

# Red Flags for Autism

## Warning Signs of Autism in Early Childhood

Parents should ask their child's family doctor for referral to a developmental pediatrician for assessment if there are concerns with any of the following:

### Communication Red Flags



- No babbling by 11 months of age
- No simple gestures by 12 months (e.g., waving bye-bye)
- No single words by 16 months
- No 2-word phrases by 24 months (noun + verb – e.g., “baby sleeping”)
- No response when name is called, causing concern about hearing
- Loss of any language or social skills at any age

### Behavioural Red Flags



- Odd or repetitive ways of moving fingers or hands
- Oversensitive to certain textures, sounds or lights
- Lack of interest in toys, or plays with them in an unusual way (e.g., lining up, spinning, opening/closing parts rather than using the toy as a whole)
- Compulsions or rituals (has to perform activities in a special way or certain

sequence; is prone to tantrums if rituals are interrupted)

- Preoccupations with unusual interests, such as light switches, doors, fans, wheels
- Unusual fears

## Social Red Flags



- Rarely makes eye contact when interacting with people
- Does not play peek-a-boo
- Doesn't point to show things he/she is interested in
- Rarely smiles socially
- More interested in looking at objects than at people's faces
- Prefers to play alone
- Doesn't make attempts to get parent's attention; doesn't follow/look when someone is pointing at something
- Seems to be "in his/her own world"
- Doesn't respond to parent's attempts to play, even if relaxed
- Avoids or ignores other children when they approach

Autism is treatable.

Early intervention is critical.

Know the warning signs of autism in young children.

Act early.