

HELP FOR GOOD

Zoey



Stark County
Board of
Developmental
Disabilities



Zoey

Meet five-year-old Zoey Mick, daughter of Rachel and David Mick. Zoey has been connected to Stark DD Early Childhood services since she was an infant. She received support through Stark County Early Intervention, working with Stark DD Developmental Specialists and therapists. She now attends Stark DD Preschool – Autism Program at Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center.

“Zoey has overcome so much. When she first came to Eastgate, she was non-verbal. She completely blossomed in the first year. Sight words were very easy for her. But what really got her starting to talk was her interest in music. She loves to sing. So that helped to translate into her becoming more verbal,” said Rachel. “Being around other children at Eastgate and the help she received from her teacher and staff was crucial to her development. She used to be more solitary, but being at Eastgate has really opened her up to other kids. She will approach other children at school and in public and say ‘hi’ to them and engage with them.”

Zoey has many passions. In addition to music, she loves Disney princesses, dancing, any musical instruments, reading, space, and exploring.

As a five-year-old, Zoey has some amazing strengths/talents. “Zoey can read at a higher level than her age, very musically inclined (singing as well). She has been able to play simple songs on a xylophone or piano after being shown or figuring it out for herself,” said Rachel. “Zoey is also very physical and strong; she’s not scared of anything. She loves learning and trying new things. She’s good at puzzles and trying to figure out how things work.”



How has Stark DD helped or been a resource?

“Where do we begin? Robin McAlister, Early Intervention Specialist, was her first support from Start DD. She was very helpful and amazing with Zoey. She had such great patience not only with Zoey, but with us trying to learn and navigate with Zoey. She gave us a lot of helpful insight and ways to help Zoey,” said Rachel.

“When she went to Eastgate preschool, she got more speech and occupational therapy that really helped her. Eastgate gave her structure and helped her with her individual needs. Holly Thomas, her teacher, along with the staff, found ways to help Zoey that were unique to her. They really figured out what Zoey responded to best and found ways to use that knowledge to help her in her development. They were very in tune with Zoey and who she was,” said Rachel. “We always have constant contact with the staff which makes things a lot easier. They were able to give us resources when needed for outside help and assistance. They were always trying to help where they could. They just really love Zoey and it shows. We were just blessed to have Eastgate and Stark County DD as a resource.”

In 2021, the CDC reported that approximately 1 in 44 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to 2018 data.

- *1 in 27 boys identified with autism*
- *1 in 116 girls identified with autism*

[-Autism Speaks](#)



“Zoey loves to read, her favorite books at school are Good Night Moon and Polar Polar Bear What Do You Hear?” said Holly Thomas, Stark DD Preschool Intervention Specialist at Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center: “She loves performing by singing, dancing and re-enacting Disney movie scenes. She is very social, loves hugs and greeting her peers. Her relentlessness and determination is admired by all who know her.”

While Rachel says who knows Zoey hasn't expressed what she'd like to be when she grows up, “I can see her doing well with music.” We can too, Zoey.

[Enjoy Zoey's talent singing the Eastgate preschool song](#)

**“Be kind, be safe, work hard...
be kind, be safe, work hard...at
Eastgate Preschool be kind, be safe,
work hard.”**

