

New Hope for Children with Autism

Center to Offer Full Diagnostic Testing and Insurance Coverage

By: Samantha Gray
Autism Spectrum Disorders Clinic

According to a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) survey published in 2007, all forms of autism now affect 1 in 150 children in the U.S. today. If you contrast this with the incidence reported in the early 1990's, 1 in 10,000 children, this increase is alarming. Given its prevalence, autism is now more common than childhood cancer, diabetes, Down's Syndrome and HIV.

Many will tell you that the cause for autism is due to generalized "genetics." Worse, they'll imply there is no cure – or, at least no protocol that can provide

families with hope. I can tell you from firsthand experience that these things are simply not true. My son, Zack, was once included in the above autism statistic. To meet him today, you would never know that he once had almost every symptom of autism, especially when you see his mischievous grin and hear his six-year-old giggle.

Like every child, Zack was precocious and curious as he grew from an infant into a toddler. At 24 months, however, the changes I noticed weren't of a more independent child seeking his way in the world, but of a child regressing into a more infant-like state. He lost his ability to verbalize, his curiosity about the world vanished, and he had out-of-control tantrums and severe gastro-

intestinal problems. The neurologist who examined him stated matter-of-factly, "your son has developed autism." To further aggravate an intensely devastating diagnosis, he said he will need Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, ABA Therapy and, if he gets out of control, here's a list of drugs we can put him on. Oh, and by the way, **insurance doesn't cover any of this.**

How could this be? How could we afford this? The thought of not being able to treat my son because insurance wouldn't cover the treatment was unthinkable! Our system is failing the families and children suffering with autism. That day led me to open the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinic (ASD)

where testing and treatment are covered by insurance.

Now, here's the rest of the story:

Conventional medical doctors couldn't seem to help Zack, and I couldn't accept that the happy-go-lucky little boy I had was now sentenced to a life of intolerances—intolerance to once favorite foods, toys, interactions...life. Consumed with the feeling that what my son was experiencing wasn't normal, healthy or permanent, I did the only thing I could think to do: read. And research. And read some more. I learned that autism doesn't just occur in one form. "Autism Spectrum Disorders," (ASD) is the umbrella term for neurobiological afflictions that manifest as



Zack 30-days after autism diagnosis, July 2006



Zack 90-days after starting diet, supplements and therapy, May 2007