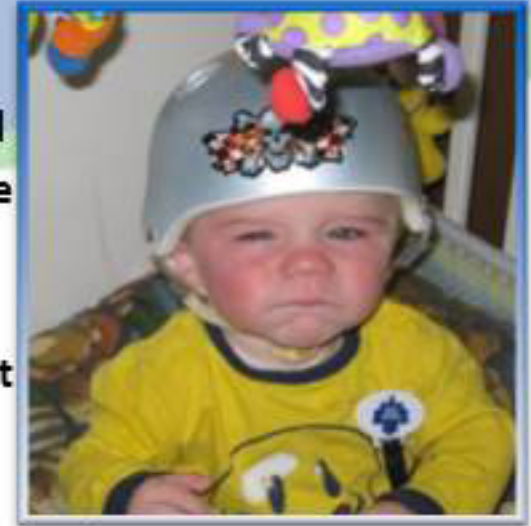


Five Counties gets boy back on his feet after spinal surgery severed his nerves, but not his spirit

The diagnosis of a spinal tumour was hard enough on three-year-old Xander Townsend and his family. When a surgeon had to sever some of his nerves in his spinal cord, that journey became even tougher. Thankfully, Xander had a team of Five Counties Children's Centre therapists to get him through it. Jennifer Townsend had already met the staff at Five Counties in Lindsay, since her son was referred there for treatment at age 13 months, related to a flat spot in his skull (plagiocephaly). He wore a helmet to reshape his head, facing the first medical challenge of his young life.



At that time, his mother had no idea how integral this facility would be to Xander's health. The damage to his spinal cord led doctors to believe that Xander would never walk again or control his bladder or bowels.

"He was wasting away to nothing due to the inability to eat, as his bowels and bladder were not functioning properly," his mother says.

After receiving physiotherapy, Xander now walks, although he cannot walk long distances and he tires easily.

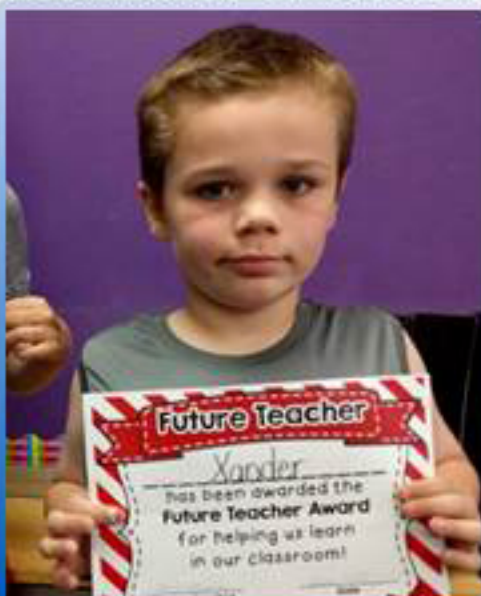
"But he walks!" Jennifer says.

Thanks to occupational therapy, he graduated beyond pullups. Now nine, he continues to receive physio and occupational therapy and receives counselling from a social worker to build his self-esteem.

He has also graduated from speech therapy after not beginning to speak until after his surgery. "He now speaks as well as you or I," his proud mother says.

"Five Counties has affected Xander's life beyond treatment by giving him the confidence to never give up, encouraging him to strive to reach his goals and supporting him during the hardest time in his life thus far."

"Therapists went to his school to ensure that he has every opportunity that any other child would have, which has helped with his attendance as well as his grades and his ability to interact with the other children outdoors," she adds.



Jennifer is grateful to have so much support for her family over the past eight years.

"They have reassured me when I have been unsure. They have become like an extended family to us," she says.

"They are absolutely amazing and truly promote a child's abilities, not limits."



Five Counties
CHILDREN'S CENTRE