

Rebecca Rodriguez is a proud single mother of a wonderful middle school aged boy, Santiago, and technology is a very important aspect to their independent community living. To increase her independence and education supports for her son, Rebecca's support agency provided her with laptop in 2020, along with some basic tech coaching. Sadly, that device was stolen in 2021, significantly impacting her abilities to work with her support team, as well as her son's special education team. The device also helped her to organize and track information, including communication and scheduling with Santiago's father, when he joins him for visits during the week and weekends. Consequently, The Arc of Weld County provided a personal device to Rebecca via the Inclusive Technology Access Fund in November of 2021.

Now with access to the new device, Rebecca is back on track communicating with her provider agency, son's special education team, and his father via email. The family have also returned to some of their favorite family activities such as looking up arts and crafts projects to share together. Rebecca has even coached Santiago to independently search for his own fun ideas. More recently they both have become interested in cooking, and together they scour the internet for fun, unique, and interesting recipes to create. At times, one cannot really determine who is the teacher or tech coach and who is the student, as they both are learning from one another and having a great time doing it! When reflecting on how the device has helped her, Rebecca states that she sometimes has difficulty sharing and remembering her thoughts. The access to the computer and understanding how to use it has really supported that need. "When I try to say things, it doesn't always come out right. So, I put it into the speaker (talk to text) because I tend to forget." The accessibility of these notes has helped build Rebecca's confidence in herself, so much so, that she is hoping to expand her tech skills to support her goal of obtaining inclusive, competitive employment.

Rebecca also wants the same experiences and accessibility for her son, as she has learned with her laptop and tech coaching. The family will be applying for a second device from the Inclusive Technology Access Fund for Santiago. He is so excited to have a device of his own, but it won't just be for fun as it will also support the continuity in his academic studies throughout the school year, whether he is spending time with his mother or father.