

CHAMPIONING YOUR CHILD: EMPOWERING YOUR CHILD'S JOURNEY

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Sotos Syndrome Support Association Annual Conference • July 11-13, 2025



"If your child could see themselves through your eyes, what would they believe they're capable of?"

Would they see resilience? Joy? Potential beyond any diagnosis? Because every single day — through the appointments, the advocacy, the tough choices and the triumphs — *you* are shaping the way they see themselves.

This session isn't about having all the answers. It's about the journey. Some of you are just starting out. Others have been walking this path for years. But all of us — every parent in this room — has something powerful to offer: **OUR STORY.**

We'll talk about the hard-won lessons, the little wins that felt like miracles, and how to show up every day as your child's champion — not just for them, but for *you*, too. Because when they see you thriving, they believe it's possible for them, too.

Let's talk the “Hard” stuff!

- ▶ Would anyone like to share some of the following:
 - ▶ The medical appointments that are hard to keep up with-
 - ▶ The school needs that they fight to get-
 - ▶ The social situations that you “wish” your child had-
 - ▶ The experiences you feel like they are missing-

WHAT WAS LEARNED AND HOW YOU GREW:

Keeping Up With Medical Appointments

Lesson: You've become the master of appointment planning and health system navigation.

Resilience: Coordinating specialists, therapies, and treatments builds perseverance and advocacy skills.

Advocating for Educational Needs

Lesson: Every IEP meeting and school conversation shows your commitment.

Resilience: You've learned negotiation, know your child's rights—and in those roles, you've also taught your child to advocate for themselves.

Building Social Opportunities

Lesson: You recognize and create chances for friendship and belonging—playgroups, sports, inclusive activities.

Resilience: Even when social doors seem closed, you find creative ways to open them.

Filling the Gaps

Lesson: You spot what your child is missing—be it motor skills, leisure activities, or independence.

Resilience: You adapt, experiment, and insist until your child has access.

Let's talk the “Good” stuff!

- ▶ Would anyone like to share some of the following:
 - ▶ Something your child did to surprise you-
 - ▶ The last thing you did to take care of YOU-
 - ▶ Some of the things that bring you joy and happiness-
 - ▶ What your child did to inspire you to keep moving forward-

WHAT WAS LEARNED AND HOW YOU GREW:

Celebrating the wins!

Lesson: A new food tried, a physical milestone hit, a project completed—these are your victories, too.

Resilience: These small wins add up, becoming a shield against disappointment

Prioritizing Well Being

Lesson: You've discovered how nutrition, sleep, movement, and mental health fuel success—not just in others, but in *you* too.

Resilience: Maintaining your own wellness means you're there *for* them—with joy, not just endurance.

Modeling strength through Joy

Lesson: Your happiness and your engagement tell your child they can flourish too.

Resilience: They are watching you- this is your chance to show them happiness, joy, excitement, love, and this list goes on.



Think back to where you started—and look at how far you've come.

Some of you may be just beginning this journey, while others have walked many miles already. **If you could go back and tell yourself one thing at the start, what would it be?**

That insight—something you've learned, struggled through, or figured out—might be exactly what another parent in this room needs to hear today.



💖 WHY CARING FOR YOURSELF MATTERS

Modeling Healthy Habits: When your child sees you exercising, choosing nutritious meals, or taking time to recharge, you're showing them that self-care is important and okay.

Building Emotional Resilience: Taking breaks, connecting with your own support network, or journaling helps regulate stress.

Boosting Physical Stamina: Exercise, good sleep, and routine medical check-ups strengthen your ability to do what you need to do!

Replenishing Mental Energy: You're better equipped to solve problems, advocate, and celebrate wins when your mind feels rested and clear.

Combating Burnout: Regularly filling your own cup ensures you bring joy—not just endurance—to your child's journey.

**What are
some of the
things you are
winning at?**



**How often do
you find
yourself
talking about
these things?**



**What
boundaries
have you
knocked
down?**



A little bit about me:



- ▶ I am a mom and wife, first and always.
- ▶ I am Senior Director of Retail.
- ▶ I am an elected trustee for my Board of Education serving my 2 second 3-year term.
- ▶ I am an advocate in the special needs community- both educational and medical.
- ▶ This is my 3rd conference.

A little bit about Dantae:

- ▶ My son Dantae was diagnosed at 8 months of age.
 - ▶ Included:
 - ▶ Hydrocephalus-cleared on its own
 - ▶ Hydronephrosis- cleared on its own
 - ▶ Floppy
 - ▶ Reflux
 - ▶ Seizures-controlled by meds
 - ▶ Small VSD
- ▶ He was also diagnosed with:
 - ▶ Salt Wasting Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
 - ▶ G6PD Deficiency- Blood disorder
 - ▶ Autism/ADHD
 - ▶ At 10 he was diagnosed with Leukemia- Beat it in 2022!
- ▶ Most importantly he is a teenage boy living his best life.

