Warning Signs to Watch For

Five Things to Know:

1. Your child is unique and develops at his or her own pace.
2. Understanding the basics about child development will make you more aware of the skills your child should achieve.
3. Trusting your instincts – you know your child best. If something just doesn’t feel quite right, share your concerns with your health care provider.
4. Early identification and treatment are key to a bright future for your child.
5. Easter Seals services.

We know the first five years of every child’s life are an intensive developmental period. By age five, a child has begun to walk, talk, feed himself, make friends, and much more.

Make the first five years count for your child. Recognizing a problem is your very first step to ensure your child gets the services he or she needs early - at the time they can benefit the most.

Note: This list is not exhaustive; each child is unique and may reach developmental milestones slightly earlier or later than his or her peers.

Watch out if your child:

Before age 1
• Doesn’t blink when shown a bright light
• Doesn’t focus and follow a nearby object moving side to side
• Rarely moves arms and legs; seems stiff
• Seems excessively loose in the limbs, or floppy
• Doesn’t respond to loud sounds

Age 1
• Does not crawl
• Drags one side of body while crawling (for over one month)
• Cannot stand when supported
• Does not search for objects that are hidden while he watches
• Says no single words (“mama” or “dada”)
Age 2
• Does not speak at least fifteen words by eighteen months
• Does not use two-word sentences
• Does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon) by fifteen months
• Does not imitate actions or words by the end of this period
• Does not follow simple instructions

Age 3
• Cannot stack four blocks
• Still clings or cries whenever his parents leave him
• Shows no interest in interactive games
• Ignores other children
• Doesn’t respond to people outside the family

Age 4
• Is unable to separate from parents without major protest
• Is easily distracted and unable to concentrate on any single activity for more than five minutes
• Shows little interest in playing with other children
• Refuses to respond to people in general, or responds only superficially
• Rarely uses fantasy or imitation in play

Age 5
• Doesn’t use plurals or past tense properly when speaking
• Doesn’t talk about her daily activities and experiences
• Cannot build a tower of six to eight blocks
• Seems uncomfortable holding a crayon
• Has trouble taking off her clothing

If you suspect your child may have a problem, don’t delay. Contact your family doctor, public health nurse, or Easter Seals in your area immediately, or visit MaketheFirstFiveCount.org for more information.

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