

When their daughter Chloe was born with Down syndrome, Kathy and John McClellan didn't know where to turn. The doctors could diagnose the syndrome but couldn't give out the names of any other parents dealing with the same situation. "I didn't know what to do or who to turn to," said Kathy. She focused on getting to know her daughter one on one but still needed that extra connection.

It was after Chloe's first birthday that Kathy heard about the Ollie Webb Center, Inc. on the news. "I'd seen the Ollie Webb Center on a community calendar and that's when I realized that would be a great place to start." She called the Center and was matched in their Parent to Parent mentoring program. "I think the parents helped us by telling us about their experiences. The professionals knew about the disabilities but didn't have those firsthand experiences," said Kathy. The mentoring program helped the McClellans understand the impact Down syndrome would have on their daughter.



"They gave us hope...that our child will have a productive life."
- Kathy McClellan

When you first meet Chloe, you don't notice her disability. You see a girl who is content with life, happy to sit down at a table for an imaginary tea party with her close friend Reagan. Surrounded by dolls and talking up a storm, she's just like any other child. The program taught Kathy and John that their daughter would have a chance at a normal life. "They gave us hope that yes, our child will be like the rest of our other children and will have a productive life. Watching their example really helped us a lot."

The McClellans now support other new parents through the Parent to Parent program. They meet frequently with other parents to share their stories and provide the support these new parents need to come to terms with their children's disabilities. "Communication is so important," said Kathy. "You learn that this is a good program. The day you give birth, you want to know who will be there to help you get through this."

Day or night, when a parent of a child with a disability needs someone to lean on, the Parent to Parent program is there. To these new parents, that little bit of communication and reassurance makes all the difference in the world.



Chloe and Reagan's parents lean on each other for support