

ASD Module Script

Module 2: Early Detection

Early Detection: Developmental Differences in Children with ASD: Welcome to the module on early detection. The goal of this portion of the training module is to understand symptoms of ASD that are commonly observed throughout early childhood. Knowing the red flags helps clinicians decide when to refer and when to wait. Keep in mind that symptoms exhibited by a child with ASD may change over time. The symptoms we discuss here in the infant and toddler years may be non-existent later in life.

Developmental Differences: 0-1 Year:

- Some children with ASD do not babble, point, or make meaningful gestures by 1 year of age
- They may seem irritable, and are not easily soothed
- If they do not respond to his or her name
- Or avoid eye contact
- Also, they may not smile (or are socially-unresponsive to smiles directed at them)
- At times, they may even seem to be hearing-impaired

Developmental Differences: 1-2 Years:

- The child does not speak 1 word by 16 months of age
- Does not combine 2 words by 2 years of age
- Doesn't seem to know how to play with toys
- Has repetitive behaviors and an absence of functional object play
- Seems to lack creativity in play
- Is attached to one particular toy or object with intensity

Developmental Differences: 2-5 Years 1: There is some continuing overlap of developmental differences for children as they move into the toddler years. There may be a lack of responsiveness on the child's part when their name is used and they may fail to make and keep eye contact consistently. Joint attention, which should have begun its emergence around nine months of age, should be solidly developed at this time, yet a child with an ASD may continue to not demonstrate this ability. At this age, language becomes a focal point of development, yet a child with ASD may be failing to develop speech or experience a regression in previously developed spoken language. While language development is currently an associated characteristic, it is not uncommon for this to be one

of the first red flags noted by caregivers and professionals interacting with a child who may later be diagnosed with Autism.

Developmental Difference: 2-5 Years 2: Instead of undeveloped or regressed speech, some individuals may develop atypical speech, such as odd or idiosyncratic language. As a child continues in their toddler years toward their school age years, the deficits across all areas really begin to emerge. Another difference that becomes apparent is the way that the child regulates their emotions, with the presence of tantrums and over-emotional reactions. As previously noted with language, regressions may also occur in play behaviors and social skills as well. Indeed, cases that are termed regressive amount for up to 50% of all diagnoses.

Summary: Early Detection: You have now completed Module 2: Early Detection. In this module, we covered developmental red flags that are characteristic of a possible ASD for children ages birth to five. Please proceed to the post assessment.
