

Introduction

When the parents of Ezra came to the Feuerstein Centre and asked us to help them to develop their child, we started with an intake interview. As we always do with very young children we started with an observation in the daily situation of the child: their homes and their day care centre. This will give us the best picture of the child to start with.

Instead of asking the parents to come to the Feuerstein centre every week, we offered them to help the teachers to become “better mediators” for Ezra. They become the mediators Ezra needed the whole day in order to give him the maximum support. We asked the mother to write down her experiences.

Ezra

A picture of a special child, seen through the eyes of his mother.
(Hester Hess)

When he was 3 years old, Ezra was diagnosed with the Wiedemann-Steiner syndrome. This explained the “problems” he had the first 3 years, being problems with feeding and developmental delay. When he was 2 years and 4 months old, he started walking. When he was well into 2 years old, he started talking. Initially, we had additional help for him at the day-care through a foundation named Okido we received some money to allow a pedagogical aid to work on Ezra’s development in a 1-on-1 situation. When we felt like we needed to see if we could make bigger steps with Ezra we contacted the Feuerstein Centre. At that time, Ezra was 3 years and 3 months old. After the intake at the Feuerstein Centre, Jochanan came to observe Ezra at the day-care centre. After the observation, we thought we would receive a plan of therapies that Ezra would receive at the Feuerstein Centre. But it went differently. After the observation, the advice was to send Ezra to the day-care more often so that he could learn from his same-aged peers. Where he initially went 2 whole days, he started going 2 whole days and 2 mornings after the observation. The Feuerstein Centre was to keep observing periodically and provide advice to the staff on the focus points in working with Ezra.

It is unclear how Ezra will develop further. The doctors who have worked with Ezra expect that he is on the mild side of the spectrum of the syndrome. But we cannot see into the future. Most children with the syndrome attend special education schools.

The Feuerstein Centre did not recommend special education for Ezra. They recommended to send him to school a year later. But because of the support from the Feuerstein Centre and the execution of the staff at the day-care, Ezra was able to make such leaps before he was 4 years old that the advice changed and he was able to start regular education at 4 years old.

The Feuerstein Centre remain involved in the support at school. Every few months we evaluate with Jochanan, the teacher, the school counsellor and us as parents. Together we formulate attainable goals for Ezra. This is a pleasant working situation

for everyone.

At the moment, Ezra is doing well in the first group (first year of kindergarten). Cognitively he is doing pretty well. He can focus on games and assignments that have an ending. If it becomes difficult or a free play situation he still tends to lose his attention to what he is doing.

Since the involvement of the Feuerstein Centre, Ezra made so many steps in his development. The observation that he should go to the day-care more often to learn from other children has done him so much good. He made steps in eight months that we all would not have expected.

The Feuerstein Centre emphasizes the positive aspects of Ezra and provides good advice for the points of focus in working with Ezra. For us as parents they provide the sounding board we need. They help us to transform our insecurities into positive energy and to see how good Ezra is doing at the moment.