

Early Diagnosis and Intervention for Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Geraldine Dawson's research has contributed greatly to the growing body of evidence about autism spectrum disorder (ASD), especially in young children. Dawson has approached ASD from all angles, from conducting studies of early brain and behavioral development to genetic research. She pioneered the use of event-related potentials to study early brain function in very young children with ASD. Her main focus, however, lies in early diagnosis and intervention. She was one of the first researchers to demonstrate that autism symptoms could be recognized in young infants. Recently, with Sally Rogers, Dawson helped develop the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) for behavioral intervention for toddlers with autism. She empirically validated this model in the first-ever randomized, controlled trial of a comprehensive behavioral intervention for toddlers with autism, and the results revealed that children who received ESDM showed significant improvements in IQ, language, and adaptive behavior. Dawson is a recipient of the Association for Psychological Science (APS) [James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award](#) for her lifetime of significant intellectual achievements in applied psychological research.

[Watch Dawson's Award Address](#) at the [24th APS Annual Convention](#).