



Hunter at Five

Five years old. Let me just repeat that one more time - Hunter is five years old!!!!!!
Praise God. I cannot help but get overly excited about Hunter turning five. The fact that he continues to grow is nothing short of a miracle. Despite the many little battles that Hunter must face on a daily basis, he continues to show tremendous determination, resilience and strength. I say this all the time and I can't help but say it again - he is so tough!

Teamwork continues to be the name of the game when it comes to Hunter's on-going care. We are blessed to have such gifted specialists (physical, occupational, massage and speech therapy, and special education), nurses and caregivers on board to help our family. Through my observations over the past five years, I have determined that there are some very crucial components necessary for success in these areas of Hunter's care. It's all about trust, communication and unconditional love. Over time, each of us, in our own special way, have earned Hunter's trust and learned how to uniquely communicate with him. Complete unconditional love and friendship have been the keys to unlock the sweet little boy trapped inside that body. Moreover, let me tell you, he is the sweetest young man, but he can certainly be a stinker if he wants too. Hunter has truly been our guide and teacher. He is very good at letting us know exactly what he wants to do. Hunter would much rather play all the time, especially with his sisters, however when it comes time to getting serious and really working, he gives it all he's got. He is having so much fun being a big five-year-old boy and we are having fun just watching him grow.

Hunter continues to receive intense physical and occupational therapy five times a week. Over the past year, these areas of treatment have been of greater challenge for Hunter due to his hip situation. Both of Hunter's hips are at physical risk, his right hip for anterior subluxation and his left hip for posterior subluxation. All of this is new to us and of great concern. We have teamed up with the Orthopedic Department at the Children's Hospital of Buffalo and are investigating every avenue we might be able to take in which to ensure Hunter's comfort. Elizabeth and Kathy, his therapists, are always investigating different treatment options and adaptive equipment to improve Hunter's physical status. Presently, Hunter uses the Kid Kart TLC and Tumbleforms Tri-stander to assist him with sitting and



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standing. He loves his stander the most, because he is able to stand up nice and tall, much taller than little sister Camryn. You can tell that he has more confidence in himself when he is standing tall.

Hunter's educational team continues to provide excellent instruction in all areas of school-age play and activities. Yes, I did say school age - Hunter will be a kindergartener in September. Isn't that awesome! Hunter is so smart (I just have to brag for a minute). He must have some of that competitive edge that his daddy has because, whenever he is challenged, whether in school, at play or in therapy, he wants to succeed and pushes himself until he does.

As Hunter continues to grow, we continue to grow as well. There are few words to describe the overwhelming impact that Hunter has had on our entire family. He is truly a blessing sent from heaven. Only God knows how long Hunter will be here so each and every day is a treasure filled with trials as well as triumphs. And through it all, we continue to learn invaluable life lessons that only a precious child like Hunter could teach us.