

# Late bloomers

[Health & Medicine](#), [Disease](#)



At the first hint of labor, she is rushed to the hospital with fear and excitement. Hours of painful contractions take over her body but the knowledge of soon meeting her unborn child keeps her hanging on. After delivery she holds her newborn son in her arms. She does not know until years later how dependent upon her this child will become.

Josh does not respond well to sounds or faces but the doctor's test his hearing and find nothing wrong. A few years later this mother notices that her son is a "late bloomer" when he has not yet learned to walk or attempt to talk. His appearance is like other children his age but his abilities are limited. Josh is unable to point to objects or hold his arms out for love. He pushes away from affection wanting to be left alone to play with his toy cars. Josh finds fun in flapping his arms and laughing, usually at inappropriate times.

School has come but still Josh does not speak. When he begins to speak, he talks in a repetitive babbling manner that is impossible to understand. He fears school and unknown faces. When he arrives home from school, he is repetitive in movement and activities. Josh paces the floor in circular motions and at times bangs his head on the floor. Josh does poor in school because he fails to pay attention. He has poor eye contact and is often seen with his hands over his ears. By this time, his mother has realized that he is not a "late bloomer", something is wrong with her child.

After many tests and observations, Josh is diagnosed with autism, a disease that is not curable. He will live with this social disability for the rest of his life. Josh's mother is concerned that she is to blame for his disability. She

consults her doctor about the cause of this disease. It is possible that viruses and genetics have a role in Josh's autism but neurological damage is most likely.

Depending upon the severity of Josh's disability he may or may not be able to care for himself in the future. He is totally dependent upon his mother for his basic needs in life.

The above story is a typical scenario of a child with autism. " Autism is a severe developmental disorder characterized by profound language delay and extreme social withdrawal (San Jose Mercury News). Autism affects normal development of the brain having to do with social interactions and verbal skills. Autistic people usually have a hard time relating to the outside world. They are often described as being in an ice block. The cause of autism is still undetermined but, researchers from all over the world are devoting time and energy into finding the cause.

Neurological damage can occur in any child for any number of reasons. This is why autism is so hard to diagnose and treat. This disease can affect anyone and any race. Neurological damage can be caused by many things part of the everyday life, such as vaccines.

Due to a 273% autism increase in the last ten years in California, the U. S. Department of Education launched a research study. " It was decided to target mothers who had received a live virus vaccine after the age of 16, whether or not they had an autistic child." (Yazbak, F. Edward, MD, FAAP 1999) The conjecture was that antibodies which the child had received from it's mother

had some how mixed with the vaccine to create autistic results. Mothers received the vaccine to meet requirements for higher education; work related vaccines, or failure to react to previous vaccines.

Two hundred forty parents of autistic children and mothers who had received vaccines were studied. Seven studies are discussed in 'Autism: Is there a vaccine connection?' " Six out of seven children (85%) who resulted from these pregnancies were diagnosed with autism, and the seventh, (case 1) whose mother received a measles vaccine, exhibits symptoms which suggest autistic spectrum" (Yazbak, F. Edward, MD, FAAP 1999). Research is still being conducted on vaccines given to pregnant women and how the vaccines effect the unborn child.

Other cases of autism are being researched, as neurological technology is becoming available. Genetics, for example, are being scanned for flaws and pictures are being taken of the brains in progress. " Phenylketonuria (a brain disease) is a purely genetic disease that can cause mental retardation" (Cook, Jr., Edwin H. 1999). If it is found early in childhood, dietary therapy can prevent this disease. It is possible autism may be treated the same way, but because this theory and many others are new, funding and research just begun.

Secretion is also a therapy that can help with autism. " It is one of the hormones that controls digestion" (Lloyd, John Wills 1998). Secretion is emitted into the empty stomach by cells in the digestive system to stimulate the liver and stomach to produce enzymes that aide to digestion, and fluids

that neutralize the acidity of the intestines. Pituitary adenylate cyclase activation polypeptide (PACAP) is also used.

PACAP, a peptide that is used to medicate disease such as ulcers, but has a side effect of suppressing membranes which cause autistic children to act abnormal has been found. When given to rats, delayed reactions were seen in response to loud noises and open spaces. When children received secretion, their eye contact improved and alertness and expressive language were seen (Horvath, Stefanatos, Sokolski, Wachtel, Nabor & Tildon, 1998).

The Tomatis Method is a much different approach. The aim of the Tomatis Method is to develop or reestablish communication when it had been lost or impaired using the ear and its various functions (Sollier, Pierre 1996) Tomatis treats the child not the disease. This treatment is not a cure; it is only used to improve the lives of autistic children. Sixty percent of the children treated show improvements, such as clearer speech, more eye contact, and interaction with other children and teacher. Parents have been reported that Tomatis Method speeds up other therapies and makes life easier. Like all treatments, there are good and bad days. Some days the children revert to their own world and again become recluses. Tomatis has found a new way to retrieve these children.

To reestablished communication, Tomatis focuses on the vestibule, the inner part of the ear. " There is not one single muscle of the body, including the muscles of the eyes, that is not under control of the vestibular system" (Sollier, Pierre 1996). When the sensory input does not run smoothly the

child becomes bombarded with information. The confusion of the information causes the child to withdraw into his own world to protect himself.

Tomatis points out that hearing and listening are two different things. Autistic children cannot focus on the correct information coming into his senses. All of us hear background noise, but choose to focus on bits of information that are important to us. An autistic child does not have the ability to listen, he may hear cars pass by on the street below and all the other background noises. Autistic children 'space out' or enter into their own world to escape the confusion of the outside world. By creating an easier way for autistic children to decipher information, the desire to speak is found.

To do this, conducted research in which children listen to their mother's voice. " He electronically filtered her voice, to match the sounds heard in the womb" (Sollier, Pierre 1996). The children began to bond with people around them. It is known that a mother's voice soothes children, and since autistic children live in fear its natural that Tomatis uses the mother's voice to sooth those fears.

As technology becomes available many therapies will be created to improve the life of autistic children, but the best way to improve the child's life is to educate their care providers. Autism is an incurable disease estimated to occur in 1 in 500 people (Centers for Disease and Prevention 1997). Learning the symptoms and signs of autism is the first step in education and improved care for autistic children. Signs of autism may be detected as soon as infancy. Some signs include:

1. Arching his/her back to avoid touch
2. Failure to anticipate being picked up

Years ago parents did not live the burden of with autism. Most children were put away in asylums to be left in their own world, because they were not understood. These children spent their lives not knowing any other world than their own. Today with the technology we have, we can enter into the child's world and bring him back to our own. This can all be done with education and technology.