

# My Big Gift

Gabriela Reyes



## BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Describe a time you advocated for your child. What did you do?
2. Discuss the word *advocate*. Try using it in several sentences.

## Something Was Not Right

This story is about my young son and me. He is my third child and my only son. When my son was born, he needed to stay in the hospital for a couple of days because he would not eat. That was not a good sign. During his first two years, he learned to eat and crawl the same as his sisters. But I noticed he did not speak. That was the first *red flag*. I knew something was not right with him.

When he started to walk, he fell a lot and that was the second *red flag*. His *development* wasn't right, and it was time to look for help from a specialist. In Ciudad Juarez, where we lived, there were only two *pediatric neurologists*, and the waiting list was very long.

## A Diagnosis

Finally, we got an appointment with a doctor, and the *diagnosis* was *developmental delay*. My son needed speech therapy and more tests. We didn't have insurance for my son, and we needed to pay for all the tests, appointments, and medicine. That was a very hard time for my family. We

also needed to find a school for him. Private school was very expensive, so he started going to a regular kindergarten.

## I knew that I needed to find help.

I didn't see any progress in my son. I knew that I needed to find help from a different school and teachers.

I prayed to find a better life for him. I asked

God, the universe, or anyone for an answer. I needed help to figure out how to move forward. After some time, I found the answer. It was a school called CAM in Mexico City. It is a special school for students with learning *disabilities*. I met a wonderful teacher. Her name is Maritza. She taught me *strategies* and exercises to *stimulate* all the senses in my son's body and brain. It was hard work for me because I took him to therapy Monday through Friday, and I continued going to my job every day.

## Joy in the Journey

This was the beginning of learning about Special Education. It is wonderful to learn about my son's condition. When I understand what he needs, then I can do more for him. It has been a beautiful journey for me and my family. I walk with other people that are going through the same thing, and we support each other. It is complicated, but there has been a lot of joy in this journey.

## AFTER YOU READ:

1. According to the article, how did Gabriela advocate for her son?
2. Note the vocabulary words in *bold italics*. If you're not sure what they mean, use context clues to figure it out. Try using them in your own sentences.
3. Why did the author choose "My Big Gift" as the title of this story? Share a big gift you have received in your life.



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