

# Two little words: 'I know'

Two friends build Sensory Processing Disorder outreach to help others

**K**elly Jurecko always thought something was different about her second-born, but Riley surpassed all the milestones in the baby book, walked at 7 months, counted well and loved saying his ABCs.

"I thought I had this little amazing boy, but I didn't really know," she says. On the first day of school, he bit the teacher. Jurecko remembers the devastated feeling she had when she heard Riley wasn't talking like the other kids and likely had sensory issues.

"Everything I loved about him, that I thought was so great, were signs of Sensory Processing Disorder," she says.

Dawn Eagle's second child, Charlie, was a difficult baby from the start. Eagle says she just figured that was the way some second babies were. Although Charlie met all of his milestones, she voiced her concerns to her son's pediatrician, who told her not to fret. Still, she says she felt like a failure as Charlie's mom.

Hundreds of hours spent on the Internet yielded the information that confirmed her fears and finally made doctors listen: Charlie was having seizures. He has epilepsy and Sensory Processing Disorder.

Neither woman had heard about Sensory Processing Disorder, a neurological disorder causing problems processing information gathered by the five senses that to some even sounds made up.

When the two friends, both stay-at-home moms with two boys and a girl, turned to each other in their parallel stories, two simple words always helped: "I know."

"We really had each other the whole time to really understand what this was and to not



From left, Dawn Eagle holding Jessica (4 months), Carter (2), Kelly Jurecko, Addison (3), Jack (5), Charlie (3), Dave and Riley (4)

understand and learn about it together," Eagle says.

Neither could imagine going through it alone, though they now know so many other parents who are. So a year ago, they started a monthly support group for parents. What they heard most was how hard it was to find information and help for the kids. The pair spent hours every night researching information, "just to make our kids better," they say.

Driven to share what they found, they brainstormed creating

a nonprofit organization that funds a scholarship for therapy for a year for its recipient and a website, [SPDparentzone.org](http://SPDparentzone.org), full of local and state resources and parent stories.

"I wanted to give hope to other people, that you can do it yourself, that you are helping your whole family," Jurecko says.

Once they learned the red flags, they realized each also had another child with sensory issues—Eagle's oldest and Jurecko's youngest.

The biggest lesson they've learned: "If you feel like your life is chaotic, it doesn't have to be. There's help; there's a way to help your children, help your family," Eagle says.

And you don't have to go through it alone.

## SUPPORT ONLINE

Find resources and share your family's story at [spdparentzone.org](http://spdparentzone.org). Kelly Jurecko and Dawn Eagle say they welcome e-mails from parents.

## IN THEIR WORDS

### HARDEST MOMENT

**Jurecko:** I think every moment up until we found out what was going on with him. ... Really, I think it's all so hard.

**Eagle:** When I found out he had epilepsy.

### BEST ADVICE RECEIVED

**Eagle:** We tell each other, "you are not crazy," because you feel crazy. Not to give up.

### HAPPIEST MOMENT

**Both:** Every day.