



## SUCCESS STORY

### Giving Hope To Disadvantaged Children

**A disabled seven-year-old goes to school at last**



Photo: USAID

Jasur now hopes to become a scientist, something he would not have dared to dream of one year ago.

***“Above all, I dream that my son will find his place in life and become a worthy man,” said Jasur’s mother.***

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Jasur Tursunaliyev will never forget September 1, 2005, the first day he went to school with other children. Until that day, this seemed impossible. Jasur has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. Many, including school administrators, did not believe that he was capable of attending school with “ordinary” children. Schools in Uzbekistan usually do not accept disabled children because they are not equipped to provide for special needs. Also, many falsely believe that children with cerebral palsy are mentally disabled and are not capable of studying at the same level. Lack of access to education marginalizes children like Jasur, separating them from the rest of society and preventing them from finding work as adults.

Things began to change for Jasur when the leaders of the Community Education Committee based in School N. 11 learned about his situation. The committee, formed as part of USAID’s program to improve education in Central Asia, is comprised of volunteers, including parents, teachers, and school administrators, who work to improve the quality of education. USAID encourages community involvement, provides training on student-centered teaching, and helps integrate children with disabilities into schools.

After a workshop on children’s participation and inclusion in education, committee leaders successfully argued for Jasur’s admission to school. That summer, his parents set up a classroom at home, complete with a desk, blackboard, and visual aids. His friends Bobur, Qudrat, and Maftuna brought him books and supplies, while his grandmother and parents tutored him. By September, Jasur could read well enough to attend school. In addition, USAID provided Jasur with a wheelchair that made him more mobile; he had been using a modified baby carriage.

Today, Jasur is a first grade student. He is proud of his new school uniform and satchel, but most of all he likes to talk with his friends. Jasur’s family is very grateful to the school staff, and to the teachers who make a special effort to assist their son.