So often we hear something along the lines of early intervention is best practice. And this is true. Even still young children are not usually sent for further assessments until closer to two or three. The good news is, is that if you're worried about signs of autism in your baby, there are steps you can take to assess and to work with your baby right now, to start turning things around. Hi, I'm Dr. Mary Barbera, I'm the mom of two sons, one with autism and one who's going to medical school next year. I'm also a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and bestselling author. Each week I provide you with some of my ideas about turning autism or signs of autism around so if you haven't subscribed to my YouTube channel, you can do that now. I was in denial when my firstborn son Lucas started showing signs of autism after his first birthday. He didn't want to say cheese to the camera anymore.

He stopped doing the little sing songy games we had taught him and he stopped waving to people. He became very picky with food and his sleep became a problem too. The first few words that he had popped out here and there. But I had no idea how to get him talking and learning. I didn't have any idea how to teach him to point and how to teach him, um, to how to play. My husband, who's a physician, brought up the possibility of autism when Lucas was just 21 months old. And at that point I told him, I didn't want to hear those words ever again. Before he brought up the word autism though, I, I didn't even notice any of the early warning signs. Even though now looking back, they were all there. So I do want to tell you a few things you can do if you're concerned about your baby, or even if you have a, another child with autism and you have a baby that is at high risk, the chances of a sibling baby, have a high risk of autism, about 20%.

If you have one child with autism, 20% of the time, the second child will also have autism. So we've learned a lot about autism in babies and early signs by studying the siblings. And if you have a baby or if you're pregnant and you want to get involved with the sibling study and you live fairly close to a teaching, uh, children's hospital, you can contact them and just, uh, see if they have a sibling study going on. But a lot of things you can do when you're worried about a baby. So first of all, I would check out the CDC milestones and keep a close eye on your child's development. And the other complicating factor is there is a wide range. Some kids are premature when they're born. Some kids have other issues that complicate things, medical problems or so forth, but keep a close eye on milestones.

Whether they are four months old or nine months old or 18 months old or 24 months old or 30 months old and keep those milestones so that you can see if they are just generally delayed and just a little bit behind in some of the categories. That's probably a better sign than if they're very delayed. So you also, you don't want to just look at talking either. You want to look at the use of language, such as gestures pointing, uh, nonverbal cues. There is an M CHAT screening tool that you can download print for free, take the M CHAT test. I did do a video blog on the M CHAT. This is just a list of, I believe 23 questions where you can check off if your child points and response to name and all those kinds of things. As I said, pointing is really important, and this should emerge between 12 and 18 months of age.

I did a video blog on pointing as well. So if you do see some gaps with what the milestones are and where your baby is at, you should contact your early intervention provider. You can, if you don't know where to go, you can search for that in your local area. You can also contact your physician, your child's pediatrician, or a family practice physician. And you can talk to them about what you're seeing and your concern. And you can ask for an early intervention assessment and intervention. Taking a wait and see attitude is never a good idea. Intervention can never hurt if you're doing a child friendly approach like I have developed. You want to promote social language by pairing yourself with all good things, playing things like peek-a-boo and animated songs and games that your baby and young child might enjoy.

You can also consider taking my online toddler course for parents and early intervention professionals ages one to four or five. Any child with any delays, if you are motivated to learn step by step, what to do, I think that is the best way. I know how to help you. Some members of my toddler program, are even reporting turning autism around and preventing the diagnosis. They are getting off of waitlists because their child is caught up. It's not the case for everyone, but I do know that over the years, since my son's diagnosis, I have learned a ton about how you can teach the skills that your child is delayed with. So the best way to get started today is to take my quiz, at marybarbera.com/quiz, watch a free workshop and consider joining us in our online course and community. It could very well change your life.

In summary, we want to closely track a baby's development using tools like the CDC milestones and the M CHAT. And although many people may say not to worry, the baby's so young, every, every child develops at their own rate. It's important not to ignore delays and to take action if you see any kind of social communication delays, odd behavior such as lining things up and, and insistence on the same routine over and over again, these can all be signs of autism and there's a lot you can do to turn things around. Don't forget, take my autism quiz at marybarbera.com/quiz. And I hope to see you right here next week.