



FIT Annual Meeting

Presented by

Julia Oppenheimer, Ph.D.

UNM Associate Professor and Clinical Psychologist, Director for Early Childhood Clinical Services

Sandy Heimerl, PT, MS, DPT, Meg McLaughlin, MS, OTR/L, Kristine Domino, MS-CCC, SLP, J. Alyx Medlock, MS-CCC, SLP, Sarah Lancaster, LMSW, Mareth Williams, MD, Osana Abich Oliva, MD

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

Early Childhood Evaluation Program





Autism Spectrum Disorder: Recognizing Red Flags and Talking to Families about Specific Diagnostic Concerns (SPIKES Model)

June 16, 2022

FIT Annual Meeting – Virtual Professional Development Day
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
Department of Pediatrics - Center for Development & Disability



Introductions and Housekeeping

- 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



*Please note this zoom platform is not HIPAA-compliant - please do not identify any confidential/case-related information.



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.
- Understand use of the SPIKES model and what strategies each letter represents
- 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 th with families.



Why is early identification important?

- Early signs of ASD can be easy to miss, and too often professional 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

- 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)

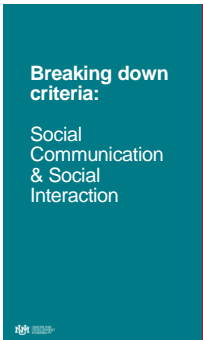
Early Intervention and ABA are key to set children up for success, determine how they learn, and support families!



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



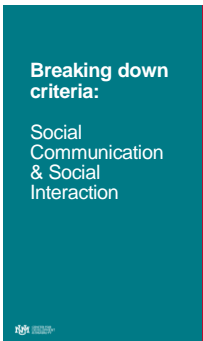
Deficits in Social Emotional Reciprocity

- 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/LXRat11pabU>

Joint Attention: https://youtu.be/vL_BuoOWd0dE



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/yAw0G6SS2Pc>

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

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

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

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


Speech Milestones: <https://youtu.be/OTBy3F8Uu6e>

Hand Flapping: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_gZqQv_Ae4

Toe Walking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBPfv3yEUyE>

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-60kMS4M>

Case Example

Recognizing red flags for ASD

<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?

Family Centered Care

"Ten years from now, I may not remember the particular test or therapies administered to my son, but I will most definitely remember the interaction I had with you. I will strive to remember your name and especially the way in which you spoke with me and my child—the compassion you exhibited."

(A parent, in Leff et al., 1991 Children's Health Care)



SPIKES PROTOCOL

- Setting
- Perception
- Invitation
- Knowledge
- Empathize
- Summary and Strategy

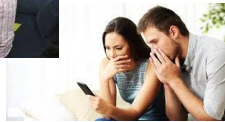


Adapted from: Baile WF, Kudaska AP, Beale EA, et al. Communication skills training in oncology: description and preliminary outcomes of workshops on breaking bad news and managing patient reactions to illness. Cancer. 1999;86:887-97.



Setting

- Privacy
- Comfortable location
- Enough time to talk
- Distractions



Perception

Explore family's ideas, openness, and awareness



Invitation

-Are parents willing to have this conversation?
-How much do they want to talk about today?




Knowledge


Share information
Use plain language



Empathy
Identify family's emotion and provide empathic response
Recognize how this may be hard




Strategy
- Present options, resources, referrals



Case Example
Applying SPIKES model

<https://youtu.be/1Q2CzTJh7nI>



Watch video of both twins again, and consider:
How would you support this mother in noticing these behaviors, assessing her concern, and talking about a referral for an ASD assessment?

Tell us about **your** experience with these kinds of conversations



- What has been hard?
- What has gone well?
- What cultural differences or specific cultural perspectives have you encountered?
- Do sensory differences come up before the question about Autism?





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://identifyfreesigns.org/autism-resources-early-intervention-16-signs-essays/>

UNM CDD AODD Webinar: 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):e33-e44. doi: 10.1093/pt/pz1190.

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://autismnavigator.com/ast-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

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/autismprogram/index.html> (505) 272-1852 or tollfree 1-800-276-1961

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

Link to online Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) Symptoms Checklist: <https://sensoryteam.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

Julia Oppenheimer, PhD, IMH-E®(III)
505-272-5899 (phone)
joppenheimer@salud.unm.edu

University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
Center for Development and Disability
2300 Menaul Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107

