

Planet Parenthood

My son's election day accidents

This is not a story about what we as a nation won or lost politically on Nov. 4. My Election Day story is a personal one and relates to a recklessly impulsive boy, my son Sam, who seems to be accident-prone on this particular day.

This past Tuesday, as my husband waited in line at the Penn Township building to vote, he allowed Sam to wander over to the Penn Township playground. As any parent with an active nine-year-old knows, keeping that child by your side as you patiently wait over an hour to do your civic duty is virtually impossible. And though my husband was a bit reluctant to let Sam go play at the park, he gave in and hoped that his line would move quickly.

Unfortunately, it didn't move quickly enough. As he stood on the building's steps, minutes away from casting his ballot, a woman brought a bloodied and crying Sam back to his father. One of the swings had apparently whacked him in the mouth,

causing his front tooth to be knocked askew and his top gum to split and bleed.

Luckily Dave was able to vote soon after Sam's return, and he made it to the dentist just before he closed down for



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lunch. Dr. Tom (Muller) took an x-ray of his front teeth, and we are now in a "wait and see" stage before we can chart a course of action. While I am extremely grateful that Sam wasn't seriously hurt during this latest mishap, I can only hope that it doesn't set us back financially if it ends up including trips to an orthodontist and/or some major dental work.

After the dust settled on my son's most recent accident, my husband reminded me of an altercation from eight years ago, when Sam was barely 13 months old. On election night

of 2000, Sam was toddling around our small house in Chatsworth, Calif., when he tripped and fell directly on to the corner of our coffee table, splitting open the skin directly above his left eye. I had never put bumpers on the edges of the table since my daughter was much more cautious and, well, we kind of let it slide since there had never been any close calls with those sharp corners. In any event, we took Sam to the emergency room that night where he received his first two stitches. I have since gauged the 2000 election by our hospital visit: when we left for the hospital, Bush was ahead; when we returned, Gore was ahead. Any of us who were old enough to vote that year certainly remembers the chaos that reigned over that election for the next few weeks.

The presidential election year in between these two—2004—was thankfully uneventful, except at the point when I was taking my ballot to the voting booth and a five-year-old Sam blurted out for everyone in the polling place

to hear, "Mom, why are you voting for Kerry?" Even though it was a little embarrassing to be called out on the most private of our basic rights, I preferred that to another emergency trip to the hospital or the dentist.

So is there a common theme here, besides the fact that my son is prone to accidents on presidential Election Days? Sure, the fact that I now have my own individual Election Day story that doesn't have anything to do with the candidates which will help me to remember these times by my son's mishaps. I couldn't tell you what I did on the days of any of the elections I voted in before I had kids. Now I won't be able to talk about Election Days without mentioning my rowdy son. That is, until four years from now: come Election Day 2012, Sam will be relegated to a padded room with no sharp objects in sight, and I'll have nothing to remember the day by, except for the news of who was elected.

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