

## Mom Finds Support for Son With Epilepsy Through Employer-Provided RethinkCare Program

Rethink Benefits is now RethinkCare. This story is from a former Rethink Benefits participant.

**“My son has a big heart, and he is very brave and courageous,” says Zsuzsanna Temperli, a mother of two from Calgary, Alberta, Canada.**

Zsuzsanna, a procurement capabilities manager for Unilever Canada, said her son Jaden was considered a healthy child when he was born in August 2011. Only 7 months later, she and her husband received an epilepsy diagnosis for their first-born child.

“He has been developing fine, but slower than other children,” she said. “Therefore he is assessed to be 2 to 3 years behind the children in his peer group.” At just 9 years old, Jaden has gone through three brain surgeries with the hope of reducing the number of daily seizures he was experiencing. After the last surgery in 2019, he developed a hemiparesis and could not move the right side of his body.

While the family has faced a number of challenges, today Jaden is progressing well both mentally and physically. Zsuzsanna gives some credit for that positive progression to the youngest member of the family, the 2-year-old Soraya.



“Simply by playing together, they learn a lot from each other,” Zsuzsanna said. “It has been very emotional for us to see both of them going through the same physical development despite the age difference. Together, they (re)-learned to crawl and then walk, grab and hold objects. They have been supporting each other all the way, the bond between them is very strong.”

In addition to a supportive family unit, Zsuzsanna said she is thankful for the access her employer has provided with RethinkCare. She said she first enrolled in the program to take advantage of resources to help Jaden with social skills, especially after the family moved from Switzerland to Canada in 2019.

“All of the supporting materials that are available online are just simply fantastic,” Zsuzsanna said of RethinkCare’s online portal. “I do not need to search for hours on the internet to find the best one that suits my son’s needs.”

In addition to accessing printable and downloadable materials exclusively available for RethinkCare participants, Zsuzsanna said she has taken advantage of a number of program features that have become even more relevant with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“After the consultations with our behavior analyst, videos and courses that could help my son are added to his profile,” she said. “During past consultations, we have addressed several concerns, such as initiating/ participating in conversation with his peers, sleeping issues, being motivated to learn at home, etc.

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Zsuzsanna says she is thankful to Unilever Canada for their forward thinking in offering RethinkCare, saying it shows they recognize not every employee is in the same situation.



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**- Zsuzsanna Temperli, RethinkCare Participant**

“There are individuals, families who need a little bit more support than others,” she said. “Offering such a benefit is very helpful in many ways. Being new to the country, not having any support in Switzerland, connecting with RethinkCare was a very big help for me, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown.”

Zsuzsanna would encourage everyone to use the program, “regardless if one’s child has a major disability or is just dealing with a behavior issue.”

“I like that it is not a ‘deploy all’ approach, but meeting with the individual’s needs,” she said.