

2-8-23

My name is Marissa Jeffries. I have four children Ava (8 ½ years), Sage (5 1/2), Dani (3) and Halo (8 months). At this time, they all attend The Family Partnership's Four Directions Preschool and Infant care program.

Eva started attending Four Directions Family Center when she was three years old. Sage started at 16 months. Both were on Scholarships. At that time, I would not have been able to send my children to preschool without scholarships. The bad part was that the scholarships I had only lasted 6 months and then my kids would have to stay home with me until my housing worker and the Four Directions staff could help find another scholarship. The down times would last a long time. Last time they were out of school, it took 4 months to find another scholarship. This pattern was hard for our lives. During the down times, I did not have any support to watch my children so we all had to stay home together every day. I could not work. The kids missed their friends and fell behind in skills. We lost our routine.

My children all love school. Sage and Dani participate in Ojibwe immersion class to learn the language and about their culture. They learn to get along with friends and get ready for kindergarten. Their behaviors and emotional skills are much better since starting preschool. Sage also gets Occupational Therapy there to help him with his fine motor skills and pre-kindergarten skills. When Sage was out of school, his therapy had to stop. Every time he returned to school after being gone, his skills would be more behind.

Eva was able to go to school at Four Directions during COVID when public schools were closed. That really helped her stay up with her learning and schoolwork. Since graduating from Four Directions preschool, Eva is doing very well in school. Her report cards are very good. She is in 3rd grade and is a good reader. She gets a tutor for math help. Four Directions helped her be ready for school.

Today, I am able to get a job because all four of my children are in school. Sage is still on a scholarship so he can get full hours. This is important so he can get ready for kindergarten and get his therapy.

I hope in the future, other families can get help from scholarships that will last longer so their children don't have to be pulled out of school and parents can have jobs.

Thank you,

Marissa