



Early signs of autism include a decrease in how much a child looks at people's faces and smiles at others.



The timing of when these first signs appear can vary a lot from child to child.



We evaluated children up to 7 times as they grew from birth to age 3.



We examined where their gaze went in both structured settings (during developmental testing) and during play time with toys.



Children who went on to be diagnosed with autism at age 3 spent less time looking at adult faces when they were 6-12 months old.



Early eye-gaze assessment may help identify children in need of services and supports even before they receive a diagnosis of autism.



We are now developing easier ways to evaluate eye contact in doctors' offices or with video-based screening tools.

