

Gomez, C. (2003). *Identifying early indicators for autism in self-regulatory difficulties*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Auburn University, Alabama.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study were to (a) identify self-regulatory difficulties of 1-year-olds with autism, and (b) determine if 1-year-olds with autism exhibit self-regulatory difficulties consistent with a diagnosis of regulatory disorder. Parents of children diagnosed with autism (N=65) retrospectively reported on their children's self-regulatory difficulties at 1 year of age (12-23 months) using the Temperament and Atypical Behavior Scale (TABS). Forty percent of the parents reported watching videotape of their children at or around 1 year of age before completing the TABS. One-year-olds with typical development (n=120) from the TABS norming efforts served as the comparison group.

Results indicated children diagnosed with autism exhibited significantly more self-regulatory difficulties at 1 year of age than typically developing age mates. In addition, 86% of the children with autism exhibited self-regulatory difficulties consistent with a diagnosis of regulatory disorder (RD). Parents identified 10 TABS profile items with #51 (screams in sleep and can't be comforted) being reported by 85% of parents. Furthermore, 67% of the parents reporting their children with autism had a RD at 1 year of age also indicated a RD of the under-reactive type. On the basis of these findings attention to self-regulatory difficulties in early autism identification was the ultimate goal driving this research, the information gained from assessment of self-regulation difficulties alone may serve a valuable purpose.