

# Preston's First 18 Months

Our Little Buddy



Love, Mom and Dad

# Pregnancy

At the time that we decided to have a baby, we lived in West Jordan, Utah. Daddy was a salesman for Mother's Cookies. Mommy was a pharmacist at Wal-Mart. We both worked full time so when we had time together, we valued it. We enjoyed being selfish and doing everything together. Our lives were fun, free, and sometimes lazy. Sunday afternoons were for long naps and conversations about life and the future. A couple vacations gave us a chance to have some adventures together to always remember. Daddy used to tease me about having a baby. I think he was baby hungry long before I was. One day, we decided it was time; time to move on to the next step and have a baby. We had no idea what an amazing experience lay ahead of us.

I found out that I was pregnant with you on Christmas Eve 2002, about three months after we started trying. My reaction to finding out was both fear and excitement when the test came back positive. Early Christmas morning I told Daddy the news. I said I had a present for him but that he couldn't open it-a baby. He was so excited. This was a big step for us and there was no turning back. You were on your way to us.

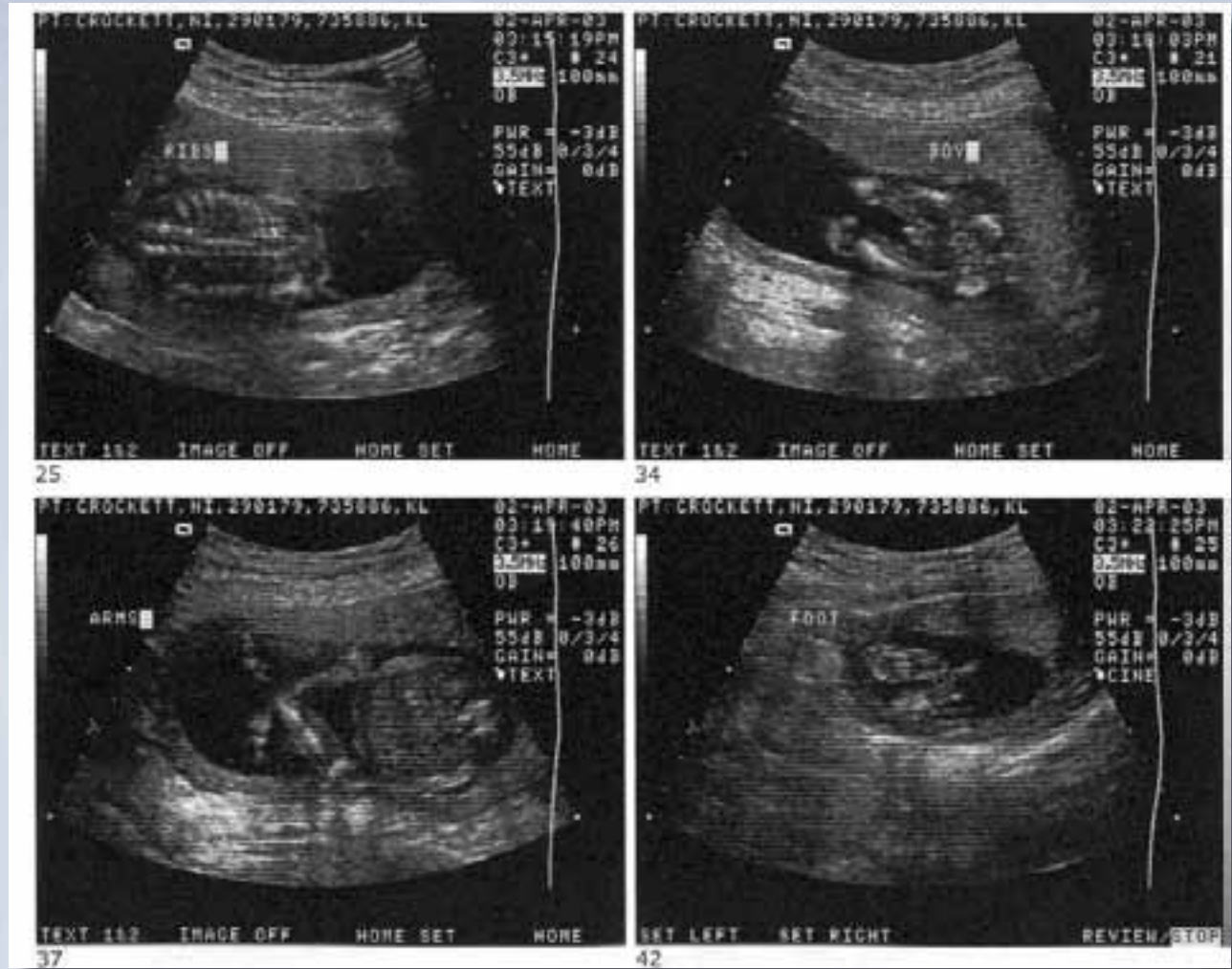
We kept the secret to ourselves for a while. At the end of January, we gave Grandma and Grandpa Crockett an "anniversary present". They opened it to find a frame with a message inside from you. They were surprised. About a week later, we told Grandma and Grandpa Nielson by offering Grandma a mint. Inside the Altoid mint tin, there was a note that said, "We're pregnant!" She was just as excited as I hoped she would be.



Announcing to Bob and Vicki that they were becoming grandparents



Announcing to Terry and Darla that number eleven was on the way



We had the ultrasound at 18 weeks. It's a boy!

Being pregnant wasn't as difficult as I had feared. I felt just a little queasy at first, but it didn't last long. The only food craving I really had was for dairy-especially cheese. Usually, I just craved food in general. I was always hungry! I had a few fears about having a baby. From the beginning, I was very worried about the discomfort of pregnancy. It turned out that I wasn't that uncomfortable until the last few weeks. My feet became very swollen and I couldn't stand for more than half an hour without them burning. Other fears involved actually being a mother. I just wanted to be a good mother. I wanted to know that you would always feel my love and love me back.

Daddy came to each doctor visit with me. We first heard your heart beat at 10 weeks. It sounded like a dishwasher, kind of a whirring sound. With each doctor visit, the beat grew stronger. At 18 weeks, we had the ultrasound. The experience was amazing for both of us. You wiggled all over the place. The technician pointed out your face, hands, and legs. She asked if we wanted to know what we were having and received a loud "Yes!" from us. She pointed to three little dots and typed the word "boy" on the screen. Daddy squeezed my hand tight and tears filled our eyes. Finally, we could say "he" instead of "it" when talking about our baby. Now we could call you Preston.

On the 20-week mark, I was driving home from work when I felt a small muscle spasm in my belly. It was a strange feeling because it also felt a little like butterflies. I didn't know what it was and didn't think much of it. Suddenly, I remembered that I should be feeling you move anytime and that this was probably it! That night, I felt it again just as Daddy fell asleep. It was another week or so before he was able to feel anything. The little taps became stronger as the weeks went on. One day, I remember sitting on the couch watching TV. when a small movement caught my eye. I actually saw my belly move from the outside! I loved the feeling of your kicks and taps. Around 28 weeks, you were rolling all over. Daddy and I would talk about what you might look like in there, but we just couldn't imagine.



Aunt Cindy and Jen were pregnant with your cousins. Jen had her baby 4 days later.



We went to San Diego when I was 6 months pregnant.

37 weeks. Almost there!



# Birth

I woke up three times during the night on August 23, 2003, ten days before my due date. The last time, around 6:30 a.m., I realized that my water broke. I told Daddy that this was it but it still took us a minute to figure out what that really meant. I showered and ate. I remember looking in the mirror and my belly was so hard and low. It didn't sink in that I would get to meet you that day.

We had about a thirty-minute drive to St. Marks hospital. We called our parents to let them know and said we would call them when you came. I was in labor for about 14 hours total. We got to the hospital around 9 a.m. At about noon, I still wasn't progressing. They gave me some pain meds and received an epidural around 3 p.m. I was able to get some sleep while we waited. Daddy rented a movie "the Client" for us to watch. It was fun being just the two of us and wondering what you would look like.

At 5 p.m. your heart rate dropped. This really worried the nurse and several people came in to try to stabilize you again. Daddy and I were scared because we didn't really know what was going on. My doctor was out of town for the weekend so I had to see the doctor on call. I didn't like him as well. The doctor gave me some medicine to move things along around 7 p.m. Things were going o.k. until around 8 p.m. when your heart rate dropped again. This time, they decided not to risk your life and wheeled me down to the operating room to perform a cesarean section. I remember lying on the table as they pumped more drugs into me and prepared my belly. I just wanted Greg and it took so long for him to come in. Then he was there by my side, holding my hand. In just a few short minutes, you were here. I couldn't see because of a sheet blocking my view, but I saw Daddy's face as they held you up. The nurse wrapped you in a blanket and Daddy got to show you to me. He held you next to me briefly and brushed your cheek against mine. They quickly rushed you over to the table to clean you off and check your health. You were born at 8:17 p.m. and weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. You were 20 ½ inches long.



Daddy took this picture when you were just 2 hours old.



Mommy and baby Preston.



Mommy's perfect little boy.



Our first family photo.



Daddy loved holding you and feeding you.



You are so cute!



Coming home on August 26, 2003.



Four generations- all the oldest boys in the family.

Daddy got to go with the nurses to bathe you and take your pictures. I had to stay to be stitched up. I began to shake all over when I got back to my room. I was cold and my body was shaking for about three hours. Finally, after three hours of waiting, they brought you to me. The first time I held you, I felt love, love, love. I was overwhelmed by the instant love I had for you. People said you were red, but I didn't think so. You were perfect with lots of dark hair and a little button nose. I finally got to meet the little person that had been kicking me all these months. I felt awe for the miracle of life.

We had several visitors while in the hospital. Because of the cesarean birth, I had to stay extra long. When you were four days old, we got to bring you home. We left in the afternoon and bundled you up in the car seat. I remember sitting in the back seat with you as we waited at a red light and thinking "here we go." Daddy and I were both very nervous. There were so many visitors to see you. Everyone commented on how beautiful and perfect you were. All I wanted to do was hold you and look at you. I would get such an overwhelming feeling of love that I would cry sometimes. I just couldn't believe you came from me- this new, precious, little life.



One of my favorite pictures. You are just three weeks old.



# Measurements

2 months

Wt 13.5 lbs (85%), Ht 24" (90%), OFC 39.5 (45%).

4 months

Wt 18 lbs (95%), Ht 26" (90%), OFC 42.1 (50%)

6 months

Wt 19 lbs, Ht 27 in, OFC 43

9 months

Wt 22 lbs, Ht 29.5", OFC 45.1

1 year

Wt 24 lbs

18 months

Wt 26 lbs



3 Months



6 Months



1 Year



18 Months





One of my favorite pictures at three months old.





Four months old playing at Grandma Crockett's.



Five months old playing at Grandma Nielson's.

# Sleep Time

All new mothers wonder whether their baby will be a “sleeper”. I was one of them. I bought a book called Baby Wise that says you can get a baby sleeping through the night by about ten weeks old. I was all gung-ho and read the book cover to cover the first week you were home. I quickly learned that it was unrealistic to try to follow it. When a newborn wants to sleep, there is no keeping him awake. You slept so much at first. Something like 16 hours of the day! You slept in our room in the same cradle that Daddy slept in as a baby. We wanted you right in there with us, until we realized how noisy of a sleeper you were! After about two weeks, we moved you into your crib and you made the transition just fine. From the beginning, you were good about going to sleep at night and not wanting to stay up all night. However, you were up again a couple hours later for a feeding. Those first several weeks were tough as you had to learn to go back to sleep after eating. I would be up for 45 minutes to an hour feeding you and getting you back down, then I would have to go pump. By the time I got back to sleep, I only got an hour or two and had to do it all again. This was the case for several weeks. I was amazed that I could function on so little sleep.

When you were a couple months old, I was so excited that I got three whole hours of sleep in a row. At ten weeks, you slept eight hours straight during the night for a few days and I thought I was home free. Well, you started nursing at eleven weeks and I think that ruined it. I think you liked being close to mom when I nursed you at night. At least I only had to get up a couple times during the night. However, you woke up early in the morning- between five and seven.

After a few months, your nap times became more established. The whole first year you took three naps a day. Some people thought that was a lot, but you never slept more than ten hours at night. I love naptime. Your cooing sounds were so cute when you woke up. I had a baby monitor so I could hear you wherever I went in the house. Once I heard those little sounds, I went in to get you. You always got the biggest smile on your face when you saw me.

At eight months, you finally started sleeping through the night consistently. It felt so good to have some nights where I got real sleep. If you did wake up, it was usually just once and I was back in bed within half an hour. When you were teething, you had a hard time sleeping. The hardest time was around sixteen months when your molars came in. We would rock you to sleep, and then go to lay you down and you would start crying again. You wanted to be held the entire night. One night Daddy tried sleeping on the couch with you in his arms. That didn't work well either. We had a tough time and of course, didn't realize until after the fact that it was due to teething. Since then, you have been great. You still wake up occasionally and I rock you back to sleep. Sometimes you ask for your bottle first, and then zonk out. It doesn't bother me to get up because I know you need me.

Rocking you to sleep has always been a special time for me. I wrap you up in your favorite yellow blanket. We cuddle belly to belly and rock. Sometimes I sing to you. There is just something so special as I sing to you and look into those precious, innocent, loving eyes. I know that I am your whole world and it fills me with joy. This is when time stands still. I have my baby in my arms and there is no other place that I would rather be. Nothing I could do that is more important than loving you.

As you grew into a little boy, you liked to play more. Sometimes, you weren't quite ready for your nap so we would read a book. You knew it was time for a nap, so you started asking for "book, book". Even now, you love to play with your leap pad before going to sleep. After the book, I pull you close and give you a sippy cup. Sometimes, you just want to suck on the tabs of your blanket. You try to put them in my mouth and I growl at you. You start giggling and do it again. We also play peek-a-boo with your blanket. After the giggles, you calm down and finally go to sleep. When you pull your blanket over your head, I know you are serious. It isn't long until I have a sleeping little boy in my arms. I have a hard time getting myself to get up and put you in your crib. I just love having my arms filled with you!



Sleeping with Daddy when you were just one week old.



Our little burrito in his big crib.



Taking a nap under the playgym at three months old.

Time to take the canopy down and lower your bed!



Sleeping with your favorite blanket at one year old.



This is my favorite sleeping picture. You are 18 months old.



# Eating

Ah, food, your favorite thing- well, one of them. It was difficult when you wouldn't nurse, but you drank well from a bottle. The first night we brought you home, we wondered if you were eating enough from what I had pumped. When we took you to the doctor the next day, you were somewhat fussy. The doctor asked about how much you were eating and suggested we give you formula as well. We did and you were happy, happy! I felt bad I hadn't given you enough. I continued to struggle trying to nurse you for a few weeks, then gave up and just pumped. You ate every three hours the whole first year of life. One day when you were about 11 weeks old, I gave you a bottle as always. Then, just for fun, I tried to nurse you. I guess you were still hungry and you latched right on. I was so excited! From then on, I was able to nurse you when you woke up at night and it was so much easier! I lasted until you were 7 months old.

We introduced you to food at 4 months. I hoped the cereal would help you sleep through the night. No such luck. We mixed the cereal with formula and fed you with a spoon for the first time while we were in Arizona at Christmas. You weren't too sure what to do with the spoon, but we had fun trying. When we got back, I started you on the number one baby foods. You loved everything you tasted. You loved crackers because you could suck on them. However, you quickly learned that if you held your hand over the side of the high chair, the dog would take it from you. This caused some giggles, and then you would do it again.

Solid foods started around nine months. Still, the baby food was easier most of the time. When you turned a year old, it was time to move to whole milk and food at every meal. Switching from formula to milk wasn't a difficult transition. We had trained you to take your bottles at room temperature so it took a little getting used to with the milk straight out of the fridge. We also switched you over to a sippy cup. You still call it a bottle, but we are proud to say you were off the bottle at a year. You slowed down to three meals a day and two or three bottles.

For several months, you were a great eater. Sometime around 16 months you started getting a little picky. You also started spitting food out. I thought it was funny at first because it was only certain foods like olives. Then it became every mealtime. We try all kinds of things. You still eat your baby cereal every morning and usually have a yogurt for lunch. You will still eat vegetables, as long as I give them to you the right way. The high chair won't last much longer. You have figured out how to wiggle out of the straps, turn around, stand up, then try to sit on the tray. I have to watch you real close.



Your first taste of food.



Are you gonna feed me?



You are always playing.



Did you know food goes in your mouth?



# Talking

While it took several months before you said your first word, that doesn't mean you were silent. You mostly just grunted a lot the first few months. Crying was the only way to communicate as a newborn. And I definitely knew when you weren't happy! I also knew when you were happy because of your smiles and sweet sounds. When you were four months old, you started making sounds in different tones. We called it cooing. You would get started and just keep on going. Instead of crying when you woke up, you just started making silly sounds. I loved it.

By about seven months old, you started making copycat sounds. We would make a loud sound and you would copy it. We would grunt a couple times and you would copy that too. You started clucking your tongue about a month later. Finally, the first word came at nine months. You had been making sounds all along that sounded like mama and dada. But, it's hard to really tell when you started realizing that I was mama. So, we don't consider them to be your first words. No, your first word was uh-oh! I guess it isn't much of a word, but you definitely understood what it meant. You would sit in the high chair and drop something on the ground then say "uh-oh!" Sometimes you would say uh-oh, then throw the toy on the floor. We started teaching you other words. When we would say "ding-dong", you would move your head side to side.

Other words soon followed. We think you figured out who mama and dada were around ten months. We got a few "thank you's" that came out more like a "dank do!" More and more, we got deep giggles. For some reason, it took a lot to get you to laugh. When you were playing in your playpen, Daddy would hide on the side then jump up and say, "Boo!" You would laugh and laugh. My next favorite word you said was "Hi!" The best part was that you knew it was the first thing to say to someone when you saw them. It wasn't just the word, but how you said it. I wish I could capture it with the intonation. You said it the same cheesy way that I did. One day when Daddy was watching you, he was sitting on the floor against the couch. You walked over to him, crawled up on him, and said "Hi, Daddy" He loved it.

A few months later, you started noticing the clock in your bedroom. When I got you out of the crib after naptime, you would point to the clock. Soon, you were seeing clocks everywhere from the big one in the living room to the small one on Daddy's wrist. You would always point and say "glock." You also discovered Elmo and said "memo." Grandma's and grandpa's were Maama and Maampa. When we got dinner ready or pulled out a snack, you would start saying Mmmm! Even now, that is how you let me know you want what I am having. When you really want something, you say it loud several times in a row and keep pointing. It is amazing how much you can communicate without really saying something.

Once you figured out that pointing to something got you what you wanted, you learned to say "this" or "that". Though, it was more of a "dis?" or "da?" We loved playing peek-a-boo with you. We played that game often and you started saying "Pee-Boo" back to us. Your first song was Old MacDonald. It started around fifteen months. You said E-I-E-I-O so clearly. Soon you were trying to say Old MacDonald and hum the tune a little. I think "moo" was your first animal sound because of that song. Now, you make all kinds of animal sounds. One of my favorite sounds is "Meeeeowww" We drive past an animal hospital a lot that has a picture of a cat and dog on it. We'll just be talking as we drive by and from the back seat comes "meeeooooow" I write it that way because that is how you say it; your voice kind of dips down in the middle. I hope I never forget that sweet sound. When you see Scout, you yell "puppy!" and get all excited. When he barks, you woof. I swear I heard you woof at him before you said your first words. The other animal sound we love is the "bock, bock" when you see ducks. When it is time for a nap or bed, you've learned to say "night, night". Sometimes you say it before bed because you are tired and you know it is time.

I tried to sit down with Daddy and write a list of words that you say at eighteen months old. There were so many of them that I don't need to list them. I am just continually amazed at how smart you are. You pick up on things so fast. There are also many objects that you know what they are, but don't say it yet. Then there are times when you try to mimic conversation- especially on the phone. You just start mumbling then your voice goes high at the end. I'm sure it's because you hear us talking to each other all the time and want to do it yourself. You have the sweetest voice. When I am at work and missing you, I just think of you saying all your cute words and I always smile. You love your Daddy so much. When he comes home, you go running to the door and yell "Daddy!" when you see him. When he leaves for work in the morning, you see him put on his coat and pucker up for kisses.



You pucker up and wouldn't show me your teeth.



Finally, I got a picture of your first two teeth.



Look at all those teeth at 18 months old.



You have an adorable smile.

# Teething

You got your first teeth around seven months. We noticed the little white bumps on your bottom gums. You were constantly slobbering. I remember you woke up screaming one night at three in the morning. I calmed you down and got you back to sleep. The next morning, we saw a tooth. I felt bad that I didn't realize why you were so upset. Now, getting a picture of those teeth to send to grandma was another story. You wouldn't have anything to do with that. As you can see in the pictures, you were quite determined to keep them to yourself!

Your upper teeth didn't come for another couple of months. Then two more on top came around ten months. You were good about teething. Unfortunately, I rarely realized that was what was going on and therefore didn't get you the numbing gel that you needed. When I did use it, you calmed right down. The molars were tough coming in around 16 months. They took the whole month to come in and you woke up every night sometimes two or three times. I felt so bad because I could see the points poking through with the gums still covering them. Finally, they came and you started sleeping again, which means we started sleeping again!

# Bathtime

Daddy was the first to bathe you. He got to do it in the hospital right after you were born. He said:

It was so cool to know that I was going to give Preston a bath. He was so little. It was so hard. I didn't want to break him. It was a lot harder than I thought it would be. I had never given a bath to a baby and he had never had a bath. I used wipes to clean him. I had a hard time trying to hold him- he was so floppy. He didn't like the bath. He was crying so hard. The nurses were good and helped me through it. After the bath, I dried him off and put his diaper on him. Then came the hard part; he got two shots, vitamin K and something else. I hate shots. Preston took it a lot better than I did. He didn't even cry. He got this look like "what was that? I don't know. I am too little and new to know." Then the nurse wrapped him up like a burrito and he was done and ready to see Mom

A sponge bath was your first bath at home. Later in the week, Grandma helped us with another sponge bath. We had to do it this way until the cord fell off. You didn't like it much. When Daddy picked you up, you peed on him! He had it all over his shirt.

Bath time got easier when we were able to use the tub. I would put it on the counter next to the kitchen sink. Then I could use the extending faucet to rinse you. When you were a few months old, I noticed that as the stream of water came near your mouth, you would start sticking your tongue out to drink it. When you started sitting up, you learned to splash all over. We started putting you in the tub with us when you could sit up by yourself.

As you graduated to the big tub, bath time was more fun for you. We had a few tub toys to keep you entertained. I loved filling the tub with bubbles and taking pictures of you playing in them. Bath time is still fun, but you hate getting your hair rinsed. It always scares you to lie back in the tub. When your bath is over, I set you on the hooded towel on the toilet and wrap you all up. Then you have to play with the light switch. At around 17 months, you noticed the ducks in the bathroom. Each time you get out of the tub, you look at them and say "bock, bock, bock". Now, when I say it's time for a bath, you go running down the hallway. I get you undressed and let you run around for a few minutes. I just like to see that little bare bum jiggle down the hall.



Splash, splash, splash



Getting a little too big for the baby tub.



You love playing with the bubbles.

# Motor Skills

It takes awhile for babies to develop some motor skills or intentional movement. While we loved our little newborn, we couldn't wait for you to interact with us. One day, when you were about three months old, we stood in front of the mirror in the bathroom. Daddy stuck his tongue out and you copied him. He smiled and you smiled. Then Daddy frowned and you started to cry. Of course, we just laughed. We were so excited to start getting some interaction. We loved watching that little tongue as you tried to copy us. And that was just the beginning of copycat. I have to be careful now because of the many things you will copy.

Around four months old, you found your hands. Actually, it was more like your hands found your mouth. You would suck away on them and make the silliest sounds. You also started rolling over. However, it took another month before you were rolling continuously. We got a kick out of it because you would only roll one way. We'd have to turn you around so you would come back to us. If we took your diaper off, there was no stopping you. That is, until you got stuck next to the dog under the table.

You were about six months old when you started sitting up. This opened a new kind of freedom for you. You could lean forward to grab a toy. One day, after your bath, I wrapped you in your hooded towel and sat you down in front of the mirror. You thought that was so great! You made all kinds of faces in the mirror and hit it.

Scotting was the next skill. I think this was one of my favorites. I have several little video clips of you scotting toward objects. I wish I could put them in this book! You were eight months old. I put you on your belly with a toy in front of you. To get it, you kind of pulled your body with your elbows like an army crawl. Once you reached the desired object, you would grab it and roll over smiling and cooing. Of course, sometimes we had to tease you and move the toy so you would keep scotting. It wasn't long before you learned to get up on your knees and push yourself back into a sitting position. I still remember laying you down on the floor with your bottle one day. I went into the other room and when I came back, you were sitting up! It was the first time that you weren't in the position I left you in. You learned to clap, copying us every time we cheered you on.

Crawling came next at nine months. You figured out that if you moved those knees and arms, you were able to get around much faster than by scotting. Boy was I in trouble now. We laughed at your gorilla crawl. You would crawl around with your legs stiff and

your bum in the air. I loved going from one room to the other and having you follow me. You learned to pull yourself up on the furniture.

One day, I came in to get you from a nap and there you were standing in your crib! Like before, it was weird that you weren't how I left you. We put the crib down lower after that.

When we went to Lake Powell, you were ten months and pulling yourself up constantly. I could see you were so proud of yourself. We stayed in a tent together so we had to use a flashlight at night. Daddy was teasing you by flashing the light in your eyes. You blinked at the light when he clicked it on, then kept blinking as Daddy kept clicking. Later in the month, you started walking along the furniture. Eventually, you would even move from one couch to the other. You learned how to wave and started waving at everyone.

When you were eleven months old, you had the crawling thing down. I could hardly keep up with you. You surprised me one morning when you crawled up the entire staircase. I happened to have the camera right there and got it on video. Of course, you had no idea how to get back down. So, I would get you and bring you back downstairs to do it again. You had no interest in walking. You started standing up, then sitting down to be funny.

The first steps finally came when you were fourteen months. I was taking care of you at church. You wanted down so I watched you standing there looking at all the girls. You got this look of concentration on your face then stepped forward. Three little steps, then you were down. I literally squealed out that those were your first steps and all the girls who saw it were so excited. From there, the walking thing took some time. I could get you to do a few steps between couches or from Mom to Dad. It wasn't until about fifteen months that you started walking more than crawling. We were in St. George for Thanksgiving when you really caught on. You walked all over Great Grandma Springer's house. Great Grandpa thought it was cute.

Once you started walking, there was no stopping you. I loved watching you walk because you were so unstable for a couple months. Falling down was common. Even now, I love to watch you walking down the hallway. I guess it is because you are just so small. We go outside to play with Scout. You love to throw his ball and giggle as he runs after it; not that it goes very far. We have really enjoyed all of your phases from our slug to little boy running all over.



You look like a typical little boy here.



We took this picture for Daddy for Valentine's Day.



I love your beautiful eyes.



You learned early how to do a “stink bug”.



This is your favorite Chevron car.



I was taking pictures of you with one camera, so you grabbed the other one.





The first time I found you with your blanket in your mouth at 8 months old.



Your blanket is always in your mouth.

## “Dee-Dee”

Your “dee-dee” is your most prized possession. It all started when you were about eight months old. One of my girls made me a blanket out of yellow fleece. She cut the edges like fringe and knotted each tab. You liked to play on it and roll around when you were only a few months old. One day, you discovered the tabs. I laid you in your bouncer with the blanket over you. When I looked at you again, you were sleeping with one of the tabs in your mouth. That was just the beginning to a long lasting relationship. You liked it so well, that I ended up making mini blankets so I could take them with us when we ran errands.

After a few months, you had to have one to go to sleep. You still used your pacifier to sleep until you were just over a year. Slowly, you began to prefer your blanket to the pacifier. I credit the dee-dee for getting you off of it. When you are tired, you take the tabs and run them over your face. You love to have one under your nose, one in your mouth, and one in the other hand. Daddy and I tease you by putting them in our mouths and pulling opposite directions. You just giggle and when we let go, you try to put them back in our mouths.

As you learned to talk more and tell me what you want, the word dee-dee was heard often. When you are hurt, upset, or just tired, you start calling for your dee-dee. Daddy teases you by walking around the house with you saying- “Where’s your dee-dee?” You look and look and get all excited when you see it. You grab it and drag it around with one tab in your mouth. I tried making a blue one because the yellow blanket was getting so ragged. You weren’t too interested. When I lay you down at night, you ask for it. If I bring the wrong one, you get mad and keep asking. Even in the dark of the middle of the night, if I have to pick you up to rock you, you know whether I have the right blanket.





# Playtime

I got a baby swing for one of my showers and it was cool. You could rock side-to-side or front to back. As an infant, you spent a lot of time sleeping in it. The mobile above you turned and changed colors, but you didn't notice it for a few months. You also spent a lot of time in the bouncer. It had a vibration mode to soothe you and a bar that lights up with bubbles.

We bought a play gym that had many colorful animals hanging from it. The mat had music that played while you lay on it. One day when you were only three months old, I had you laying on it on the bed. I was doing my makeup or something and when I looked over, you were sprawled out sleeping. It was the cutest thing.

Your favorite playmate is Daddy. He likes to tease you and tickle you. He loves finding ways to make you smile and giggle. Mommy is very happy that Daddy has someone else to tease! You are in for it. He plays with your blanket and hides under it. Or he holds you and says "where's your blanky?" but won't let you have it. He throws you on the bed, then grabs your feet and slowly drags you off the end. You get laughing so hard.

For some reason, you love my cooking utensils. Your favorite seems to be the spatula. If I'm emptying the dishwasher, you come running for the silverware. Eventually, you learned to help throw the silverware into the drawer. I often have to chase after you to get my spatula back! Another favorite toy is the phone- especially our flip phones. Around a year old, you figured out how to flip it open, and then you put it up to your ear and pretended to talk. One night in the car, you were playing with my phone. So, Daddy decided to call it from his. The phone lit up and started making noise and you got this look on your face as if you didn't know what to do with it. We thought it was so funny.

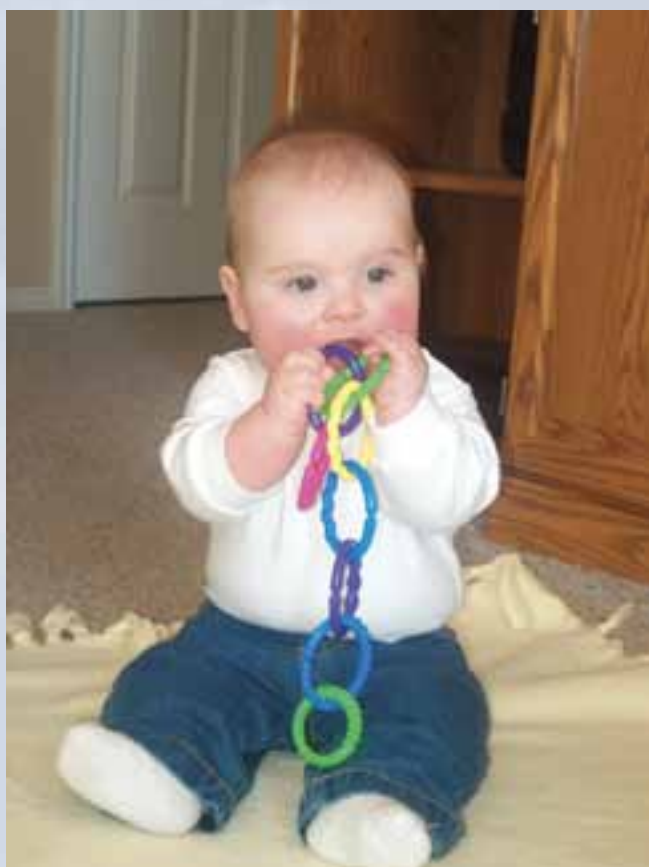
Now, at eighteen months you want to play with everything. Life is a game and it doesn't take much to make you smile and laugh. You love Scout too. Every morning when you first see him, you point and yell "Puppy!" We go outside to throw the ball with him and you have to have a turn. Scout doesn't scare you at all. Even when you were just learning to crawl, you crawled up on him as if he was just another toy. We laughed when you used him as a stepping stool to get up on the couch. You love to be outside. Somehow you find all the rocks and either throw them or put them in your mouth. You like to push your stroller around. You aren't quite tall enough to use the handle, so you have to hold onto the basket underneath.



You rolled right under the table and got stuck next to Scout.



The first of many times that you found the toilet paper.



Playing with your rings on your favorite blanket.



You loved the boat at Lake Powell.



You stayed with Grandma for a week without us. We played in the pool when we got back.



Grandma took cute pictures of you.



We took you on your first fishing trip when you were eleven months old.



Daddy was fishing while we played in the leaves.



Wearing your new Easter outfit.

# First Birthday

I couldn't believe it when you turned one. We had a party with Grandma and Grandpa Nielson, Megan, and Great Grandma and Grandpa Springer. I bought you a birthday cake that looked nice. Then I bought a smaller one for you to eat or explore yourself. It's kind of a traditional thing to give a child free reign over the birthday cake for the first birthday. We were excited to see what you would do. However, we hadn't really given you anything sweet before and you certainly didn't know what a birthday cake was. We put you in your high chair and set the cake in front of you. You looked at it, and then looked at all the people looking at you. Then you looked at the cake again. You didn't really know what to do with it. We tried to help you a little by giving you some frosting; still not interested. Daddy got a little creative and wiped the frosting on your face. We opened presents and you loved everything you got.

You had no idea what to do with the birthday cake.



You loved your presents.



# Halloween

For your first Halloween, we decided to make you a cookie costume. Daddy had a cookie monster costume that great grandpa had from a long time ago. He wanted a little cookie to hold. I was so proud of my creation. However, you may have looked a little more like a potato than a cookie. Still, you were adorable. We went over to Aunt Cindy's and took pictures of you with your cousins. Millie and Anna were mermaids. Cindy made the costumes. You were just two months old.

You were about 14 months old for your second Halloween. You learned at the babysitter how to put your hand to your mouth and make an Indian noise. So, an Indian made sense. This costume was a little tricky. I wanted to make it because it's just more fun for me. I used a pattern for a shirt and pants, then just added fringe. The result was just right. We went to the trunk-or-treat at the ward building. We had your face painted like an Indian by the mutual girls. Then we just spent the night handing out giant bags of cookies.

# Christmas

For your first Christmas, you got to play the Baby Jesus at the family Christmas party. Grandma has the grandkids act out the Christmas story while someone reads it. You played the part perfectly. I bought you a little Santa hat that I toted around everywhere. People always commented on what a cute baby you were. I took all kinds of pictures of you in it. At the Crockett family party on Christmas Eve, you were a hit. Everyone wanted to hold you and play with you. We opened our presents that night because we were flying out to Phoenix early in the morning. Of course, you weren't too interested in the whole present scene. We just gave you some wrapping paper while you sat in your bouncer and you were happy.

We got to the airport early on Christmas morning. I was hoping that you would sleep for most of the hour and a half flight. Of course, I put your Santa hat on because I made sure you wore it everywhere. You did well for most of the flight, and then got really hot and fussy. We cooled you down with the air vents. When we got to the airport, Grandma Crockett was waiting for you at the bottom of the escalator. She cried when she saw you because it had been a couple months since she had been with you. When we got to the house, you met your cousin Bentley for the first time. While most people play in the snow at Christmas, you got to swim in the pool.

You looked great swimming in your Santa hat. Your diaper got full so we had to take it off. We all had fun playing with you in the water. We all got together on Christmas night to open presents to each other.

Your second Christmas was more fun because you were 16 months old and much more interested in toys. This year, you couldn't play Baby Jesus. We had to use a doll. Grandpa had a gift for you from Santa. You sat on his lap with your cute rosy red cheeks. Once all the presents were opened, you didn't have much interest in your own. No, you were fascinated by Anna's Busy Ball Popper. You loved it so much that Santa got one for you for Christmas. At Great Grandma Crockett's party, you ate lots of olives off of your fingers. You played with your second cousins.

When it was time for the talent show, you shared your own. You stood in the circle with everyone watching and performed Old MacDonald with mom's help. Everyone laughed as you sang E-I-E-I-O. That was on Christmas Eve. You were perfectly happy when we put you down for bed. At about 12:30 you woke up with croup. This was your second time getting it. We tried to sleep with you in our bed, but it was hard to listen to you trying so hard to breathe. We ended up taking you to the emergency room around 2 a.m. We were there waiting around forever. You were so miserable and cranky. Finally, the doctor came and gave you the medicine you needed. We were all back in bed around 4 a.m. It was a rough Christmas morning. We all slept until about 8 a.m. So, it was a pretty late Christmas morning. We came out to open presents. You just weren't interested. You wanted to play with the ball popper or explore behind the Christmas tree. We got you to help open one gift. We had a big breakfast and Grandma and Grandpa Nielson came over to visit. It was a great day to just play and be together as a family.



Cookie monster and his cookie.



One little Indian.



Merry Christmas!



Swimming at Grandma's on Christmas Day 2003.



You were always playing on the presents behind the tree.



Playing with your cousins at Grandma Nielson's Christmas party.

# Dear Preston,

I want you to know how deeply I love you. Our first 18 months together have filled me with joy. I am so excited about what the future holds for you. I know you will be successful in whatever you put your mind to. You have taught me so much in these few short months. I've learned what it means to love unconditionally. I know that no matter what choices you make, I will always love you. You are my special little boy. I want to raise you in a home full of love and happiness. Your father and I are so happy. We are thankful every day that we have you.

I used to wonder what you would look like when I was pregnant. Now, I wonder what kind of person you will grow into. You have such a happy disposition. I know you will have many friends. You will be an example to them. I watch you play with your Daddy and I know that you will be close to him. He is so excited to have a little boy to take fishing and camping and hunting. I hope you will learn from him. He has such a great work ethic. We want to teach you the importance of working hard so that you can feel that satisfaction of a job well done. I want to instill in you confidence. I love you so much. I want you to feel the love of your parents. I want you to always be true to what you know to be right.

You are so precious to me. I will never forget the experience of first feeling you move, seeing you on the ultrasound, seeing your sweet face and feeling it touch my cheek right after you were born. I'll never forget watching you learn to crawl and taking your first steps; the sweet sound of your voice when you say Mommy; the look on your face when you see me walk into the room. I love you so much my sweet little boy. I hope you will never forget that.

Love,  
Mom

# Dear Preston,

The last 18 months have be so wonderful. As I sit here and think of the first time I saw you I remember the most wonderful loving feeling that came over me; that feeling has been growing ever since. You make me so happy. I love hearing you laugh. I love seeing you smile when you see me. I love to play with you. I love teaching you new tricks, even when your mom doesn't think that it is a good idea. I love to hear you running down the hall. Watching you grow is so wonderful. You have changed so much. I've watched you grow from this little slug in my arms to this fat slug. I've loved watching you go from sitting up, to rolling around, to doing your monkey crawl, to walking and running. Time has gone by so fast. You are the best thing that has happened to me since your Mom.

I want you to have so many things. I want to see you grow up to be strong and healthy. I want to see you get an education and get a great job to provide for you and your family. I hope you marry a wonderful girl like I did. Preston you are so special to me. I love you so much. I hope we have a great relationship and we are able to do many thing together.

Preston I want you to be a great brother. I want you to always look out for your brothers and sisters. You are the oldest. You have a great responsibility to set a good example for them. I know you can do this. I want you to know how much I love you. I will always love you through the good and the bad.

Love,  
Dad

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