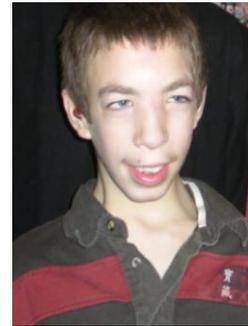


My name is Janine Palma and I have a son, Cody, who is 17 years old and has a syndrome called Cri du Chat (cree do shaw). He is missing chromosomal material on the short arm of the 5th chromosome. The genetic term for this is 5p- (five p minus). This syndrome is represented in very few individuals. The incidence rate is 1:70,000 which leaves little opportunity for families to connect or even spread awareness. There is a website for a support group. Our family has attended several of the summer get-togethers. They are informative and fun. The web address is www.fivepminus.org



Cody's syndrome is accompanied by many characteristics. The most prominent characteristic would be his low intellect. While we have never had his IQ tested, he processes information much like a toddler would and reacts in such a way. He loves to play with trucks, cars, balls, and watch Spiderman. He prefers to sit with adults over children and clings tightly to me and my husband.

One of the reasons we never had his IQ tested was because Cody does not speak. He has a few words and some that only his family understands. We didn't feel it was fair to use a standardized IQ test that is meant to test people who can at least respond verbally. Cody communicates using a Dynavox, gestures, and sign language. Again, his sign language is limited to his ability of processing information so he has certain common signs and those he uses to communicate with those around him. We call those "Cody signs".

One of the areas my husband and I strive to teach Cody is self-determination. We want Cody to have the opportunity to choose activities, food, entertainment, and such. His expressive language is so low that we fear he wants, or needs, more than what he can express. Having more technology in our home would improve his quality of life and help us learn more about him as he grows into adulthood. We look forward to working with anyone who is interested in helping Cody adapt his environment and provide opportunities to grow and learn.



Cody helping out by cooking.



Cody with brothers and sister.