

## **Tony's Story**

### *Listening Training for our son Tony - May, 1996*

... Our son's name is Tony. He is nine years old. His story will no doubt ring familiar with many...As a four month old, he suffered what was to be first of many ear infections....After many more assessments with various professionals, we were still no closer to finding help for our son. It seemed noone felt that there was anything that could be done for him. We were told he was autistic, ADHD, PDD, brain damaged, mentally retarded, but the one that hurt the most, "he should be institutionalized."....

Our son's name is Tony. He is nine years old. His story will no doubt ring familiar with many.

As a four month old, he suffered what was to be first of many ear infections. It was before this though that I noticed something was not as it should have been. By eight months I was already stressing my concerns to our doctor. She said it was nothing. By eleven months he was not making any intelligible sounds. Again, don't worry. By eighteen months, some children are just slow starters. By two and a half, I had to demand something be done.

Finally we were to have a speech assessment. It lasted ten minutes. Tony became upset while there and she referred us to psychologist.

We started to visit "Angela" who found Tony to be "unusual". She thought him to be autistic-like, however she found him to be "puzzling". If anyone was puzzled, it was us. We heard this for the two months we were to go there. Nothing else.

After many more assessments with various professionals, we were still no closer to finding help for our son. It seemed noone felt that there was anything that could be done for him. We were told he was autistic, ADHD, PDD, brain damaged, mentally retarded, but the one that hurt the most, "he should be institutionalized.".

School was extremely hard for Tony. He was in a special class. Still unable to speak more than a few words, he was bullied, beaten and taught nothing.

Always regarding any material I could find and scouring the T.V. Guide for and specials on autism, I saw one listed on the Discovery Channel. It was about a place called The Listening Centre and I was mesmerized by a man as he spoke about these children with passion and understanding. His name was Paul Madaule. It took me three weeks to make the call. I was terrified of again being turned away. That was nine months ago. In that amount of time this marvelous place has turned our lives around. After Tony's first sessions he started trying to talk to us and being affectionate. But most importantly, he was happy. He has since gone for two more sessions.

My child has been reborn. To hear his sweet voice as he speaks to us can still bring tears to my eyes. He has become social and enjoys playing with children instead of running around towards nothing.