

## Early Childhood Evaluation Program – Technical Assistance & Consultation

### Continuing Education series for NM FIT Providers

Presented by

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Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP) Interdisciplinary Clinical Faculty and Staff

## Autism and Sensory Differences: Recognizing Red Flags and Talking to Families about Specific Diagnostic Concerns

March 30 & April 1, 2022

University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
   
 Department of Pediatrics - Center for Development & Disability



## Introductions and Housekeeping


- Today's ECEP Team
- We want to see you!
- We want to hear you!
  - Please use the chat or jump in with comments, ideas, and questions.
  - Goal is to share experiences and knowledge



## Objectives for today


- List at least three red flags that warrant referral/ further assessment for autism spectrum disorder.
- Identify three basic strategies for sharing developmental concerns with a family.
- Describe some basic pitfalls people tend to fall into in discussing developmental concerns and making a referral for further assessment.
- Identify one step to take to improve your ability to discuss concerns with a family.
- Identify at least one new resource that can be shared with families.





 NEW MEXICO  
**Early Childhood**  
 Education & Care Department

Family Support and Early Intervention Division  
 FAMILY INFANT TODDLER (FIT) PROGRAM


## Why is early identification important?




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- Early signs of ASD can be easy to miss, and too often professionals recommend a “wait and see” approach.
- Autism can be reliably diagnosed by 18-24 months, children usually are not diagnosed until 4-5 years (girls are also dx later).
- In 2021, CDC reported 1 in 44 children in US dx with ASD.
  - 1 in 27 boys
  - 1 in 116 girls
- Loss of skills affects 1 in 5 children with ASD, and typically occurs between ages 1 and 3.

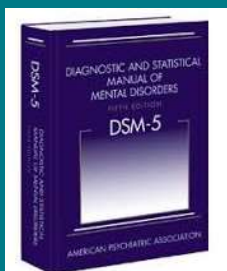
## Why is early identification important


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- If not caught early, can have cascading effect on brain development, lead to significant social, language, and cognitive deficits AND challenging behaviors.
  - 31% of children with ASD have an intellectual disability (IQ <70) and struggle with daily functioning
  - More than half of children with autism have one or more chronic sleep problems
  - Nearly 28% of 8-year-olds with ASD have self-injurious behaviors (head banging, arm biting, skin scratching)
  - Motor impairments are common in children with ASD (90%) (Bhat 2020) and may be one of the earliest signs of disorder
  - 69% to 95% of people with ASD have sensory processing problems (Hazen, E. et al, 2014)

**Early Intervention and ABA are key to set children up for success, determine how they learn, and support families!**

## DSM-5 Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder



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### A. Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts:

Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity

Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction

Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

### B. Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities:

Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech

Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns or verbal nonverbal behavior

Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus

Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment\*\*

\*\* new consideration

## Breaking down criteria:

### Social Communication & Social Interaction

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### Deficits in Social Emotional Reciprocity

- Inappropriate gaze
- Lack of warm, joyful expressions
- Lack of sharing interests
- Lack of response to contextual cues
- Lack of response to name
- Lack of coordination of nonverbal communication

Response to name: <https://youtu.be/M9LCahr6BSs>

Lack of response to name: <https://youtu.be/LXRat1pabU>

Joint Attention: <https://youtu.be/yLBuoOWdOdE>

## Breaking down criteria:

### Social Communication & Social Interaction



## Deficits in Nonverbal Communication

- Lack of showing
- Lack of pointing
- Unusual prosody
- Lack of communicative consonants
- Using a person's hand as a tool

Ice cream and play: <https://youtu.be/yAv0G6S5ZPc>

Inappropriate play: <https://youtu.be/uS8ZHme6pk0>

Shyness: <https://youtu.be/quMxuPxmFs>

## Breaking down criteria:

### Restricted & Repetitive Interests & Behaviors



## Repetitive Behaviors & Restricted Interests

- Repetitive movements with objects
- Repetitive movements or posturing of body
- Lack of playing with a variety of toys
- Unusual sensory exploration or reactions
- Excessive interest in particular toys

Echolalia: <https://youtu.be/xidivV9wmbg>

Speech Milestones: <https://youtu.be/OTBv3F8Uu6o>

Hand Flapping: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_gZqQy\\_Ae4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_gZqQy_Ae4)

Toe Walking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBPfv3vEUvE>

## Breaking down criteria:

### Restricted & Repetitive Interests & Behaviors

#### Emotional Regulation

- Distress over removing objects
- Difficulty calming when distressed
- Abrupt shifts in emotional states
- Unresponsive to interactions

Difficulty with transitions: <https://youtu.be/K-6i0tkMS4M>

## Case Example

Small Group Discussion

<https://youtu.be/1Q2CzTJh7nl>


Watch video of both twins and consider for each:

What red flags do you see?


Do these red flags warrant a referral?

What do you think this mother sees in these two children? Is she aware of the differences and red flags?

How would you support her in noticing these behaviors, assessing her concern, and talking about a referral for an ASD assessment?



## Case-specific Inquiries and Questions?



### Join us for more ECEP Office Hours:

Session 2: **Recognizing Red Flags and Talking to Families about Specific Diagnostic Concerns (Focus on Autism and Sensory Issues)**

March 30 at 4pm and April 1 at 8am

Session 3: **Recognizing Red Flags and Talking to Families about Specific Diagnostic Concerns (Review/check in on Autism; Focus on Cerebral Palsy and other complex neurodevelopmental issues)**

April 27 at 4pm and April 29 at 8am

Session 4: **Family-Focused Strategies Addressing Autism Spectrum Disorder, Feeding Issues, and Sensory processing concerns.**

May 25 at 4pm and May 27 at 8am

Session 5: **Family – Focused Strategies Addressing Cerebral Palsy.**

June 22 at 4pm and 24 at 8am



## References

Autism Speaks (2022). Autism Statistics and Facts. *Autism Speaks*. Retrieved on 3/17/22 at: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-statistics-asd>

CDC (2018) What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved on 9/22/20 at <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>

Weatherby, AM (2019). The power of early: Helping families change their child's trajectory. Retrieved at <https://identifythesigns.org/autism-resources-early-intervention-16-signs-gestures/>

UNM CDD AODD Webinar: [https://www.cdd.unm.edu/cddlearn/autism-portal-courses/for-parents/preschool-interventions/ASDInTheEarlyYears/presentation\\_html5.html](https://www.cdd.unm.edu/cddlearn/autism-portal-courses/for-parents/preschool-interventions/ASDInTheEarlyYears/presentation_html5.html)

Autism Case Training: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/autism/case-modules/identifying.html>

Bhat AN. Is Motor Impairment in Autism Spectrum Disorder Distinct From Developmental Coordination Disorder? A Report From the SPARK Study. *Phys Ther.* 2020 Apr 17;100(4):633-644. doi: 10.1093/ptj/pzz190.

Hazen, E. et al (2014) Sensory Symptoms in Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*.



## Additional resources

### More Helpful Videos

<https://autismnavigator.com/red-flags-of-autism/>

<https://autismnavigator.com/>

[https://babynavigator.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/16x16\\_early\\_glimpse.pdf](https://babynavigator.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/16x16_early_glimpse.pdf)

<https://autismnavigator.com/asd-video-glossary/>

### Additional Webinars/Online Trainings

UNM CDD AODD Webinar: [https://www.cdd.unm.edu/cddlearn/autism-portal-courses/for-parents/preschool-interventions/ASDInTheEarlyYears/presentation\\_html5.html](https://www.cdd.unm.edu/cddlearn/autism-portal-courses/for-parents/preschool-interventions/ASDInTheEarlyYears/presentation_html5.html)

Autism Case Training: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/autism/case-modules/identifying.html>

### Information for Providers and Families

UNM CDD Autism Portal: <https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/>

Autism Family and Provider Resource Team:  
<http://www.cdd.unm.edu/autism/programs/index.html>  
(505) 272-1852 or toll-free 1-800-270-1861

ASHA handout: <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/full/10.1044/leader.FTR1.24042019.46>

Link to online Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) Symptoms Checklist:  
<https://sensoryhealth.org/basic/symptoms-checklist>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Learn the Signs, Act Early  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html> &  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/signs.html>





# Contact information

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