• Then compare and contrast to development in ASD
• Select key markers to use for screening and diagnosis

Early development

How do we find out about early development in those diagnosed? (Zwaigembaum et al., 2009)

• Retrospective studies (parent report, home studies)
• Prospective studies with high risk infants (e.g. those with family members diagnosed)

What do we know about children with autism?

• Very young infants show reduced interest in social stimuli, intersubjective abnormalities; joint attention problems are clear by 1 years old
• Impaired early social communication (e.g. response to name, joint attention, play, sensory abnormalities) (Yirmiya & Charman, 2010; Barbaro, 2012)
• At around 18 months old should show triadic communication → pointing etc. that isn’t just for mum and baby, and doesn’t need words

Communication difficulties

• Poor response to name
• Speech delays, low frequency of or unusual vocalisations
• Joint attention – failure to share interest by pointing, giving/showing, or to respond to communication gestures
• Imitation

Social interaction difficulties

• Limited ability to anticipate being picked up
• Low frequency of looking
• Little interest in interactive games/affection
• Content to be alone

Toddlers

• Abnormal eye contact
• Little social referencing/sharing/affect/enjoyment
• Little interest in social games