

MOM YESSICA

Ready to enter her sophomore year of high school and three months pregnant, 16-year old Yessica decided to learn how to take care of herself and her baby by joining Nurse-Family Partnership. At first, she was nervous to meet Desiree, her NFP nurse at Any Baby Can.

She didn't know what to expect, but Desiree made her feel comfortable. So much so that Yessica soon knew she could tell Desiree anything. Desiree and Yessica discussed how Yessica could take care of herself during her pregnancy and successfully navigate her juvenile diabetes by watching what she ate and avoiding sugar. Yessica's goal was to ensure her baby didn't arrive early and that neither she, nor her baby, would encounter complications.

Yessica's mom attended some of the home visits with her, so that her mother could learn the latest care information from Desiree too. Desiree also helped Yessica learn how to better communicate with her family about what was happening in her life.

Her daughter entered the world and Desiree began to help Yessica care for her newborn. "I realized that there were things I hadn't considered or thought about, like if I would breastfeed or bottle feed my baby, and what my baby's nutrition requirements would be at each age," says Yessica. Desiree helped Yessica and her baby find comfortable positions and a good way to latch on, fueling Yessica's breastfeeding success. "I mostly breastfed, even though it was hard to do it. When a spot opened up at my high school's daycare and my baby was on campus at high school with me, then I would visit her during the day to feed her." Desiree describes Yessica as a breastfeeding champ!

At times it was hard to manage both school and motherhood, but Yessica was able to succeed with her parents support. And when Yessica needed to study and still wanted to spend time with her daughter,



Yessica and her daughter celebrate with her NFP nurse Desiree on NFP graduation day.



Yessica proudly graduated high school a few months after graduating the NFP program.

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Desiree suggested she read her school readings aloud. "My daughter would stare at me while I was reading and her facial expressions looked like she understood what I was telling her. I was comfortable doing this because I read to her when I was pregnant too," says Yessica.

Together Yessica and Desiree made sure her baby was thriving and growing. "There was a time when she wouldn't want to walk, but Desiree told me not to give up, and to play with her and make her move more," Yessica says. Her bond with Desiree is strong.

A few months after she graduated from the Nurse-Family Partnership program, Yessica proudly graduated from Lanier High School in Austin, Texas, in the top five percent of her class with 34 college credits. She began a new chapter in her life as a first-year, first-in-her-family-to-go-to-college student enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin. Yessica is pursuing a degree in corporate communications and a minor in business and has thought about attending law school.

Yessica credits Nurse-Family Partnership with helping her mature as a mother and individual. She also shares that the program helped her understand what it is to be a mother and learn how her life would change. "It feels good to accomplish things in life. I'm not debating my future," she says.