

FUNCTION JUNCTION: BEHAVIOR MATTERS

August 2022 Research Recap

August was a busy month on social media and in the research field! First, Susan Kuo (@susan_kuo on Twitter) a postdoctoral researcher at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts, shared details of her study that sought to understand just how much individuals with autism vary in early developmental milestones, such as walking and talking. She found that early development varies enormously in this population. She stated, "We clearly have much to learn about the diverse needs of the autistic community in early life, and much to learn about to better adapt environments to fit those needs." She found that some children with autism show few developmental delays whereas others show many delays. In the new study in [JAMA Pediatrics](#), her team compared 17,000+ children with autism and 4,000+ siblings without autism and found that individuals with autism, on average, reached their milestones 1-20 months later than their siblings. The delays were longer for later milestones, like speaking, than earlier milestones, like smiling.

Cissy and Susan found this so interesting because they had always read that the developmental sequence in children with autism was disordered, which it is, and this new information about developmental delays has significant impact for parents of young children as well as those who teach early childhood special education (ECSE).

