Retarded Child Not Nearly Some People Might Think, The Problem Mother Says

Editor's Note. In cooperation with the efforts of the Vermilion Parish Association for Retarded Children at giving all possible aid to retarded children of the parish, Mrs. Lucien Landry has offered this story of her son with hopes that it will encourage others faced with a like problem.

Ray, who is now nine years old, is a retarded child and the youngest of two children.

He was born at the Palms hospital on Thursday, July 22, 1954. His weight was seven pounds, eight ounces, appearing very healthy and normal in every way. We left the hospital the very next day.

Ray sat up alone at six months and walked at exactly one year. He was a very fast and active child.

At three years of age, he was speaking only a few words that we could understand clearly. It was then we became concerned. We took him to our family doctor, and it was then he told us of a possible retardation. We took him to the Charity Hospital in Lafayette for a complete physical. The only thing they could see wrong was an allergy.

When Ray was of school age, with the help of Mr. Ray Broussard, visiting teacher, an appointment was made with the Department of Special Education at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. After being evaluated, we were told he had an IQ of a three and a half year old. It was suggested to us that if we wanted him in school, a nursery school would be the best place until he would reach the age of eight.

Regardless of what we were told, Ray was put in first grade to see if any improvement would be made, and stayed there for six months. When he was seven, we placed him in the class for exceptional children. He has started his third year in this class and loves it.

Having a child like our Ray isn't nearly the problem some people might think. We are thankful for the wonderful class and teacher, Mrs. G. J. LeDet, and her helper, Mrs. Elwood Landry, and for our association for retarded children. Like his father said only a few weeks ago, it seems that Ray just couldn't be any other way. I know that we just couldn't possibly love him more and we know that he loves us also.