

New Method Of Therapy Could Help Kids With Autism

He plays his Wii like any other 12 year old. He reads comic books and has an iPod.

If you ask his mother, its a miracle. "Most people, in the community and public, they think 'Rain Man.' They don't know because there's all levels of severity for autism," said Kirstine Harner, the mother of Mason Harner, who is autistic.

Mason has been treated for autism since he was three. Early on, it didn't appear he would live a normal life. "You get that initial shock, and you go into 'okay what do I do? What are our local resources?'" says Harner.

Now, after being treated by Vince Redmond of the Center for Autism and Related Disorders for the last few years, Mason is a new person. "Its a very discreet, repetitious way of re-introducing skills to a child where we do it over and over and over again," states Redmond.

The Valley Achievement Center endorses Redmond's way of helping autistic children. "The organization he works for provides behavior analytical services and that's really where the best evidence is," said Melvin Thomas, an Assistant Director with the Valley Achievement Center.

When Mason was asked if he wanted to do an interview, he said no. He didn't even want his face on camera, a remarkable sign that Mason is aware of social consequences.

"I absolutely laughed, because I think its perfect. He didn't want his secrets to be revealed. It means he's very aware," said Redmond.

Mason is also doing well in school, with his teachers holding him to the same standard as the other kids. His mother couldn't be more proud. "He's kind of aware that he's a little different, and he tries to adapt to that," said Harner.

