With childish expressions and swaying hands moving all over the room, aiming to touch whatever he hears in enthusiasm and passion, trying to explore his small world, Mohammad Abu Al-Saber - two and a half years old - is delighted to finish the last individual session at the BASR's vision rehabilitation unit after undergoing 11 months of treatment and rehabilitation.

Mohammad was born after 30 weeks of pregnancy with only 2 kilos 400 grams weight. His mother says “during his first days I sensed there was something wrong, he was very frightened and reluctant if anybody of us tried to play with him or carry him”. At the age of 4 months, his family noticed a delay in interaction and facial expressions, so they took him to several hospitals and outpatient clinics in Palestine and Jordan. He was diagnosed to have psychomotor delay with retinopathy of prematurity (a disease of the eye affecting prematurely-born babies); but one year later, there was no real improvement in Mohammad’s condition. “I started believing my son will never be able to walk, we totally lost hope” his mother says.

On 7th June 2012, BASR’s Outreach team visited Mohammad at home in Za’tara near Bethlehem; and upon assessment, they noted that he couldn’t move from mattress and has no ability to stand due to his worries about falling down as he can’t see clearly the environment around him, upon which he was admitted to BASR for an intensive rehabilitation program encompassing physiotherapy and occupational therapy to improve his bed mobility, standing balance and gait, as well as speech therapy, vision rehabilitation and psychosocial support.

After two months of daily hard work by BASR’s multi-disciplinary team, Mohammad gradually began to follow simple orders, eat independently, sit in balance, control his head and interact socially; but he was still unable to walk or speak, so he was referred to BASR’s vision
rehabilitation unit where he was followed up on a weekly basis. In less than 9 months, he started running full of life, sometimes getting lost, but soon after he finds his way back. Now he speaks normally and he started slowly to distinguish the sounds around him.

“The BASR team did their best, and the progress was impressive” says the mother with glittering eyes, adding “BASR team did not only treat my son, they also taught me how to deal with him. Mohammad was special and different in the past; but nowadays, he is fully integrated in our family, he plays with his siblings and walks around without much assistance at home”.

Mohammad is to be visiting the vision rehabilitation unit only once a month for a while, to be followed up in his daily life for removing any potential barriers and for guiding his parents to cope with all his needs at home. “Mohammad won’t be powerless anymore; he will have a good future”, the mother peacefully sighs.