

David is now 4 yrs of age and his parents explain even as an infant he was different from other children. Instead of investigating his environment and enjoying the interactions with parents, siblings and wider family and friends he spent time sitting frozen, he didn't seem to have any response to common everyday sounds e.g. his parents voices, the dog barking, music on the CD player and even his toys. At first Sue and Doug, David's loving parents suspected he had a hearing impairment. But, deep down they knew there was something more serious going on.

David rarely made eye contact and didn't seem to like cuddles and kisses from his dotting parents. He struggled to achieve developmental milestones and would often do things out of common sequences, for example he never crawled, he walked but only on tiptoes. Even, at 4 years David does not use words to communicate, he has never uttered a single word. David screams and grabs to communicate what he wants. When he was 3 years of age he began to show a strong and passionate interest in brightly coloured shopping brochures and catalogues. He was more excited about going to the letterbox than his toys, and he would have a meltdown if there were no shopping brochures in the box. Sue would have to pick him up off the ground and when she got him inside he would rock himself and bang his head on the wall or against the furniture. Any attempts by Sue to try and comfort him would be strongly resisted.

David couldn't cope with any changes in his daily routine and any departure would cause David to experience intense episodes of screaming and erratic running around on his tiptoes banging into objects and injuring himself from time to time.

Sue and David were always on high alert. One night Doug heard a noise outside and eventually went out to investigate, only to find David sitting outside. A few months later, he was found in the next-door neighbours backyard. He has taken off a number of times and although his parents now have multiple locks they are still not confident of keeping David safe without constant supervision.

David has just been diagnosed with a mild form of Autism.