

Yesterday, Kyle had to repeat some lab work. As a new patient to the family practice, he had previously been there only one time to meet his doctor. That initial visit included a blood draw.

Fortunately, Kyle has always been very good about the actual blood draw. He allows us to squeeze and stabilize his arm and is very still, and even quiet, while the needle goes in. As long as there is not a lot of fumbling for a vein, it is a quick and smooth process.

The difficulty usually comes in the beginning. Kyle's biggest challenge is the motor planning required to sit in an unfamiliar shaped chair with awkward, funny arm rests. These chairs are often taller than typical chairs. All of these nuances create an obstacle for Kyle which adds stress and leads to uncertainty and resistance.

Difficulty with motor planning, or its more official name, apraxia, presents a huge obstacle in Kyle's life. Autism often comes with add-ons and they can be as significant as the autism itself.

The first time we had his blood drawn there, two wonderful ladies were very kind and patient while Kyle struggled to sit in the chair. There were three chair options and after trying the two that were the most challenging, I deemed the best chance of success to be a chair which was not in a good position in the room for the blood draw. The women were very accommodating and moved the chair to the middle of the room and with all of our perseverance, we made it work. But it definitely took some trial and error, extra time, and lots of patience from all of us.

This time, the lady (I MUST find out her name) apparently remembered Kyle and had the easier chair all set up for him before we entered the room. The perfect chair was set at the perfect angle inviting Kyle to sit down. She welcomed Kyle into the lab and was ready and waiting with lots of encouragement and a smile.

There was a little bit of hesitation, but Kyle was able to get seated fairly easily and quickly. The rest went very smoothly and we were in and out of there in a very short amount of time. After it was over, Kyle just wanted to sit in that chair for awhile. I think he was surprised that we were actually finished so quickly. Pleasantly surprised, I'm sure.

Excellence Lives in the Details

Written by Gayle Nobel

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I was very, very touched by the thoughtfulness of this woman regarding the chair. It was a mindful adjustment of a seemingly small detail but it made a world of difference for Kyle. It reduced a large piece of the stress for him and frustration for all of us.

The fact that she remembered Kyle in a busy lab and made the extra effort to make this adjustment, was HUGE. Looking deeper, I realize she got it! Whoo hoo!! Kyle got a break. A thoughtful, caring attitude with an action to back it up went a long way yesterday morning. Honestly, it made my day.

Action speaks louder than words or intention. Excellence truly lives in the details.