the support didn’t just extend to Jack, it also encompassed the entire family. Her parent educator helped her with potty training, sibling rivalry, behavior regulation, and nutrition tips, as well as provided extra diapers and books.

“I appreciate that Partnering with Parents is a family centered program. Even though not all of my children were officially enrolled in the program, the team was great about addressing the whole family and helping us function as a unit,” she says.