

The last 3 years have been a really amazing experience.

When my fiancée and I first found out we were expecting we were excited but we had roommates at the time and knew we really needed to get our own place. We were also a little nervous and scared since parenting is such a huge responsibility. We first heard about Healthy Families while we were in the hospital. A woman from Healthy Families came by our room, asked us a few questions and told us about the program. We were a little skeptical at first but realized we could use all of the help we could get.

A couple weeks after bringing Kaylynn home from the hospital Dawn called to tell us more about the program and we scheduled a time for her to come out to our home to meet us and see if it was something we wanted to do. Dawn was super friendly and really helped us feel at ease. She provided us with a lot of support and encouragement. My fiancé and I didn't have a very good background growing up. I didn't have much structure when I was a kid and we moved around a lot. My parents used drugs and there was a lot of anger in my house. I remember wanting to tell my mom stuff as a teenager but knew I couldn't because she would tell my step-Dad and he would hit me. I wanted a different relationship with my daughter than the one my parents had with me.



In those first few visit Dawn helped us think about what our wishes were for Kaylynn are and we were able to think about the values that are important to us as a family. One of the best activities we did early on was writing a letter to Kaylynn about how we wanted to be remembered as a parent. Three years later I still keep the letters we wrote to her as a keepsake. The most important thing for kids is remembering how their parents made them feel. I want my kids to not be scared of me.

I have learned through Health Families that you don't need to use physical punishment or call your kids names to get them to listen to you. I've learned different ways to be calm and the importance of getting on their level to understand their emotions and to let her know I get it. I've learned that she isn't screaming because she is trying to make me mad she is screaming because she is having a hard time. I can show her that I understand and then she knows she can trust me because I am calm with her.

Before Healthy Families I didn't realize how important it was to get on the floor and play with your kids. I liked all of the activities Dawn has brought for us over the years and have enjoyed the opportunities to connect with her through play. We also talked a lot about personality and temperament traits and how to parent kids with personality traits that are different than my own. Dawns also brought information about self-care. I never knew how important it is for me to take care of myself and how that actually makes me a better parent for my kids.



I have enjoyed having our home visitor Dawn come into our home and tell us that we are doing a good job. We didn't really have a lot of that so to have someone offer us that support and be our cheerleader for the last 3 years has been a really amazing experience.

~ Sarah, Healthy Families Parent