



Developmental Screening

What it is. Who completes them. Why it is important.



Every family looks forward to seeing a child's first smile, first step, and first words. Regular screenings help raise awareness of a child's development, making it easier to celebrate milestones and identify possible development concerns as early as possible.

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive



What is a Developmental Screening?

A developmental screening is a research-based tool that a parent or caregiver completes on their child. Questions regarding the child's language, movement, thinking, behavior, and emotions are recorded. A healthcare provider, early childhood educator, or another trained community-based service provider scores the responses based on developmental norms. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends developmental and behavioral screening for all children during 9, 18, 24/36 month well-child visits.

During this period of rapid development, most children reach their developmental milestones within a certain time period. Parents, pediatricians, and early care and education professionals look for milestones in play, learning, speaking, movement, and behavior.

What screening tools are typically used?

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ-3): General Development
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional 2 (ASQ: SE-2): Social and Emotional Development
- Parents Evaluation of Development Status (PEDS): General Development



Why is it Important?

Development in the first five years of life occurs at the most rapid pace than any other time in life. In fact, by the time a child is eight years old, approximately 95% of brain development has occurred. It is important to note that the brain does not develop in all areas at the same time and rate. For example, development in motor skills may lag behind the development of verbal skills or vice versa. All children develop at their own pace and in their own time, so it is important not to compare one child's development to another.

Understanding where a child is in their development allows parents and caregivers to provide experiences that enhance healthy growth and development. Screenings provide an understanding of what developmental milestone comes next and provides parents and teachers to identify areas where a child may need extra support.

What are the Developmental Domains?

Social and emotional: attachment, behavior, self-regulation

Language and communication: crying, cooing, babbling, laughing, listening, speaking, following directions

Cognitive: learning, thinking, problem-solving, creativity

Physical development: large motor movement (sitting, walking, running) and small motor movement (picking up small objects, holding a crayon)



Resources

- Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resourcetag/brain-architecture/>
- Office of Early Childhood Development: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/eod/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive>
- AAP- Healthy Children.org: <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/pages/default.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- Help Me Grow Orange County: <http://www.helpmegrowoc.org/>