

# Finding a Voice



As an infant, Adoré was what most people liked to call a “good baby.” She was quiet, wasn’t fussy and didn’t cry too often. Little did I know, these were signs of news to come. As she progressed to toddlerhood I realized that she still didn’t make much noise—she didn’t babble, and hadn’t yet said her first word. She didn’t make eye contact with others and preferred to play alone in a quiet corner. She didn’t even acknowledge her name if you called to her. Initially, her doctors thought she may have been deaf, and she did indeed fail her first round of testing with the audiologists. However, a visit to her pediatrician revealed that Adoré was also not meeting many of her developmental milestones. She didn’t use gestures, like pointing, and she never sought out others to perhaps share a toy that she liked. She was perfectly content to play all by herself. After being referred to a developmental pediatrician, I was told that my daughter might have autism.

After that, we went through a whirlwind of evaluations and intake appointments with various social service agencies. We finally landed at what became like Adoré’s home away from home—the Center for Autism. The Center is like a breath of fresh air. From the front desk to the Executive Director, everyone is always pleasant and welcoming. They really take the time to listen to my concerns and I could tell that this wasn’t “just their job” but that they truly care and love what they do. The staff are always willing to go beyond the call of duty. Once, I was having trouble making it to a treatment plan meeting because of my school and work schedule. To help accommodate my schedule, one of the staff members actually brought the treatment plan to me at my work downtown! Whereas other organizations may have decided to just forego my inclusion, the Center makes it their business to always keep me in the loop regarding my child’s treatment.

I believe Adoré’s tremendous progress is due in large part to her time at the Center. Though she has received outside occupational and speech therapy, these individuals only worked with her for an hour or so a week. During all the ups and the downs that



we went through, the Center was always there offering consistency and support. Adoré learned PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and sign language at the Center which allows her to communicate her needs and wants to others. Once a non-verbal shadow of a child, Adoré has blossomed into a very vocal (and opinionated) little girl who loves music, drawing and playing with her little sister.

Adoré and I were sad the day she “graduated” from the Center’s Preschool Program, but we were happy to learn about the Social Competency Program. Now two nights a week, she gets to socialize with her “extended family” at the Center, and she wouldn’t miss it for the world. I am forever grateful to the Center for giving Adoré the most important gift she could ever receive—a voice.

- Lovlei McKinnie, Adoré’s Mother

EACH STAFF MEMBER SUPPORTED MY CHILD AND FAMILY IN THE BEST WAYS POSSIBLE.

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The Center for Autism offers a variety of comprehensive, year-round programs and services for individuals and families affected by autism. Each service is designed on a case-by-case basis in order to meet the varying needs of each individual.

All of the Center’s programs maintain the primary goal of helping people with autism interact with others using a viable communication system. To achieve this goal, the Center offers Specialized Autism Services (SAS), evaluation services and professional consultation.

### Specialized Autism Services (SAS)

Our Specialized Autism Services (SAS) are intensive, comprehensive treatment programs that are specifically designed to meet the individual needs of our clients and their family. In addition to providing therapeutic services to our clients, we focus on giving families an outlet for support and the resources needed to continue treatment at home and in the community. The following SAS programs are offered:

- Preschool-aged Children: a daily, intensive treatment program for children ages 2-5. This program is held Monday through Friday from 9:00 am-2:00 pm.
- Social Competency: evening programs designed to facilitate social competency skills in children and adolescents ages 6-15. This program is held Monday through Thursday from 5:00 pm- 7:00 pm.
- Individual Outpatient Therapy: an individualized treatment program designed to provide therapy to all age groups.

### Evaluation Services

Early evaluation and diagnosis are vital to successful autism treatment. The Center for Autism offers diagnostic evaluations to people of all ages. Through the observation of a person’s behaviors and collection of a developmental, medical and family history, the Center’s team of psychiatrists and specialists are able to determine an individual’s diagnosis and make appropriate recommendations.

### Professional Consultation

The Center provides professional consultation services to a variety of people and organizations. Types of consultation include workshops and seminars on assessment and intervention techniques, staff training, behavioral observation, and the development of individualized education, treatment program or life-plan. All consultation services are specialized to meet varying needs.

For more information on our services, visit [www.thecenterforautism.org/programs](http://www.thecenterforautism.org/programs).