

Early Warning Signs

Here are some early warning signs that might make you suspect a child is developing communication and/or social skills in an atypical fashion:

- Not speaking in single words by 2 years of age.
- Not speaking in simple phrases by 3 years of age.
- Not smiling spontaneously to human contact by 3-6 months of age.
- Not becoming more outgoing with familiar people by 6-9 months of age.
- Not preferring to be with specific people by 6-9 months of age.
- Not reacting to others' moods by 9-12 months of age.
- Not naming common objects by 19-24 months of age.
- Not following simple commands by 19-24 months of age (e.g., "Show me your nose").
- Not knowing primary body parts by 25-36 months of age.
- Not able to give name, age, and gender by 25-36 months of age.
- Not knowing names of animals by 4 years of age.
- Not enjoying or actively engaging in make-believe play by 4 years of age.
- Not using generally correct verbal language by 5 years of age.
- Children who are not easily soothed by human contact.
- Children who do not make eye contact in a socially driven manner.
- Children who prefer to play alone and are not responsive to attempts at redirection.
- Children who do not engage in functional play with toys (e.g., prefer to spin the wheels on a car rather than race it down a track).
- Children who engage in odd, repetitive motor mannerisms.

SOURCES

Zukerman, B.S.; Frank, D.A.; & Augustyn, M. *Infancy and Toddler Years*. In Levine, M.D.; Carey, W.B.; & Crocker, A.C. (1999) Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics – 3rd Edition. Philadelphia: Saunders.

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