

## Gabby's Story

### 7 years old



Our Gabriella Rose, born January 1999, appeared a healthy baby girl. At six hours old she could lift her head and watch as her Daddy walked and talked around the hospital room. Amazing! I didn't know a newborn could do this. Then one day, her life and ours changed. Within the first few days of life, she had seizures, became hypotonic and developed a severe intertrigo rash.

As the months went by, Gabby was not meeting developmental milestones. At 16 months old, she was evaluated at an Early Intervention exam and I was told she was functioning at about the level of a six month old.

We visited many doctors and diagnoses of hypotonia, static encephalopathy, global developmental delay, and severe mental retardation were given. Eventually, PDD, Cerebral Palsy, abnormal toxicology, gastro intestinal dysfunction and Autism Spectrum Disorder were added. In addition, Gabby had a severe sensory disorder, not knowing where she was in space, not able to feel touch or pain appropriately, and her vision and auditory processing were affected.

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something foundational that other therapies could build on or compliment.

At about 2.5 years old, Gabby started an all natural, organic diet, including fresh vegetable juice. I saw a slight improvement in awareness with this diet, but I knew there must be more we could do to help her.

My sister sent me an article about

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and how it was being used to treat Cerebral Palsy. I believed this therapy could help Gabby's condition and give her the boost she needed to begin the healing process.

Gabby was 3 years old and we set out for our first round of 40 dives. The facility had two monoplace chambers.

Gabby's protocol was 100% O<sub>2</sub> at 1.5 ATA for one hour two times per day for four weeks with a break on the weekends. We did not do a SPECT scan. I went into the chamber with Gabby the first week, after that she went in by herself and was perfectly comfortable. During those first dives, the chamber was brought to pressure very slowly to allow Gabby's ears to adjust and Gabby had no problems whatsoever. She really liked being in the chamber.

We were awed at how quickly Gabby responded. In the first 10 dives, we saw improvement in eye contact; after 20 dives, her gross motor skills and motor planning began to improve. She could push a small child's chair around the room without getting it stuck against the wall.

After 25 dives, she amazed us by walking to an artificial tree in the room and said 'tree.' She then walked to the window looked out at the parking lot and said 'car.' Before the 40 treatments were complete she was drinking through a straw and began to perspire for the first time in her life. Gabby continued to make progress up to 6 months after HBOT. When we returned home, she was able to get into a standing position from the ground with no assistance.

We went back two more times and Gabby completed 116 dives in total. We continued to see improvement in motor skills, eye contact, cognition, receptive and expressive language. Her balance and gait continued to improve as well as awareness of her surroundings. She was beginning to respond to simple requests and she was showing some signs of being affectionate!

The center also provided access to a wonderful occupational therapist

trained in Neurodevelopment Techniques (NDT). She worked with Gabby three times a week. This OT-NDT really seemed to compliment the HBOT. Gabby was responding nicely to the occupational therapy now.

Gabby began bio-medical interventions including, vitamin/mineral supplements, cod liver oil, fish oil capsules and probiotics. She also began the gluten-free / casein-free diet. We were also doing a home-based intervention called the Son-Rise Program, including a lot of sensory integration things. She started therapeutic horse back riding and cranial sacral therapy.

**“We were awed at how quickly Gabby responded...”**

**The cloudiness was disappearing from her eyes.”**

We were told of a another hyperbaric center and Gabby began treatments there in 2004, she was 5 years old. Gabby continued to make gains in all the areas she had in the past, along with an increased awareness of her surroundings. The cloudiness was disappearing from her eyes.

Gabby's HBOT protocol was still 100% O<sub>2</sub> at 1.5 ATA, but we did not always go every day. We went three times a week for a few weeks, and when we were able to do more, we did. Gabby continued to make gains in fine and gross motor skills along with motor planning. She stepped from the parking lot onto the sidewalk unassisted and was able to string two beads. In the past Gabby could only tolerate ten minutes outside on a cold day, and could now stay out for longer periods of time, even going sledding with her sister.

January 2005, just before Gabby turned 6 years old, she began methyl B-12 injections under the care of Dr. James Neubrandner. She continued with her other bio-medical interventions and therapies. She began Celebrate the Children, a private school for children with special needs in April 2005, they follow the DIR (Developmental Individual Relationship), Greenspan model.

Gabby began HBOT again in June 2005. This time we saw a real leap in her interest in socializing with others, especially her peers. She would

say 'hello' to the children in the chamber before she had her treatment. Also, she began to respond to questions and requests in a more timely manner.

In the past, too, Gabby would constantly pull her sister's hair. We finally began to see this behavior begin to diminish. Between 2004 and 2005 Gabby received 86 HBOT treatments.

When Gabby returned to school in September 2005 the speech therapist stated that Gabby had a 'speech explosion.' Gabby was moving her mouth in new ways, she was verbalizing much more and making many new sounds. By October, Gabby was selected as 'Social Butterfly' of the month! Indeed, HBOT and bio-medical support compliment the traditional occupational, physical and speech therapies that have been recommended.

December 2005-January 2006: Gabby received HBOT again. When Gabby returned to school after the winter break, everyone commented on how she had gained weight, for the first time. The physical therapist was impressed with Gabby's gains as well.

To date, Gabby's digestion has im-

proved and has fewer loose stools. She can now climb the playground equipment with minimal to no assistance. She will initiate play and is always thinking.

**"This is not the same child that started HBOT at three years old.**

**Many layers have been peeled away..."**

We have safety gates around the kitchen, but when Gabby wants to get in, she pulls a chair to the counter and proceeds to climb onto the counter top, looking in the cabinet for snacks. If I am in the kitchen she will go into the bathroom and turn

the water on, which she knows will get me out of the kitchen leaving the gate open, and she quickly runs in!

Gabby has had a total of 243 hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatments over the past 4 years. She has been doing bio-medical interventions for about 3 years along with various other therapies that have helped her. Gabby is interested in life. She is affectionate and playful. Gabby loves to explore, have fun and enjoy life. She is very social and wants to be part of the action. She even participated in her sister's girl's softball team by hitting the ball off the T and running the bases.

She is concerned for others, and at school, is affectionately called 'the

class mother'. Although Gabby's speech is apraxic, using approximations of words and gestures, she is able to tell us what she likes and dislikes. She can ask and answer questions; she has stories to tell; comments on what's going on; she wants to join in conversations.

This is not the same child that started HBOT at three years old. Many layers have been peeled away and Gabby is now able to participate and enjoy the world around her. She is becoming more self-regulated and growing into the beautiful girl she was meant to be.

That has been Gabby's journey from then to now! We look forward to continued progress and healing through prayer, HBOT, other bio-medical interventions with related and complimentary support.

**Doctor's Notes:**

*I believe in HBOT, whether from hard or soft chambers, and whether done from my clinic or from other clinics. The pressures and protocols needed by some may not be needed by all. At this time it is impossible to know how many treatments a child will need, which children will do better on high or low pressure protocols, or if a child will need to be treated long-term or short-term. What is being demonstrated undeniably is that HBOT, whether hard or soft, is a valuable adjunctive therapy to autism and other developmental neurological conditions. Therefore it is my opinion that every child should be afforded the opportunity to try HBOT.*