

Emerge



A Child's Place

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Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy

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Parents Often Miss Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder



Bonnie Hacker, OT
Founder / Director

Parental concern ranks as a major indicator for risk of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Multiple studies encompassing 737 children show that parental concerns about speech, language, social skills, or other developmental arenas prove highly specific (79% to 81%) in detecting global developmental deficits.¹⁻³ However, the absence of parental concern is not sensitive enough in assessing normal development (47%).¹ In other words, parents often miss signs of autism spectrum disorder in their young children, but when they do report signs of ASD, the concerns are usually justified. This highlights the importance of childcare professionals using regular screening tools on a schedule rather than waiting for parental concern to initiate assessment procedures.

Historically, parents of children later diagnosed with ASD express concerns between 18 months and 4 years of age.^{4,5} However, retrospective studies of home videos showing children later diagnosed with ASD reveal that significant deviations in development (such as eye contact, responding to name, pointing, and showing) were evident by 12 months of age.^{6,7}

Early identification of developmental delays is important in ASD for two reasons. One reason is that younger siblings of children with ASD have a 10% to 20% chance of having ASD as well.⁸⁻¹⁰ Parents should have the opportunity to consider this information before deciding to have another child. The other reason is that **a growing body of evidence supports the consensus that intensive intervention with very young children can make a significant, positive impact on long-term outcomes of autism spectrum disorder.**¹¹⁻¹⁹

In the Durham/Chapel Hill area, TEACCH is often the referral source of choice for diagnosis of autism. A simultaneous referral for occupational and/or speech therapy is often indicated. Occupational and speech therapy are essential components of an effective intervention program for most children with ASD. **When developmental delay is suspected, children can benefit from pediatric OT and ST even prior to an official ASD diagnosis.**

The therapists at **Emerge - A Child's Place** have specific experience working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and EmERGE therapists have received continuing education in Floortime Intervention. Developed by Stanley Greenspan, MD, Floortime provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and treating children challenged by autism spectrum and related disorders. It focuses on helping children master the building blocks of relating, communicating, and thinking, rather than focusing on symptoms alone. The therapists at EmERGE truly tailor programs to the individual needs of both the child and his or her family. EmERGE involves parents in therapy sessions and gives them guidance and support for implementing therapy strategies at home.



Parents often miss signs of ASD, and when they do report signs, parents often report later than the ideal timing.



Affordable Care at EmERGE – A Child's Place

Many parents find that insurance coverage for pediatric occupational or speech therapy is often limited. In these cases, EmERGE has even more to offer in addition to uncompromising quality of care and excellent facilities. Even though the quality of care at EmERGE is at the highest levels, you will find the fees at EmERGE to be the most affordable.

Please tell parents about EmERGE – A Child's Place
Believing in a Child's Potential to Flourish

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