

# Study: Pediatricians Overlook Early Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder

SALT LAKE CITY, UT – (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Reports of a new study by Special Abilities, Inc. send an alarming message to parents of young infants and children. Pediatricians are not recognizing the symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at an early age denying children benefits of early intervention and therapy. Autism is a complex neurological disorder characterized by profound delays in communication and social interaction and affects over 1.7 million individuals in the U.S.



Send2Press® Newswire

*Caption: Lawrence P. Kaplan, PhD, author of "Diagnosis Autism: Now What? 10 Steps to Improve Treatment Outcomes"*

"This is an important issue," says Lawrence P. Kaplan, Ph.D., chief investigator for the study on early diagnosis of ASD. "This research shows that although pediatricians are given sufficient clinical diagnostic protocols to identify developmental delays in infants, there is a significant delay of the early diagnosis of ASD."

In a response from over 500 parents whose children were diagnosed with ASD, only 2.7% of pediatricians diagnosed any degree of autism and nearly 50% of these children were diagnosed after the age of three.

Another startling statistic indicates that 42% of the pediatricians did not

notice any developmental delay in those children who were eventually diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

There is compelling evidence in medical literature that intensive behavioral therapy, beginning before age three and targeted toward speech and language development, is successful both in improving language capacity and later social functioning.

“It is imperative to recognize the symptoms of ASD in a timely manner, preferably in the first two years of a child’s life,” says Dr. Kaplan. “Providing an appropriate early diagnosis, whether it be autism or even developmental delay, means that an early treatment program can be started for the child.”

As a parent of a child with ASD, and the author of “Diagnosis Autism: Now What? 10 Steps to Improve Treatment Outcomes,” Dr. Kaplan knows first hand that early intervention is extremely effective before age two. “It’s just trying to get the pediatrician to identify some type of developmental delay as soon as possible,” says Dr. Kaplan.

The research was funded by Special Abilities, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1995 and is dedicated to improve outcomes for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders by promoting public awareness and providing educational programs for parents.

Website: [www.specialabilities.org](http://www.specialabilities.org)

News issued by: Special Abilities, Inc.

# # #

Original Story ID: (273) :: 2005-04-0413-007

Original Keywords: Special Abilities, Inc., Lawrence P. Kaplan, PhD, Diagnosis Autism, parenting, children diagnosis, Autism Spectrum Disorder, ASD, Pediatricians, Utah newswire, Salt Lake City news, 501(c)(3), non-profit organization Special Abilities, Inc.