

## **The Results of 100 Autistic Children Pre and Post the Basic Tomatis Program**

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Utilizing an 'Abilities to Be Improved' and an 'Abilities Improved Form' pre and post the basic Tomatis Program of 60 hours of listening, parents of 100 Autistic Children noted changes in their children. The possible areas of change were the following: 1) Academic Achievement, Thinking, Learning, 2) Attention, 3) Behavior, 4) Creativity, 5) Interpersonal Growth, 6) Intrapersonal Growth to Know and Express Self, 7) Well-Being, 8) Listening and Speech, 9) Reading, Writing, and Spelling, 10) Movement, Sports, and Rhythm, 11) Musical and Vocal Skills, and 12) Relaxation. The results demonstrated that the most significant change occurred in the area of Interpersonal skills and the least affected area was Well-Being.

Autism, according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) website's Glossary is a brain disorder that begins in early childhood and persists throughout adulthood. It affects three crucial areas of development: communication, social interaction, and creative or imaginative play.<sup>1</sup> The Autism Society of America announced that at the end of the 1990's, 1 out of 250 children had autism and that there had been an increase of 172% in that decade. Autism had also become the fastest growing developmental disability in America.<sup>2</sup> In some parts of the United States, there have been pockets where 1 in 75 children have autism.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning that the symptoms and characteristics present themselves in a variety of ways and on a continuum of mild to severe. Autistic individuals can present any combination of behaviors and in any degree of severity.

Some of the more known characteristics<sup>3</sup> are:

- Insistence on sameness; resistance to change
- Difficulty in expressing needs; uses gestures or pointing instead of words
- Repeating words or phrases in place of normal, responsive language
- Laughing, crying, showing distress for reasons not apparent to others
- Prefers to be alone; aloof manner
- Tantrums
- Difficulty in mixing with others
- May not want to cuddle or be cuddled
- Little or no eye contact
- Unresponsive to normal teaching methods
- Sustained odd play
- Spins objects
- Inappropriate attachments to objects
- Apparent over-sensitivity or under-sensitivity to pain
- No real fears of danger

- Noticeable physical over-activity or extreme under-activity
- Uneven gross/fine motor skills
- Not responsive to verbal cues; acts as if deaf although hearing tests in normal range.

Additionally, children with autism often have sensory integration issues. Even the slightest changes in sensory stimulation can impact them.

However, all autistic children do not present with the same symptoms. For example, some are very socially connected, wanting to touch and cuddle with family members, while others remain isolated. Each autistic child needs to have their specific remedial needs identified and addressed. The Tomatis Method allows for this individualization.

Over 50 years ago, “The Tomatis Effect” described the connection between the voice, the ear, and the brain and was accepted by the French Academy of Science in 1957. From this connection, the field of sound based therapy began. The Tomatis Method is a sound based therapy that is all encompassing, as it stimulates all of the functions of the ear, including those responses which occur via the branching effects of the cranial nerves. The method uses a special device called The Electronic Ear, filtered and gated music, bone conduction stimulation, and active voice work to make change. A Listening Test is administered to determine where therapy should begin as well as how to monitor for changes with the program. The basic Tomatis Method program includes 60 hours of listening using proprietary programming through the Electronic Ear.

The ear is more than just a hearing mechanism. Because of its anatomy and physiology, it also encompasses, supports, enhances, or stimulates the following: receptive/expressive language, pragmatic language, oral motor skills, feeding issues, gross and fine motor skills, posture, muscle tone, articulation, emotional connectedness, vestibular imbalances, proprioceptive imbalances, eye-hand coordination, vocal production, singing and musical skills, auditory processing skills, attention, focus, organization, and more. Dysfunction with these issues and skills are apparent within the symptoms associated with autism.

### The Study and Results

Over 500 autistic children have visited Davis Centers, Inc over the past few years. This study reviews the changes noted by the parents of 100 of these children. Ages of the children were 3-21.

All new clients at Davis Centers, Inc. are administered the Diagnostic Evaluation for Therapy Protocol (DETP®) test battery to determine the appropriate starting place for therapy intervention. All 100 clients demonstrated that the Tomatis Method was an appropriate intervention to support positive changes for them at some time during the suggested protocol.

An Initial Assessment includes the Listening Test, Laterality Test, Client Case History, and Client Interview. Before starting the first 30 hours of listening, the parents are also asked to fill in an ‘Abilities To Be Improved’ form. This form includes 102 possible changes in the areas of 1) Academic Achievement, Thinking, and Learning, 2) Attention, 3) Behavior, 4) Creativity, 5) Interpersonal Growth, 6) Intrapersonal Growth to Know and Express Self, 7) Well-Being, 8) Listening and Speech, 9) Reading,

Writing, and Spelling, 10) Movement, Sports and Rhythm, 11) Musical and Vocal Skills, and 12) Relaxation. They check off the areas that they would most like to see improved in their child.

At the end of the 60 hours of listening, in addition to the final Listening Test and Laterality Test, the parents are asked to fill in the 'Abilities Improved' form. This form includes the same 102 possibilities in the same areas. The results were tabulated by the 12 areas.

The changes were tabulated in descending order as follows: 87% made change in Interpersonal Growth, 85% in Listening and Speech, 81% in Academic Achievement, Thinking, Learning, 80% in Attention, 79% in Behavior, 69% in Intrapersonal Growth to Know and Express Self, 66% in Movement, Sports, and Rhythm, 63% in Musical and Vocal Skills, 54% in Relaxation, 49% in Creativity, 39% in Reading, Writing, Spelling, and 20% in Well-Being. Change was noted in every area.

Interpersonal Growth	87
Listening and Speech	85
Academic Achievement, Thinking, Learning	81
Attention	80
Behavior	79
Intrapersonal Growth to Know and Express Self	69
Movement, Sports, and Rhythm	66
Musical and Vocal Skills	63
Relaxation	54
Creativity	49
Reading, Writing, Spelling	39
Well-Being	20

Table 1  
Change Pre-Post Tomatis with 100 Autistic Children

### Summary

Within the 12 areas of consideration, all of the 100 autistic children's parents documented some type of change in their child during the initial 60 hours of their basic Tomatis Method program. The largest area of change was evidenced with Interpersonal Growth at 87%. The top four areas were 80% or higher, all demonstrating high levels of change. Nine out of 12 of the areas were reported to have 50% or greater demonstrable change. The area of least change was with Well-Being at 20%.

Autistic children typically need many more sessions beyond the original 60 hours. Therefore, the changes noted in the post session 'Abilities Improved' form, are indicative of only the beginnings of change for

these children. Additional sessions of the Tomatis Method were suggested to further enhance the skills improved.

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### References

- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/glossary/glossary.asp>
- <sup>2</sup> [http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Autism\\_Facts](http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Autism_Facts)
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=autismcharacteristics>

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