

Tips for Families with Children from Birth to 5 years

Understanding Developmental Screening

What is it?

Developmental Screening is a quick way to find out how well your child is learning and growing. Usually it means answering some easy questions and it only takes 5- 10 minutes.

Why is it important?

Children grow and change rapidly during the first years of their life. When delays or problems are found early, parents and providers can work together to help children. Studies show that working with children when they are very young can make a big difference in the future.

What can I do?

- Be aware of when your child learns new skills, like sitting up, making sounds, using words, or pointing to a toy.
- Learn about developmental milestones - things children usually do at certain ages.
- Be sure to take your baby to regular "well child" visits with your health care provider.
- Ask your health care provider, social services or educational coordinator about **any** concerns you have about your child's growth, learning, or abilities.
- If you have concerns, ask for your child to be screened for developmental delays.
- Keep records about your child's health, including screening tests.

Where is developmental screening done?

Developmental screening can be done by any professional that has received special training. Screening is most often done in a doctor's office, by a public health worker, or through early education (like Head Start) or early intervention programs. Some screening tools are even available on the Internet.

What happens if... ?

What does it mean if the screening shows that my child might have a delay or a problem with development?

Screening is just the first step in finding out what might be happening. A screening test lets you know that your child may have a risk for a delay or problem but more testing will need to be done before you know for sure. Usually you and your child will be referred to an Early Intervention program or a more specialized health care clinic to have more tests done.

What does it mean if the test shows that my child does not have a delay?

GREAT- it means that your child is progressing at about the same rate as other children! You should still be sure to bring your baby in for regular well child visits. All children grow and develop differently. Some delays or problems don't show up until a child is older. Regular health checks and screening will help you know about your child's progress.

What if I still have concerns after a screening test is done?

Ask your health care provider what you should watch for and what to expect your child to learn or do before the next visit. Sometimes your health care provider can give you some fun activities to try with your child to develop their abilities more fully. Be sure to bring up concerns and discuss your child's progress at each visit.