

Billy's story begins when he was born prematurely at 33 weeks. After 17 days in the neonatal intensive care unit, he was discharged, and we were on our way home without concerns. But over the following months, Billy was noticeably favoring his left side. He would neither roll over on his right side nor use his right hand to play with toys. Within a year, Billy was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. But since Billy was (and still is) a happy, social, and bright child, I knew he would just need a little extra help to overcome his weaknesses. I began researching therapies and programs to help him succeed. Our occupational therapist asked if I had heard about Lekotek. I immediately went home, did some research, and called Lekotek. Helene Prokesch, Lekotek's executive director, answered and suggested I visit Lekotek's new satellite in Gainesville. Billy and I did so, and I was impressed. Although the thought of adding one more thing to a busy routine of therapy was intimidating, I decided to do it and am glad I did. Six years later we are still enjoying Lekotek; it remains an important part of our lives.

We began Lekotek to access adapted toys and resources that were financially out of reach. Before each visit, I would let our Lekotek leader know what our occupational, physical, and speech goals were, and she would select toys to help Billy reach developmental milestones. At Lekotek, Billy was able to work on goals through play while having fun. Lekotek has provided opportunities for Billy to experience valuable activities and events. Many were first-time experiences such as attending a professional baseball game, trying inflatables at Hippo Hop, and participating in his first puppet show. Our family enjoys Saturday morning Happy Tails, Lekomusic, and family events such as visits to the Ink Children's Museum, the Little House of Art, and Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary. Our Lekotek leaders and the entire staff have become family.



Lekotek of Georgia

Making a difference for children with disabilities

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Help Lekotek Make a Difference
For Children with Disabilities



Through the Power of Play

Since coming to Lekotek, Billy has made great progress in developing self-confidence, his language abilities, and academic and computer skills. When Billy was younger he anticipated each play session by exclaiming "New toys." Now his favorite annual event is the summer computer camp. In the adjacent photo taken at the camp, Billy and Angela, a Lekotek leader, are playing Jungle Adventure, a game that requires Billy to wait and click at exactly the right time in order to overcome dangerous challenges. Obstacles include a fiery furnace, rolling logs, and alligators and predators. Upon, successfully navigating the course, Billy's prize is the golden treasure chest – and his pride in a job well done.

Billy is just one of many Lekotek success stories. Since beginning in the basement of Easter Seals, 36 years ago, Lekotek has made a difference for more than 6,500 children and families through the power of play. Today, Lekotek operates six centers in Georgia, and this year, 852 children participated in play/learning sessions, summer computer camp, computer and iPad evaluations, music classes, pet therapy, computer club, and LekoPal activities for teens. In addition, Lekotek offers programs that provide opportunities for siblings and families to learn from each other's experiences and support one another. There is still more to do – many more children need our help. We – and they—are counting on you to create their success stories.



With your support, we can reach our goal of making a difference for all the children who need us.

Donations can be made on line at www.lekotekga.org

