

S U C C E S S S T O R I E S



Our Success Stories series was created as a way to communicate with our friends and donors in an efficient, inexpensive format. Each month, we feature one of our programs and the inspiring story of a child whom the program has helped. To be added to the Success Stories email list, just send your complete e-mail address to successtories@eliada.org.

Keila is a beautiful brown-eyed girl who was born in Mexico four years ago. Although pregnancy and labor were extremely difficult for both mother and child, the doctor in Mexico assured Keila's parents that their baby was in perfect health and would be absolutely fine. Three years passed, and still Keila had not begun speaking, didn't follow directions, and refused to interact with other children.

Keila's family immigrated to the United States seeking citizenship and a better life for their child. When she first arrived, Keila saw a pediatrician who referred her to a specialist. The specialist examined Keila and issued a diagnosis that every new mother fears: Keila was autistic. Immediately, Buncombe County Schools arranged for Keila to receive speech and language therapy. Therapists tried to work with Keila in the home, but were unsuccessful. Keila would not sit still for therapy and spent most of their sessions under the table, meowing like a cat.

Buncombe County Schools referred the family to Eliada's new More at Four Program. The first week was very difficult for Keila, who had never been apart from her mother. Each day when her mother left, Keila clung to her in tears and spent most of each day crying. Keila did not want to play with the other children, and didn't know how to express her basic needs or wants.

Keila has been in the More at Four program for several months and is doing extremely well. Her social skills and vocabulary have improved greatly. Keila is learning English as well as Spanish and is now verbally expressing her wants and needs to her teachers. Every morning she runs into the classroom smiling and is able to kiss her mother and say "bye-bye ma ma". She is always excited to greet her friends in the morning and calls them by name, saying "Come on, play!" She loves playing the "duck game" where she sorts toy ducks by color, and also loves taking care of Oreo, the class pet hamster (who she calls "Baby"). Keila also loves to blow kisses to her teachers and friends.

We are all very proud of how much Keila has learned in such a short time. With the continued therapy she is receiving from Buncombe County Schools and the learning opportunities afforded by Eliada's More at Four program, we are confident that Keila will be ready for and successful in Kindergarten.



Keila, October 2006