



Hello, my name is Joanne*. When I was 16, I was married and had a newborn baby. I had dropped out of school in the 8th grade. I was very scared about being a good mom.

I came from a home where there was abuse, alcoholism and mental illness. I didn't know how I was going to raise my baby, but I knew I wanted it to be the total opposite from what I had growing up. I joined Birth To Three's Program for Young Parents and was able to talk with other parents and receive important information about positive parenting. It helped me to not repeat the patterns of abuse from my own childhood.

Through the years, I got divorced and had two more children. I found myself alone with three children and had many difficulties, including how to support myself. With all of the stress our family was going through, my 5-year-old son, Tyler, was really acting out and behaving in ways that were dangerous for him and for others. I lived in a rural area and there was not

that much support there for me and my son until Birth To Three offered a class called *Make Parenting a Pleasure*®. Through the help I got in that group, I learned more about how to take care of myself **and** my child. These skills got us through our tough spot and have kept our family stable, nurturing and healthy.

Today all three of my children are happy, well-adjusted people. Both of my older children were students at University of Oregon. My daughter got her master's degree in education and is an early interventionist. My son has his bachelor's degree in business. They both volunteer and are active in the world around them. My youngest son graduated from high school recently and is planning on eventually attending the University of Oregon. His plan is to be a zoologist. I graduated from the University of Oregon with a bachelor's degree in human services and I will eventually go on to get my master's degree.

My children are the only children in my whole family to not be drug addicted, in jail or homeless. They are the only children to go through college. My children are the generation that has stopped the chain of abuse and addiction. I believe a big part of that is because of the support and

resources that were available to me through Birth To Three and others. I kept reaching out for help and I believe God brought me what I needed to not only make it through, but to soar above my obstacles.

I believe in Birth To Three. I am successful in my plan to change the abusive and addictive patterns in my family because of the support I received.

**Not her real name*