

TALKING ABOUT AUTISM

A Roadmap for Physicians

Pediatricians and primary care clinicians play a pivotal role in increasing vital early diagnosis and access to care for the 1 in 36 children with autism spectrum disorders. As a trusted advisor to your patients and their families, the groundwork you lay with parents and caregivers can have a powerful and far-reaching impact.

Know the early warning signs

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| Why { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developmental delays can be identified at a very young age• Early intervention is proven to be the most effective way to help children learn skills and avoid unnecessary barriers to growth | Resources { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn over for early warning signs• www.firstsigns.org |
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Administer the MCHAT-R/F

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| Why { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autism screening for children 16-30 months• Validated, free, online• Translated into over 80 languages• Takes 15 minutes or less | Resources { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.mchatscreen.com• 0-2 : Low Risk - Rescreening advised• 3-7 : Moderate Risk - Refer for follow-up• 8-20 : High Risk - Immediate referral |
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Refer immediately for a diagnostic evaluation

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| Why { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When indicated by MCHAT-R/F• Reducing treatment delays optimizes early intervention leading to improved results | Resources { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ABS Kids has experienced, specialized in-house psychologists• We accept most insurance plans. |
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Talk to the family about autism

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| Why { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To familiarize caregiver with the term autism and your specific concerns related to autism• Clarify your concerns related to autism | Resources { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autism Society of America<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://autismsociety.org/screening-diagnosis/• American Academy of Pediatrics<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://publications.aap.org/toolkits/pages/Autism-Toolkit?autologincheck=redirected |
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Continued collaboration

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| Why { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases access to appropriate care• Improves treatment quality• Provides support for caregivers so they can focus on their child | Resources { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ABS Kids supports continuity of care by providing a written report of the results of the evaluation, timeline for care, and updates on entry to post-diagnosis treatment. |
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EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF AUTISM

12-18 Months

- Limited interest in interactive games such as Peek-A-Boo
- Doesn't show "stranger danger"
- Limited response to others (smiling, making a sound, or gesturing)
- Very inconsistent response to their name
- Limited babbling

18-24 Months

- Few to no words used
- Limited pretend play (pretending to be superheroes, playing dress up)
- Lack of pointing to show interest
- Limited social integration/ more engaged in parallel play

24-36 Months

- Sensitive to noises and how things feel (like clothing)
- Difficulty transitioning (tantrums, argues, etc)
- Picky Eater
- Language delay
- Doesn't engage in symbolic play (pretending a block is a car)
- Lack of interest in peers
- Doesn't initiate social interactions except to get needs met

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING EVALUATION

Autism evaluation involves interviews, observations, questionnaires, reports, and feedback sessions. ABS Kids emphasizes timely evaluations while maintaining personalized, quality care.



Before a diagnostic assessment, you will meet with us to discuss your child's history to determine if testing is warranted, or if other recommendations are more appropriate.



The psychologist will usually set up a diagnostic appointment of approximately three hours with your child. Sometimes another appointment will be scheduled with only the parents/caregivers.



The psychologist may also provide questionnaires to the parents/caregivers and to the child's teacher(s) to assess the child's behavior in different settings.



ABS Kids supports an empirical, data-driven approach — after a diagnostic assessment is complete, the psychologist will interpret the results and write a comprehensive report for the family.



The psychologist will review the results and discuss further recommendations with you. At this time, you're encouraged to ask the psychologist questions about the results.

Contact us for information on wait times, evaluation length, and teleassessment availability.

