



# Atypical Development

## Provider Observation Guide

Use this guide to determine eligibility for children who show atypical development or behavior, as evidenced by one or more of the following criteria, even when a 25% developmental delay is not present.

### Sensory-Motor Responses

<b>Abnormal muscle tone</b>	Unusually floppy or stiff; difficulty maintaining posture; tires easily
<b>Limitations in joint range of motion</b>	Difficulty fully extending arms or legs; resistance or discomfort during positioning, dressing, or play
<b>Abnormal reflexes or postural reactions</b>	Persistent primitive reflexes; delayed or absent protective responses (e.g., not extending arms when falling)
<b>Poor quality of movement patterns or skill performance</b>	Movements appear awkward, jerky, or inefficient; difficulty sequencing movements for age-expected motor tasks
<b>Oral-motor skills dysfunction, including feeding difficulties</b>	Gagging, choking, excessive drooling; difficulty chewing or swallowing; limited acceptance of textures

### Social-Emotional Development

<b>Delay or abnormality in achieving expected emotional milestones</b>	Limited emotional expression; difficulty calming compared to peers; does not seek comfort when distressed
<b>Persistent failure to initiate or respond to most social interactions</b>	Rarely makes eye contact; limited response to name; does not engage in back-and-forth social play
<b>Fearfulness or distress that does not respond to comforting by caregivers</b>	Prolonged crying or shutdown despite caregiver support; intense reactions to routine situations
<b>Complete lack of stranger discrimination</b>	No preference for caregivers over unfamiliar adults; does not check back with caregiver in new situations

## Behaviors That Interfere with the Acquisition of Developmental Skills

<b>Inability to separate from a caregiver</b>	Prolonged distress when caregiver briefly leaves; described as excessively clingy; unable to engage in play or routines without caregiver present; refusal to interact with trusted adults other than caregiver
<b>Repetitive, non-functional feeding behaviors</b>	Putting food in mouth, spitting out, and re-eating
<b>Inability to sit for an age-appropriate amount of time</b>	Frequently leaves seat during meals or activities; unable to attend long enough to engage in tasks; caregivers describe as always on the move
<b>Frequent and prolonged tantrums</b>	Frequent, intense emotional outbursts beyond expected regulatory capacity; difficulty recovering without significant adult intervention; interferes with participation in daily routines

## Impairment in Social Interaction and Communication Skills Along with Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors

<b>Predominant use of rote, scripted, or echolalic communication</b>	Repeats memorized phrases or scripts without functional intent; limited spontaneous requests or meaningful exchanges
<b>Trouble engaging in reciprocal verbal or non-verbal turn-taking</b>	Difficulty sustaining back-and-forth exchanges despite having words; communication appears one-sided or limited to routines
<b>Preference for repetitive or solitary activities over functional or interactive play</b>	Prefers solitary activity despite adult or peer attempts to interact; leaves activity when a caregiver joins in play
<b>Repetitive motor movements or sensory-seeking behaviors that interfere with engagement</b>	Repetitive movements (e.g., hand flapping, rocking, spinning) or sensory-seeking behaviors (e.g., rubbing face on the floor, seeking tight spaces or deep pressure such as hugs, scratching or pinching, climbing or jumping, mouthing or chewing non-food items) that limit engagement

