Heart warrior packs bag for school

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A little boy who underwent two major heart surgeries at less than a month old is now packing his bag and getting ready to start primary school this September.

When Finlay was just three weeks old doctors discovered that he had a congenital heart defect in which the two main blood vessels leaving the heart (the pulmonary artery and the aorta) were swapped over. The condition, transposition of the great arteries, causes low oxygen levels and in Finlay's case was extremely severe as he also had two holes in his heart.

The odds were stacked against him, and as a result Finlay underwent two major surgeries before turning a month old to give him a chance of survival. Despite this scary start to life, Finlay, now four years old, will be popping on his school uniform to join his big brother at primary school for the first time this September. **Mum Cassie says:**

"Finlay is really looking forward to starting school and joining his big brother Charlie in the playground! The date is fast approaching and it's a really exciting time for us.

"We have no doubt that Finlay will have a ball. If you saw him, you would have no idea what he's had to deal with so early on in life. He's a very cheeky chappy with bundles of energy and a real love for life, so he will be in his element making lots of new friends!

"We recently took Finlay for a check-up and thankfully his heart is fine and the doctors are happy with his progress. It's the best outcome we could've hoped for! As a family, I feel like we've come a long way since Finlay's emergency heart surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital."

Throughout his hospital treatment, Finlay's family were supported by The Sick Children's Trust with free accommodation at its 'Home from Home' Guilford Street House. The charity supports families with seriously ill children across its ten 'Homes from Home' in the UK. **Mum Cassie continues:**

"It was such a dark time for us. But thanks to the support of The Sick Children's Trust, we were able to stay together, just minutes away from Finlay's hospital bedside and for that I'll always be grateful to the charity. Knowing that we had a base to leave our things and come back to every day to eat, shower and sleep made such a difference and let us concentrate on being there for Finlay to help his recovery."

The Sick Children's Trust relies entirely on voluntary donations to keep its 'Homes from Home' running. Every year the charity supports around 4,000 families with seriously ill children in hospital, and it costs The Sick Children's Trust £30 to provide a family with accommodation for one night. **Assistant Guilford Street House Manager, Tina Thake, says:**

"We're so pleased to hear that Finlay is about to start primary school! It's lovely to see pictures of him graduating nursery and we can't believe how much he has grown. We wish him the best of luck and hope he enjoys it."

For further information about The Sick Children's Trust, please visit http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/

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