

# Autism: Including Children with Social, Communication, and Behavioral Needs



"Children and Challenging Behavior  
Making Inclusion Work,"

[www.inclusivechildcare.org](http://www.inclusivechildcare.org)

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Early Parental Concerns: The following parental concerns could indicate a very young child is at risk for atypical development. If a cluster of concerns is noted (any typical child may have a single item on the list), they should be taken seriously, prompting immediate further investigation and routine developmental screening.

## Communication Concerns:

- Does not respond to her name
- Cannot tell someone what she wants
- Language is delayed
- Does not follow directions
- Appears deaf at times
- Does not point or wave bye-bye
- Previously said a few words but now she does not

## Social Concerns:

- Does not smile socially
- Seems to prefer to play alone
- Does things "early"
- Has poor eye contact
- Is not interested in other children
- Is in her own world and tunes others out
- Gets things for herself and is very independent

## Behavior Concerns:

- Throws tantrums, is hyperactive, uncooperative, or oppositional
- Gets stuck on things over and over
- Toe walks and has odd movement patterns
- Has unusual attachments to toys (e.g., always holds same toy)
- Does not know how to play with toys
- Is oversensitive to certain textures or sounds
- Lines things up

Red Flags or Absolute Indicators: The following are red flags, or absolute indicators, and may indicate a young child is at risk for atypical development. These concerns should be taken seriously, prompting further investigation with screening and immediate evaluation.

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by the age six months or thereafter.
- No back and forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by the age of nine months or thereafter.
- No babbling by the age of twelve months.
- No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by the age of twelve months.
- No words by the age of sixteen months.
- No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by the age of twenty-four months.
- ANY loss of speech, babbling, or social skills at ANY age.