Óscar Amuz, pioneer of Autism Soccer

Being autistic vs Having autism

10 exercises for language problems
Eye contact in neuroatypical children

Children with autism and humor: reach them through laughter!

Photography by Matthew Samuel Arias
Letter from the President of Autism Soccer

First of all, I would like to thank God for this beautiful opportunity He put in my heart. He set me out to help and empower children and adults within the autism spectrum disorder through soccer.

Everything started in October 2012, when, without knowing, I rejected four autistic kids for the programs that I used to run with neurotypical children. I realized that I had to do something to help them, so I called these four families to ask them to be the first members of this soccer program.

I was commissioned in Soccer Park in Palm Springs North Florida, so I started a soccer program called Hope For Autism United For Soccer Foundation Inc. But the name wasn’t it, and a few months later I created a DBA on the name Autism Soccer. This is marking the 6th year anniversary of this project, and I am where I want to be; I’m proud of everything that has been achieved in the name of this organization.

We expect to open in 15 countries around the world to help more than 50,000 kids for the year 2021. I believe that love and passion are everything we need to make things possible; so we need your help! We encourage you to be part of the history of this organization, and a helping hand can shape a brighter future for many kids around the world.

Oscar Amuz
President of Autism Soccer

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The Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners

Whereas: Exemplary achievements made by individuals, organizations and initiatives symbolize the characteristics which make Miami-Dade County a thriving metropolis, hence it is essential that they be praised and recognized for making a difference in our midst; and

Whereas: In the past autistic children have been known to be discriminated against in the participation of sports and physical activities, even though soccer and physical activity assist the children with their symptoms and allow them to step into an environment conducive to their betterment; and

Whereas: Autism Soccer was established to teach soccer skills to children with Autism in a supportive environment and since its founding it continues to help these children build self-confidence; and

Whereas: Autism Soccer allows children with Autism to join other children on the same spectrum of Autism so that they might receive a treatment through sports; and

Whereas: While working on the kid’s inclusion especially in sports programs, Autism Soccer hosts different projects and pilot initiatives, including a walk at Amelia Earhart Park to promote Autism awareness;

Now Therefore: BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I, CARLOS A. GIMENEZ, MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, CHAIRWOMAN AUDREY M. EDMONSON AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ON BEHALF OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND THIS COMMUNITY, do hereby proclaim April 1 through 7, 2019, as

Autism Soccer Week

In Observance Thereof: I call upon the good people of Miami-Dade County to join me in applauding the men and women of Autism Soccer who devote their time to highlighting the importance of learning about Autism and ways to create healthy lifestyles for our youth.

[Signatures]

Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor
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The autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) is a complex neurobehavioral condition, which starts to be noticed since the first year of a kid’s life, and will last for as long as they live. The most recent data shared by the U.S. Center for Disease Control shows that 1 out of every 68 children are diagnosed with some type of autism, but even when this syndrome is more common than most people think, there’s still exist a lot of negative myths around it. Here we’re going to talk about 8 of those myth about the ASD.

1) **It only affects children**

   This is only half truth; the condition is usually diagnosed only on kids, but since it’s a lifetime condition, those kids grow up to be adults, and so, adults are affected by ASD too.

2) **People with autism do not feel any kind of need for socializing with others**

   Not quite, although is truth that they do not have the same need that most of us have for socializing, they can enjoy time with others even when they don’t express their joy the same way we do.

3) **People with autism do not feel any kind of emotion at all**

   This is false, it is truth that one of the most difficult things that someone with ASD can do, is to identify what they feel, but that doesn’t mean they are unable to feel any kind of feeling whatsoever, they all have Alexithymia, which is a personality construct characterized by the subclinical inability to identify and describe emotions in the self.

4) **People with autism can’t express their feelings**

   Again, this is only half truth; they can’t express their feelings the same way we do, that is of course related to their alexithymia, meaning they can’t put in words what they feel because they don’t even know how they feel exactly. Nonetheless, they might express their feelings in particular ways, if we pay enough attention to their behavior, we should be able to find something unusual in the way they act, and so, try figure out what they feel.
5) The origin of autism is in a lack of affection

This is absolutely false, the ASD has nothing to do with lack of attention in any way, autism is just a neurobehavioral condition, a brain alteration, meaning that if you pay a lot of attention to a kid even before the autism’s syndrome can be noticed, the syndrome will still be there.

6) People with autism are geniuses

It depends on what you mean exactly. People with the syndrome shows different results when it comes about IQ, although, it is truth that a significant amount of them can show outstanding results, but it’s not something that always goes accompanied with being inside the ASD.

7) Kids with autism should not go to regular schools

Children with autism benefit greatly from integration into school life. Of course, there can be differences, but in most cases send them to school is a good thing; there they can learn about social skills, which is one of the hardest things to do for them. Although it’s truth that some kids can not face a classroom because of different reasons, and that sometimes their behavior can be harmful to other children, as noted before, this doesn’t tend to be the case.

8) They live in their own world

This is also false. A lot of times we hear those words, and though it can be just a manner of speech, it’s just not accurate; they live in the same world we all live in. Sure they can have unusual behaviors, but that doesn’t mean we should try to exclude them; the fact that they have a particular condition is not excuse for treating them as if they’re anything but people with rights and feelings. We should make things easier for them, not harder.

We hope that with this new knowledge, you have a more clear view about the autistic spectrum disorder, and remember, not everything we hear is true, sometimes the facts are a little more complicated.
Autism Glass: A Solution for Gaze Avoidance

Autism glass is a set of wearable glasses that allow children to see their parents through a system and a smartphone application.

Why many children are misdiagnosed?

Late Spectrum Diagnosis: Just How Common it Is to be Misdiagnosed

Autism spectrum disorders nowadays can be diagnosed with more precision than ever, mostly because there’s a lot of information and tools to help with the correct diagnosis. However, in previous decades it was hard to find the reason for the atypical behavior in children and adults alike. This situation is the reason for many late diagnoses in adults, and even wrong diagnosis and treatments for the wrong condition that they had to stand while growing up.

For some individuals, dealing with struggles in their lives because they can’t choose a proper reaction and have difficulties to engage with the people around them is quite common. Finding that they are within the spectrum is a relief, as it helps them learn how to handle their conditions, that way their lives can improve significantly.

There is not a single cause for this. It depends on how they behave, what symptoms they present, and if their parents and teachers are paying attention to their development and interactions with other children. Also, because we are talking about a spectrum with so many different conditions and symptoms, it can be hard to place every single one of the children into it.

Since 2013, thanks to the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, professionals, teachers, and parents have found a guide to place the array of symptoms associated with autism. And with it, the diagnosis has become a group effort to find the best course of action for children and help them integrate to their surroundings.

But for many kids who grow up undiagnosed and became adults, this lack of proper diagnosis became a burden; they grow with an odd feeling of not belonging, they are criticized for their natural behaviors and feel like outcasts, especially during their teenage years. With the new technology and procedures, a lot of people have been finding a correct diagnosis, starting a treatment to ease their problems, and help them interact with society.

As more people begin to understand what the ASD’s really are, there will be fewer misdiagnosis and children will find a way to develop their full potential. That is the reason why parents and teachers must work closely, ask each other if something looks out of the ordinary, be very aware of the children habits and interactions, and observe their reactions to find symptoms that will indicate some condition or behavioral aspect.

As parents, we should never be afraid to seek professional guidance and ask as many questions as are necessary; after all, your kids deserve the best in the world, and living within the spectrum is not necessarily a negative thing: it’s just the beginning of a wonderful journey with its ups and downs, with sacrifice and rewards, that will prepare them for the future ahead.

Come to Autism Soccer, where we offer excellent programs for the development of your children and a place for them to be comfortable and happy.
Language problems can affect many children diagnosed within the autism spectrum disorder. However, some kids suffer those problems and aren’t in the spectrum. This happens because there are many reasons behind language problems besides autism: ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), difficulties in the muscles involved in the speech process, or even emotional distress. Sometimes, there’s no external factor: the most common source for these sort of problem is the way in which children acquire their language skills.

Speech ability can get better with the appropriate therapy, and activities specially designed for improving language skills, depending on how children develop those. Many of them consist of performing certain movements, where the main speech organs (cheeks, mouth, lips, tongue and vocal cords) are involved. Here we have ten exercises that therapists use, and that are easy to do at home.

**Breathing exercises:**

These are simple and repetitive movements while producing sounds along with the breathing. Kids can do nasal and vocal inspirations and expirations, retaining the air between the changes is good, too. Another way to do it is to maintain the air inside the mouth and nose alternating progressively between the two. Changing the breathing speed is one of the final exercises to practice, it can be done with inspirations and exhalations; it has to be practiced with both shallow and deep breaths.

**Articulate phrases:**

Here therapists use poetry, tongue twister or short sentences from children’s books, to make kids pronounce and articulate the letters and syllables that they are mastering. With practice they will get a better use of them; it can be accompanied with beats for rhythm.
**Blow exercises:**

These can be done with different objects, but the main point is to get better lip movement and air control. Among the activities there are:

- Blowing paper balls across a table: which could be turned into a game like soccer where the kid that put his paper ball inside the goal wins.
- Blowing out candles: they can be of different sizes.
- Taking down a paper tower: make one with small papers and have the kid take it down by blowing on the stack.
- Blowing soap bubbles: you can let your kid have some fun with these; it’s better if children practice the blowing movements while having fun. You can also ask them to try to incorporate sounds which each blow.

**Vowel pronunciation:**

In this exercise, children have to constantly repeat the vowels while exhaling slowly. They ought to do as many repetitions as the therapist wishes, as long as the kid feel good and comfortable. Usually, vowels are the easiest letters to pronounce, hence why a better pronunciation of vowels can be a good starting point to build up language skills.

**Rhythm exercise:**

Using a drum or any surface that has a good enough sound produce different beats, and then have the kid repeat them using his voice and mouth. You have to pay attention to his performance and help him to follow the rhythm with his own sounds, correcting when necessary. Rhythm is essential for children, that way they can learn to articulate words better.

**Silent exercises:**

Both the child and whoever plays the role of the therapist will be in a room entirely silent. Then the therapist will perform a series of sounds, and the kid needs to pay attention to identify and repeat them. One of the benefits of this is that children can recognize sounds and where are they come from.

**Facial movements:**

Inflate the cheeks, while retaining air for some seconds and then deflate them, and start over doing several repetitions. Finally use water, keeping it on the mouth and then moving it from cheek to cheek.
Making friends and sharing great memories with them are some of the highlights of growing up; but for children within the spectrum, this is a delicate subject because one of their main challenges is their difficulty engaging with traditional social skills. However, if both sides make efforts there can be an everlasting friendship and common understanding.

When a neurotypical child wants to make friends with one with ASD, as parents you should explain to them what are the differences between them, and what is the correct approach. These tips can help you prepare all the family to welcome their new friend!

**Acceptance**

The first step is to accept the differences between each child. Children with ASD face their own challenges, but they also have abilities that can surprise you! An excellent way to help them connect is finding a common activity or hobby that both kids can enjoy. Remember that while we have different abilities and personalities, those make us the people we are.

**Learning**

After the first few encounters, you can start to learn the kid’s routine and what he or she can enjoy at your home. For example, you can ask the child’s parents what kind of food he or she likes, and try alternatives to make their food time an enjoyable activity with your children. Both families can become close while the friendship between the kids is growing. It’s vital to learn the preferences of the members of that family, as it can be useful for the future. Who knows, maybe you can plan a trip together!

**Be a counselor**

Commonly, when kids with ASD feel comfortable with their friends, they can ask for help in some situations, or if you see something strange discuss it with them privately, help them to navigate the tricky world of social interactions.

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Understanding

Now that you know what the new friend likes, you have to understand that sometimes he would prefer to be alone or immersed in a game or activity. TV, an external conversation or game will require focus, and it might be hard to keep their attention if they’re focused on something else. But that doesn’t mean that they’re rude, it’s just how they focus on specific tasks.

Invitations

Try always to invite and include your new friend in the activities and gatherings that you host. Kids within the spectrum want to be part of said activities but don’t know how to ask, or don’t catch the rules of the game. Try to explain to them while playing and most important go to their pace.

Never be afraid

If you are worried about how to act in front of your new friend or don’t know how to approach a situation, just ask them directly. More often than not, they’ll be more than ready to explain the reasons behind their behavior or what is affecting them. Also, you should always speak the truth; when they ask a question about participating in a game, and you think that it couldn’t be good for them, discuss it and get a mutual solution.

Communication

Some children within the spectrum understand things better with a visual explanation, others with a verbal one. While with some kids their attention span is short, and for that reason, easy and quick explanations are the best. Find the perfect way to communicate with your new friend, and don’t be afraid to make strange gestures; they will appreciate the effort.

Behavior

Always be alert in the changes that kids within the spectrum can show in determined situations. They tend to feel uncomfortable in large crowds, with some noises, smells and even lights, for that reason staying alert for sudden changes is basic to prevent a negative response that can even be dangerous for them. He or she will only need a break to calm down and feel better, just give them space and time.

Come to Autism Soccer to learn and observe our programs that facilitate children becoming friends!

Join Us

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Florida Senate Resolution

By Senator Taddeo

A resolution recognizing April 1-7, 2019, as "Autism Soccer Awareness Week" in Florida.

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong developmental disability resulting in impairment of an individual's ability to learn, develop healthy interactive behaviors, and understand verbal, nonverbal, and reciprocal communication, and

WHEREAS, autism, the result of a neurological disorder affecting brain function, affects one in every 68 children, and millions nationwide, but few understand this complex disorder, and

WHEREAS, children with autism have a variety of symptoms and special abilities, and

WHEREAS, children with autism have been discriminated against in the participation of sports and extracurricular activities because of these symptoms and special abilities, and

WHEREAS, children with autism have a right to reap the physical and mental benefits of sports and extracurricular activities, and

WHEREAS, children with autism must be given the chance to participate in sports and extracurricular activities as we continue to research this complex neurological disorder to find treatment options to help those affected and as we strive to provide families with education, awareness, and acceptance, and

WHEREAS, Autism Soccer teaches soccer skills to children with autism in a supportive environment that encourages teamwork and assists them in building self-confidence, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

That April 1-7, 2019, is designated as "Autism Soccer Awareness Week" in Florida, and that Floridians are encouraged to support and encourage the engagement of children with autism in sports, including soccer, and extracurricular activities.

This is a true and correct copy of Senate Resolution No. 930, adopted by the Florida Senate on April 3, 2019.

Debbie Brown
Secretary of the Senate
WHAT IS AUTISM SOCCER?

The organization satisfies the needs for neuroatypical children’s development, while simultaneously cultivating their personality and character, working through to help them achieve physical and psychological welfare. At autism Soccer the goal is:

- Teach children within the AED basic norms and behaviors for soccer practice within a supportive environment.
- Help them develop a life lasting love for exercise while having fun.
- Guide them to ingrain the knowledge that with training, self-stem and love, anything is possible.

But we’re not alone! These protocols are promoted through clinics and specialized assistance for each children, given by professionals in the area.

At Autism Soccer we bring in professional clinical and health assistance including:

- Physical Therapy.
- Occupational therapy.
- Behavioral applied analysis.
- Language therapy.
- Social skill therapy.

Our organization itself is not one of the aforementioned therapies, but we brought into our practice techniques from them, enforcing abilities for the little ones in all of the required areas, helping them overcome other health issues that can arise during infancy, such as obesity.

Over the past 6 years we’ve had the opportunity to help over 3,000 children and adults develop different qualities, improving their lives and learning more about their own condition to understand their surroundings and gain trust and confidence in how they interact with others.

The goal of Autism Soccer has always been clear: finding more volunteers that join the project and that will, without a doubt, be part of a blossoming project in the upcoming years. For now, Oscar is sure of just one thing: every step and setback he experienced led him and Autism Soccer where it stands now. “I knocked on 999 doors, because I know that even if it was the 1000 knock I did, somebody was going to give me good news!” And he achieved beyond his wildest dream: Autism Soccer is recognized as a holiday in Florida and it’s part of the select group of nonprofits that are supported by other foundations and international projects. Today is only one step in the growth path of this project, one that without a doubt, will help score a definitive goal in the fight that will help children within the Autism spectrum change their lives. With help and Oscar Amuz’s energy, this is a game that’s already a victory.

Join Us

Oscar Amuz looks as he usually does, with a twinkling smile and bright eyed. This is the guy that founded, and still embodies the soul of Autism Soccer, a project that started in 2012 as a way to help the little ones at home find passion and joy in sports. But we know it goes way beyond that. The foundation started as a non-profit, and stands today as the bright place where children and adults with autism spectrum and related conditions both in the psychological and physical real can cohabit. It has turned into a growth opportunity for OScar as a person, guiding him through the past years, plus enabling him to turn his efforts into meaningful and positive changes to the lives of children around the world.

“I promised myself changing the lives of these children, but the reality is that they changed my life too.”

Autism Soccer’s history starts small: a great idea that turned into an effort so large that even today, the growth spurt is beyond Oscar wildest dreams. “At first, I wanted to help the kids” he says, “They’ve always been relegated off sports, and many can’t fathom how they can change their lives through soccer”. To Oscar, the biggest moment in his life as a founder and president of the foundation came when he saw for the first time the real impact of his program. “These children can break your heart with their life stories, but at the same time, they can lift you up and show you the strength they have for you to understand them and help you build the path for them to give out their 100%”.

The benefits of the program are just the beginning of what the foundation does for children: the contribution to the physical and social development are just a part of that Autism Soccer does for the community. “Latinos have many stigmas, with our project we’re breaking the barriers and showing that having different ways to see the world doesn’t make you a strange creature, but gives you a unique point of view” he says with his signature smile. Is this the mindset that helps him try his hardest to achieve his goals, the same that brought him to this day. Autism Soccer is born and lives off his first years with an absolute disagreement with his goals: they want to be big, but they’re relegated to small spaces, little audience and lack of support.

But that’s not it for them. That was just a temporary setback. Oscar Amuz opens doors (or knocks at them) in a professional, direct and determined way, such way that makes it easy to notice that for him - this project is beyond a job. Through the minds of all that work with him there’s a common regard: he’s the embodiment of effort, the spark and determination that reflects the actions and results of his project so far. Taking action to take the project to new heights, Oscar determines who, when and where he’ll have his next success, backed up by a team that defines goals with him, side by side, to achieve the milestones of his project.

Join Us

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Dogs have been a great company for humans for hundreds of years. They can even be very helpful in personal fields such as health, especially when it comes to children.

Growing up with a dog is an amazing experience. There are situations in which you might think that it’s not appropriate to have pets, but this is nothing more than a simple appearance. In this article, we’ll show you how dogs benefit autistic children.

**How do pets help?**

According to a study at the University of Missouri, children with autism who have a pet have greater social skills compared to children who don’t. In the case of children who have dogs, they have better development of these skills. The dogs are very effusive in their displays of affection; also, they look for attention and company.

**Socialization**

Children with autism who have pets, react well within the processes of social therapy. Although this may vary according to the conditions and characteristics of the autism that each child presents, the interaction with dogs has proved to be extremely beneficial in this regard. The dog becomes part of the social dynamics of the child, its activities, and its centers of interest.

**Understanding attitudes and behaviors**

One of the most complicated situations to deal with autistic children is to decipher and understand their attitudes and behaviors. However, through interaction with dogs, children can approach and begin to understand the most basic levels (the animal level) to the most complex language structures.

**Development of ties with the pet**

The child can develop an interest in the pet, and this will lead him to want to know more about his dog. It can facilitate the process of socialization of the child because he will want to investigate more and the topic will be relevant for them.
One of the most known characteristics of the autism spectrum disorder is lack of eye contact, which presents in the first years of the life of these children, with some professionals suggesting that it can start on the first months. This lack of social interaction is not by any means a sign or rudeness from them, but actually, it’s a way to feel more comfortable among people. Children with ASD can get highly anxious with eye contact, especially if the other person responds to it.

**Symptoms**

As every characteristic within the spectrum, avoiding eye contact can manifest in multiple ways:

- Some actively seem to avoid eye contact because they feel uncomfortable with it, as with every social interaction.
- Others can make eye contact in familiar environments, with well-known people.
- And others can look at you in strange ways, staring either at you or at a specific object.

**Why does this happen?**

There are two major reasons that explain why children and adults alike avoid this action. First, they feel indifference toward eye contact; they think that it isn’t important to establish it. Remember, they often don’t have the same instincts about social interactions as neurotypical people, so they cannot fully comprehend why it is necessary to make direct contact. This normally happens during childhood.

However, when they grow up, teenagers and adults with ASD feel eye contact in an uncomfortable way that can trigger anxiety episodes and other adverse reactions or behaviors. Some completely hate it, especially if they are pushed to do it, so never pressure them; instead, you should encourage them to improve their social abilities but never to the point of generating the opposite reaction. Professionals haven’t found the reason behind this change from children to teenagers because children can learn how to make eye contact without rejecting it, but while growing up, they feel it as a burden.
There are still many questions about this, and many ongoing studies exploring possible reasons; but meanwhile, working with these kids to develop their social skills is the best way to change these behaviors, with patience and hard work.

**Can lack of eye contact be treated?**

With the autism spectrum disorder, there are usually more questions than answers, and that leaving aside the controversy in many studies and therapies. In that regard, eye contact is no the exception; however, therapists now believe that there’s no symptomatic answer, instead, it can depend on every individual and the way they feel towards it. Instead of trying to fix this, we as educators, parents, and facilitators should listen to their own voice in that regard, accept that they don’t like it, and teach them to communicate it by simply saying something like “I’m listening but i won’t look at you directly.” The most important thing we have to do is understand that this preference is totally fine, that making eye contact isn’t essential for communication and that we must accept this preference, instead of trying to force a change.

Remember eye contact isn’t the most important skill when dealing with a person with autism; if they are more comfortable without looking at you, but are still listening and can have a satisfying conversation with you on many different topics, then that’s all that should matter.

Come to Autism Soccer, where we offer excellent programs for the development of your children and a place for them to be comfortable and happy.
Playing with our children, approaching them, and laughing with them helps us to strengthen the parent-child relationship and discover aspects that we would never have imagined. Practicing laughter therapy is a good way to communicate, it’s also simple and has many benefits.

When we perform a session of laughter therapy, we experience a strong dose of endorphins that relax the muscles and even help us to leave shyness behind.

**Endorphins**

Endorphins are substances that our body produces naturally and that provides a well-being sensation. The production of endorphins isn’t continuous, you have to stimulate it; so doing a couple of laugh therapy sessions is a good idea.

Lately, with these busy lifestyles, we forget to share time with the family, to make time to play with them. Sometimes we should disconnect our children from the internet, from those electronic games, and from television; we should encourage them to spend more time with the family, to talk, to play games, to communicate.

**Organize a family laugh therapy session**

Invite grandparents, uncles, cousins. The more participants, more fun!

- Start making a nice invitation created by yourself.
- Condition any room in the house, clear of any objects, a free area.
- Use comfortable, light clothes, in which you can be able to jump to the ground freely and have the time of your life no worrying about spoiling it.

**“Crazy face, crazy laugh.”**

Play games like inventing a character and change each participant’s personality. Introduce yourself and then start with the game round.

Everyone can be placed in a circle, and the one who starts the game shows to the one on his right the craziest face that comes to mind, and this one next door and so on. One by one will make your face crazier and, believe us, the laughter is assured.

**Benefits**

At the end of the session of laughter therapy, we will be seized by an enormous sense of peace, affection, and relaxation in our family. Adults are children once again, and the kids show themselves as they are, without any embarrassment. The results are amazing.
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Autism is a very well-known disorder that affects a lot of people around the world; in the United States, it affects 1 in every 68 children, which includes 1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls. Every child or adult with autism is unique, that’s why every treatment plan should be exclusive to the person to whom it’s addressed. Treatments usually involve the person’s entire family and professionals, some programs may be based in at home with professional specialists, and trained therapists or sometimes parents get trained to serve as therapists for the child under the supervision of a specialist. Other programs may be delivered in a special center or even at schools. Usually, families choose to combine more than one treatment method.

The terms “therapy” and “treatment” may be used to refer to the program. The word “intervention” may also be used to describe the words treatment or therapy. These descriptions are meant to give general information about each program. For more information, please contact a specialist.

What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

Applied Behavior Analysis, or ABA, has been used by hundreds of therapists to teach communication, self-care, play, academic, social, work and community living skills. There is a lot of research that has demonstrated that ABA is effective for improving their cognitive and language abilities. Different models using ABA have come to view, all of which use behavioral teaching. ABA methods use the following three-step process to teach:

- A verbal or physical stimulus such as a request or command. This may come from a person or the environment.
- A resulting behavior, which is the subject’s (the child’s) response or lack of response to the stimulus.

The recommended number of hours of structured intervention ranges from 25 to 40 hours per week, during the preschool period. Many therapy methods described here will require more research before getting started because they are very complex. It’s a good idea to talk to experienced parents and make sure to have understood very well what is involved before beginning any therapy. And whenever is possible, observe the therapists in action.
What is Pivotal Response Treatment?

Pivotal Response Treatment, or PRT, is a behavioral intervention based on the principles of ABA. PRT is used to teach language, increase social, communication, and academic skills, and to decrease disruptive or self-stimulatory behaviors. The goal of PRT is to produce positive changes in the standard actions, leading to improvement in communication and play skills, social practices and the child’s ability to monitor his or her own behavior. The child plays an essential part in determining the activities and objects that will be used.

What is Verbal Behavior?

Verbal Behavior (VB) is another behavioral therapy method based on the concept of ABA, with a different procedure to acquiring language. Verbal Behavior and classic ABA use similar structures to work with children. Verbal Behavior motivates a child to learn a language by developing a connection between a word and its value. Verbal Behavior may be used as an extension of an ABA program.

VB treatment is provided by trained psychologists, special education teachers, and speech therapists.

What is the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)?

The Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) is a developmental, relationship-based intervention approach that uses teaching techniques consistent with applied behavior analysis (ABA). The goals are to foster social gains (communicative, cognitive, and language) in young children with autism. ESDM is proper for children with autism or autism symptoms who are as young as 12 months of age, through preschool age.

Adults providing ESDM, focus on behaviors involved in capturing and holding children’s attention; fostering their motivation for social interaction through highly enjoyable routines, using joint play activities as the medium for treatment, developing nonverbal and verbal communication, imitation, and joint attention. Also, using reciprocal, turn-taking exchanges inside joint activity routines to foster social learning. Early Start Denver Model has been shown to be useful for increasing IQ, language, social skills, and adaptive behavior if used as therapy for at least one year.

What is Floortime (DIR)?

Floortime is a unique therapeutic technique based on the Developmental Individual Difference Relationship Model (DIR). Floortime allows an adult to help a child expand his circles of communication by meeting him at his level of development and building on his strengths. Treatment is often incorporated into play activities – on the floor; the goal is to help the child reach six developmental goals that contribute to emotional and intellectual growth.

The therapist, or sometimes the parents, help the child reach a level of enjoyment, as well as participate in the child’s activities.

Practicing sports is also a very effective therapy for autistic children, that’s why Autism Soccer was founded!
# MEASUREMENTS

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During the previous decade, Asperger disorder and autistic disorder were two separate conditions, each one of them with different treatments and therapies. But since 2013 with the publication of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, both are included inside the denomination of autism spectrum disorders, so now it’s hard to define them as separate.

However, ASD can be diagnosed into three functional levels, putting the so-called Asperger into the first level, while the autistic disorder will depend on the symptoms and behavior of the individuals; but normally children will be between the second and third level. Nowadays, Asperger is considered as high functional autism, and for this and many other reasons, there are some differences to note between the two.

Besides the reasons stated above, when talking about differences we must understand that every individual presents a specific group of symptoms, those are the main cause for the creation of a “spectrum” that contain all the aspects related to these disorders. It will be really difficult to find two children with the same group of symptoms, even after the diagnosis. We will show the main differences among these three levels.

**Language problems:**

On the first level, kids won’t present any kind of problems with language; actually, they can be very talkative, especially with trusted people. On the second one, they can present a certain delay in the communication skills, while on the third level we will find nonverbal children.

The first level can present some struggles like eye contact, difficulty to start a conversation and emotionless tone. But these individuals can improve these skills and have better interactions. Very different from the second and third levels, where the communication is a hard process and it can take several years of therapy to find a correct way to communicate with them.
Separate IQ levels:

On the first level, we can find people with incredible talents, some of them even can present a higher IQ, which made them gifted in an array of professional fields. They can be scientists, physics, engineers or can follow an artistic line, like a classical musician. With the second level, children tend to present some struggles with the learning process, but they have an average IQ.

While for the third level, they can have an IQ below the average, which create many difficulties with the learning process and integration to professional life. They can learn basics, but it can take twice the time of the other levels.

Diagnosis:

For the third level, the diagnosis is very accurate, and it can be made in the initial years. But for the first and second, it can take more time, because the symptoms and behavior are so different. Besides, as parents you must be observing every interaction and reaction of your child, to notice some strange attitude.

Teachers also play a huge role in the diagnosis, but the first level is the most difficult to give a straight diagnosis. It can take years to collect all the data about the behavior of the children, and later the respective therapy and treatment.

In the end, these denominations help to understand their struggles, conditions, and symptoms, but now they are all within the spectrum. ASD can bring new light and knowledge about autism and other disorders, to a better understanding of their lives and how they face it.

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Autism Go Soccer Supercup

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By: Dr. Limon

Mix the lemon juice, with the rocoto, garlic, salt, pepper, and fish. Let stand one minute, then add more rocoto, the fish soup and evaporated milk to reduce acidity. Serve on the plate and decorate with onion, coriander, and avocado.

www.doctorlimon.com

- 8 oz. of fish
- 1 cup of lemon juice
- 1/2 spoon of rocoto pepper
- Salt and pepper
- 3 spoons of evaporated milk
- 1/2 spoon of garlic paste
- 3 spoons of fish soup
- Coriander, onion, and avocado to decorate

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