



Tip Sheet 8 *Using Screening Results*

When screening results are reassuring

- This child's development appears similar to other children of the same age. Continue to watch for new skills and explore ways to encourage the child's development.
- Parents are their child's most influential teachers. Professionals and others in the community can help support parents in this role. When children are doing well, it is a great time to explore resources and opportunities that will help children continue to grow.

It is appropriate to use screening results to design supports for each child. However, screening results are not intended to be used to design curriculum or evaluate programs.



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.

When screening results indicate a parent concern

Professionals will view parent concerns as importantly as they view other concerns identified by the screener. Identified parent concerns can lead to dialogue with parents regarding a child's development, information sharing and potential formal and informal referrals.

When screening results indicate a concern

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a child receive simultaneous referrals:

- To his or her **primary care physician or pediatrician / developmental pediatrician** for a full medical evaluation to determine if there is a physical or developmental cause behind the delay. The doctor may make a diagnosis that can guide treatment.
- To **Early Intervention/Birth to Three Program** (if the child is under 3 years of age) or **Early Childhood Special Education** (if the child is 3-5 years of age) to determine if the child is eligible for services. Screening results can be used for decision making around individual supports to children.

Building a team

Anyone may make a referral for an evaluation by the Birth to Three Program or Early Childhood Special Education. After a referral is made and parents give consent, parents and professionals meet to determine program eligibility, assess specific strengths and challenges, and make a plan for support and service delivery. The team may include parents, early intervention/special education providers, medical care providers and other helping professionals. The team coordinates supports for the child's developmental progress.



Tip Sheet 8 (continued) Using Screening Results

Building a team (continued)

Sometimes parents may decide not to pursue a formal referral following a concerning screening result. Professionals will respect their decision and suggest informal opportunities for supporting the child and family. When possible, offer to re-screen and revisit other resources and services that may support the child's needs in the future.

Next steps

In the referral process, parents and professionals partner to ensure children receive appropriate supports and services. The parents' role is to make sure the child is present and ready to participate, as well as to observe the service providers' interactions with the child.

Parents may also be asked to help the child achieve goals, and to talk with other family members and care providers as to how they can help. Working with parents, early interventionists and special education personnel develop a plan and offer strategies to promote a child's development. This often includes daily practice of suggested routines and activities involving the child and the child's caregivers within their everyday interactions.

Helping professionals (such as home visitors and social workers) can support parents with reminders of appointments, giving suggestions for transportation to and from appointments, supporting positive parent-child interactions and sharing in the celebration of the child's accomplishments.

What's next for your team?

Have you established relationships with partners serving children with delays?

For more information:

- **American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement**
Identifying Infants and Young Children with Developmental Disorders in the Medical Home: An Algorithm for Developmental Surveillance and Screening
tinyurl.com/AAPPolicyStatement
- **Birth to 3 Program**
tinyurl.com/WIBirthtoThree
- **WI Early Childhood Special Education**
tinyurl.com/EarlySpecEd
- **WI First Step Hotline for Parents with Children and Youth with Special Needs**
tinyurl.com/WIFirstStep
- **WI Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)**
tinyurl.com/RegCenters

"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 developmental 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.