

Case Study – The Listening Program®

Isabelle, Age 3, Autistic Moderately Impaired

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Name: Isabelle
Gender: Female
Chronological Age: 3 years
Clinical Diagnoses: Autistic Moderately Impaired

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Isabelle had normal development until her Measles, Mumps, and Rubella inoculation at 18 months. Her parents noticed regression but as she had also become a big sister at that time, they guessed it was because of the new baby. At 28 months her parents asked the school to evaluate Isabelle as she had lost her speech and was constantly screaming. The school district diagnosed her with “autistic like” behavior. At that time her mother checked Isabelle’s vaccines and learned that she was exposed to very high amounts of Thimerosal, which contained mercury, a known neurotoxin. In January of 2002 Isabelle was diagnosed “autistic moderately impaired” by Dr. Solomon at the University of Michigan. Other than loss of language, she showed few classic symptoms of autism other than extra anxiety and a few minor repetitive movements and sounds. Her mother noticed that she did not understand words correctly. If she were told to “touch mommy” she would touch her tummy. This difficulty caused her mother to look for help in auditory processing for Isabelle.

TREATMENT

Isabelle began Applied Behavior Analysis, ABA therapy on December 1 of 2001. Two therapists work with her plus her mother. She attends a typical preschool with her mother in the mornings. She has learned some sign language but uses less than twenty signs.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Isabelle started The Listening Program® in November, 2002 with the Sensory Integration (SI) CD 1, Extended Schedule, listening 15 minutes once a day, for five days per week. Although she initially took the headphones off, she was fine with putting them right back on. During the first week of SI, she had two days of extreme emotional behavior that was unusual for her. On the positive side, she was more adventurous and exhibited an increased frustration tolerance. She also showed improved focus and was less anxious and tense. She began to sing more and play with her voice, often while listening.

We changed to the Base Schedule for Isabelle’s second week of listening to SI 1. She now listened 15 minutes twice a day for five days a week. This brought more changes as she became more animated and had more appropriate interaction with adults and with her peers. She was more calm and her face and/or body looked more relaxed. She began to exhibit more eye contact and a change in eating habits. She was more physically active and more flexible. During the week she lost all control of her sleep behavior. Previously she had a delicate but somewhat consistent sleep schedule of approximately 8-9 hours sleeping 10 pm to 7 am. She was now getting up at 4 and 5 am. The biggest change this week was in her expressive language and she had better scores on her ABA programs that target this area. She was beginning to show a little

more clarity in her speech. When Mom asked her, "Do you want this?" Isabelle said "no" very clearly. Usually her "no" lacked the full pronunciation and vowel sound, and was more staccato.

TLP Kit CD 1: Isabelle is beginning to try different foods. Her sleeping pattern is more typical now, from 11 pm to 7:15 am. Her father noted that she had more eye contact, that she was more physically active, and was more gentle with animals and people. She has been singing more or playing with her voice and has been speaking more clearly. Isabelle has been exhibiting more appropriate interaction with adults. She is less defensive, more responsible and more adventurous. She is also more calm and relaxed with an improved mood this week.

TLP Kit CDs 2: Isabelle is looking more "on" altogether. She still seems to be a bit clumsy in her movements but this seems to be resolving itself. They have been working on a breathing program and teaching her how to draw in a breath and blow out candles or blow a whistle. After two weeks, she is really catching on.

She is speaking more clearly and can match tones more accurately. She was pulling on Mom's arm when she lost her grip and stumbled backwards. She said "Whoa!" and Mom was very impressed by her comment as this was new for her.

She is more independent and is exploring more. She goes upstairs to play a little more even when Mom stays on the first floor. She is also venturing further at play and in church. She is noticing what other kids are doing more and not checking to see what Mom is doing as often. This week Isabelle started a Gluten/Casein-free diet.

TLP Kit CD 3: Isabelle has begun to say words to Dad spontaneously and appropriately. When she eats cereal she now requests "more." Previously she would pull her parents toward the cereal and throw her hand towards the box. In the last few weeks, she will try eating something if Mom tries it first. She ate a carrot this week, which was new. She is not mixing up words as much. She is also singing along with Mom better. She is trying to match the tones that she hears for the first time. Mom was singing a song, then stopped and Isabelle sang the next line by herself!

TLP Kit CD 4: Isabelle is cleaning up things for herself without being asked. Mom has also seen her complete tasks, such as cleaning up, sorting toys, and doing puzzles, which is new. Her babbling sounds more like words every day. Her physical coordination is improving and she has a more consistent level of energy.

TLP Kit CD 5: Christmas was easier for Isabelle this year than last year. She really didn't have any meltdowns to speak of. She did have a rough week though and seemed more tired. Her sleeping has gone out of control. She is going to bed very late and falling asleep at 5:00 in the afternoon. However, she is not waking at night once she is asleep. That is a huge improvement from other sleep lapses.

TLP Kit CD 6 plus 15 minutes of (SI) 1: Isabelle did not take her usual supplement over the Christmas break that helps with serotonin levels. She has had more tantrums and sleep disruptions. She is more emotional, more needy, and more angry, which is all new. We have added the SI CD to help calm her. During the ABA therapy this week they are working on words. Isabelle has started to say more words, even without prompting, although she is sometimes wrong in connecting the word with the item.

TLP Kit CD 7 plus 15 minutes of Speech and Language (SL) CD 1: Isabelle has begun to notice that her preschool friends can do things she can't do, such as showing emotions. She is showing more frustration, but in an appropriate way. She is showing a little more aggression. She will hit in a playful way, then look to her parents for a reaction. This is VERY new. She is acting out more. Isabelle is working hard on saying words. For example, Mom has been asking her "What is this?" for a doll, bottle, and horse. When she is prompted to answer, she frequently will say bottle when they hold up the doll. It's exciting for Mom to hear the words and see that she is really trying. She continues to try new foods now without much prompting, and she is liking them.

TLP Kit CD 8 with 15 minutes (SL) CD 1: "We have had an explosion in language this week. Finally!" wrote Mom. She is understanding more and overall is more aware of things. At school a boy began counting friends saying "1, 2." Isabelle continued counting "3, 4, 5" after him. At school while on Mom's lap, she attended to the story for 20 and 30 seconds, the first time Mom has caught her doing this. She has better sleep patterns and is going to bed at 10:30 pm rather than 11:00 pm. She is more gentle with people. She comforted her little sister after she fell by patting her on the head.

Second Cycle:

Base Schedule-15 minutes twice a day, five days per week.

TLP Kit CD 5 for two weeks: Mom says Isabelle is looking so much better. She is more animated and is paying attention to people, watching her friends at school. She looks at you when you are talking and she is more expressive in her face. She does make an effort to answer even though she says things wrong.

TLP Kit CD 6 for two weeks: The dark circles under her eyes are rarely there anymore. Her teacher and Mom have tracked her outbursts in preschool from September to present. She used to have more than 10 outbursts every day. Now some days she doesn't have any. One day she played with the baby and said, "Baby mine." This is the first time she has put two words together.

TLP Kit CD 7 for two weeks: She has been attending and responding a little better to the Sesame Street videos. There were some good signs that she was watching and tracking the actions on screen. She has been doing great with imitating. Isabelle went to her preschool for the first time by herself on Thursday. This was wonderful as she has a difficult time with separation from Mom.

TLP Kit CD 8 for two weeks: She is now able to identify items in her "talking box." Her job is to open the box, pull out one item at a time (there are 6-7 items) and label them. Her pronunciation has gotten much better.

PRE AND POST TESTING

Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC) Scores, Internet Scoring Program

NOTE: The Autism Research Institute has developed this simple Internet evaluation. Scores are weighted according to the response and the corresponding subscale. The higher the subscale and total scores, the more impaired the subject.

	PRE TLP	POST TLP
Speech/Language Communication	20	20
Sociability	14	10
Sensory/Cognitive Awareness	18	10
Health/Physical/Behavior	18	16
Total ATEC Summary Score	70	56

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Language improvement was one of the listening goals we had for Isabelle. She has made improvements in receptive language. After the second cycle she was tested with verbs (from the ABA curriculum) and was successful in this area. She has made about a 15% improvement in expressive language. Before she started TLP, she was using limited sign language. She now speaks more but still has a limited vocabulary and has not yet begun to put more than two words together. Isabelle is a much better listener. Prior to TLP she would tune out voices. She has probably improved 75% in this area and works harder to tune out her parents. She follows instructions very well so it seems that TLP has addressed her auditory processing issues.

Her sleep patterns have improved a great deal. Isabelle used to wake up at 1 am and be up until 5 am. This would happen between one and three times a week. Now it rarely happens, perhaps 1 to 3 times a month.

Isabelle has gained in social maturity and shows more appropriate behaviors. She is trying and eating many more foods and liking them. She shows more expression in her face and her physical coordination has improved. She is better at beginning and completing projects. Her attention and focus have improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is likely that a child such as Isabelle would benefit from continued use of The Listening Program®, at least 15 minutes a day for as long as growth and benefits are seen and then at regular intervals for a “tune up.”

End of Case Study

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