

Early Signs and Symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) presents with early signs and behaviors that can be observed in young children. Recognizing these signs early can lead to timely intervention and support.

Common Early Signs of ASD

Lack of or Delayed Speech

- Delayed or absent speech development compared to peers
- Difficulty expressing needs or using age-typical language
- Limited use of gestures or pointing to communicate
- Repetitive speech or copying speech they hear from others or television shows, songs, etc., known as echolalia

Difficulties with Social Interactions

- Difficulties in making or maintaining eye contact during interactions
- Difficulty understanding or responding to social cues like facial expressions or other physical gestures
- Preferring to play alone or having limited interest in social play with peers

Repetitive Behaviors

- Engaging in repetitive movements or actions like hand-flapping, rocking back and forth or spinning objects
- Watching portions of videos repeatedly or playing with toys in unexpected ways
- Experiencing intense dysregulation when routines are broken
- Food selectivity and preference for eating the same foods

Behavioral Support Needs

Due to limited communication and sensory processing difficulties, children on the spectrum may:

- Experience longer or more intense episodes of dysregulation that may include aggressive behaviors
- Struggle to regulate their emotions
- Attempt self-injurious behaviors

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Why Early Recognition Matters

Early intervention can improve outcomes by promoting communication skills, social interactions and adaptive behaviors.

Seeking guidance from health care professionals can provide clarity and support for families navigating an autism diagnosis.

Next Steps: If you notice any of these signs or have concerns about your child's development, consult with your pediatrician or a developmental specialist.

Learn More

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