Early Identification of Autism

Normal Development

1st Year
Social Skills
- Joint Attention
  - Social Smile - 2 months
  - Following gaze - 8 months
  - Follow a point - 10 to 12 months

Communication
- Babbling - 6 months
- Alternating to-and-fro pattern of vocalization - 6 months
- Turning to own name - 8 to 10 months
- Waves bye bye - 12 months
- "Give it to me" with gestures - 11 to 12 months

2nd Year
Social Skills
- Point to out of reach objects - 12 to 14 months
- Point and look between object and parent - 14 to 16 months
- Show objects to parents - 14 to 16 months
- Point to interesting object - 14 to 16 months

Communication

Early Signs of Autism - 0 to 2 Years

1st Year
Social Skills
- Lack of progressive development of joint attention
- Limited eye contact
- Content to be alone
- May become attached to a hard object

Stereotypical/Repetitive Behaviors
- Excessive mouthing of objects
- Aversion to social touch

Communication
- Lack of alternating pattern of vocalization - 6 months
- Not babbling - 12 months (rule out hearing loss)
- Lack of pre-speech gestures (waving, pointing, showing)
- Poor response to name

2nd Year
Social Skills
- Seems independent (uses advanced motor skills to attain objects rather than requesting
- Abnormal eye contact
- No pretend play i.e. feed the doll

Stereotypical/Repetitive Behaviors
- Inappropriate use of objects
- Hand and finger mannerisms - emerge at 3 years
- Hyper or Hyposensitivity to sounds, textures, taste, visual stimuli

Communication
- No words by 16 months
- No two word phrases by 24 months
- Echolalia-stereotypic repetition of words
- Does not respond to name
- Does not follow commands
- Regression of language at any age

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**Diagnostic Criteria DSM-IV-TR**

ICD-9 299.00

(I) A total of 6 or more items from (A), (B) and (C) with at least 2 from (A) and 1 each from (B) and (C)

(A) Social Interaction

- Use of multiple nonverbal behaviors
- Failure to develop peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people

(B) Communication

- Spoken language — either delay or lack of
- If adequate speech, difficulty in initiating or sustaining conversation
- Stereotyped, repetitive or idiosyncratic language
- Lack of varied, spontaneous, make-believe play or social imitative play

(C) Restricted Repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities

- Preoccupation with one or more stereotyped/restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal in intensity or focus
- Inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines or rituals
- Stereotyped/repetitive motor mannerisms
- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

(II) Delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas, with onset prior to age 3 years:

(A) Social interaction

(B) Language used in social communication

(C) Symbolic or imaginative play

*Criteria are difficult to apply to children under 3 years

**Surveillance and Screening**

**Age 0 to 2 years**

**Surveillance**

- Family History of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - 18% increased risk if sibling with ASD
- Assessment of Developmental Milestones - Joint attention deficits the most robust clue to autism
- Parental Concern - 80 to 90% recognize child abnormalities <24 months

**Screening Tools**

- M-CHAT 16 to 48 months: www2.gsu.edu/~psydlr/Diana_L._Robins_-_Ph.D..html
- STAT 24 to 36 months: http://stat.vueinnovations.com/about

**Physical Findings Warranting further work-up**

- Acquired macrocephaly, microcephaly
- Syndromic exam findings
- Language Delay - Always R/O hearing loss

**Resources**

**Local**

Early Childhood Education Programs
INTOT (360) 748-4359
ECEAP (360) 736-9391
Growing Together (360) 736-5906
Lewis County Head Start (360) 736-1696
Pope’s Kids Place (360) 736-9147, ext 107

Family Support
Parent to Parent — (360) 736-9558

State and National

State Diagnostic Centers
Mary Bridge Developmental Center (253) 403-1400
Tacoma UW Autism Center (253) 692-4721
Seattle Children’s Autism Center (206) 987-8081
UW Child Development Clinic - Seattle (503) 413-2200
Madigan Army Medical Center for Military Personnel - (253) 968-0261

Internet Resources

- Autism Speaks: www.autismspeaks.org
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): www.ded.gov/ncbddd/autism
- AAP Autism Toolkit: www2.aap.org/publiced/autismtoolkit.cfm