

## AUTISM ADVISOR Information, and Tips about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

## **Red Flags for Autism**

## Warning Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood

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If you observe items on the following list it may mean that your child is developing differently. Parents should discuss this with their family doctor or pediatrician and ask about a referral for further assessment.

- Doesn't point to show others things he/she is interested in
- Inconsistent or reduced use of eye contact with people outside the family
- Rarely smiles when looking at others or does not exchange back and forth warm, joyful expressions
- Does not spontaneously use gestures such as waving, reaching or pointing with others
- Does not respond to gestures and facial expressions used by others
- More interested in looking at objects than at people's faces
- May be content to spend extended periods of time alone
- Doesn't make attempts to get parent's attention; doesn't follow/look when someone is pointing at something; doesn't bring a toy or other item to parent to show them
- Inconsistent in responding when his or her name is called
- 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 or interact
- No words by 16 months or no two-word phrases by 24 months
- Any loss of previously acquired language or social skills
- Odd or repetitive ways of moving or holding fingers, hands or whole body (rocking, pacing). Walks on toes.
- Displays a strong reaction to certain textures, sounds or lights (e.g., may reject clothing or want to be completely covered, put hands over ears, stare at lights)
- May appear indifferent to pain or temperature

- Lacks interest in toys, or plays with them in an unusual way (e.g., lining up, spinning, smelling, opening/closing parts rather than using the toy as a whole)
- May engage in prolonged visual inspection of objects (e.g., may stare along edges, dangle string or move items closely in front of his/her eyes)
- Insists on routines (has to perform activities in a special way or certain sequence; requires a particular route or food and is difficult to calm if even small changes occur)
- Preoccupation with unusual interests, such as light switches, doors, fans, wheels difficult to distract from these
  activities
- Unusual fears but may not seek comfort from adults

Autism is treatable.

Early intervention is critical.

Know the warning signs of autism in young children.

Act early.



**DISCLAIMER:** This document reflects the views of the author. It is Autism Ontario's intent to inform and educate. Every situation is unique and while we hope this information is useful, it should be used in the context of broader considerations for each person. Please contact Autism Ontario at info@autismontario.com or 416-246-9592 for permission to reproduce this material for any purpose other than personal use. © 2012 Autism Ontario 416.246.9592 www.autismontario.com

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