

Special Considerations in Children under Age 6

Level 0 - Evaluation and Comprehensive Assessment:

Evaluation and comprehensive assessment. See *Principles of Practice*.

Use of rating scales is highly recommended. For a list of scales and checklists, see *Principles of Practice* and Box 1 on page 7.

For updated links to rating scales and checklists, visit floridamedicaidmentalhealth.org.

Early signs that may indicate a child under age 6 is at risk for ASD:

- ◆ No big smile or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or later
- ◆ 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 words by 16 months
- ◆ No meaningful, two-word phrases (not including imitating or repeating) by 24 months
- ◆ Any loss of speech, babbling, or social skills at any age



Level 1 - Evidence-Based Psychosocial Treatment and Other Non-Pharmacological Interventions:

Start with evidence-based psychosocial and other non-pharmacological interventions (e.g., physical therapy, speech/language therapy). See *Principles of Practice*.

Note: Pharmacotherapy is not the primary treatment for youth with ASD and ID. The use of antipsychotic medications in children under 6 years of age is generally "off-label," not recommended, and should only be considered under the most extraordinary circumstances.