

# Appendix 11: American Academy of Pediatrics - Clinical Guidelines on Autism

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In late 2007, Doctors Chris Johnson and Scott Myers from the Council on Children with Disabilities authored two autism clinical reports detailing information on autism and care management facts for pediatricians and care providers. Due to the size of the documents (approximately 75 referenced pages) only the abstracts of the studies are presented.

## **Identification and Evaluation of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

### ***Clinical Report Abstract***

Autism spectrum disorders are not rare; many primary care pediatricians care for several children with autism spectrum disorders. Pediatricians play an important role in early recognition of autism spectrum disorders, because they usually are the first point of contact for parents. Parents are now much more aware of the early signs of autism spectrum disorders because of frequent coverage in the media; if their child demonstrates any of the published signs, they will most likely raise their concerns to their child's pediatrician. It is important that pediatricians be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of autism spectrum disorders and have a strategy for assessing them systematically.

Pediatricians also must be aware of local resources that can assist in making a definitive diagnosis of, and in managing, autism spectrum disorders. The pediatrician must be familiar with developmental, educational, and community resources as well as medical subspecialty clinics. This clinical report is 1 of 2 documents that replace the original American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement and technical report published in 2001. This report addresses background information, including definition, history, epidemiology, diagnostic criteria, early signs, neuropathologic aspects, and etiologic possibilities in autism spectrum disorders.

In addition, this report provides an algorithm to help the pediatrician develop a strategy for early identification of children with autism spectrum disorders. The accompanying clinical report addresses the management of children with autism spectrum disorders and follows this report on page 1162, available at [www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/120/5/1162](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/120/5/1162). Both clinical reports are complemented by the toolkit titled *Autism: Caring for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians*, which contains screening and surveillance tools, practical forms, tables, and parent handouts to assist the pediatrician in the identification, evaluation, and management of autism spectrum disorders in children (Johnson, C. P., Myers, S. M., 2007).

The full clinical report is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics at <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;120/5/1183>.

# **American Academy of Pediatrics Clinical Guidelines on Autism Management of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders**

## **Clinical Report Abstract**

Pediatricians have an important role not only in early recognition and evaluation of autism spectrum disorders but also in chronic management of these disorders.

The primary goals of treatment are to maximize the child's ultimate functional independence and quality of life by minimizing the core autism spectrum disorder features, facilitating development and learning, promoting socialization, reducing maladaptive behaviors, and educating and supporting families. To assist pediatricians in educating families and guiding them toward empirically supported interventions for their children, this report reviews the educational strategies and associated therapies that are the primary treatments for children with autism spectrum disorders.

Optimization of health care is likely to have a positive effect on habilitative progress, functional outcome, and quality of life; therefore, important issues, such as management of associated medical problems, pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic intervention for challenging behaviors or coexisting mental health conditions, and use of complementary and alternative medical treatments, are also addressed. (Johnson, C. P., Myers, S. M., 2007).

The full clinical report is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.aap.org/pressroom/issuekitfiles/ManagementofChildrenwithASD.pdf](http://www.aap.org/pressroom/issuekitfiles/ManagementofChildrenwithASD.pdf).