

Case Study – The Listening Program®

C.B., Age 11 yrs 9 mos, Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Submitted by: Melissa East
Honeybee Listening
Boulder City, Nevada
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Name: C.B.
Gender: Female
Date of Birth: October 10, 1990
Chronological Age: 11 years, 9 months
Clinical Diagnoses: Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Scoliosis

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

From birth C.B. showed a normal developmental pattern and was sitting at 4 months, crawling at 10 months and walking at 14 months. Her speech was developing normally until 1 1/2 years old, and then disappeared. C.B. was diagnosed with autism in December of 1992 at age 2. She continued to babble until 4 years old. C.B. has not achieved toilet training and is toilet scheduled only. She has a very limited diet and will only eat Spaghetti O's, grilled cheese, toaster strudel, dry cereal, smooth peanut butter and jelly. She does not know when she has eaten enough. C.B. is not well coordinated. She is aggressive and will lash out, hitting others or biting her own hand in crowded environments. She engages in echolalia and says and reads everything but doesn't converse. C.B. flips through books and writes in them, not reading them. She can read but doesn't comprehend at the same level.

TREATMENT

During early childhood C.B. had tubes inserted twice to drain fluid from her ears. She has been in special education programs since she began school. She couldn't write her letters 1 1/2 years ago. Her Occupational Therapist worked with her in strengthening her hand and was the one who realized C.B. was left-hand dominant. C.B. takes 0.1 mg of Clonidine to help her sleep at night.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

C.B. started The Listening Program® in July, 2002 with the Sensory Integration (SI) CD, Base Schedule, listening 15 minutes twice a day. To begin, she was rewarded after listening with five minutes of watching the movie SHREK. She started humming along while listening and seemed more cooperative. However, after a few days of listening full time, C.B. was more aggressive than usual. She threw the headphones and refused to listen. From our discussion, it seemed that C.B. was picking up on tension in the family rather than the issue being the listening.

I suggested that Mom start TLP this week and let C.B. take it at her own pace. This would allow Mom to model listening. I also suggested that Mom take C.B. on a shopping trip to buy some special markers for her favorite activity of special writing in her journal. The music would be offered to C.B. as a way to help her sleep at night and would be played to accompany special activities. C.B. then began to listen to SI CD 1 through speakers. The next day C.B. was cooperating completely with headphones. She likes the program and isn't as intent on checking the time as with the first few days. She now listens all the way through. She has her own listening corner in her room complete with rocking chair, nightstand, and writing paper. C.B.'s aggression has noticeably decreased.

TLP SI CD 1: C.B. is very playful this week. A lot of her aggression is gone. She is starting to use more appropriate vocabulary, initiating conversation more than ever. She is now asking questions, instead of repeating. C.B. is more tolerant with glue, and Playdoh. She played with clay for the first time at school and is now excited about her activities there. Her school report says she is following directions better. She likes peanut butter sandwiches again. She tried chicken noodle soup for the first time and ate the whole can! She has better eye contact and is more aware of her environment. She has been telling Mom and Dad that she loves them.

TLP Kit CD 1: C.B. loves listening to the new CD. She smiles and giggles with the changes. She is calmer after listening and is easier to get to bed. She has been falling asleep on her own, even without her usual medication. C.B. is asking for things more. Instead of saying, "need hug" which meant snack, she will now say, without encouragement, "Can I have a drink please?" She is finishing her food and saying, "all done" and meaning it now. C.B. is more cooperative on the toilet. Some aggression has returned but this may be related to the excessive heat; it has been close to 100 degrees Fahrenheit this week.

TLP Kit CDs 2-5: C.B. started 5th grade this week. She loved the chirping birds on the CD and became very playful and adventurous. This included running away from Mom for the first time in a store at the check out! It didn't happen again after Mom warned her not to. She has made many requests for music this week such as You Are My Sunshine, Itsy Bitsy Spider, Old McDonald, etc.

C.B. was much more aggressive the second week. During clothes shopping with Mom and Grandma, she hit Mom, screamed and cried all day long. She ran away again. Aggressive outbursts do happen more often around Mom who is not as firm as C.B.'s father. Many other things are improving. She is drooling less, she has improved concentration, and her speech is greatly improved. C.B. has been able to read Little Clifford and Arthur books from start to finish. She has watched videos all the way through for the first time without rewinding or fast forwarding. She ate an entire cheeseburger, pickles and all at McDonalds. This is the first time she has ever eaten a hamburger.

The toilet training issue got worse for a couple of weeks. She used to admit to being soiled or wet but now when she is, she will say "no thanks." During CD 5 she started to tell herself, "It's okay, you'll be okay." She is growing too fast. From June to September she grew 2.5 inches and her curvature of the spine got much worse. She wears a brace that has helped her posture, but not the curve.

Because C.B. was exhibiting more aggression, we changed her listening schedule to 15 minutes of CD 5 from the TLP Kit and 15 minutes of SI. The Sensory Integration CD helps coordination, balance and has a grounding effect. C.B. will continue on this schedule until her behavior improves.

C.B.'s reading comprehension has improved and her writing is getting better. She can write Daddy a letter, which she couldn't do before.

C.B.'s ability to understand concepts is improving. When a teacher at school was away during the summer, she said the teacher had died. Mom explained the difference. When a second teacher left to get married and Mom explained the difference between dying and going away again, C.B. got the concept right away. Mom continued to work with concepts. They watched a kissing scene on television and Mom explained the difference between really kissing and pretending. C.B. understood and was able to make the connection.

TLP Kit CD's 6-8: C.B. is now answering "no" instead of parroting "no thanks" to everything. Her drooling increased for a few days, probably due to a cold, then stopped. Her aggression level is high and her parents are working on ways to deal with that. She continues to show positive changes. Her writing is excellent. Her language has really taken off and C.B. is having conversations with her parents all the time now. As her mother was cooking a meal she asked her, "What are you making?" She is trying foods like cucumbers, salads, etc., things she would never eat before.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Toilet training was one of the listening goals we had for C.B. Although this was not met directly after the first listening cycle, there were definite changes in how she responded to soiling herself. Many sensory issues have improved. Now she knows when she is finished eating and says "all done." She is eating many foods she wouldn't consider before. She was able to watch a video all the way through without any fast forwarding or rewinds.

Physically C.B. is more coordinated, not as clumsy. She initially was falling asleep sooner and without medication but now is having a hard time getting to sleep and sometimes needs medication to do so. Overall, C.B. has made much progress, particularly with expressive and receptive language skills.

C.B.'s normal aggression has continued to be an issue throughout the first cycle. C.B. was more calm initially and more playful a few weeks later. The aggression returned and the Sensory Integration CD has helped but it is still an issue. C.B. turned 12 while in the first listening cycle and began her first menses. It is possible some of her aggression is due to hormonal changes and her age.

In a follow-up communication 6 months later with C.B.'s mom, she told me that C.B. continues to have less drooling and more eye contact. C.B. recently switched schools and now has much more sensory integration and a male teacher. This has been a very positive change as her aggression has finally decreased. While there has been little change in her echolalia, there has been a change in the way she answers questions since she switched schools. For example to the question "How are you feeling?" C.B. will answer, "better" rather than repeat the question. She also now often says, "Mom, gotta tell ya." The best change since finishing the first cycle of TLP is that C.B. is staying dry and starting to use the toilet on her own with no prompting from her parents.

C.B. has not yet started a second cycle of TLP, although this is a recommended protocol. Her parents are currently preparing C.B. for back surgery. In the meantime, C.B. will be using the Sensory Integration CD at her new school.

End of Case Study

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5748 South Adams Avenue Parkway | Ogden, UT 84405
801.622.5676 | fax: 801.627.4505
provider@advancedbrain.com | www.advancedbrain.com