

Firstborn

Category: Parenting

written by Colleen T. Fogarty | May 8, 2019

Cradling this two-month-old baby boy in my arms, stroking his face, savoring the infant skin.

Wait, what is that? A gap, something in his jawline?

My heart races. I run my fingers gently over that same spot, the one that worries me, this time using my palpating finger more intentionally.

Ohhhh. I relax. This must just be the growth plate in his jaw. Of course.

Though I cannot recall learning about the growth of the jawbone in medical school, nor the growth plates that must be there, I know that other bones have them, allowing small people, like infants, to grow into the full size people they will become.

Now, years later, when I turn my head as he darkens the doorway, I see his man-jaw, often with a shadow of growth. I imagine his jaw growth plate has closed by now.

When he was two, vehicles fascinated him. We would take the window table on Sundays at an Indian restaurant on Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, placing him in a booster seat by the window so he could watch the traffic. He sat, gazing intently, pointing, saying "Car. Car. Car." As my husband and I chatted, we patiently listened to him, responding to his automotive discoveries.

Now, as a senior in high school, he has a man-jaw and a driver's license. He often comes to me before I go to bed, asking when he can use the car. "Car. Car. Car."

Ohhhh, I think, remembering his two-year-old self.

At two-and-a-half, my husband used to take him to preschool in a stroller, passing by the Harvard University campus. One day, my firstborn came running to me, "I go college Mommy. I go college."

Ohhhh. Now, at the end of senior year, he is indeed going to college, in accordance with his preschool prophecy. It's moments like these, of

remembering and connecting, that I marvel at the transitions eighteen years have produced.

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