

Darcy's Story

Conductive Education, the professionals, parent carers and community we have been so warmly welcomed into at NICE has become a driving force of hope, steering our determination to continue giving our son, Darcy, the very best opportunities in life. The physical and cognitive improvements we have observed in Darcy over the past year have been incredible and on reflection, in the most positive sense, extremely emotional.

For context, Darcy contracted septicaemia and bacterial meningitis at 12 days old but fought back incredibly hard from full mechanical ventilation and multiple organ failure. As a result of the infection he suffered, he went on to be diagnosed with obstructive Hydrocephalus, quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy and Global Developmental Delay. He has battled through many brain surgeries and undergone Botox treatments, alongside numerous lengthy hospital stays. Darcy is also diagnosed with severe Haemophilia B, which came as a huge shock to

us on initial discovery, as there is no family history. We have all undergone a significant period of learning, adjustment and emotional turmoil. However, Darcy's beautiful, unwavering zest for life and gritty determination has been nothing short of inspiring.

When we initially stumbled on NICE, through signposting from a SEND family at a local playgroup to us in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, and with luck the timing fell in line with one of their Open Days. From our initial assessment with Conductors Erika and Lucy, we have never looked back and have attended each week in term-time from the Milestone Service through to the Red Boots Pre-School group. Within a matter of three sessions, Darcy was celebrating, giggling and gesturing to enter the centre doors immediately after we drove through the gates of Cannon Hill Park.

At NICE, Darcy has the opportunity to stand, stretch, toilet train and converse with his friends. He can express emotion, be encouraged to share,



turn-take and expect to achieve more than he imagines. We have been there to witness him learn, belly laugh uncontrollably and win wheelbarrow races! The equipment itself is enviable, specialist seating, gait trainers, tricycles and ladders. Climbing bars, sensory trays, adapted tables and interactive wall displays are all integrated into a tightly packed and impeccably planned timetable of education and therapy. Every corner of the building is considered for the children, to make the environment inviting, friendly and homely.

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A NICE Story continued...

It is difficult to express what NICE as a whole means to us as a family. It is our safe space, a place we can rely upon for its well qualified staff, their incredible expertise and genuine, deep care for our child. The focus is on the short, medium and long-term, with consideration for each person's entirely unique needs, challenges and diversities.

We have been treated with respect and compassion and carried through low points when needed, whether it be an offer of a cup of tea, a seat or a listening ear. We are determined to have Darcy's time at NICE to be further enhanced as we seek to enrol him in their Specialist Primary School as he begins his formal education. NICE is a significant part of our lives and routines, and we have learnt so many practical tips that empower our daily lives with Darcy.

We have also been privileged to meet several wonderful families who understand completely the fears and frustrations that unfortunately often come with the territory of raising a child with additional needs and medical complexities. Many of these families travel from across counties to attend, including ourselves, which is almost

evidence enough of just how wonderful this centre is.

We want to spread the word about Conductive Education and the proven power of its ethos; to nurture the child to explore movement, whilst having fun and succeeding in order to make meaningful and progressive connections with the world.

Erika, Lucy and Megan have, as Darcy's conductors at NICE, triumphed Darcy's every achievement and continue to recognise the small and unique steps he makes. Darcy is bearing more weight, walking with support with quad sticks, having more spontaneous conversation with adults and his peers and demonstrating a real wish to be on his feet.

Darcy's and all our lives are being gradually transformed by the positive impact of the outstanding and holistic provisions at NICE. We cannot wait to continue observing and supporting Darcy with all his milestones and achievements as we enjoy the journey of life with NICE at our side.



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