

## Caitlin Hoel's Success Story

It has been 1 year since we started self-directed support with our daughter Caitlin. Caitlin aged out of the school system at age 21 and had a wonderful experience due to having a 1 on 1 aide to contribute to her success and safety. We transitioned to a day program where there was a nurse and a staff ratio of 4-1.

Caitlin has a rare disorder called Aicardi syndrome and has many seizures. Caitlin is totally dependent on others to help with her personal care and hygiene. Caitlin is ambulatory but



needs constant supervision due to her seizures and her surroundings. The program failed to provide the support she needed resulting in many accidents that could have been prevented with the 1 on 1 support she needed. The solution at the program was to have Caitlin contained in her wheelchair, which resulted in Caitlin being frustrated and acting out with bad behaviors. Caitlin is non-verbal but told me by pulling me out of the program every afternoon and protesting in the car every morning that she was not happy. Our wonderful case manager helped us get Caitlin into the self directed support

program. We were so very fortunate to find our amazing personal assistant Olena. It was a bonus that Olena is the same age as Caitlin. Caitlin did a 360 when she started receiving the support and was able to go out in the community with her new friend.

This past year has been amazing watching their friendship grow and doing things that 22 year old girls like to do. Caitlin loves riding in the car and listening to music. The two often go shopping or hang out at the park together. Olena has been on vacation supporting Caitlin and enjoying so many things that Caitlin loves to do. Caitlin and Olena both love to go to the pool, go out and eat and just enjoy each other's company. I also have to add I feel relieved that we haven't had any accidents since Olena has been supporting her and Caitlin has learned some new skills such as getting in Olena's car all by herself with little assist. Caitlin's quality of life has tremendously improved and our family's peace of mind for Caitlin's health and safety is a big relief! I want to thank our case manager Tia Bunch and also Jaime Viviano- the coordinator of self directed support for all their encouragement and help to make Caitlin have her own success story to share. I also have to thank Olena Lahovska who without her support and care this would not be possible.



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