DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING TOOL KIT

Did you know?

- 1 in 4 children in the U.S. ages 0 – 5 are at moderate or high risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delays.

- Fewer than 30% of these delays are identified by the time children enter school.

- Only 29% of U.S. children under the age of 6 received screening in FY 2011 – 12.

- Developmental and behavioral disorders are linked to high costs and long-term consequences for physical health, mental health, education, child welfare, and justice systems.

- Establishing a streamlined, coordinated system of screening, referral, feedback, and follow-up across settings, provides the greatest chance that children will be identified and ultimately reach available early intervention services.

Sources: Help Me Grow National Center Resources; Child Trends Data Bank: Screening & Risk for Developmental Delay; Birth to 5. Watch Me Thrive! A Community Guide for Developmental and Behavioral Screening

Help Me Grow Ventura County has developed this tool kit to provide you with best practices in the developmental screening process.

Developmental screening assists in the early identification of children with developmental delays. Early identification leads to early intervention; providing families with needed support to help their children reach developmental milestones.

To help you screen the children in your care, Help Me Grow VC offers you this simple guide based on years of local experience and evidenced- based research.

Developmental screening consists of THREE components:

SCREENING – Developmental Screening uses evidence-based screening tools. We recommend using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire ("ASQ-3") due to its ease of use, parent reporting reliability, and questions varying by age.

REFERRAL – Screening results in the "black" or "concerned zone" require consultation with parents and possible referral processing. Page 5 provides referral information.

FOLLOW-UP – It is essential to follow-up with the family or families to ensure the child is receiving services. For screening results in the "monitor" zone or "gray area", set a date for the next screening. **Never conduct screening without following up on results.**

Parents are involved in each step.

SCREENING

REFERRAL

FOLLOW-UP
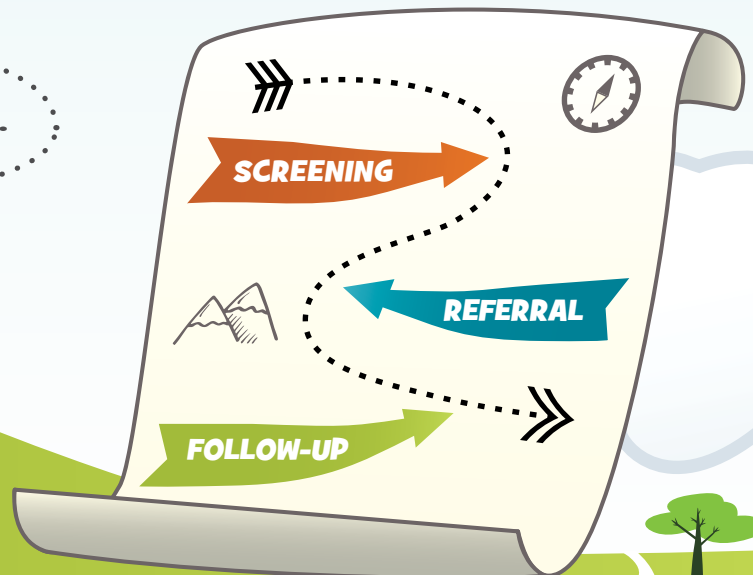
WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING?

- Developmental screenings are tools used by parents, early childhood professionals, medical providers, and others to determine if children are learning basic skills when they should.

- The screening is the first step in looking at a child's development. It is **NOT** a diagnosis.

- Screenings connect children at risk of developmental delay with further evaluation to determine eligibility for services.

- Standardized screening tools are part of a larger system including screening, referrals, and follow-up.

- California Department of Education's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) QRIS initiative promotes the use of a standardized, evidence-based developmental screening tool as a component of the quality system. Their choice for this instrument is the ASQ-3 & ASQ-SE.

- The ASQ-3 is an easy-to-use screening tool that is completed by a child's parents. **Parents are reliable reporters of their children's development.**

- The ASQ-3 looks at five domains (skill areas): Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social.

For more about what and why of developmental screening visit:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive

or **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- As an Early Childhood Educator professional, **YOU** are on the front lines, partnering with families, as you observe the development of young children.

- Regular screenings bring attention to childrens' developmental milestones. This makes it easier for parents to know what is developmentally appropriate for their child.

- In your position, **YOU** can ensure that children receive the extra support they need while in your care **AND** are linked to appropriate services.

- Studies show children who receive early treatment for developmental delays are more likely to be successful in school, hold jobs, and live independently.

- American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development during their first three years or whenever a parent or provider has a concern.

- For a flyer to share with parents and families about why screening is important visit **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**.

You can make a difference in the life of a child.

Explaining the screening process to Parents

About the ASQ-3:

- The ASQ-3 is a tool that can assess a child's development.

- Similar to vision and hearing screenings, a developmental screening identifies possible developmental concerns.

- Responses to the questions on the ASQ-3 can help show a child's strengths and any area in which the child may need support or practice.

- Respond to questions using:

  "Yes" to indicate the child is performing the skill.

  "Sometimes" to indicate the child is just beginning to perform the behavior.

  "Not yet" to indicate the child is not yet performing the behavior.

- The ASQ-3 asks questions about the following skill areas or domains:

  Communication: Receptive and expressive language skills, but does not pick up problems of articulation.

  Gross Motor: Large muscle movement: Crawling, sitting, walking, running, and jumping.

  Fine Motor: Small muscle movement: Using crayons, stacking, and grasping.

  Problem Solving: Cognitive/learning abilities, imitating, following directions, "cause and effect"

  Personal-Social: Self-help skills and interactions with others.

  Overall Questions: Asks questions about a child's overall development and other general concerns.

About developmental milestones:

Children develop at their own pace, so it can be difficult to tell exactly when a child will learn a skill. However, understanding developmental milestones gives a general idea of what changes to expect as a child gets older.

Children reach milestones in play, learning, speaking, actions, and movement. Skills such as talking, the first step, smiling for the first time, and waving good-bye, are all developmental milestones.

What is developmental delay:

Developmental delay is when a child does not reach developmental milestones at the same time as other children the same age. Unmet milestones can be an indication of possible health conditions, or other factors effecting a child's growth.

Keep in mind that parents are:

- Reliable screeners of their child.
- Reliable reporters of their child's development.

To learn more, see the training module on developmental screening for early childhood professionals at: **www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/WatchMeTraining/index.html**

You may be able to earn continuing education credits!

For a link to above training module and more ASQ tools visit: **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**

Early identification can lessen the effects of a child's delay or disability.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AFTER SCORING

Discussing screening results: *Take time to listen to the parent when communicating results. Emphasize the child's skills and strengths when discussing results.*

No concerns:
(ASQ-3 results in the "white area")
Inform the parent that the results of the ASQ-3 indicate their child's development is typical for their age. Provide them with activities they can use to help their child to continue to meet milestones. Ask them to share results with the child's primary health care provider or medical home.

Let them know when their child should be re-screened.

Monitor:
(ASQ-3 results in the "gray area")
Discuss any concerns the parent identified in overall concern area. Discuss ways the parent can support and provide opportunities to practice skills. Provide parents with activities they can use. Ask them to share results with the child's primary health care provider or medical home.

Let them know when their child will be re-screened.

Concerns:
(ASQ-3 results in the "black area")
Let the parent know that the screening indicated areas of concern. Ideally communicate the results as soon as possible. Identify the domain(s) of concern. Remind them this is not a diagnosis. Seek better understanding of the concerns expressed by the parent. Ask them to share results with the child's primary health care provider.

Provide follow-up or a referral for further assessment to determine eligibility for services.
See page 5 for more about referrals.

Before making a referral consider:

- Opportunities to participate in early learning program
- Health/biological factors (i.e. allergies, asthma, diabetes)
- Environmental/cultural factors
- Dual language learner
- Concerns in multiple domains may result in multiple referrals
- Referrals will be made with the cooperation of Site Supervisors and parents

Follow-Up:

1. Provide age-specific developmental milestone sheets and activities.
   (Available at **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**)
2. For children who do not qualify for services re-screening is essential.
3. Follow-up with parents to ensure they have contacted agencies and community resources.

Remember: Never conduct a screening without following up on the results.

Major developmental delays:

If major developmental delays are discovered make an immediate referral.

Birth – 3rd birthday: refer to Early Start
3 – 5 years: refer to the school district

Some possible factors that may contribute to a delay:

- A medical diagnosis or significant developmental disability
- Physical mobility limitations to access campus, classroom, and/or activities
- A confirmed diagnosis of vision or hearing impairment from a physician or audiologist
- Minimal to no verbal communication in home language and English

Encourage parents to share screening results with their child's health care provider.
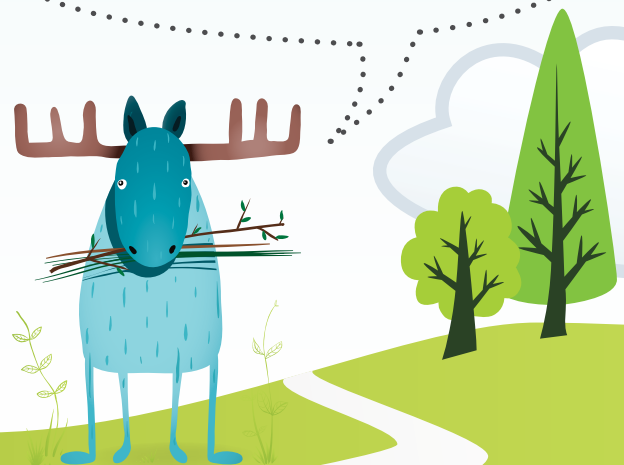
REFERRALS & RESOURCES

Agency Referrals

Tri-Counties Regional Center – Early Start

Age: 0 – 36 months

Federal Law (34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 303) mandates early referral and services for infants and young children who have or may have developmental delays.

Who to contact:

- For Ventura, Ojai, Oxnard, and Port Hueneme: Call 805-351-3140
- For Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Simi, and Camarillo: Call 805-522-8030

Who can refer: Anyone can make a referral, ideally a parent, or a teacher with parent consent.

School District Referrals

Age: 3 – 5 years of age

The SELPA assures that 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds with disabilities not yet in kindergarten have access to Special Education services, as per EC 56440. At this age, children qualify for services under the same categories as for K-12.

Who to contact: The family's local school district, Special Education Department. See school listing at **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**.

Who can refer: Parent or guardian must make referral. For an example of a referral letter visit **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**.

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Additional Tool Kit Resources

Visit

www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit

for access to resources and organizations available to help with early childhood developmental issues such as:

- Help with system navigation
- Training and support for families
- Assistance with behavioral issues
- A flyer encouraging parents to screen
- A sample School District referral letter
- A list of developmental milestones
- A sample data collection sheet
- Additional ASQ tools

Also visit **www.211.org** or call **2-1-1** which provides callers with information about services available to them including help with basic needs, support for children and families, and much more.

READINESS CHECKLIST

☐ Provide staff background on developmental screening.

☐ Inform parents about importance of screening.

☐ Obtain parent's consent to conduct screening.

☐ Determine ASQ-3 questionnaire & other required materials.

☐ For group screenings:

  - *Recommended staff ratio is 1 – 5 to ensure ability to answer parent's questions.*
  - *Define and assign staff roles.*
  - *Encourage that the questionnaire be completed by the person most familiar with the child's abilities.*

☐ Determine follow-up process.

DATA

Collect information on screenings as required by your agency or funded partner.

Help Me Grow Ventura County requests that you collect basic screening and referral data. For a sample data collection spreadsheet visit: **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I help parents help their children meet their developmental milestones?

Teachers can provide parents with resources and handouts so parents are aware of typical milestones. Give parents specific ideas for play activities which parents can do at home to help their child's learning. Encourage parents to spend time playing with their child and help parents understand how simple and complex play promotes children's learning. Monitor child's development and communicate changes to parents.

What if a parent asks, "Will my child grow out of it?"

Although teachers can be great sources of information the answer to this question is truly that you do not know. Children with developmental delays may improve with intervention but if left untreated a delay may develop into a developmental disability. Since each child is unique, teachers should refer parents to their pediatrician or early intervention program for their child to be individually evaluated. Encourage concerned parents to access early intervention programs as early as possible.

How do I score the ASQ if some questions are left blank?

When an item is omitted, the area scores are averaged and the area total score is adjusted. If one or two items are omitted, use the Score Adjustment available at **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org**, page 72 of the ASQ-3 User's Guide, and page 3 in the Quick Start Guide.

If there are more than two items left unanswered the area cannot be scored. If possible, contact the parent to obtain their response to the missing item(s).

What is the quickest way to calculate age of the ASQ to use?

Use the ASQ Age Calculator online available at **http://asqagecalculator.com** or **www.HelpMeGrowVC.org/Toolkit**.

You can also use the ASQ-3 Age Administration Chart on pages 67 and 154 of the User's Guide.