

Screening for Autism Could Begin at the 1-Year Well-Baby Visit

A simple checklist can detect autism spectrum disorders, language delays, and developmental delays as early as the 1-year well-baby visit, according to a *Journal of Pediatrics* study.

Thirty pediatrics offices in San Diego County participated in a program that screened all infants for autism and related disorders at the 1-year checkup. Screening involved a 24-item checklist that parents completed in about 5 minutes in the waiting room. Of some 10,500 screened infants, 184 failed and were tracked every 6 months for 3 years. Some 40 infants who passed served as controls.

During follow-up, 32 of the 184 infants were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, 56 with language delays, 9 with developmental delays, and 36 with "other" delays. The positive predictive value of the checklist was calculated at 75%. All controls continued to test normally throughout follow-up.

American Academy of Pediatrics Urges Universal Autism Screening

All children should be formally screened for autism at 18 and 24 months, even if there's no reason to suspect the disorder, according to new guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

A clinical report, "Identification and Evaluation of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders," was released by the academy online. It notes several red flags that call for immediate evaluation:

- lack of babbling, pointing, or gesturing by 12 months
- no words by 16 months
- no spontaneous two-word phrases by 24 months
- regression of language or social skills

Physicians are encouraged to look for signs of autism at every well-child visit and to ask parents open-ended questions about developmental concerns, such as a child not responding to his or her name. The report also provides an algorithm for screening children for autism. The AAP says early diagnosis will help "guide families to effective interventions, which will ultimately improve the lives of children with [autism spectrum disorders] and their families."

A second report, "Management of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders," reviews therapies and educational strategies. Both reports will appear in the November issue of *Pediatrics*.

<https://webmail.cbeyondonline.net/owa/?ae=Item&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAAA42XssLMywS5FTIW0tFlIWBwBXCq2PdQoTTKVaqrUmsh%2bAAxqYDJgAABXCq2PdQoTTKVaqrUmsh%2bABgcg0XAAAAJ&cb=0>

<http://firstwatch.jwatch.org/cgi/content/full/2007/1030/1?q=pfw>



CSBS DP Infant-Toddler Checklist

Child's name: _____ Date of birth: _____ Date filled out: _____

Was birth premature? _____ If yes, how many weeks premature? _____

Filled out by: _____ Relationship to child: _____

Instructions for caregivers: This Checklist is designed to identify different aspects of development in infants and toddlers. Many behaviors that develop before children talk may indicate whether or not a child will have difficulty learning to talk. This Checklist should be completed by a caregiver when the child is between **6 and 24 months of age** to determine whether a referral for an evaluation is needed. The caregiver may be either a parent or another person who nurtures the child daily. Please check all the choices that best describe your child's behavior. If you are not sure, please choose the closest response based on your experience. **Children at your child's age are not necessarily expected to use all the behaviors listed.**

Emotion and Eye Gaze

- 1. Do you know when your child is happy and when your child is upset? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 2. When your child plays with toys, does he/she look at you to see if you are watching? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 3. Does your child smile or laugh while looking at you? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 4. When you look at and point to a toy across the room, does your child look at it? Not Yet Sometimes Often

Communication

- 5. Does your child let you know that he/she needs help or wants an object out of reach? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 6. When you are not paying attention to your child, does he/she try to get your attention? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 7. Does your child do things just to get you to laugh? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 8. Does your child try to get you to notice interesting objects—just to get you to look at the objects, not to get you to do anything with them? Not Yet Sometimes Often

Gestures

- 9. Does your child pick up objects and give them to you? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 10. Does your child show objects to you without giving you the object? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 11. Does your child wave to greet people? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 12. Does your child point to objects? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 13. Does your child nod his/her head to indicate yes? Not Yet Sometimes Often

Sounds

- 14. Does your child use sounds or words to get attention or help? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 15. Does your child string sounds together, such as *uh oh, mama, gaga, bye bye, bada*? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 16. About how many of the following consonant sounds does your child use:
ma, na, ba, da, ga, wa, la, ya, sa, sha? None 1-2 3-4 5-8 over 8

Words

- 17. About how many different words does your child use meaningfully that you recognize (such as *baba* for bottle; *gaggie* for doggie)? None 1-3 4-10 11-30 over 30
- 18. Does your child put two words together (for example, *more cookie, bye bye Daddy*)? Not Yet Sometimes Often

Understanding

- 19. When you call your child's name, does he/she respond by looking or turning toward you? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 20. About how many different words or phrases does your child understand without gestures? For example, if you say "where's your tummy," "where's Daddy," "give me the ball," or "come here," without showing or pointing, your child will respond appropriately. None 1-3 4-10 11-30 over 30

Object Use

- 21. Does your child show interest in playing with a variety of objects? Not Yet Sometimes Often
- 22. About how many of the following objects does your child use appropriately:
cup, bottle, bowl, spoon, comb or brush, toothbrush, washcloth, ball, toy vehicle, toy telephone? None 1-2 3-4 5-8 over 8
- 23. About how many blocks (or rings) does your child stack? **Stacks** None 2 blocks 3-4 blocks 5 or more
- 24. Does your child pretend to play with toys (for example, feed a stuffed animal, put a doll to sleep, put an animal figure in a vehicle)? Not Yet Sometimes Often

Do you have any concerns about your child's development? yes no **If yes, please describe on back.**