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## **Bloggin' It: One Mom's Successful Blog Story & Advice to Help You Set Up Your Own Blog** by Vicki Knopf

Last year, after wanting to start a family website of some sort for a long time, I decided to start a family blog about life around the Knopf household. Sometimes it is about Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS), one of my three kids with PWS, or about life in general, but I decided to share for two main reasons: 1) many of our close friends and family live far away, and 2) I wanted to share what life is like with three kids with PWS, plus four teenagers, two dogs, etc....you get the picture! As the sub-title of my blog states, "Life is Never Dull!!" I am repeatedly asked about my blog from family, friends, and even random strangers. I've been recognized at my local mall in J.C. Penny's due to my blog before. No, I did not know the person. Scary, huh? I know her now, though.

Blogging seems to be intriguing to some and yet tedious to most. What most don't realize is that it literally only takes me five minutes to post an update on the blog each day. Sometimes I get a little long-winded but for the most part, blogging is quick and painless for me. It is always amazing to me how many people hit the site and or blog each day and from where they originate. For example, in a 24 hour period, we've had visitors from the states of Alabama, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. That is 21 states. As far as different countries, we've had visitors from Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. I love having a site meter so I can tell who has hit the blog site and so I can see how they ended up there. It has become my personal mission to make this blog as interesting as possible so my frequent visitors don't get bored.

If you would like to start a blog of your own, it is easier than you probably think. I outlined some steps to take and then offer some suggestions to make it successful below. As for me, I like to think of my blog as a work in progress. It is forever changing and I am forever adding things to it. To help with PWS awareness, I included a link to the PWSA (USA) website. I've included pictures and videos, too. Feel free to check out my blog at <http://www.theknopfcrew.blogspot.com/> to get ideas. Have fun and happy blogging!

### **Steps:**

1. You need to find a reliable host for your blog page. A quick Google search for "free blogs" will turn up a host of sites. I decided to go with Blogspot.com for their user friendliness.
2. You will need to decide on a name for your blog and follow steps to set up your page. It really is like blogging for dummies. I am not really as talented with the computer as my blog lets on!

### **The Five P's of Successful Blogging:**

1. Post often. Blog readers like to see new content fairly often when they check in.
2. Pictures. There are a few rare successful blogs that are driven by words alone but for the most part pictures help tremendously. Many people view blog hopping like flipping through magazines. Which pages are you most likely to stop on? The ones with interesting pictures that grab your attention, not those with a lot of words.
3. Personality. Be genuine. Part of the appeal to blog readers is to get a peek into the life of the author. How personal you want to get depends, of course, on the focus of your blog and your intended audience.
4. Permutation. (Thank you dictionary.com.) It's great to have a specific topic that your blog is directed to, but the same ol' thing every day can get a bit boring. So keep it fresh by introducing new topics, jokes, tutorials, videos, etc. occasionally.
5. Participate. I was completely shocked to learn that on the whole, there is a blogging community! Get involved. Visit other blogs that interest you and leave comments. Share the link on your own blog. Participate in the community and you'll be more successful than you can imagine.

*Caution: Anything posted on the internet may be viewed by friends and family, but also by strangers. PWSA (USA) offers this article for those interested in blogging, but strongly encourages anyone interested in pursuing this activity to learn about privacy issues in order to make informed decisions.*

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*still hungry for a cure.*