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# Fundamental red flags that may help parents identify autism in children

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Autism spectrum disorders are being diagnosed in ever increasing numbers. Nationally, there are about 1 in 68 children identified with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network. However, the ADDM estimates that the number is even higher in New Jersey, with 1 in 45 children being diagnosed with an ASD.

Due to the prevalence of these disorders, it is crucial for parents to know how to recognize the warning signs, seek help if they are worried about their child's development and understand what interventions are available if their child is diagnosed with an ASD. Some of the most fundamental red flags for an ASD are:

- no big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by 6 months of age or thereafter
- no back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expressions by 9 months or thereafter
- no babbling by 12 months
- no back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by 12 months
- no words by 16 months
- no two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months
- any loss of speech or babbling or social skills at any age

Your child's pediatrician will screen for autism at regularly scheduled visits. However, if you have any concerns about signs of autism or any aspect of your child's development, you should speak with your pediatrician and arrange for additional evaluations. For more information about:

- Early developmental milestones: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/>
- Autism diagnosis, interventions and resources in NJ: <http://www.autismnj.org/>
- Early Intervention of NJ: will provide free developmental evaluations and

recommendations for interventions for child birth to 3 years: call 888-653-4463. For children 3 years and older, contact your local school district if you have concerns about your child's development.

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**Source:**

<http://www.valleyhealth.com/>

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