



Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Interest in early identification of autism and autism spectrum disorders has never been higher. Parents read about autism in popular magazines or see celebrities give testimonials on talk shows. As a result, First Steps providers may be asked to give their opinion about a child's potential diagnosis. If you are concerned about potential indications of an autism spectrum disorder in a child or simply want to help parents get more information:

First Steps mental health professionals can help!



Many people think of language delays first when wondering about autism. However, social behavior deficits can be identified earlier than language deficits and appear to be a better predictor of later autism. A critical social behavior occurring early in development is joint attention (JA) or spontaneous sharing of enjoyment about an object or event by looking between it and another person.

Early JA and other social behaviors include:

- * Eye contact and social smile in first few months
- * Back and forth "talking" by 6 months
- * Turning consistently to name by 8 to 10 months
- * Following someone else's point by 10 to 12 months
- * Pointing to request by 12 to 14 months
- * Pointing for social reasons by 14-16 months

First Steps mental health providers can help with diagnosis and with supports and information for families.

**Indiana Association for
Infant & Toddler Mental Health**

1431 North Delaware St
Indianapolis, IN 46202

www.iaitmh.org
E-mail: info@iaitmh.org