

## 22 Early Warning Signs of Autism

By Scott LaFee | March 05, 2015

**A**pril is Autism Awareness Month. The disorder is the fastest-growing serious development disability in the United States, affecting 1 in 68 children, according to [Autism Speaks](#), an advocacy group.



While there is no cure, early detection and treatment of [autism spectrum disorders](#) (ASD) can dramatically improve the lives of affected children and their families. There is no medical test for diagnosing ASD. Rather, experts assess a child's developing behaviors and social skills, often beginning as early as 12 months.

Here are some of the things to look for, though only a professional can determine if an infant or toddler is at true risk for an autism spectrum disorder. For more information, visit the [UC San Diego Autism Center of Excellence](#) or call 858-534-6912 to schedule an evaluation.

Toddlers between 12-24 months at risk for an ASD MIGHT:

- → Talk or babble in a voice with an unusual tone
- → Display unusual sensory sensitivities
- → Carry around objects for extended periods of time
- → Display unusual body or hand movements
- → Play with toys in an unusual manner
- → Show low enthusiasm to explore new things or appear underactive
- → Seem overly fussy or be difficult to soothe

Toddlers between 12-24 months at risk for an ASD MIGHT NOT:

- → Point at things

- → Babble or talk back and forth with another person
- → Try to gain the attention of others
- → Smile in response to your smile
- → Make good eye contact
- → Show objects to others
- → Point to request
- → Respond to their name
- → Look when you try to direct their attention
- → Enjoy cuddling
- → Show shared enjoyment
- → Say their first word by 12-14 months
- → Use common gestures
- → Show interest in other children
- → Use a large range of facial expressions

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## **Care at UC San Diego Health**

[Autism Center of Excellence](#)

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