

Introduction

Welcome to *Climbing Out of Autism One Bite at a Time: The Companion*, a handbook designed to acquaint you with discoveries made after the publication of *Climbing Out of Autism One Bite at a Time*. The information contained in this handbook is intended to supplement, not substitute for, information provided in the text. Additionally, these recommendations use terminology defined in the text and broaden understandings offered in the book, simplifying the process of implementing Comprehensive Organic Intervention. Topics addressed in this handbook include:

Early Warning Signs
Comprehensive Organic Intervention in Action
Steps in Achieving Recovery
Testing Procedures
Homeostasis
Zero Tolerance
The Daily Report
Products and Proprietors
Additional Recovery Resources
The National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm

The information presented in this handbook is truly intended to be used as a companion to *Climbing Out of Autism One Bite at a Time* which provides the foundation for understanding the autism recovery process called Comprehensive Organic Intervention. Please do not attempt to use this information as a stand-alone model for autism recovery. Thank you.

Early Warning Signs

Shortly after Raja was diagnosed with autism, my sister noticed that many of the children in her Mommy and Me classes had unusual behaviors and she asked me to write a list of autism's early warning signs. Honored by her request, I compiled the following data, hoping that it would enable parents to courageously enlist the assistance of diagnosis and early intervention as quickly as possible. Identifying developmental differences as early as possible is optimal because early identification allows early biological intervention. Facing the unwanted takes great courage. Accepting the possibility that your beloved child may not be developing normally is brave, emotional, and difficult, but the earlier problems are detected, the faster and greater likelihood of recovery. Early biological intervention is the key to reducing or eliminating serious developmental conditions, up to and including autism. Common warning signs are:

1. Digestive irregularities. Digestive irregularities which may include diarrhea, constipation, foul-smelling or oddly-colored stools, or unusual spitting up.

2. Sleep irregularities. Your child experiences sleep irregularities that do not even out within the first three months. Sleep irregularities may include frequent waking, excessive time awake, or excessive time asleep.
3. Sound sensitivities. Sound sensitivities may include crying, screaming, covering ears, or appearing startled/frightened by blenders, vacuums, fire alarms, cars, fans, fire engines, ambulances, music, drums, tambourines, airplanes, marching bands, flushing toilets, etc..
4. Lack of appropriate eye contact.
5. Lack of response when name is called repeatedly (does not turn head in response to name being called).
6. Lack of desire to connect with others, including parent, siblings, or other children.
7. Unusual attachment to parent or primary caregiver. Expresses fear or anxiety when parent or primary caregiver is away, even if only in another room.
8. Unusual detachment from parent or primary caregiver. Does not express affection or regard for parent or caregiver.
9. Lack of age-appropriate speech, including lack of gurgling sounds or speech imitation in infancy. May include ability to speak but inability to articulate well.
10. Resort to hitting, pushing or shoving to express desires.
11. Lack of pointing at objects even before speech has developed.
12. Drooling that is age-inappropriate and not associated with cutting teeth.
13. Misunderstanding of age-appropriate commands. For example, if asked not to touch an object, the child touches the object and expects praise.
14. Inability to follow instructions. The child will not do what is asked, but does not appear to be willfully defiant. He simply seems unsure of what is being asked and cannot organize himself to respond as same-age children do.
15. Rephrasing of others' questions necessary to elicit appropriate response.
16. Playing with parts of toys or playing with toys in ways other than intended.
17. Lack of interest in toys.
18. Lack of interest in age-appropriate books or being read to (even as young as infancy).

19. Watching objects go up and down beyond age-appropriate interest in such motion. Throws things such as toys, sticks or rocks to watch them come down.
20. Detachment from same-age peers. May appear aloof or disinterested in parallel play.
21. Lack of ability to perform age-appropriate gross-motor and fine-motor skills, such as jumping, hopping, turning a doorknob, using eating utensils, or stringing beads on thread.
22. Lack of age-appropriate sense of danger. May demonstrate repeated desire to run toward moving objects, not matter how many times he is warned of danger. May not stop running toward street/moving objects when told to stop.
23. No fear of heights. Interest in climbing high things. Interest in teetering over the edge of high objects.
24. Interest in fast-moving or dangerous activities, such as sliding down slides that are too high or teetering over the edge of ledges.
25. Lack of age-appropriate facial expressions. Additionally, may make inappropriate facial expressions under certain circumstances, such as smiling when scolded.
26. Objection to being touched or groomed, including being hugged, holding hands, combing hair, brushing teeth, dressing or undressing, or bathing. May object to certain fabrics or application of personal care products such as lotion on skin.
27. Lack of response to age-appropriate social cues. May talk out of turn. May not answer when spoken to.
28. Lack of participation in age-appropriate social activities such as games that require turn-taking or reciprocity.
29. Preference to be alone versus spending time with peers. May seek the companionship of a parent or caregiver who does not upset preferred routines.
30. Extreme need for routine. Becomes visibly upset when routine is disrupted.
31. Lack of age-appropriate self-help skills. Demonstrates no interest in acquiring such skills.
32. Little or no imaginative play.

33. Fear or repulsion at entering a room filled with noise, people, or busy machines. Fear of small or enclosed spaces. Prefers wide-open spaces or being outdoors.
34. Difficulty in paying attention to age-appropriate activities. May wander off, physically or mentally. May protest engaging in such activities. May melt down, unable to express real problems and desires.
35. Lack of focus. Cannot stay on task or exercise age-appropriate follow-through.
36. Need for close supervision.
37. Appearance of being mentally “checked out.” Appears to be in a daze, not daydreaming.
38. Inability to connect actions with consequences.
39. Inability to understand that people have feelings.
40. Inability to monitor oneself in relation to others. May bump, push, or step on others without comprehension that behaviors of this sort hurt.
41. State of being hyperactive, giddy, lethargic, upset, or mentally cloudy after eating certain foods or coming in contact with certain substances. Symptoms may appear immediately or be delayed by as much as several hours.
42. Lack of ability to fit into, or adjust to, differing social settings such as school and church. May be especially fearful or anxious when left alone in such settings. May cling or cry without consolation.

Developmental manuals, available at nearly all bookstores and in many grocery or department stores, describe patterns of normal infant and child development. Deviation from patterns of normal development may be determined by consulting developmental manuals, pediatricians, other parents, trusting your intuition, or any combination of the above. My advice is to trust your instinct. If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. If you suspect an irregularity, solicit feedback from others, including your child's pediatrician. If your child's pediatrician says it will even out and it doesn't, inquire if he is willing to help you pursue information regarding potential biological imbalances. If not, find a pediatrician, homeopath, or naturopath who will.

Comprehensive Organic Intervention in Action

Comprehensive Organic Intervention is a two-pronged approach for autism recovery that encompasses both dietary and environmental issues. Comprehensive Organic

Intervention depends on homeostasis and zero tolerance. Progress is monitored by the Daily Report. While it sounds complex, it looks like this:

1. Ask yourself, “What foods can my child eat without causing a reaction?” These are dietary considerations. Dietary considerations can largely be determined through allergy testing.*
2. Ask yourself, “What can my child encounter (touch, smell) without causing a reaction?” These are environmental considerations. Environmental considerations can largely be determined through allergy testing.*
3. Practice zero tolerance by avoiding any food or environmental substance that causes a reaction. (Foods and environmental substances that cause reactions are the ones your child tests positive to during allergy testing). Zero tolerance means *zero contact* with a food or environmental substance that causes a reaction.
4. Maintain homeostasis, or physiological balance, by avoiding reactions. Maintaining balance requires practicing zero tolerance. Maintaining balance is how your child recovers.
5. Monitor your child’s homeostasis by recording your observations on the Daily Report.

Steps in Achieving Autism Recovery

1. Use allergy testing or the elimination diet to determine baselines (the elimination diet is described in *Climbing Out of Autism One Bite at a Time*).
2. Establish homeostasis, or a balanced physiological state.
3. Maintain homeostasis through zero tolerance.
4. Record your observations on the Daily Report (sample follows testing information).

Additional testing can be utilized to determine deficiencies and imbalances. Testing options follow. (Autism Recovery Education is not associated with any of the testing procedures or facilities listed below).

Non-invasive Allergy Testing Procedures

- a). Electrodermal Screening (EDS).

Electrodermal Screening, or EDS, is performed by a trained doctor (i.e., an osteopath, chiropractor, naturopathic doctor, or physician) and includes placing electronic sensors

on the fingers (like an EKG machine) to determine reaction to various dietary and environmental substances. EDS is considered very safe and extremely accurate. Although I have not yet tried EDS, the literature I have reviewed indicates it may be the safest, fastest, least invasive, and most accurate testing system currently available. For a trained practitioner in your area, please call American Association of Living Systems Practitioners at (800) 888-9789.

b). Nambudripad's Allergy Elimination Technique (N.A.E.T.).

Nambudripad's Allergy Elimination Technique (N.A.E.T) was developed by Dr. Nambudripad as a system to identify allergens through muscle testing. Administered by a trained doctor, this is the testing technique I used for Raja. The process was comfortable and the results accurate. However, the technique also promises healing from allergies, with which we had no success. Based on our experience, I recommend the technique for testing only. To locate a practitioner in your area, please call (714) 523-8900 or www.Allergy-naet.com.

Invasive Allergy Testing Procedures

a). Antigen Leukocyte Cellular Antibody Test (ALCAT).

While some people are more comfortable with non-invasive procedures, others prefer knowledge derived from blood tests. The Antigen Leukocyte Cellular Antibody Test, or ALCAT, is described in the book *Your Hidden Food Allergies are Making You Fat* by Rudy Rivera, M.D., and Roger D. Deutsch. The ALCAT uses blood to determine food and environmental allergies and is considered very reliable. Although I have not used the ALCAT personally, I have reviewed the list of substances that may be tested and find the list comprehensive. Additionally, you can request to be tested for additional substances at a "per substance" charge, which is handy for testing substances common to your diet or environment that might not otherwise appear on their standard testing list. The ALCAT requires a blood sample. You may wish to speak to the company regarding testing a child to ascertain their recommendations. For information regarding the ALCAT, please contact American Medical Testing Laboratories at (800) 881-AMTL or www.alcat.com.

**Standard invasive allergy testing is performed using the RAST. Avoid the RAST. It is not sensitive enough to detect allergic response on the levels necessary to facilitate autism recovery. Use the ALCAT instead.*

Testing for Amino Acid and Essential Fatty Acid Levels

Proper amino acid and essential fatty acid levels are critical for a properly functioning body and mind. Additionally, amino acid levels and essential fatty acid levels are typically deficient in autistic individuals. Moreover, in my research and experience, proper essential fatty acids contribute to improved digestion, which aids in calmer

demeanor, ability to focus, extended attention span, and spontaneously improved eye contact.

Non-invasive Amino Acid Testing Procedure

A combination amino acid test is available from Great Plains Laboratory and uses urine for testing amino acid levels. (If your child is not potty trained, they may suggest attaching a plastic bag to catch the urine. While this is not easy, it is not invasive). Using the same urine sample, The Great Plains Laboratory will also complete a gluten/casein peptide test and test for intestinal yeast and bacterial overgrowth, including unspecified genetic diseases (this is considered one test and has one inclusive price). To order, request the Organic Acid Test kit from The Great Plains Laboratory at (913) 341-8949 or e-mail them at GPL4U@aol.com.

Invasive Amino Acid Testing Procedure

A 20-panel amino blood test (fasting plasma) is available from the Pain and Stress Clinic. If a urine sample presents problems or you prefer a blood test, call the Pain and Stress Clinic at (800) 669-2256 or visit their web site at www.painstresscenter.com.

Essential Fatty Acid Testing Procedure

The essential fatty acid test requires a stool sample that is sent to a laboratory for testing. In addition, the same sample is used for a Comprehensive Digestive Stool Analysis, a group of 25 tests that measure gastrointestinal health. To find a health care provider who uses this test, contact the Great Smokies Diagnostic Laboratory at (800) 522-4762 or www.gsdl.com.

While many other types of tests exist, I believe that these three are necessary: a comprehensive food and environmental allergy test, an amino acid test, and an essential fatty acid test. With the dietary changes that will be necessary to achieve and maintain homeostasis, such as the elimination of sugars, certain imbalances that could be tested for, such as candida (yeast overgrowth), will stabilize. However, testing for candida is always an option. Additionally, if your child exhibited autistic symptoms after vaccination or you have reason to suspect heavy metal toxicity, you may wish to pursue a local alternative physician who can administer tests and suggest natural remedies to flush heavy metals from the system.

Homeostasis

Homeostasis, or a balanced physiological state, is the presence of wellness whereby the systems of the body and mind are functioning in a state of health. *Achieving and maintaining homeostasis is necessary for recovery and therefore represents recovery's guiding goal.* By achieving and maintaining homeostasis, the systems of the body and mind come into balance and signs of recovery become obvious. Lost milestones are recovered. Gross- and fine-motor skills improve. Demeanor, attention span, and social skills, including language development and use, normalize. *In order to achieve and maintain homeostasis, all foods and environmental substances that cause reactions must be removed.* This process respects the immune system's need for a zero-tolerance.

Zero Tolerance

The zero-tolerance approach is necessary because the autistic individual's immune system is overloaded and unable to process properly food and environmental substances that would otherwise be perceived as harmless. For example, while many children can use bubble bath without experiencing an interruption in homeostasis, the ingredients in bubble bath (and most other common household and personal care products) will likely cause a reaction in your child. Because the autistic child's immune system is hypersensitive and also overloaded, it is unable to cope with contact of any kind (including inhalation) from substances that cause a reaction. While this situation may seem extreme, *the immune system reacts to quality, not quantity*, so that one bite, whiff, or momentary interaction with an allergenic food or environmental substance is enough to trigger a reaction. Every reaction gave Raja a three-day setback! Reactions are costly recovery deterrents. Recovery is advanced by avoiding reactions.

The Daily Report

The Daily Report is a helpful tool in monitoring your child's progress. The Daily Report will suffice as the Food and Reaction Journal (as described in my book), providing a format that allows you to record the events of your child's day and your corresponding observations regarding his behavior. The Daily Report provides a locus of control in determining what food and environmental substances make your child react. *It is a critical tool in refining the recovery process.* Additionally, it is a useful record for medical purposes or for reflection as the recovery journey unfolds. I urge you to customize this format to fit your needs. The Daily Report is your refining tool in the recovery process. Make it user-friendly so that it helps you determine what is allowing your child to achieve and maintain homeostasis.

A copy of The Daily Report follows.

The Daily Report

Date: _____ Awakened _____ at:
a.m.

If awakened in the night, indicate times:

In detail, describe observations pertaining to last night's sleep, including how long symptoms lasted:

Shallow
breathing _____
Thirsty _____
Hot _____
Kicking _____
Tossing/turning _____
Crying _____
Flushed
cheeks _____
Red ears _____
Moans _____
Perspiration _____
Dreams/nightmares _____
Difficulty going to sleep _____
Seizures _____
Other _____

Upon waking, describe your child's physical, mental, emotional, social, and behavioral conditions. All waking moments should be accounted for. Please include detailed descriptions of food consumed, including preparation. Record people and objects in close proximity, including smells (perfume, deodorant, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies). Watch for signs of reaction, including physical symptoms or inexplicable antisocial behavior (edging toward the door, running outside/away from a person or situation). Record reactions in detail, including duration (use clock to list times). Be as specific as possible.

Provide a copy of this form to all people who care for your child. Request that they fill out the form as accurately as possible (you may want to provide a sample). Urge them not to overlook anything and to become increasingly more aware that your child does what he does for a reason; *even inexplicable behavior would not be inexplicable if your child could speak and/or explain what he is sensing. His sensations drive his behavior.* Inform all the people who interact with your child (including your spouse, other children, caregivers, teachers, and therapists) that your goal is to remove all dietary and environmental substances that cause reactions. Explain that homeostasis (a stable body

and mind) is the goal and that by completing The Daily Report they are partnering with you in your child's recovery.

Morning observations:

Breakfast (content, preparation, and quantity):

Interacted with (list all toys, persons, and environments):

Afternoon observations:

Lunch and snacks (content, preparation, and quantity):

Interacted with (list all toys, persons, and environments):

Evening observations:

Dinner and snacks (content, preparation, and quantity):

Interacted with (list all toys, persons, and environments):

Bedtime:

Summary of this day:

Indications of homeostasis (be as specific as possible. Try to describe subtle things as well as obvious ones):

Indications of reaction (be as specific as possible. Try to describe subtle things as well as obvious ones):

Note: Both areas should not be filled out simultaneously. Your child is either maintaining homeostasis or experiencing a reaction. Therefore, indications of homeostasis and reaction do not exist simultaneously.

Magic Bullet

While it is possible to facilitate autism recovery using Comprehensive Organic Intervention, please know that this approach is not a magic bullet, a one-size-fits-all panacea, or a guarantee. Although every effort has been made to ensure that all information on this web site is as thorough, accurate, and well-researched as possible, neither these guidelines, nor any information offered in this web site, is offered as a

guarantee that implementing Comprehensive Organic Intervention will cause or allow a child to experience any level of recovery from autism.

However, I firmly believe that the most obvious and widely neglected aspect of autism is its potential biological foundations and the imbalances and deficiencies therein, and that correcting these imbalances and deficiencies can facilitate recovery. It is working for my son. I believe it will work for others. Although autism recovery is not an easy process, it is truly miraculous and worth the perseverance required to achieve it.

Products and Proprietors

In my book, *Climbing Out of Autism One Bite at a Time*, I listed all the products we were using at the time to create the lifestyle that is still facilitating Raja's ongoing recovery from autism. The products and proprietors listed here are discoveries made since the book was published and were not listed in the book.

In the ongoing pursuit of wellness, we continually try products and test for success. The products listed below have resulted in immediate developmental gain and sustained gain. We are not associated with these companies in any way and do not receive any compensation for sales made as a result of these recommendations.

Unless otherwise indicated, the product listed is the only one we use, although the manufacturer may offer several others. As with all products, if your child has a reaction, discontinue use and avoid altogether.

Products

Product: Ideal Balance (nutritional oil)

Manufacturer: Arrowhead Mills

Available at: Refrigerated section of health food stores

Cost: Approximately \$10-11 per bottle (12 oz.)

Ideal Balance (formerly Essential Balance) is a cold-pressed, organic seed blend of flax, pumpkin, and sunflower providing Omega-3, Omega-6, and Omega-9 essential fatty acids. I use this in a "milk" recipe that Raja drinks and uses in cereal every day (milk recipe follows at the bottom of food product listings). This oil blend resulted in immediate, spontaneous improvement in eye contact, speech, and concentration, enhancing Raja's social and learning skills.

When Ideal Balance was named Essential Balance, the formula included borage oil, the oil derived from the borage flower. Since borage oil was removed from the blend (a company spokeswoman said the FDA required removal because borage is considered a supplement and not a food), I have been adding hemp oil to Raja's milk (product information follows) with good results.

Product: Organic Hemp Oil
Manufacturer: Nutiva
Available at: Refrigerated section of health food stores
Cost: Approximately \$8-9 bottle (8 oz.)

Nutiva Organic Hemp Oil is non-genetically modified, cold pressed, and rich in Omega-3 essential fatty acids. The label says it is the closest vegetarian source to fish oil.

Although nutritional oils are expensive, Raja never goes without his milk, the drink in which the nutritional oils are blended, using six cups daily. When we travel, we take the ingredients to make milk or bring enough frozen milk to last the duration of the trip. I consider these oils essential to Raja's recovery.

Product: Omega Twin
Manufacturer: Barlean's
Available at: Refrigerated section of health food stores
Cost: Approximately \$23 per bottle (12 oz.)

Omega Twin contains flax and borage oils, the latter being a very important oil in stabilizing Raja's demeanor. Additionally, this oil is lighter and tastes better than the others, making it easier to mix in Raja's "milk" without requiring a large effort to mask the taste.

Product: Primal Defense (powder)
Manufacturer: Garden of Life
Available at: Silver Springs Supplements (800) 520-1791
Cost: \$44.95 per container (2.85 oz.)

Primal Defense has made the single greatest, abundantly evident developmental changes that occurred from the moment Raja started using it. It has improved his digestion, making him regular, and has resulted in every kind of corresponding improvement imaginable, from increased eye contact to language, social, and learning skills. Primal Defense is green and tastes green, if you know what I mean, so I began by using a little in his carob and have gradually increased the amount as he has adjusted to the taste. I use Primal Defense in a glass of milk (recipe below) and have noticed that the whites of my eyes are getting whiter.

The container reads:

Primal Defense is a natural whole food probiotic blend of HSOs (Homeostatic Soil Organisms) utilizing the Poten-Zyme Process and the Micorflora Delivery System (each of these are trademarked). Each 900 mg Primal Defense serving contains 14 non-dairy probiotic strains...

Although this product is expensive, I consider it essential to Raja's recovery. Discounts are available for bulk purchases.

Raja's Milk

My experience with nutritional oils is that they taste like fish, making them difficult to regularly ingest by the spoonful. In an effort to make them palatable, I created Raja's milk by blending the oils with bananas and honey (only enough honey to make the drink tasty). Adding frozen bananas gives the milk the consistency of a milkshake, something Raja and I enjoy very much. Raja's milk is very easy to make and its production quickly became habitual because it tastes good and the developmental results are so inspiring.

In a 6-cup blender, pour:
3 cups purified water

Add:
½ cup organic almonds

Blend very well. Strain through unbleached cheesecloth. Return liquid to blender.

Add:
¼ cup Ideal Balance
¼ cup Organic Hemp Oil or ¼ cup Omega Twin
¼ cup raw, unfiltered honey

Blend.

Add:
Enough peeled, organic bananas to bring the liquid to the six-cup level. Blend very well. Enjoy!

Proprietors

The following proprietors offer products conducive to a recovery lifestyle. Again, we are in no way connected with, or benefit from, purchases made from these companies.

Czimer's Game and Sea Foods, Inc.

13136 W. 159th Street
Lockport, IL 60441
(708) 301-0500

Czimer's Game and Sea Foods, Inc. specializes in game and sea foods that may be considered exotic and therefore hard to obtain in certain areas of the country (the

advantage to “exotic” meat and sea food is that children are less likely to be allergic to a meat they have not eaten much, such as rabbit, pheasant, or squirrel). They will wrap and ship meat without plastic wrap if requested.

Chlorine-free paper of all kinds

www.treecycle.com

Treecycle.com offers chlorine-free paper of all kinds, including “to go” containers, paper plates and bakery bags, as well as writing and printing paper.

Carpet

Earth Weave Carpet Mills, Inc.

(706) 278-8200

www.earthweave.com

Earth Weave offers 100% natural, non-toxic materials in their carpet and padding. The company will send samples.

Paint and Stain

Bioshield Paint Company

(800) 621-2591

www.bioshieldpaint.com

Bioshield uses the least toxic ingredients throughout the entire product line. They also offer a nice selection of products and colors and offer advice regarding application.

Beds and Bedding

Nirvana Safe Haven

(925) 472-8868

www.nontoxic.com

We purchased our non-toxic bed elsewhere (supplier follows), but we purchased our bedding from Nirvana. Fabulous! Although organic bedding is expensive, the bedding from Nirvana is soft, thick, and luxurious. I highly recommend their products.

Lifekind Products, LLC

(800) 284-4983

www.lifekind.com

We purchased our bed from Lifekind and I love it! It was custom built for us using our weight as specifications for firmness. Lifekind offers other products as well, ranging from linens and dishtowels to cleaning products. One of the things I like best about their catalog is that it details, chemical for chemical, all the toxins present in conventional mattresses – frightening! Considering we spend a third of our lives sleeping, our choice of bedding is very important. I believe Lifekind truly cares about health and, like the other “green” proprietors with whom I have done business, selects high-quality products designed to give maximum health benefits to humans and the environment.

Furniture and futons

www.ecobaby.com

www.hanas-generation.com

www.whitelotus.net

www.aiacolorado.org/SDRG/diviz/companies/htm

www.kyrustic.com

This is but a smattering of the many manufacturers who offer various types of eco-friendly, non-toxic furniture. If you enter “non-toxic furniture” or similar words into a search engine, you are bound to find numerous sites offering all types and styles of furniture that claims a level of eco-friendliness and non-toxicity. Many manufacturers require a doctor’s note before ordering furniture that does not meet flame retardation guidelines. It is advisable to obtain this from physician and avoid all contact with flame retardants. We ordered a furniture ensemble from Kentucky Rustic Furniture (www.kyrustic.com). The design is beautiful and the craftsmanship spectacular (although it took over a year from order date to be shipped). The pieces also arrived simply boxed without a great deal of packaging and no out-gassing. Hurray!

Children’s Clothing

www.rawganique.com

www.grassrootsnaturalgoods.com/kids/120.html

www.ecobaby.com

Children’s Toys

Small Fry Discovery Videos

www.small-fry.com

Although I have otherwise removed all plastic and plastic products from the house due to the VOCs plastic constantly emits, Raja still has a collection of learning videos that have been very helpful in his developmental progress. Some of the best and most engaging are

produced and offered by Small Fry Productions. In viewing their web site, I was astounded at the number of testimonials from parents of special needs kids. These award-winning videos are worth a look.

More Toys

The following companies offer a nice selection of wooden, handmade, and/or organic toys.

Back to Basics Toys
(800) 356-5360

Music for Little People (musical instruments plus additional assortment of fine toys)
www.mflp.com

Hearthsong
www.hearthsong.com

Constructive Playthings (blocks and train sets)
www.constplay.com

Sensational Beginnings
www.sb-kids.com

Magic Cabin
www.magiccabin.com

Florida Playground and Steel Co., Inc.
www.fla-playground.com/

UK Steel Playground Equipment Manufacturers
www.fendandleisure.co.uk
www.steelline.co.uk/playground.html

Sensory Integration and Developmental Products
www.southpawenterprises.com

All Types of Merchandise

Gaiam (Harmony)
www.gaiam.com

Whether you seek a hammock, an air filter, or adult clothing, Harmony offers a wide selection of products, many of them organic. We purchased our organic towels and a hemp shower curtain through Harmony. Harmony offers a great selection of merchandise and prompt service.

The Vermont Country Store

www.vermontcountrystore.com

Looking through The Vermont Country Store's catalog is like walking down memory lane and finding merchandise that I thought had otherwise disappeared to a world that turned much slower once upon a time. We have purchased collapsible stainless steel drinking cups as well as real handkerchiefs here and found the service to be excellent. Perhaps the service I like most is the offer to locate anything you cannot find in the catalog by writing to the proprietor.

Kitchen Ware

Look for glass, stainless steel, enamel or cast iron products, storage containers, and trash bins (no plastic products or products containing plastic; no aluminum products or non-stick coatings).

Professional Cutlery Direct

www.cutlery.com

Crate&Barrel

www.crateandbarrel.com

Chef's

www.chefscatalog.com

Williams-Sonoma

www.williams-sonoma.com

Canteens (alternative to drinking water from plastic water bottles)

www.CampingSurvival.com

Vacuums

www.miele.com

The proprietor of the local vacuum shop related a story about his chemically-sensitive wife and how her sensitivities flare up after vacuuming with standard vacuums, even

those with HEPA filters. He then opened several models on the showroom floor and demonstrated the wide variance in HEPA filters, explaining that just because a vacuum advertises HEPA, it is not necessarily superior. Then he showed me the Miele, the only vacuum that leaves the air cleaner after vacuuming. This is the only vacuum he uses in respect to his wife's chemical sensitivities. If you check the web site, there may be a Miele showroom in a city near you.

Water distiller

www.johnellis.com

The John Ellis water distiller is not just an average water distiller. This machine actually stretches the electrons in the water (permanently) and removes disease markers from water. In addition to the PUR water filter we have on the faucet, this is the water purifier we use at home.

Gardening

Seeds of Change

(888) 762-7333

www.seedsofchange.com

Seeds of Change offers an astounding array of seeds, many of them heirloom, and promotes organic agriculture. I am not much of a gardener yet, but the beautiful flowers, vegetables, and herbs offered in the catalog stirs an urge to turn the soil, plant a seed and watch it grow! Plants used for medicinal purposes are clearly marked. The catalog also offers books and gardening tools. The most reliable source of organic food we have is the food we grow ourselves. Seeds of Change may be a good place to start.

Periodicals

The Green Guide

www.thegreenguide.com

The Green Guide is a newsletter packed with information and resources for living a healthier, ecologically-friendlier lifestyle. The Green Guide always offers readers resources for additional information, ways to get involved, or sources for purchasing products. I believe the annual subscription cost \$10 – hard to beat that! For anyone making the transition to a recovery lifestyle, this is an inexpensive, informative guide that's easy to read and full of resources.

Alternative Medicine

www.alternativemedicine.com

Alternative Medicine is a magazine of alternative detailing health products, practitioners, and practices. It has many helpful articles and some great advertisements. The magazine was founded by a doctor and the editorial board consists of doctors (medical doctors, naturopaths, chiropractors) so the quality of the articles is very good. One year subscription costs \$24.95.

Natural Home

www.naturalhomemagazine.com

Natural Home magazine is another important resource in the world of alternative living conducive to recovery needs. Perhaps my favorite feature is a question-and-answer column with a panel of Eco-Experts whereby readers can get answers to questions regarding a home's toxicity, whether they are buying, building, or remodeling. The magazine is also solution-oriented, providing resources for further information at the end of each article and a book-review section with selections ranging from allergy-free homes to building with alternative materials.

Books

Is This Your Child? by Doris Rapp, M.D.

Is This Your Child's World? by Doris Rapp, M.D.

The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction by Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A.

Allergies: Disease in Disguise by Carolee Bateson-Koch, D.C., ND.

Your Hidden Food Allergies are Making You Fat by Rudy Rivera, M.D., and Roger Deutsch

The Crazy Makers: How the Food Industry is Destroying Our Brains and Harming Our Children by Carol Simontacchi

It's All in Your Head: The Link Between Mercury Amalgams and Illness by Dr. Hal A. Huggins

Pandora's Poison by Joe Thornton

Movies

Trade Secrets with Bill Moyers. *Trade Secrets* is an excellent documentary detailing the unscrupulous practices within the petrochemical industry. The documentary includes interviews with a prominent pediatrician regarding chemicals in children's bloodstreams

and a blood test Bill Moyers takes to determine his individual chemical load. I highly recommend this documentary. 120 minutes. www.pbs.org.

Additional Recovery Resources

In case a self-help program does not suit your needs, the following programs may be helpful. Autism Recovery Education has no affiliation with any of the organizations or proprietors listed below, nor have we participated in their programs.

Programs can be comforting because they offer guidance and usually have a track record that can be verified through references. While I have received complaints regarding at least two of programs listed below, the same two programs have been complimented by others. If you are considering participating in a program, please complete the necessary research prior to enrollment. Verify references - many references - and check the organization's track record. Talk to parents who have completed the program(s) you are considering. Validate that the program's approach and guidance level will meet your expectations. Programs involve risk and can be costly. Please be certain that the risk and cost are worthwhile and that the program is safe and effective before enrolling.

The Autism Institute of America

Director: Raun Kaufman

Program features: Behavioral approach. The institute offers a hands-on, supervised program in a beautiful, supportive environment.

Success story: Raun Kaufman was diagnosed with autism at 16-months old. His parents, Barry Neil Kaufman and Samahria Lyte Kaufman, were told that his situation was hopeless. Rather than giving up, they worked with him 16-hours per day and developed the Son-Rise Program (now the Autism Institute of America) to help other families with autistic children. Today, Raun is fully recovered, has graduated from an Ivy League college, and continues his parents' outstanding work as the director of the Autism Institute of America. The brochure includes many moving testimonials.

Contact information:

2080 S. Undermountain Road
Sheffield, MA 01257
(413) 229-2100
e-mail: sunrise@option.org
www.option.org



Special Foods!

Owner/operator: Karen Slimak

Program features: Biological approach. Special Foods! offers a supervised (telephone) program whereby all food is purchased through her company and shipped directly to your home.

Success: Ms. Slimak has three children whose moderate-severe health problems inspired her to research and develop a fantastic host of unusual, hypoallergenic, mold-free, chemical-free foods and other products. All three children have recovered and have completely unrestricted diets. Additionally, the Special Foods! autism literature includes stories of other individuals who have achieved success using this program. Ms. Slimak will develop products for you. Reading through her literature and product catalog, I can't even imagine the hours she has devoted to researching and creating such an impressive array of products intended to heal autistic and sensitive individuals.

Contact:

9207 Shotgun Court
Springfield, VA 22153
(703) 644-0991
www.specialfoods.com

The Autism Recovery Network

Features: An Internet listing of behaviorally and biologically based treatment options, including Applied Behavioral Analysis.

Contact: www.geocities.com/arnfl/treatment/html

New Life Learning Online College

Program features: Biologically based online autism recovery training.

Success: Over 80% in treating children with autism, Asperger Syndrome, ADD, ADHD, and other developmental disorders.

Contact:

National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm

As the parent of an autistic son, I feel it is a tragedy and a travesty that our children are systematically denied the type and level of educational services that would enable them to achieve their full potential. I take personal offense that because my son has autism, I must read books and learn how to advocate for him, a feat my parents never dreamed of performing for my siblings or myself. My parents went to parent-teacher conferences, sure, but they did not sit conference-style with sweaty palms and beating heart, vastly outnumbered by school personnel who appeared to be more interested in protecting themselves than in protecting and educating a child with special needs. My parents would have been shocked to discover the need for litigation in order to get me the services I deserved. They would have felt indignant, cheated, and betrayed by a system that they loyally supported with taxpayer dollars but that only adequately and appropriately addressed the needs and services of normally developing children. As a parent, taxpayer, and American, I too feel indignant, cheated, and betrayed by a system that fights me rather than supporting me in meeting my son's needs.

Since Raja has been diagnosed with autism, we have moved to four different states in search of a school that will recognize and honor his recovery needs, understanding that there can be no education without honoring the foundation of recovery that makes learning possible. Sadly, we have met the same resistance in every state, at every school, in every case. In an effort to ameliorate my frustration, I created The National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm.

The National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm asserts that the process of learning and recovery is simultaneous and should be combined in institutions of public education serving autistic individuals. Rather than attending special schools which are hard to find, expensive, require moving or boarding a child, and may not incorporate a recovery model, The National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm is based on the right to free and appropriate public education, seeking to redress "appropriate" aspects of educating autistic individuals.

The National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm asks parents, teachers, and therapists to partner on behalf of a child with autism for the express purpose of attaining recovery. The National Autism Recovery Education Paradigm is based on recovery level and is structured to meet the needs of all, including the most profoundly autistic child. The goal is sufficient rehabilitation to enter mainstream education without compromising the student or system within 36 months from entrance into program.

Safety: Because many severely autistic children have severe communication deficits combined with significant safety issues, creating a safe environment provides parents and teachers peace of mind. In the event that a child inadvertently leaves the classroom unsupervised, all classrooms housing autistic children should be surrounded by a tall perimeter fence with a childproof gate latch. Meeting the safety needs of the autistic child is part of a free and “appropriate” education. It is the first step in creating appropriate learning environments for autistic populations.

Chemical-free Classrooms/schools: Because autistic children have chemical sensitivities, the recovery-oriented educational model calls for classrooms and schools free of chemicals. This includes using natural, non-chemical cleaning agents, maintenance products, and lawn care products. Additionally, scents used on one’s person, such as scented soap, deodorant, perfume, and hair spray, as well as scents in the classroom, including air fresheners, scented ink makers, and scratch-and-sniff products, would be permanently avoided.

Structuring a Recovery-Oriented Curriculum

Goal: As stated above, the goal of recovery-oriented curriculum is sufficient rehabilitation to enter mainstream education without compromising the student or system within 36 months from entrance into program. Program entrance will usually correspond with cessation of services from the Early Intervention Program due to age limitations; thus, children in most states would enter recovery-oriented curriculum at 3 years of age, or thereabout, depending on child’s age at time of diagnosis. The good news is that if a child entered recovery-oriented curriculum at age 3, he could be sufficiently rehabilitated to enter mainstream education *with his peers* at age 6. The ability to successfully matriculate with normally-developing peers – verbally, socially, intellectually, and behaviorally – is the goal of recovery-oriented curriculum.

A recovery-oriented curriculum honors the students’ recovery needs, such as dietary specifications, while reaching child on his level. Recovery-oriented curriculum asks parents, teachers, and therapists to form a recovery team on child’s behalf, working very closely together to support each other and the child in achieving the dream of recovery.

Curriculum Levels

Beginning: Beginning recovery curriculum level corresponds with severely autistic children possessing no verbal, learning, or self-help skills. Students in this category have extreme sensory integration issues, tactile defensiveness issues, and often demonstrate safety issues. Curriculum is generally concerned with achieving and maintaining a stable state. Emotional content includes securing and keeping the child’s trust; comforting the frightened or overwhelmed child; and finding what reaches the child (e.g., airplanes, trains, animals, etc.) and following, and building on, the interest as much as possible. Because most autistic children are very visual, it is suggested that parents, teachers, and

therapists learn and use sign language in all communications with the child as it will help him integrate the spoken word and may lead to him practicing sign language as a communication device. Student/teacher ratio: 1:1. (Note: A trained student aide could be substituted for a teacher, allowing one teacher to oversee four or more children at the beginning level. Additionally, a parent could serve as his child's aide, giving the recovery team greater access to each other in meeting the child's needs).

Intermediate: Students at the intermediate recovery level have developed language skills, demonstrated learning abilities, possess self-help skills, and possess rudimentary social skills/interests. Students now share a structured learning environment with peers and are learning socialization as well as intellectual concepts and language refinement. Sensory integration issues, tactile defensiveness, and safety issues are moderate. Student/teacher ratio: 2-3:1.

Advanced: Students are functioning at near-normal levels regarding verbal and expressive skills. Social and coping skills are readily apparent. Ability to receive and execute verbal and written instruction is readily apparent. Sensory integration is complete. Tactile defensiveness has vanished. Verbally, socially, intellectually, and behaviorally, advanced students are functioning at levels very near their normally-developing counterparts. Student/teacher ratio: 4+:1.

Conclusion

Autism recovery is possible and will become more prevalent as institutions that serve autistic children adopt the recovery model. When parents, teachers, and therapists form recovery partnerships, an unbroken circle of care is formed, exponentially increasing the likelihood of rehabilitation. Children feel more secure and cared for as the routine embraced at home is continued at school and as the people he trusts and relies on support and embrace each other on his behalf.

If you would like more information or assistance in developing an Autism Recovery Education Model for your child or your school, please contact me at autismrecovery@frontier.net. Together we can create a learning environment that supports the needs of our recovering children as well as honoring our right to be part of the process of choice on our children's behalves.

Thank you very much for visiting www.autismrecovery.com. May all your recovery dreams come true.