Wisconsin Early Childhood
Collaborating Partners

Developmental Screening Tip Sheets

Tip Sheet 7
Sharing Screening Results With Parents

With parents of all children

Each time you screen a child, provide parents with:

1. A copy of the completed questionnaire
2. A written summary of the screening results
3. A plan of action
4. Your contact information

Be sure to include in your summary every item on the tool, including parent comments. This will help you offer resources during your meeting with the family.

Why is developmental screening important?
Routine universal screening of young children with a validated tool promotes a better understanding of each child's development. Early identification of potential delays allows for timely access to appropriate supports and services promoting optimal development for every child.

How and When to Share Results:

- Share results with parents as soon as possible.
- Share results in person.
- Choose a quiet and private location.
- Be honest, caring and objective.
- Listen and respond carefully to parents' questions and concerns.
- Recognize the value of the parents' insights as reported on the questionnaire.
- Avoid using terms like "pass," "fail," and "test."
- Describe results beyond the numerical scores. For example:
  - *"These results are reassuring."*
  - *"These results are somewhat concerning."*
  - *"These results may show a need for more practice."*
  - *"These results are concerning."*
  - *"These results show a need for further assessment."*

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Tip Sheet 7 *(continued)*
Sharing Screening Results With Parents

With Parents of Children with Concerning Screening Results

Confirm that concerning results are truly concerning
Look at the concerning points and ask again about the parents' answers in those sections.

- Were any questions not answered?
- Does an answer have more to do with experience than potential delay?
- Did the parents understand the question?
- Have things changed since the time of the screening?

Emphasize strengths
Comment on areas identified as developing especially well or typically. Determine the parents' understanding of the results, and seek ways to move forward together.

Remember the limits of the tool
Developmental screening does not result in a diagnosis or treatment plan. It simply indicates whether a child appears to be developing like other children of the same age or not. If a screening result reveals a concern, you might say, "Your answers point out that Johnny has limited cutting skills," and explain that the results will not diagnose the cause of a fine motor delay.

Help parents devise a plan of action
Partner with parents to determine next steps. See Tip Sheet 8 "Using Screening Results" for more detail.

Respect parents
If there is a concerning screening result and the parents decide not to pursue a formal referral, it is important to respect their decision. Suggest other opportunities to support the child and family.

What's next for your team?

How will you share results with parents in a sensitive and thoughtful manner?

For more information:

- **Video: Delivering Concerning Screening Results to Families**
  tinyurl.com/SharingConcerns

"Parents,"throughout, refers to parents, family members who are primary caregivers, guardians and/or foster parents.
Developmental screening is most effective when integrated into the context of families and local communities. Engaging families in the process of development screening in a way that honors their cultural and linguistic practices will result in more accurate identification of potential delays and increased follow through with referrals. After all, parents are the most important people in a child's life.