Words are not enough: Social Communication & Early Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorders

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TODAY

- What is Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Early Identification
  - Social development in infants
  - Foundation for social communication
  - Why words are not enough

Core Deficits

- Social Communication & Interactions
  - Nonverbal & verbal communication for social interaction
  - Lack of social reciprocity

- Restricted Repertoire of Interests & Activities

Current Prevalence Estimates

- 1 in 91 children
  - American Academy of Pediatrics

- 1 in 100 children
  - Center for Disease Control

Reasons for Increase in Prevalence

- Unidentified environmental, genetic &/or epigenetic factors

- Change in diagnostic criteria

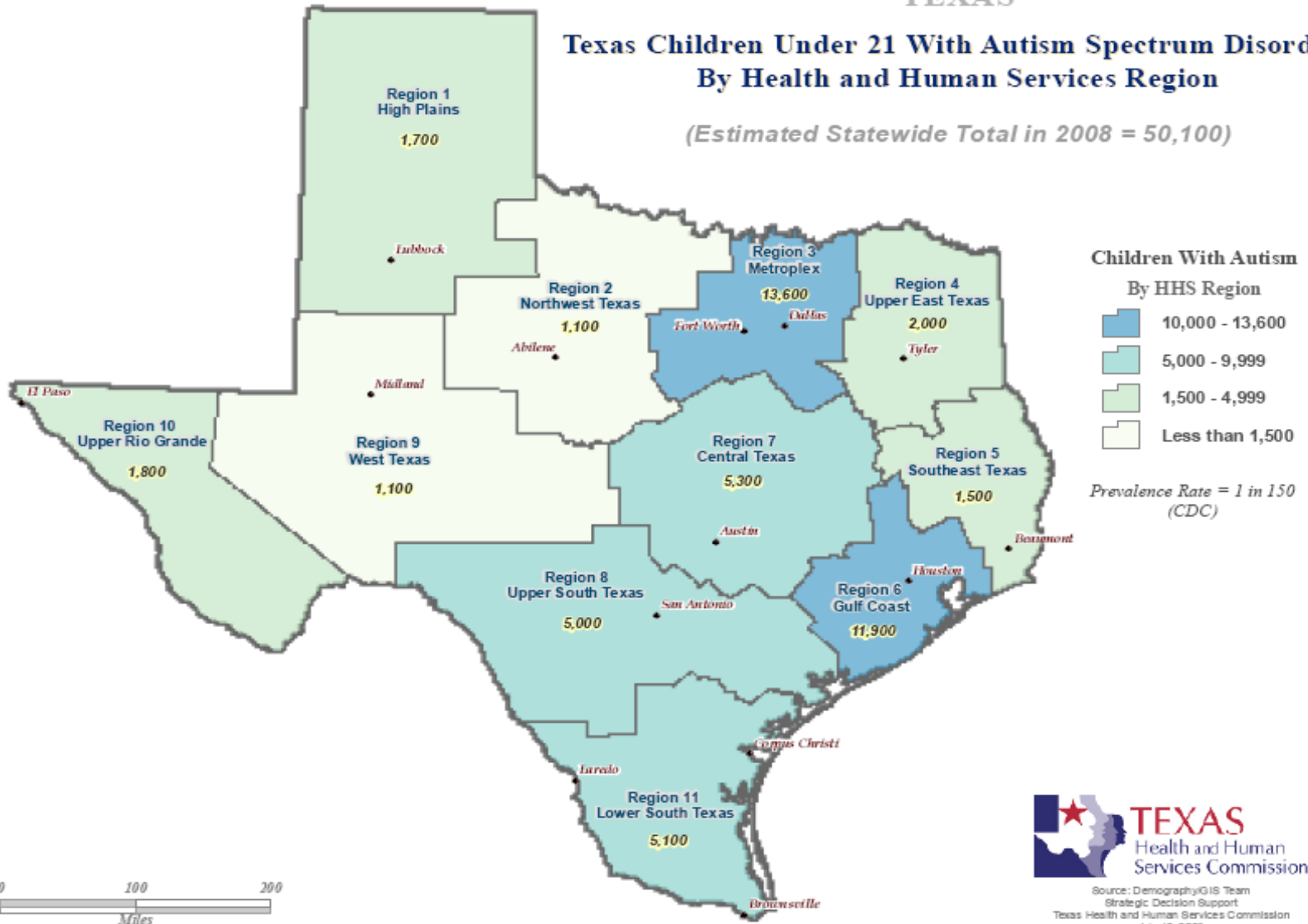- Diagnostic substitution

- Increased awareness

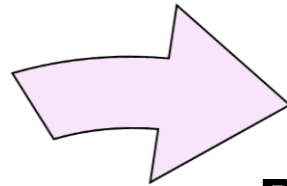Texas Council on Autism
and Pervasive Developmental Disorders

TEXAS

Texas Children Under 21 With Autism Spectrum Disorders By Health and Human Services Region

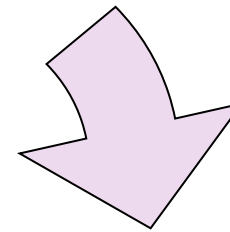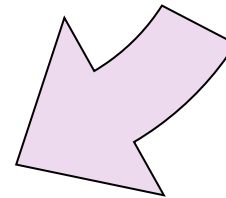*(Estimated Statewide Total in 2008 = 50,100)*

Region 1
High Plains
1,700

Region 2
Northwest Texas
1,100

Region 3
Metroplex
13,600

Region 4
Upper East Texas
2,000

Region 10
Upper Rio Grande
1,800

Region 9
West Texas
1,100

Region 7
Central Texas
5,300

Region 5
Southeast Texas
1,500

Region 8
Upper South Texas
5,000

Region 6
Gulf Coast
11,900

Region 11
Lower South Texas
5,100

Children With Autism
By HHS Region

- 10,000 – 13,600
- 5,000 – 9,999
- 1,500 – 4,999
- Less than 1,500

Prevalence Rate = 1 in 150
(CDC)

TEXAS
Health and Human
Services Commission

Source: Demography/GIS Team
Strategic Decision Support
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
July 15, 2008

0   100   200
Miles

Learn the signs Act Early!!

Early Identification →

Early Diagnosis ↓

Reliable diagnosis 18-24 months

Early Services ↓

Better Outcomes ←

What are the early signs??

- Social Communication Impairment prominent

- Restricted Repertoire of Activities & Interests may not yet be evident

Early Social Development

2 mo

6-9 mo

12 mo

Sharing Emotion

Pursuing Goals

Sharing Intention

Sharing Emotion

- Social smile

- Social responsiveness

- Face-to-face (dyadic) interaction

Proto-conversations

- Reciprocal exchanges of emotions
- Turn-taking sequences
  - Rhythmic, balanced
- Mutual gazing
- Responds to vocalization & facial expressions

6-9 months: Interaction shifts

dyadic   to   triadic

Sharing Perception & Pursuing Goals

- Goal directed
  - Selective attention to goal
  - Persist until goal is met
  - Happy when goal is met

- Understand other's goals
  - Follows adult's line of regard
  - Predict what comes next

Sharing Attention & Intention

- Mutual knowledge that they are doing something together

- Coordinate their plans & help each other

9-12 mos: Infant begins to communicate

- Social Routines
  - Wave bye bye, peek-a-boo
- Share Attention
  - Show
- Direct Attention
  - Point
- Behavior Regulation
  - Request, protest

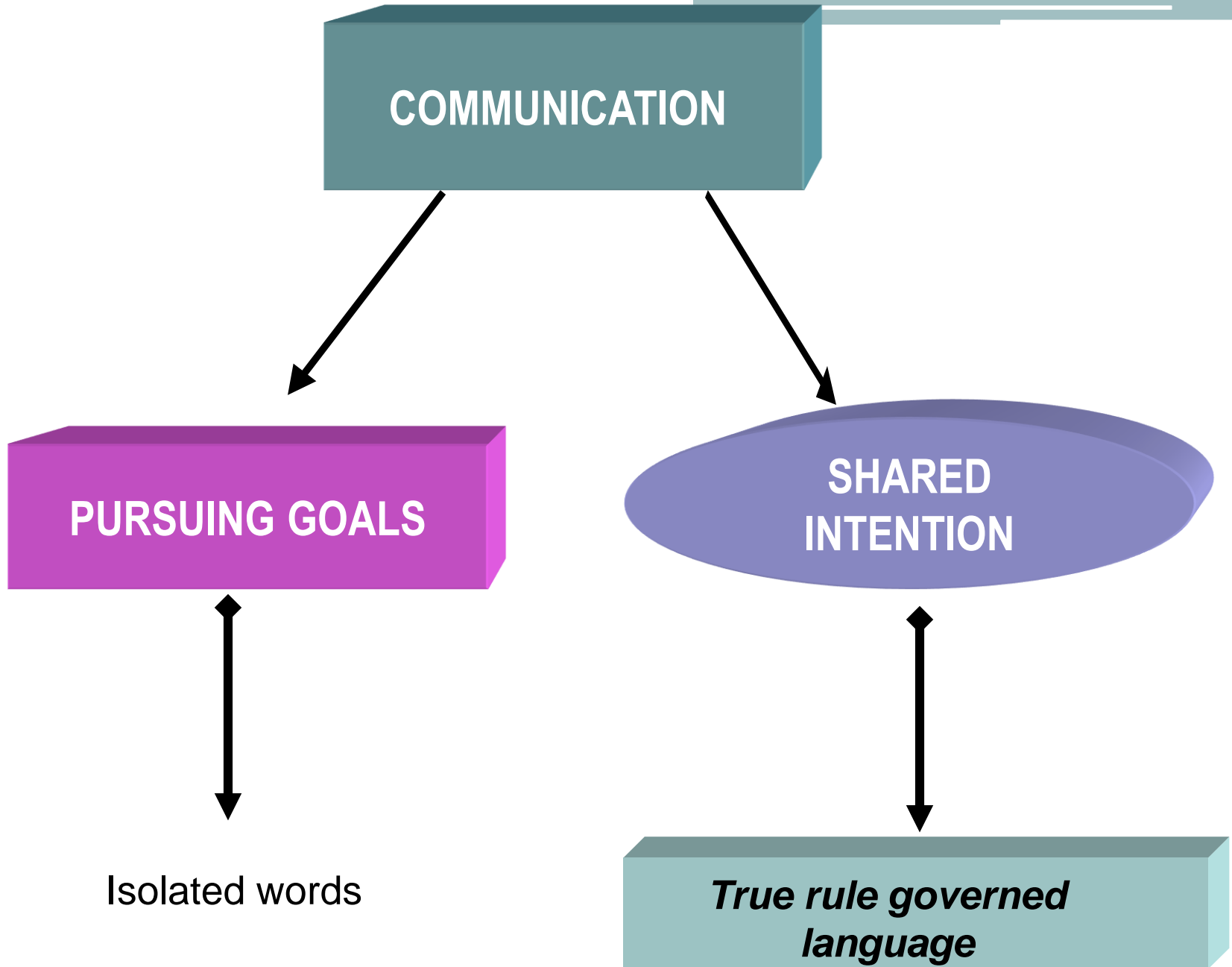# Early indicators of ASD

- No warm, joyful engagement by 5 months
- No two-way, back-&-forth gesturing, smiles or social-emotional reciprocity by 9 months
- By 12 months
  - Limited use of communicative gestures (words)
    - Showing
    - Waving
    - Pointing
    - Sharing Attention
- Limited use of back and forth interactions (peek-a-boo)
- Does not follow adults gaze or point
- Does not respond to name
- ANY loss of ANY language or babbling or social skills

Resources if you are concerned

- Talk to your doctor or nurse and ask for a referral to a developmental pediatrician or other specialist
- Contact your local early intervention agency (for children under 3)
    - http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/publications/Referral.pdf
- Contact your local public school (if 3 and older)

- Check out The ACT Early website http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html

Contact

- The *Center for Children and Family's Infant Development Program* http://infantdp.utdallas.edu/
  - Offers developmental screenings for infants and toddlers
    - Make sure you mention that you are concerned about ASD.
    - Contact Emily Touchstone at 972-883-4827 etouchstone@utdallas.edu
- *The Chrystal Charity Ball Autism Project*'s Coordinated Referral Services
  - A centralized phone number for direct access coordinated autism related services, provides educational information, referral information, and access to on-line and community resources for families and children with ASD.
    - Call 214-456-7700
- *The Callier Center for Communicative Disorders* http://www.utdallas.edu/calliercenter/clinic/autism/
  - Provides individual, group and classroom-based social communication therapy and parent training by certified speech/language pathologists
    - Call the Dallas location at 214-905-3000
    - Call the Richardson location at 972-883-3630