



INTERVENTION: ALEX BROGAN AND HIS MOTHER, LISA, WORK WITH THERAPIST JOY SEREDNESKY IN OHIO. ALEX'S TREATMENT, CALLED FLOORTIME, USES PLAY TO TEACH COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

\$12,500

cost for average special-ed student per year

\$18,800

cost for a student with autism per year

Treatments

THERAPY: A child may receive more than one type at a time, along with speech and occupational therapy.

■ **Applied Behavioral Analysis:** Intensive one-on-one drills instill social/language skills through positive reinforcement.

■ **Floortime:** This child-directed approach stresses personal interactions.

■ **TEACCH:** Uses children's individual interests to motivate them to learn in a structured environment.

■ **Social Stories:** Uses stories to teach social skills and give insight into others' perspectives.

■ **PECS:** Helps build communication skills through the use of pictures.

■ **RDI:** Encourages experience sharing and emphasizes parental involvement.



DRUGS: Nothing treats the core symptoms of autism, but drugs can ease behavioral problems.

■ **Risperidone:** This anti-psychotic was shown to decrease aggression and hyperactivity.

■ **SSRIs:** Antidepressants like Prozac may reduce repetitive behaviors.

■ **Anticonvulsants:** Drugs like Depakote are being tested for treating aggression.

■ **Stimulants:** Ritalin (left) may lessen hyperactivity.

at 4 years



Many children are able to:

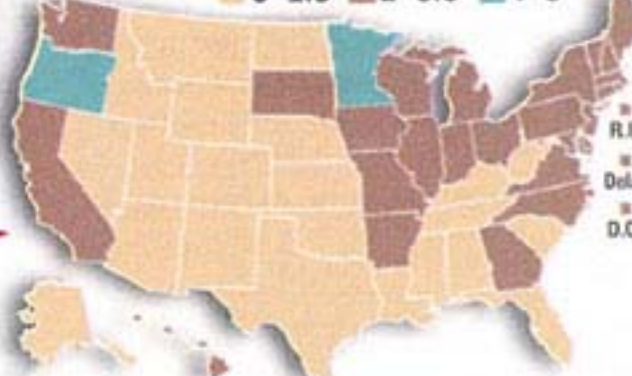
- use five- to six-word sentences
- follow three-step commands ('get dressed, comb your hair and wash your face')
- cooperate with other children

More Information

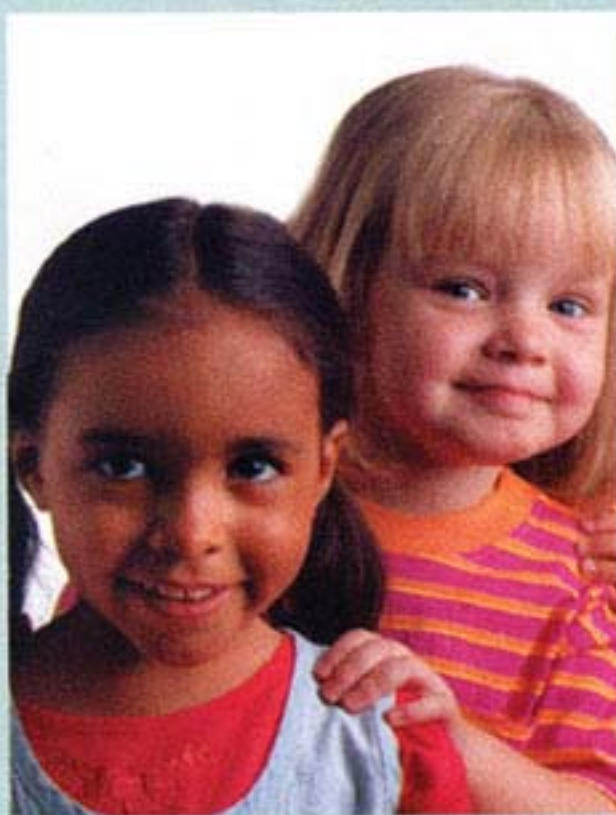
- **Autism Coalition:** autismcoalition.org
- **Autism Soc. of America:** autism-society.org
- **CDC:** cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly
- **Cure Autism Now:** cureautismnow.org
- **First Signs:** firstsigns.org
- **Nat. Alliance for Autism Research:** naar.org
- **NIMH:** nimh.nih.gov/publicat/autism.cfm

Autism rates per 1,000 children ages 6-17

0-1.9 2-3.9 4-6



at 3 years



Many children are able to:

- show affection for playmates
- use four- to five-word sentences
- imitate adults and playmates
- play make-believe with dolls, animals, people

Distribution

There are about 130,000 kids with autism ages 6 to 17 in public schools around the country. Their numbers have risen consistently across all states.

at 2 years



Many children are able to:

- say two- to four-word phrases
- follow simple instructions
- demonstrate interest in other children
- point to an object or picture when named