Jack's Story

3 years old

Our story began 18 months ago when Jack was diagnosed with PDD at 28 months. It came as no surprise to us as he had lost all of his language for a few weeks and then began slurring a few old words again.

Almost completely silent, Jack would spend his days spinning, watching the wheels of his trains or trucks, throwing rocks or toys repeatedly for hours, tracing lines on walls, have tantrums several times per day. He possessed no eye-contact, would never turn or answer to his name, and sucked on a baby bottle full of milk, for which he would scream all day long.

He would run away from me and wouldn't care if I would enter or exit the room. He didn't hug or kiss. He lost his ability to wave and clap hands and had not learned to point. He would, however, drag us around by the finger to indicate what he wanted and spent hours at a leap frog alphabet pad.

Jack had a protruding belly and would fall to the ground or bang his belly against the furniture. Spending a day with Jack, as a very pregnant mother was depressing, devastating, exhausting, and angering. I would cry all the time and pray for his recovery. I would wake-up every morning wondering how I would make it through the day and longing for the dream of my son that I thought would be lost forever.

Since those initial days, Jack has been on gluten, casein-free diet for 18 months and receives daily methyl B-12 injections. He takes daily vitamins, omegas, calcium, enzymes, many organic raw fruits and vegetables and a good diet of whole foods without preservatives that I make myself or buy at a health food store.

In addition to PDD, Jack has also been diagnosed as having enterocolitis and is being treated with sulfasalazine. Jack has had cranial sacral therapy, ABA, speech, verbal behavior therapy, social interaction therapy, and occupational therapy. He attends a speech delay program in our township and will begin a typical pre-school in September.

Jack has always been an early responder to all of the DAN protocol biomedical approaches under the care of Dr. James Neubrander, especially to methyl-B12, and to Dr. Krigsman's treatment. Due to a combination of all these therapies, Jack has progressed remarkably and was nearly recovered from PDD by the time Dr. Neubrander recommended that we try mild hyperbaric oxygen treatments.

Initially I was somewhat skeptical but definitely hopeful. I can now say that immediately my skepticism turned into amazement as HBOT seemed to lift the veil that still enshrouded Jack.

"I couldn't wait to get in the 'space ship'...each time I would see him become closer and closer to typical"

Interestingly, I noticed an immediate improvement after our very first HBOT session. Prior to beginning HBOT, Jack's reciprocal language was still delayed and conversations wouldn't last for more than one or two exchanges before he would turn and then run off. In addition, he was not able to relax enough to sleep through the night.

Before HBOT, Jack was averaging about four to five wake-ups per night. As one can imagine, Jack's poor sleep patterns were wearing on both of us and because we both suffered from sleep deprivation, I believe it hindered Jack's ability to recover completely due to my inability to help him because I was so exhausted.

Today, while he is still active, his motivations have more purpose and his play style and reciprocal play with other children are now age-appropriate and he possesses an extraordinary exuberance and thirst for knowledge and life experiences that I had only wished for him in the past. I am utterly amazed with his overwhelming progress and am proud of him.

Jack is more patient and follows directions and finally answers to his name consistently, which had been one of the hardest things for us to achieve, even when most of his other autistic behaviors had disappeared. He has a group of friends and a best friend named Lindsay, a typical child age 3, who he asks to see every day.

Between late March and May, Jack, his one-year old brother Vaughn, and I completed 40 sessions of HBOT at a rate of 4 one-hour sessions per week. Honestly, I couldn't wait to get in the "space ship," as we called it, because each time I would see him become closer and closer to typical.

With every day that passed our son gained better communication skills. His reciprocal conversation with me expanded, at first to three or four exchanges, and now he just talks all day long, sings songs, asks questions, plays tag and hide and seek with his friends and just started a team sport, soccer.

We had been so excited back in early March and prior to HBOT, when Jack had already officially lost his diagnosis from his neurologist. However, today, just two months shy of his fourth birthday and after 40 HBOT sessions, Jack has come so much further than he was when his neurologist saw him! He now acts like a typical child and is an absolute pleasure to be with.

Even Jack's appetite has increased remarkably and he sleeps through the night—and so do I! He is so lovable, plays with me and his brother and father all day long, and he relates to everyone. He is so very happy and pleased with himself and even asks if things are gluten-free. He talks to me and says things like, "I need to have dinner now...I'm hungry...can you make me Mickey Mouse pancakes...no butter please but lots of syrup." And, "I love you mom...that's beautiful," Jack said about a necklace I was wearing one day. He is amazing!

Doctor's Notes:

There are many biomedical therapies that have been shown to be helpful for children on the spectrum, and some more than others. However, no matter "how close" a child is towards recovery, and no matter how high-functioning a child may be, it is my opinion that every child be allowed the opportunity to see how much farther HBOT may be able to take them.