

# Our Journey Through God's Plan with Autism

By **Jeanetta Bryant**

IT HAS NOW BECOME CLEAR THAT WHILE SOME MIGHT CALL IT "LINDSEY'S STORY" OR "OUR STORY," THE TRUTH IS WE ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS CAST IN A DIVINE MASTERPIECE THAT IS "GOD'S STORY." THIS CLARITY WAS HARD TO FIND IN THE MINUTES AND DAYS FOLLOWING AN EXTREMELY POOR PROGNOSIS AND OVERWHELMING DIAGNOSIS FOR OUR THREE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER. IN THAT MOMENT WE HAD THE AIR KNOCKED OUT OF US. WE WERE LOOKING AT A BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO DRIFTED INTO AUTISM AND AWAY FROM US. SHE HAD "REGRESSED." GONE WERE THE DAYS OF HER LOOKING INTO MY EYES AS WE PLAYED, THE DAYS OF US LAUGHING AND HER TRYING TO PLAY AND BE SILLY WITH ME. IN THIS NEW REALITY, WE WERE BEING TOLD SHE WOULD NEVER RETURN TO ANY OF THOSE MAGICAL MOMENTS. HER DIAGNOSIS INCLUDED MANY ACRONYMS AND THE REMOVAL OF ALL HOPE.

Unfortunately for many, that's where some children's stories end—simply sad tales and gifts of sympathy for the parents. God had far different plans for our daughter and our lives. He would go on to use her in extraordinary ways and as a beacon of light to show others hope, perseverance, and triumph.

Less than 24 hours after learning the professionals' bleak expectations, I was interviewing candidates for a team role. The last person of the day came in, and from the moment she cleared the door it was obvious she was overqualified. That didn't stop us from carrying on for more than two hours of

conversation. This person was a stranger, and yet somehow, I ended up divulging to her my daughter's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). To my shock, she, too, was a special needs mom. She had even written a book on helping her son alleviate his autism symptoms. She filled me with hope, encouragement, and instructions. From that point on, Lindsey's trajectory was changed.

We went on to learn there were many things to discover. We started with changing Lindsey's diet, then added more therapies. We learned that while she may have a more challenging way forward, she still had a path!

Over time and because of moments where we were candid and transparent, God continued to place knowledgeable and kind parents in our lives. These parents lent insight, tips, ideas, and suggestions on the next steps. We were slowly but surely seeing gains.



We soon found sounds and words were starting to replace the pointing and screaming, that her attention span was growing, and her laughter returned. We watched her develop friendships and interests. The girl who was never to speak again, never to have any social or academic growth, was defying the odds.



Currently, Lindsey is a witty and sweet ten-year-old girl. She has friends, loves her school, has played soccer, dances hip hop, and is a rollercoaster junkie. It is with great pride that I have had a front-row seat to her remarkable accomplishments. She is still “catching up” on some social and academic goals, but we have no doubt those too will be conquered. But this story is only just getting started.

As we navigated the storm, it became clear not all autism families have the same experience. While so many of us are given the “facts” or “statistics,” few are given hope. Parents want to fight for their kids and help them overcome any obstacles that stand in their way, and armed with the right tools, the love of a

parent can do incredible things. With that in mind, we launched onto a new endeavor, and Abilities Workshop was born. Abilities Workshop is a nonprofit with one mission: to help every child be their best. This is done by empowering parents, pastors, and teachers with resources and HOPE. Knowing how children can improve and watching their pain fade while they shine and contribute beauty to the world is incredible.

We are honored to help parents navigate this journey and remind them their child is full of greatness. The reality is these kids are showing us perspective, patience, and love. They are teaching us how to apply these principles in an age where we need them most; we are grateful for each one of them.



*Jeanetta Bryant is Founder and Executive Director of Abilities Workshop, Inc. She is dedicated to helping special needs families find answers and children impacted by a special needs diagnosis be their best. Jeanetta is an author, developer, and advocate. As a mom of two children, one with ASD, she*

*finds no greater joy than watching them develop and achieve their dreams. Her interests include family time at home or a theme park, college football, and making memories.*

Website: <https://www.abilitiesworkshop.com/>

Most approaches to enabling children with autism to speak either don't work or alienate the child...or both. **The Autism Language Launcher** gives you something totally new: a step-by-step guide that ignites language lift-off by:

- ★ **Tapping into your child's innate intelligence (often unrecognized by others)**
- ★ **Going with your child instead of against your child**
- ★ **Building the relationship necessary to inspire your child to want to communicate**
- ★ **Giving you the tools instead of outsourcing them to someone who doesn't care as much as you do**
- ★ **Providing techniques that work with adults on the spectrum, too!**

If you are a parent, relative, professional, educator, or caregiver of a child or adult who is: not yet verbal, making some sounds, using some words, speaking in single words, or using two-word phrases, then this book is for you. In a caring, understanding, and deeply supportive way, author Kate C. Wilde uses her decades of experience with children and adults on the spectrum to show you how to break through and finally enable your child to:

- ★ **Begin speaking and communicating**
- ★ **Build their vocabulary...willingly**
- ★ **Expand sounds into words and words into phrases**
- ★ **Ask and answer questions**
- ★ **Construct their own original sentences (rather than simply repeating rote phrases)**
- ★ **Share their thoughts**

In addition, you'll learn to effectively address your child's echolalia, repetitious language, and repetitive questions (without scolding your child, stopping your child, or “doing battle” with your child) in a way that your child will find supportive, bonding, and even joyful.



Buy it on Amazon [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

**ISN'T THIS WHAT WE  
ALL WANT FOR OUR  
PRECIOUS KIDS?**