**Developmental Signs of Autism**

**In the First Two Years of Life**

**Signs in the Second Year**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MOTOR** **MOTOR** | **SENSORY-PERCEPTUAL****SENSORY** | **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL****SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL** | **LANGUAGE/****COMMUNICATION** | **MENTAL****REPRESENTATION** |
| Toe-walkingRockingHead-bangingWhirling without dizzinessPerseverative movementsHand-flappingTouches everythingMay have difficulty planning and sequencing movementsMay seem to move about without direction or purposeMay seem oblivious to people or objects when in motion (steps on toys on the floor, steps on caregiver’s hand playing together on the floor) | Withdraws from environmental stimulationEngages in self-stimulationPreoccupied with spinning objectsSuddenly ceases activity or stares into spaceMay show difficulty integrating senses across modalities - touching and looking, listening and lookingDoesn’t use gaze (eye contact) to regulate interaction (may turn away or move away when being touched and spoken to simultaneously) | Moves adult’s hand like a toolInsists on sameness and ritualizes routinesSeems to prefer objects to peopleMay be content for long periods without interactionDoesn’t play lap games, patty-cake, eensy-weensy spiderDoesn’t bring objects to show to caregiverDoesn’t look to caregiver for approval, pleasure, or to indicate a desireMay not respond to caregiver’s overtures with reciprocal intention | Echolalia, delayed echolalia unrelated to social contextPronoun reversals or omissions Voice atonal, hollow, arrhythmicMay not wave or say “hi” or “bye” or shake head yes or noMay not point to gain caregiver’s attention to desired objectMay not gesture or signal for more or to stop an activityMay not produce any recognizable words, may not use jargon or babbleMay not imitate sounds or wordsMay not look to speaker when name is calledMay not respond to “where is …” or “show me …” | No representational playLittle appropriate use of toysPreoccupied with impersonal invariant information (e.g., television commercials)May not look at booksMay not imitate body movements, finger play with songs, movement with objects (e.g., pretend to talk on the phone, put a hat on)May focus on repeated actions, routines (e.g., line up toys, dump baskets of small objects, repeat same button or lever on mechanical toy)Doesn’t laugh appropriately at caregiver’s humorous or surprise actionDoesn’t repeat action that made caregiver laugh |

© Barbara Kalmanson 2003

© Barbara Kalmanson 2003