

## Sophia's Story

4 years old



Sophia and her twin sister, growing typically, were born in Reston, VA almost 4 years ago this time of year. We were a very excited couple being blessed with twin daughters after years of trying to have children and several failed IVF cycles.

When the kids were 4 months old, we moved to Florence, Italy, for approximately 1 year, during which time we also went to India for a few months. During the Italy/India trips, both kids received antibiotics from various doctors and were also kept up to date on immunizations.

During the 11 month, Sophia (and of course her sister, Saisha) also got their Measles vaccination in India. We noticed that Sophia started to get more irritable after this point, but did not make much of this situation.

We moved back to the US just before their first birthday and were excited to be back home in VA. During her 1st year appointment in September, Sophia received another dose of the MMR and some other vaccinations from her pediatrician.

When she turned 16-17 months old, we started to notice that she was falling behind in development milestones, particularly in speech, as compared to her sister. We tried to bring this point to her pediatrician, but was of no use. We were reminded, "All kids are different and Albert Einstein started talking at 4."

We moved to Italy one more time, courtesy my job, again to Florence. This time round, the girls were 3 months short of being 2 years old. Within a few weeks, one of the doctor's in Florence noticed that Sophia was still not talking at all while Saisha had quite a few words. He suggested that Sophia be evaluated soon.

This upset us, because just before we left for Italy, one of the nurse practitioners in Sophia's pediatrician's office in VA had said the same thing. We were not able to do any-

thing in the US because we were leaving the very next day.

In Italy, we started our saga of visiting doctors who specialized in this field. We must have met at least half a dozen doctors, but got nowhere with a diagnosis. According to them, she was too young.

Sophia also had an MRI scan performed, which was normal and some extensive blood tests. She had an episode of Epstein Barr virus that was suspicious to some of the doctors, but not enough to draw any conclusion. At this point, we had a hunch that something was not right. Sophia was now 2 years old.

We returned to the US during the month of August 2004 to get evaluations. Almost from the first meeting, the Children's Hospital in DC gave her the label of PDD. We were devastated. We received the same news from 2 other doctors and also the from the county clinic.

Not knowing what to do next, we started reading voraciously on the subject, both online and in books. We decided to permanently move back to the USA for the best treatment options for this disorder.

Traveling back to Italy to wind up our affairs, we came across a doctor in Switzerland who practiced Cranio-Sacral therapy. We saw him briefly and completed approximately 30 sessions of Cranio-Sacral therapy. We found that Sophia had better eye contact and was a little more alert after these sessions.

We moved back to the US in early January and started a whole new chapter in our pursuit for her treatment. We started slowly—traditional doctors, county personnel, etc., as was the norm. We quickly found that we were going nowhere with these interventions.

A few months later, we came across Dr. James Neubrandner, whom we came to know about from watching a program on NBC about Autism. The doctor in the special explained about a connection between Autism recovery and Methylcobalamin (methyl-B12) Shots.

At first, we were skeptical, but eventually came around. In July of 2005, we started with methyl-B12 shots and followed Dr. Neubrandner's other

bio-medical treatment suggestions.

We also started a very aggressive home-based ABA program that at times was good and at other times, was spotty, mostly due to lack of availability of skilled personnel. We started seeing lots of little improvements in Sophia, including significant eye contact and alertness.

In March-2006, we started LDN (low dosage of Naltrexone). We saw significant improvements with this medication.

In November 2005, we first heard about Hyperbaric Oxygen chambers. We returned in April 2006 to Dr. Neubrandner's clinic in New Jersey for 16 sessions of mHBOT. Within 10 days of Sophia starting this treatment, we saw some gains. She was "requesting" much more and also trying to engage us more frequently in the things she wanted.

These changes could have been a result of many things, but the timing was impeccable. Sophia started verbalizing her requests, again with more frequency, and the eye contact/engagement was clearly improved.

Sophia now brings us books she wants us to read, music she wants to hear and DVDs she wants to watch, all without crying or fussing. She is still far from being cured, but seems to be certainly on her way there.

We are taking the fight up a notch and will be trying several new techniques, but intend to stick primarily with Dr. Neubrandner for his bio-med treatment—and more so now—for this mHBOT option.

We cannot categorically say which type of chamber worked better for Sophia, but it seems that we clearly saw results *immediately* after the mild chambers that were evasive after the hard chambers. For this very reason, we are going to his clinic next week for 25 more sessions and hope for the best.

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