Coping With Autism

Toledo Family Explains Life of 5-Year-Old With Neurodevelopmental Disorder

By Diana Fortis
dfortis@spokesman.com

TOLEDO — Ricky White is in many ways just like any other 5-year-old.
A kindergartner at Toledo Elementary School, he enjoys running around his backyard, playing with his toys and watching TV.

But when he was still a baby, his parents, Amber and Richard White, observed that he wasn’t developing as quickly as they anticipated he would.

At first, doctors told them just to give Ricky time — “He’s just a kid,” they said. But then Ricky’s development began to move backwards; he even began to lose his ability to speak.

At the age of 2, Ricky was diagnosed with autism and sensory integration syndrome. “We were shocked,” Amber White said. “We didn’t expect anything like that.”

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects about 1 in 88 children. It’s one of three conditions that make up the autism spectrum. The other two are Asperger syndrome and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified.

There’s no known cause for the disorder, genetics, memory and certain drugs have all been linked to the autism spectrum. A 2009 Cornell University study even concluded that states with heavy rainfall had higher rates of autism.

White was told that the viral infection she had when she was pregnant with Ricky could’ve caused the disorder.

“There are so many different theories,” she said. “It’s hard to know what’s what.”

The Whites have another son, Marcus, who is 4 years old.

More Awareness Sought About Disorder

A person with an autism spectrum disorder might:
• Have delayed speech and language skills
• Repeat words or phrases over and over
• Get upset by minor changes
• Have obsessive interests
• Flip their hands, rock back and forth, spin in circles
• Show unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel

POSSIBLE ‘RED FLAGS’

A person with an autism spectrum disorder might:
• Have delayed speech and language skills
• Repeat words or phrases over and over
• Get upset by minor changes
• Have obsessive interests
• Flip their hands, rock back and forth, spin in circles
• Show unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel

Source: CDC. http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/signs.html

Weather

TODAY: Low 47
TODAY’S HIGH: 54
Partly sunny

TOMORROW: High 56

Magnolia House

Home Opens for Former Inmates / Main 3

Deaths

Tran, Edmond 87, Chelmsford
Zand, Curtis “Cork” Dean 62, Chelmsford
Hayes, Ellen R., 83, Chelmsford

Weather picture by Hannah Baker, fourth grade, Onateka Elementary School
Autism: Lewis County Autism Coalition Created in 2010 to Help Families

Continued from previous page

"They hear the same thing, they've had the same queries," White said. "That's why I, and the other has xas.

The family also has be aware ofMutex's needs, and allow her in activities that are typical for developing kids, such as going to the movies with his dad.

"It's about finding a balance," White said. "In some sense, stricter than you would because he has to understand the world's boundaries." White said one of the great challenges in raising kids like Bicky is being aware of every expectation she had of having her best child.

"I can think about the future, I have to think about the day to day needs," she said. "I can't worry about what my child is going to be like when he is not in grade school." Bicky is in medical. He can say only "Mom," "Dad," "Dad," and "Mom." In terms of his wants to make a picture of objects, however, parents are also trying to teach him sign language.

"It's a matter of getting through life," White said.

"It's not a matter of getting through life," White said. "It's a matter of getting through life." White said.

"One symptom of autism is perceptiveness to much to help Bicky does, he sizes up his height and weight at night. Be- cause the blanket, White said he has to be sure to comfort him, making a special night's sleep difficult to come by.

"The blanket is something so to make sure he doesn't feel afraid. It's the best," White said.

"and things that would not be confortable to someone," White said.

"We do things as long as it makes sure he feels comfortable," White said.

But doing this makes things uncomfortable to someone," White said.

"It's a matter of getting through life," White said. "It's a matter of getting through life." White said.

"It's a matter of getting through life," White said.