

# STORIES OF HOPE



## DANNY'S AUTISM JOURNEY

## TO BUILD IS TO COMMUNICATE

For Danny, construction doesn't mean stacking up bricks or laying down a foundation but creating elaborate fairy tales out of toys and action figures.



For a long time, this was one of the few ways Danny could communicate his needs and feelings.

Before his autism diagnosis, Danny never looked directly at his mom, dad, or other children on the playground.

He didn't know how to ask for help.




"We were nervous about his future. How was Danny going to share his feelings and needs with his peers or others," wondered Danny's dad.

"Will he make friends in school? Would it be possible for him to say hello?"



Danny's father was concerned about what an autism diagnosis meant for his son, worrying that Danny would miss the chance to live a full and enriching life.

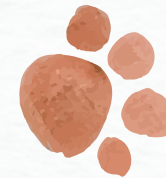
This all changed when he saw the improvement in Danny's behavior and mood after only a few months of working with Esha, an ABA therapist at Applied ABC.

 Esha and Danny were a perfect match.




"We noticed how she got into his world. Danny started participated in the games and actions she suggested. She listened very carefully to others. We immediately knew she was the one," said Danny's dad.

One of the biggest things that changed for Danny after ABA therapy was overcoming his fear of dogs.



"He'd see a dog and wouldn't want to walk near it. He'd freeze up, and it would trigger maladaptive behaviors," explained Esha. "Now, he'll openly pet them. He understands that a dog is there to comfort him and make him feel happy."

 We sat down together and watched videos showing the power of support animals and how nice they can make a person feel."

Danny is passionate about music and sound. So, Esha was able to use his interests to help him understand that dogs aren't scary, especially for people that need a little help.

Overcoming something you're afraid of isn't easy. For Danny, moving past his fear of dogs was just one success on his autism journey.



“He listens more, makes eye contact, engages more with other kids, and he’s much more verbal. He also goes and asks for help, and it’s so much easier to communicate with him,” said Danny’s dad

His dad’s feelings have also changed regarding what an autism diagnosis can mean for families.




It’s not a disability, but a different ability.”

Danny’s powerful story helps remind us that progress in ABA is about the little successes along the way.

“Every lesson rolls into the next one,” said Esha. “If a child with autism can overcome specific fears or pick up new skills, it can open up an entire world for them to explore.”

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 We want to dedicate this Story of Hope to our staff, the hard-working parents who put everything into helping create a brighter future for their children, and the children like Danny, who continue to discover more about the world and themselves daily.



While all the stories in this book are true, names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the people involved.



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