

- Autism is a medical, neurological condition with a proven medical treatment, Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)
- Children with autism use to have no hope, but now, thanks to years of studies and research, they do with early and intensive ABA
- When our son was diagnosed with Autism by Yale and KU, I selfishly and regretfully mourned for him, his life, and my hopes and dreams for him
- My husband and I picked ourselves up and become determined to learn all we could about Autism and to help our son, he was after still our same sweet, beautiful boy. Yale and KU both told us ABA was the only treatment that would give him a chance at recovery.
- Henry was diagnosed at 23 months of age and he started ABA before he was 2
- He receives 35 hours of ABA week from professional, highly skilled providers, but everything we strive to teach him, we try our best to apply ABA principles, as it how his brain is able to function and the only way he learns
- At 23 months old, Henry did not laugh and rarely smiled. He did not make eye contact or engage with adults. He did not respond to or reach for me, his mommy, or anybody. If you sat him near other children and tried to engage him in a play or sensory activity, he would remove himself. He preferred to stare at walls, plain, white walls all day. He screamed because he would not use words to communicate, he did not understand their purpose or the concept of communication. He could not point or sign. He repeated whole phrases, like a parrot, but could not ask for a drink when he was thirsty. He would become dehydrated because he was so thirsty. He knew the words milk, juice, water and drink, but they were no use to him...he did not understand and comprehend how to communicate. He did not know me, he did not know anybody, he did not live but rather existed.
- We took him OT, PT, and SLP providers, several different SLP providers who simply could not help him, did not know how to help him make the mental connection between words and communicating only thought he had a great vocabulary because he could repeat large words
- Our ABA Therapist, a licensed clinical psychologist, taught the SLP therapist, OT, and PT therapists and us how to use ABA to help Henry learn the meaning of words, to teach him to play, to live
- Prior to ABA our child simply existed, now he lives. He is happy, delightful, funny---he loves to be silly and play jokes with his friends---he has friends
- The first 18 months of Diagnosis and his necessary medical therapy, prescribed by Yale and KU as the only chance our son had any quality of life, cost us \$72,000. We sold a

family farm home we hoped to raise him on one day. We depleted the money we had saved to build a home. We emptied his college fund and stopped contributing to retirement funds, college funds and paying off student loans

- This time last year, I stood before many of you telling you our son's story and that we were soon moving to Missouri as we had no more resources to help our son and we needed insurance coverage for his therapy
- Thankfully, I was offered a state job a few weeks later and we have benefitted greatly from the State Employee Coverage, along with 105 other families. It only covers half our monthly costs for Henry's program, but we are able to cover the rest. We just needed our insurance company to cover our son's medical, life saving treatment.
- Henry will mainstream in kindergarten. He will have a full recovery from Autism. We are so close now, thanks to ABA. No child asks to have autism no father or pregnant mother does anything to cause her child to have autism, this is not preventable. So many medical diseases are preventable or caused by poor choices, but not autism. However, autism has a proven, successful medical treatment, ABA.
- I would like you to meet our son, Henry. Henry.....

Melissa Rundus, Parent