

Early indications of autism

'Early detection of autism [has shifted] from language to early social and orientating behaviours' (Baird et al, 2001).

Characteristics of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) emerging between 12 and 24 months include:

- Deficits and delays in emerging joint attention;
- Decreased response to name;
- Decreased imitation;
- Delays in verbal and non-verbal communication;
- Motor delay;
- Elevated frequency of repetitive behaviours;
- Atypical visuo-motor exploration of objects;
- Extremes of temperament;
- Decreased flexibility in disengaging visual attention.

(Elsabbagh and Johnson, 2009)

The innovative Autism Observation Scale for Infants (AOSI) focuses on behavioural symptom precursors (Elsabbagh and Johnson, 2009).

References

Baird, G., Charman, T., Cox, A., Baron-Cohen, S., Swettenham, J., Wheelwright, S. and Drew, A. (2001) [Screening and surveillance for autism and pervasive developmental disorders](#), *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 84, 468-475 (accessed 12.1.12).

Elsabbagh, M. and Johnson, M.H. (2009) Getting answers from babies about autism, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14 (2), 81-87.