



Red Flags That Warrant a Referral for Early Intervention or Therapy Services

Gross Motor

If a child is...

- Not rolling by 7 months of age
- Not pushing up on straight arms, lifting his head and shoulders, by 8 months of age
- Not sitting independently by 10 months of age
- Not crawling (“commando” crawling—moving across the floor on his belly) by 10 months of age
- Not creeping (on all fours, what is typically called “crawling”) by 12 months of age
- Not sitting upright in a child-sized chair by 12 months of age
- Not pulling to stand by 12 months of age
- Not standing alone by 14 months of age
- Not walking by 18 months of age
- Not jumping by 30 months of age
- Not independent on stairs (up and down) by 30 months of age...*an early intervention/developmental therapy referral may be appropriate.*
- “walking” their hands up their bodies to achieve a standing position
- only walking on their toes, not the soles of their feet
- frequently falling/tripping, for no apparent reason
- still “toeing in” at two years of age
- unusual creeping patterns
- any known medical diagnosis can be considered a “red flag”: Down’s syndrome, cerebral palsy, congenital heart condition etc.

Fine Motor

If a child is...

- Frequently in a fist position with both hands after 6 months of age
- Not bringing both hands to midline (center of body) by 10 months of age
- Not banging objects together by 10 months of age

- Not clapping their hands by 12 months of age
- Not deliberately and immediately releasing objects by 12 months of age
- Not able to tip and hold their bottle by themselves and keep it up, without lying down, by 12 months of age
- Still using a fistful grasp to hold a crayon at 18 months of age
- Not using a mature pincer grasp (thumb and index finger, pad to pad) by 18 months of age
- Not imitating a drawing of a vertical line by 24 months of age
- Not able to snip with scissors by 30 months...*an early childhood intervention/developmental therapy referral may be appropriate*
- Using only one hand to complete tasks
- Not being able to move/open one hand/arm
- Drooling during small tasks that require intense concentration
- Displaying uncoordinated or jerky movements when doing activities
- Crayon strokes are either too heavy or too light to see
- Any known medical diagnosis can be considered a “red flag”: Down’s Syndrome, cerebral palsy etc.

Cognition/Problem Solving

If a child is...

- Not imitating body action on a doll by 15 months of age (i.e., kiss the baby, feed the baby)
- Not able to match two sets of objects by item by 27 months of age (i.e., blocks in one container and people in another)
- Not able to imitate a model from memory by 27 months (i.e., show me how you brush your teeth)
- Not able to match two sets of objects by color by 31 months of age
- Having difficulty problem solving during activities in comparison to his/her peers
- Unaware of changes in his/her environment and routine...*an early intervention/developmental therapy referral may be appropriate*

Sensory

If a child is...

- Very busy, always on the go, and has a very short attention to task
- Often lethargic or low arousal (appears to be tired/slow to respond, all the time, even after a nap)
- A picky eater
- Not aware of when they get hurt (no crying, startle, or reaction to injury)
- Afraid of swinging/movement activities; does not like to be picked up or be upside down
- Showing difficulty learning new activities (motor planning)
- Having a hard time calming themselves down appropriately
- Appearing to be constantly moving around, even while sitting
- Showing poor or no eye contact
- Frequently jumping and/or purposely falling to the floor/crashing into things
- Seeking opportunities to fall without regard to his/her safety or that of others
- Constantly touching everything they see, including other children
- Hypotonic (floppy body, like a wet noodle)
- Having a difficult time with transitions between activity or location
- Overly upset with change in routine
- Hates bath time or grooming activities such as; tooth brushing, hair brushing, hair cuts, having nails cut, etc.
- Afraid of/aversive to/avoids being messy, or touching different textures such as grass, sand, carpet, paint, play dough, etc....*An early childhood intervention/developmental therapy referral may be appropriate.*

NOTE: sensory integration/sensory processing issues should only be diagnosed by a qualified professional (primarily, occupational therapists and physical therapists). Some behaviors that appear to be related to sensory issues are actually behavioral issues independent of sensory needs.

Vision

If a child...

- Does not reach for an object close by
- holds objects closer than 3-4 inches from one or both eyes
- Does not make eye contact with others

Hearing

If a child...

- Does not respond to sounds or to the voices of familiar people
- Does not attend to bells or other sound-producing objects
- Does not respond appropriately to different levels of sound
- Does not babble

Self-Care

If a child is...

- Having difficulty biting or chewing food during mealtime
- Needing a prolonged period of time to chew and/or swallow
- Coughing/choking during or after eating on a regular basis
- Demonstrating a change in vocal quality during/after eating (i.e. they sound gurgled or hoarse when speaking/making sounds)
- Having significant difficulty transitioning between different food stages
- Not feeding him/herself finger foods by 14 months of age
- Not attempting to use a spoon by 15 months of age
- Not picking up and drinking from a regular open cup by 15 months of age
- Not able to pull off hat, socks or mittens on request by 15 months of age
- Not attempting to wash own hands or face by 19 months
- Not assisting with dressing tasks (excluding clothes fasteners) by 22 months
- Not able to deliberately undo large buttons, snaps and shoelaces by 34 months...*an early intervention/developmental therapy and referral may be appropriate.?*

Social/Emotional/Play Skills

If a child is...

- Not smiling by 4 months
- Not making eye contact during activities and interacting with peers and/or adults
- Not performing for social attention by 12 months
- Not imitating actions and movements by the age of 24 months
- Not engaging in pretend play by the age of 24 months
- Not demonstrating appropriate play with an object (i.e. instead of trying to put objects into a container, the child leaves the objects in the container and keeps flicking them with his fingers)
- Fixating on objects that spin or turn (i.e. See 'n Say, toy cars, etc.); also children who are trying to spin things that are not normally spun
- Having significant difficulty attending to tasks
- Getting overly upset with change or transitions from activity to activity...*an early intervention program referral may be appropriate*

Language:

Difficulty making and maintaining eye contact with an adult by 6 months

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions during interaction with another person by 6 months
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by 9 months
- No babbling by 12 months
- No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by 12 months
- No consistent responding to their names by 12 month
- No words by 16 months
- No following simple and familiar directions by 18 months
- No two-word meaningful phrases without imitating or repeating?& says at least?50 words by 24 month
- No back-and-forth conversational turn-taking by 30 months
- Any loss of speech or babbling or social skills (like eye contact) at any age

****The presence of any of these concerns warrants an immediate discussion with your pediatrician and insistence for a referral to an early intervention program and/or speech-language pathologist for a complete evaluation of your child's communication skills.*

Let me also add that babies who are doing well with development exceed these milestones by leaps and bounds. These are very, very low thresholds for all the skills listed.

If your child is not meeting these basic guidelines, please don't dismiss your feelings.

*There is in all likelihood a true developmental delay or disorder present. Seek professional help from your pediatrician, your local school system, an early intervention agency, a children's clinic, a university evaluation team, or a therapist in private practice****

For those of you who would like to review the entire list, can be found at:

Sensory processing Disorder

www.sensory-processing-disorders.com

and..

Teach Me To Talk

<http://teachmetotalk.com/2008/10/23/red-flags-that-warrant-a-referral-for-early-intervention-or-preschool-therapy-services/>