

Provider Tip Sheet: Developmental Screening

Early childhood mental health refers to the child's ability, from birth to 5 years of age, to form close relationships, manage and express emotions, explore the environment, and learn. It is important to be aware of a child's development as early as possible. This will allow children to get the help they need to succeed in social and educational settings.

Recognizing Potential Developmental Delays

- Use developmental and milestone checklists in your classroom to help track progress and identify any concerns. See link below for a developmental checklist.
 - <http://doe.sd.gov/Birthto3/devchecklist.aspx> Developmental Checklist
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/families/index.html> Milestone checklists and resources

Talking with Families about Developmental Concerns

- Be aware of your center's policies regarding communication and referrals.
- Talk about development regularly- not only when there is a concern.
- Start by highlighting the child's strengths. Talk about developmental milestones the child has mastered. Use a checklist as a basis for your conversation and to confirm your concerns to the parents.
- Be clear, honest, and respectful.
- It should be a two-way discussion. Allow time for the parent to respond, ask questions, and share concerns.
- Encourage parents to share their concerns with the child's doctor or healthcare provider.
- Remind the parent you want what is best for the child.
- Follow-up with the family in a few weeks.
- Remember to be mindful of cultural differences. Some cultures do not place emphasis on certain milestones and children may develop at different rates.

What is Developmental Screening?

- Research-based instruments that asks questions regarding a child's language, motor, cognitive, social and emotional development.
- It is not a diagnosis. Instead it indicates if a child is on track developmentally and if further help is needed.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children to be screened for general development at 9, 18, and 24 months of age or whenever there may be a concern.

Referring Parents for Developmental Screening

- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT)/ South Dakota Well-Child Care
 - Preventative check-ups that provide developmental, mental health, dental, and other healthcare services to children under the age of 21 who are enrolled in South Dakota Medicaid.
 - Included is periodic developmental and behavioral screening.

- Parents can call their primary care provider to schedule a well-child check-up.
 - <https://dss.sd.gov/medicaid/recipients/recipientprograms/wellchildcare.aspx>
 - <https://dss.sd.gov/formsandpubs/docs/MEDSRVCS/WellChildCareBro.pdf>
- Birth to Three Program
 - Provides developmental screening and evaluations for children birth to age three
 - <https://doe.sd.gov/birthto3/start.aspx>
- Sioux Falls School District
 - Developmental screening and evaluations are available for children, birth through age 5, who reside in the Sioux Falls School District.
 - <https://www.sf.k12.sd.us/o/sfsd/page/early-childhood>
 - Or call (605) 367-8488 to set up a screening appointment
- South Dakota Parent Connection
 - Provides a variety of services at no cost to families including:
 - Individualized assistance
 - Information and resources
 - Referrals
 - Workshops for parents and professionals
 - <https://sdparent.org/family-resources/family-life/child-development/>
 - <https://sdparent.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Early-Childhood-Development-7-16-2021.pdf>