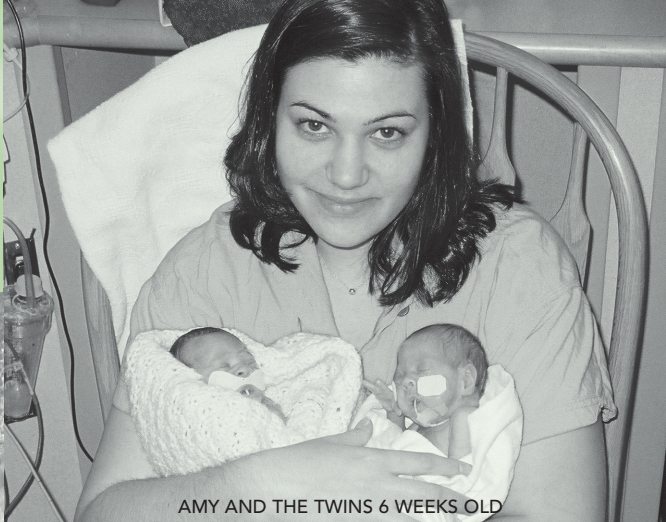


CAEDEN 1 DAY OLD



AMY AND THE TWINS 6 WEEKS OLD



NICHOLAS 1 DAY OLD

DeShazo Family Story

Like many young couples, Amy and Kevin DeShazo wanted to start a family. Due to infertility issues, that dream had a bumpy start. They were thrilled when they learned they were to become the parents of twins! Their joy was short lived when halfway through the pregnancy, devastating complications occurred. The amniotic sac for Baby "A" ruptured, putting the entire pregnancy in jeopardy. The couple was counseled regarding their options, and decided to continue with the pregnancy, even though there was a strong chance that if the babies survived, they would suffer mental and physical disabilities.

Nicholas (Baby "A") and Caeden (Baby "B") came into this world four months prematurely. Weighing a little over one pound each, they were given slim odds for survival. Nicholas suffered major medical complications: heart surgery at just 12 days old, seizures, breathing and feeding difficulties. His first 6 months of life were spent in the hospital. At one point, the family was told that his long-term prognosis was questionable . . . that therapy might help, but not to expect much.

Caeden also had numerous complications, recurring infections, and was small for her age. Despite being so sick, she was full of energy! She spent four months in the hospital, finally coming home five days after her original due date.

Nicholas, Caeden and their parents began participating in the Birth to Three System when each child came home from the hospital. Throughout the past 2-1/2 years, they received various supports and services as their needs changed over time. Nicholas' major obstacle was poor muscle tone and control, while Caeden struggled with language development. Early intervention services from a physical, occupational, and speech therapist have been an important part of their routine. Their service providers used a transdisciplinary team approach to keep the number of early intervention visits manageable since Amy and Kevin felt that "more is not always better". Services were provided in their home and community locations such as the library and playgroup.

Despite being told that he may not walk, Nicholas reached his goal of independent walking at 33 months. This major milestone has opened many pathways for him. He began using some sign language and exploring food – the first step toward oral feeding. Caeden is using language more effectively, and is reaping the rewards of oral communication. She loves dramatic play and her "babies."

Nicholas and Caeden recently celebrated their third birthday and graduated to preschool! Both children are active and moving forward with their parents to explore exciting new opportunities.