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**During Child Safety Month, Easterseals Midwest offers life-changing services to at-risk families, parents, and caregivers**

**Kansas City, MO** – While Bo was incarcerated for drug possession, his daughter Mia was born. Upon her delivery, Mia was taken into Children’s Division custody due to her mother’s drug history. Upon his release, Bo was determined to gain back custody of his daughter, and was able to do so through the help of Easterseals Midwest’s Home Visiting Services.

Home Visiting Services offer a range of resources for parents, families, and caregivers, including developmental screenings for children of all abilities, service recommendations, safety techniques, coping mechanisms, and nurturing parent practices. While Easterseals Midwest is the largest provider of disability services in the Midwest, covering Missouri and parts of Kansas and Illinois, families need not have a disability diagnosis to be eligible for Home Visiting.

“We are working with parents to help them learn and implement nurturing parenting techniques that are going to help them become better parents, help them reduce their stress, and help their children grow and develop into caring adults,” Amy Gorton, Home Visitation Director for Easterseals Midwest, said.

Bo enrolled in Easterseals Home Visiting Services in December of 2015. He was eager to learn not only how to become a better dad for Mia, but also how to care for his second daughter, who was due the following month.

Bo visited regularly with certified parent educators, both with his daughters and one-on-one to learn child safety techniques, developmentally-appropriate activities for his kids, nurturing parenting techniques, and coping mechanisms for the stress of being a father.

“We cover everything from safe sleeping to self-care for the parents,” Gorton said. “We’re meeting families where they are based on their needs. We teach Nurturing Parents techniques, which is evidence-based and has over 35 years of research behind it.”

Thanks to his quick progress, Bo was granted a six-month extension before a judge would determine permanency for his girls.

“As our visits continued and Bo’s parenting skills increased, so did his visits with the girls from one hour of supervised visitation a week, to two hours a week, to unsupervised time,” Gorton, who worked with Bo during his time in the program, said. “During that time, Bo worked two full-time jobs, bought a car, and moved to be closer to family and farther from some of the acquaintances from his ‘old’ life. He continued to drive every week to see his daughters, even coming to a visit the morning after being in an auto accident in which he cracked several ribs.”

In April of 2017, Bo was able to take Mia and Ana – his youngest – home for a trial visit. A few months later, The Children’s Division, DJO, CASA, and GAL unanimously recommended that Bo be given full custody of his daughters.

“I wouldn’t be the man I am today without [Easterseals] help,” Bo said.

Easterseals Home Visiting Services include regular visits with certified parent trainers, monthly books and diapers/wipes, developmentally-appropriate toys and other items quarterly, information on how to cope with the stress of being a parent, lessons on how to respond to your child’s developmental needs in a nurturing way, developmental screenings for your child, and opportunities to meet and interact with other families.

To qualify for Home Visiting Services, parents or caregivers must have a child prenatal to 36 months old, meet an income requirement, and reside in one of the following counties: Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Caldwell, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Daviess, DeKalb, Gentry, Holt, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Nodaway, Platte, Saline, Worth, Ray, and Livingston.

To learn more about Home Visiting Services or Easterseals Midwest, visit www.eastersealsathome.com.