

# SCHOOL NEWS

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Having a full term pregnancy, no complications, and a good delivery is a blessing. Nikolás Mazzella granted his family one.....and added a little mystery and adventure. His parents and doctors did not know that he would be born with Down syndrome, so his first few hours of life were full of questions and fear.

Nikolás' heart has had a hole in it since birth that has been slowly closing and mending on its own, and he is due to return to the cardiologist in summer 2010. He is teaching everyone around him patience as they teach Nikolás to wear his glasses! After chronic constipation and a biopsy confirmed it, Nikolás has been treated for Hirschsprung's disease (**an abnormality in which certain nerve fibers are absent in segments of the bowel, resulting in severe bowel obstruction. Hirschsprung's disease is caused when certain nerve cells in the wall of the large intestine (colon) do not develop before birth.**) A large portion of Nikolás' affected large intestine was removed during surgery in January 2009 and he continues to take a daily fiber supplement to regulate his system.

Nikolás is VERY active, keeping his four siblings and parents on the move from morning to night. He has learned to use some "signs" for words (eat, ball, bib) and makes-up others as he goes along. He is also beginning to use words



and feed himself, but would rather have others serve him at home. Sorry, Mom, guess he thinks he is still your baby!

Starting center-based services at Fairhaven School's Early Intervention program at the age of seven months, Nikolás has been moving, playing, and keeping company with his Mom and friends during our center-based developmental activities. Erin, Nikolás' Mom, attended for his entire first year and our early intervention staff enjoyed her participation. Erin and Nikolás interacted with his peers and learned his therapies together which, in turn, help them to better tackle their tasks at home. At age 2, Nikolás now goes solo during programming, but he continues to keep everyone here and at home on their toes!