Today’s piece was prepared by Elizabeth Swedo, MD, based on a story from The New York Times Magazine, [The Kids Who Beat Autism](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/03/magazine/the-kids-who-beat-autism.html?_r=0).

The article delves into the world of children who have “recovered” from autism, following profiles of several children and their families. The author briefly describes the history behind the controversy and concept of recovery from autism. She describes several methodologies used to treat children with autism, including applied behavior analysis (ABA). The article presents the results of two “rigorous, systematic studies” in lay terms. The author mainly profiles children that have recovered from autism but includes the stories of those who complete similar therapies and do not experience resolution of autism symptoms. She also includes the perspective of those who argue that “autism isn’t an illness in need of cure”, including Ari Ne’eman—president of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network.

In general, the author does a good job of preserving the uncertainty & controversy that surround autism and its therapies. She includes quotes from psychologists and developmental specialists describing these recovered children as a “subgroup of kids” and pays tribute to the evolving conception of autism as a “[possible] array of distinct conditions that have different genetic and environmental etiologies but happen to produce similar symptoms”. The article provides a helpful pop science cross-section of so-called “optimum recovery” in autistic children. It is balanced in its inclusion of both ‘recovered’ children and neurodiversity advocates. Readers will leave the article with a better understanding of autism recovery and early behavioral therapies, but also with the specter of unanswered questions and ethical dilemmas in mind.

**RESOURCES ON AUTISM & TREATMENT**

[CDC](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/treatment.html) *Autism Treatment information for families*

[NIMH Autism Topic](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml#part6) *Information for families*

[Association for Science in Autism Treatment](http://www.asatonline.org/for-medical-professionals/) *Considers available evidence for current treatments and provides related recommendations*

***“Optimal Outcomes” in Autism***

* Studies referenced by NYT Article:

[Optimal outcome in individuals with a history of autism](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12037/abstract%3FdeniedAccessCustomisedMessage=%26userIsAuthenticated=false)

[Predicting young adult outcome among more and less cognitively able individuals with autism spectrum disorders](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12178/full)

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!