

CaCoon program connects Wilsonville family with vital resources

Before home visiting case manager Tina Cox sits down to check in with parents Johnny Gardner and Chelsea Roberts, she greets their three red-headed boys.

Seven-year-old Caleb and five-year-old Carter arrive home from school while the youngest, four-year-old Conner, babbles happily as he plays at his wooden train table.

Cox has gotten to know this family well because she's been visiting them a couple times a month for the past two years as part of the CaCoon program, a nurse home visiting program for children with special health needs.

"Are you worried about tomorrow's surgery?" she asks the parents. Connor was born with severe hearing loss and he's having surgery tomorrow to re-check his hearing and place new tubes in his ears.

The family was referred to the CaCoon program by the hospital where Connor was born after he failed a hearing test. Since then the older two boys have also been enrolled, Caleb to help with speech delays and ADHD and Carter to help with autism and motor delays.

"You want your kids to succeed and this program has helped us tremendously," says Gardner as he sits on the couch holding one son and putting his arm around another.

Cox has connected the family with dozens of programs and resources, including health and dental providers, early learning and developmental disability programs, Head Start, and speech, occupational and physical therapists. She even helped the family get rental and food assistance while the parents had to take six weeks off work when two of the boys developed acute breathing problems.

"Tina and the other nurses know of resources I've never heard of before," says Roberts.



Cox is quick to also give this family credit. "Chelsea and Johnny have done a great job of advocating for their kids," says Cox.

And since they have been in the CaCoon program the kids' health has improved. Connor is learning to sign and gesture, Caleb's speech has improved and Carter's motor skills and walking are much better.

Families enrolled in CaCoon can receive services until children are 21. Cox says she doesn't know how long this family will need services, but she's already visiting less frequently because this family has become much more self-sufficient.