



Module 1: Your Important Role in Monitoring Children's Development

Learning Objectives:



1. Why monitoring children's development and identifying developmental concerns early are important



2. Why early care and education providers have a unique and important role in developmental monitoring



3. How developmental monitoring can be easy with support from CDC's "**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**" checklists and resources



Learning Objective 1

Why monitoring children's development and identifying developmental concerns early are important

The most important reason for monitoring each child's development is to find out if a child's development is on track. It is important to act early if there are signs of potential development delay because early treatment is so important for improving a child's skills and abilities.

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Developmental disabilities are surprisingly common

If you have not already had a child in your care with a developmental delay or disability, chances are, you will. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 1 in 6 children has a developmental disabilityⁱ. Children with developmental problems are at increased risk for poor outcomes in many areas important to health, well-being, and success in life.

Developmental disorders increase a child's risk for poor school performance, frequent absences from school, and repeating a grade, as well as for having more health problems.

Most children with developmental delays are not identified early enough for them to benefit from early intervention services; you can help change that.

Although about 1 in 6 children has a developmental disability, less than half of these children are identified as having a problem before starting school. This is a problem that you can help solveⁱ. Too often, adults don't recognize the signs of a potential developmental disability, they are not sure if their concern is warranted, or they don't have resources to help make their concern easier to talk about. But pinpointing concerns and talking about them is very important to getting a child the help he or she might need.

Early treatment is important

Because early treatment can make a big difference in a child's ability to learn new skills, it is very important for children with developmental disabilities^{ii iii}. Speech therapy, physical therapy, and other services are available in every state for free or at low cost to parents. However, if a developmental concern is not identified early, parents can't take advantage of these services.



*Parents refers to the primary caregivers of children in your care.

ⁱ Boyle CA, Boulet S, Schieve LA, et al. Trends in the prevalence of developmental disabilities in U.S. children, 1997-2008. *Pediatrics* 2011; 127: 1034-42.

ⁱⁱ Lord, C., & McGee, J.P. (Eds.). (2001). *Educating children with autism*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dawson, G. (2008). Early behavioral intervention, brain plasticity, and the prevention of autism spectrum disorder. *Developmental Psychopathology*, 20, 775-803.

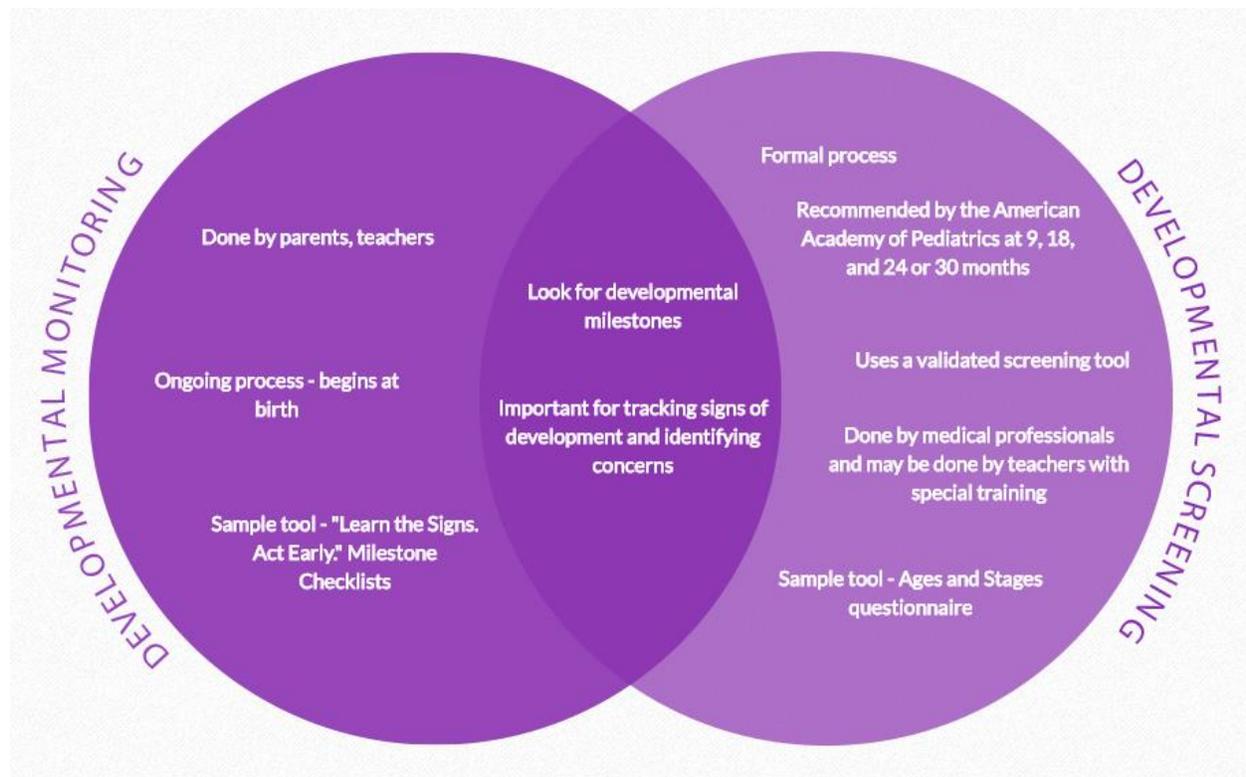
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Authorized by law, early treatment, known as intervention, is available in every state and territory of the United States. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires it. Part C of IDEA serves children under the age of 3 and Part B serves children ages 3 - 22. That's why you'll sometimes hear early intervention for very young children referred to as Part C or for school-age children, Part B.

If you monitor the development of each child in your care, you can identify children who might need services and support and help their parents get it for them as early as possible. You will also be able to reassure parents when their children's development is on track.

It's important to understand the difference between developmental monitoring and developmental screening.



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Developmental monitoring means observing and noting specific ways a child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves every day, in an ongoing way. Developmental monitoring often involves tracking a child's development using a checklist of developmental milestones.

Developmental screening is a more formal process that uses a validated screening tool at specific ages to determine if a child's development is on track or whether he or she needs to be referred for further evaluation.

Both developmental monitoring and developmental screening should be done for all young children; however, this course focuses on the easy and important practice of developmental monitoring. If you already conduct developmental screening in your program this course will help you learn ways to encourage families to monitor their child's development and how to communicate with families about the development of children in your care.

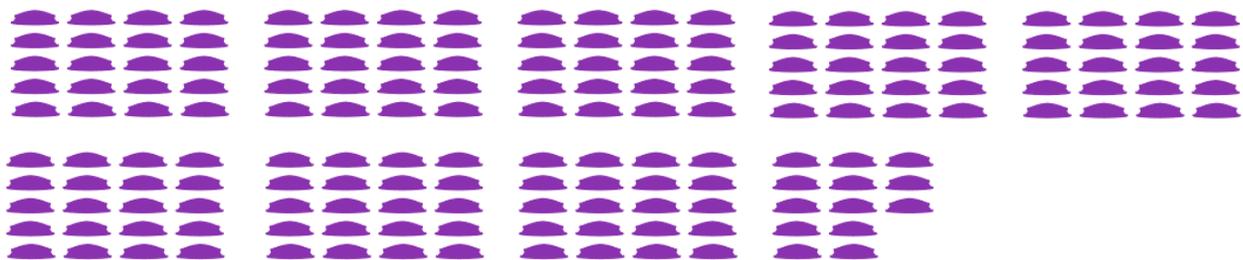
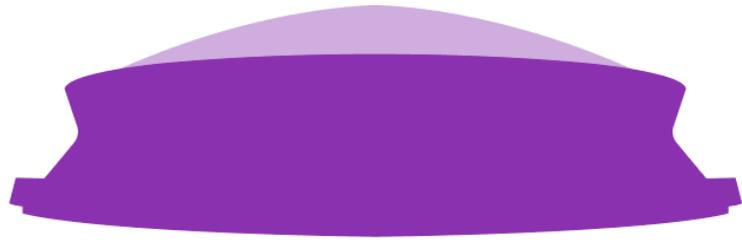


Learning Objective 2

Why early care and education providers have a unique and important role in developmental monitoring

In caring for and teaching children, you are in a perfect position to see how they play, learn, speak, act, and move alongside others of their age.

12.5 Million
Children Would Fill
174 Superdomes



Twelve and a half million children under the age of 5 in the United States are in some type of child care^{iv}. As large numbers of busy parents go off to work, you are on the front lines of watching how children grow and develop.

^{iv} Census Bureau, Survey of Income. Lynda Laughlin. Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Care Arrangements. Spring 2011. Household Economic Studies. US Dept of Commerce.

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Have you ever stopped to think just how important your role is in the lives of these young children?

The first years of life are so important for a child's development. Early experiences make a difference in how young children's brains develop and can influence lifelong learning and health. You spend a great deal of time with young children and are instrumental in determining many of the kinds of experiences they will have.

You are in a unique position to monitor the development of each child in your care. You may be the first one to observe potential delays in a child's development. Working with groups of same-aged children can help you recognize when children are meeting milestones as expected.

Because you spend your day teaching, playing with, and watching children, you may find yourself at times concerned that a child in your care is not reaching milestones that other children his or her age have, or you may have families ask you if you are concerned about their child's development.



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WATCH

The Difference You Can Make:
One Mom's Story

<https://youtu.be/3jUTGSVTRJQ>



You are a trusted partner and valuable resource to parents

Parents look to you for information on how their child is developing, because you often have good observations about their child's strengths and needs. Many parents may not have the chance to see their child with other children of the same age and may not have experience with any child other than their own. When that's the case, you can be their "measuring stick." Even when parents have their own milestone tracking checklist, they may not fully understand what each milestone looks like. You can help by pointing out or describing them.

For example:

"Today when I was reading to Johnny he pointed to show me the pictures in the book. I was happy to see that developmental milestone at 18 months. Are you seeing him do that, too?"

In addition, because you have this special relationship with parents, they may feel more comfortable talking to you if they have concerns about their children's development. You can provide support to them and their child by helping them think through what they need to do and whom to talk to.

You may already be required to monitor and screen children's development

If you work in a child care center, make sure you know and understand your center's policies on developmental monitoring, screening, and communicating with families.

Understanding the important role you play, what is required of you, and being equipped with appropriate tools will help you feel more confident in these processes.

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You may be required to use a developmental checklist, specific tool for screening, or a curriculum that addresses specific learning behaviors and goals. If required, talk to your supervisor or administrator before beginning to use any new tools.

It's important to keep in mind that it is never your role to make or suggest a diagnosis for any child.

Your role is to:

1. Look for and note each child's developmental milestones
2. Share what you've seen with parents
3. Encourage parents to talk to their child's doctor if you or they have a concern



Learning Objective 3

How developmental monitoring can be easy with support from CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." checklists and resources

You observe children's development every day in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move. You will find that it is easy and quick to monitor and record what you see if you have the right tools.

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Monitoring each child's development is easy with the right tools and resources.

If you're not already tracking each child's development, it's easy to get started. By using checklists of developmental milestones for each child's age like those offered by CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program, you can get a good idea of whether a child's development is on track.

If you have a concern about a child's development, using these easy tools can help you feel more confident about what you observe. It will also give you an objective tool to use when talking with parents.



Using checklists of developmental milestones can confirm for you that a child seems to be developing as expected.

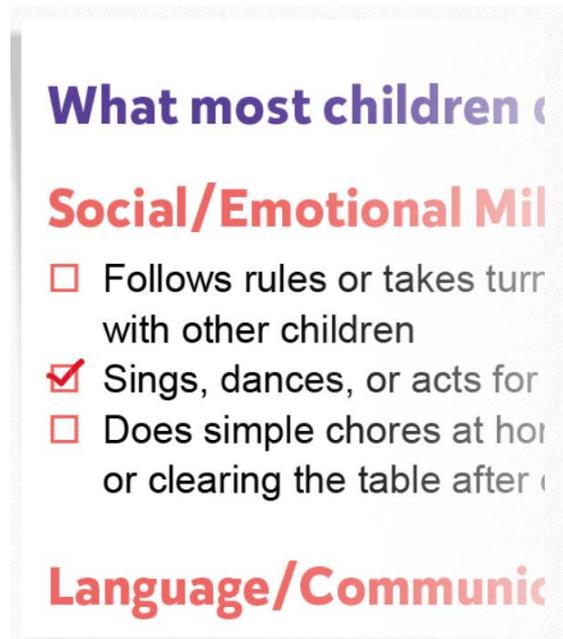
When that happens, you can use the checklists to continue to observe and monitor the child's development and encourage the family to do the same.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free, easy-to-use tools to help you look for and track developmental milestones.

Milestone checklists are not validated screening tools nor can they be used to diagnose any developmental disability.

CDC's milestone checklists are easy to use and are based on milestones developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. They are reliable and convenient tools for monitoring children's development.

- Module 2 talks more about developmental milestones
- Module 3 explains the checklists and how to use them, along with other resources for you



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- Module 4 gives insight on talking with parents about development

Access FREE CDC materials:

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/freematerials.html

Learn about CDC's Milestone Tracker App:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>

Your child at 2 years*

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____ Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 2. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What most children do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones	<input type="checkbox"/> Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying	<input type="checkbox"/> Tries to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy
<input type="checkbox"/> Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation	<input type="checkbox"/> Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate	
Language/Communication Milestones	<input type="checkbox"/> Points to things in a book when you ask, like "Where is the bear?"	Movement/Physical Development Milestones
<input type="checkbox"/> Says at least two words together, like "More milk."	<input type="checkbox"/> Kicks a ball	<input type="checkbox"/> Runs
	<input type="checkbox"/> Walks (not climbs) up a few stairs, with or	

Key Points:

- The most important reason for monitoring each child's development is to determine if his or her development is on track
- Most children with developmental delays are not identified early enough to benefit from early intervention
- Early intervention can make a big difference in a child's development and ability to learn new skills
- If you monitor the development of each child in your care, you can help identify children early who may need early intervention
- Developmental monitoring and developmental screening are not the same thing; it's important to understand the difference
- You are in a perfect position to see and track how all children in your care play, learn, speak, act and move alongside others of their age
- It is never your role to make or suggest a diagnosis for any child
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free, easy-to-use, and interactive tools to help you look for and track developmental milestones



Module 1 Quiz

1. Tracking children's development in your care is important for the following reasons:
 - a. To find out if a child's development is on track
 - b. To find out if a child might have a developmental delay
 - c. Both

2. About how many children in the U.S. have developmental disabilities?
 - a. 1 in 17
 - b. 1 in 6
 - c. 1 in 50

3. You are in a perfect position to monitor children's development in your care because (check all that apply):
 - You spend a lot of time playing and interacting with children
 - Parents see you as a trusted partner
 - Parents may ask you about their child's development
 - You are in a position to make a diagnosis about a child's development

4. Monitoring children's development includes which of the following?
 - a. Observing children's milestones
 - b. Using a developmental milestone checklist or developmental screening tool
 - c. Sharing observations with parents and encouraging them to take action if concerned
 - d. All the above

5. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has free and useful tools to help you monitor children's development.
 - a. True
 - b. False

[Complete the online quiz](#) at the end of **Module 1** to view answers and receive continuing education.

Module 2: Understanding Children's Developmental Milestones



Learning Objectives:



1. Why understanding developmental milestones is important



2. How to recognize developmental milestones



Learning Objective 1

Why understanding developmental milestones is important

The best way to monitor children's development is to track their developmental milestones.

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



What are developmental milestones?

Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving “bye-bye” are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move. You see children reach milestones every day. Though all children develop at their own pace, most children reach developmental milestones at or about the same age.



Importance of Tracking Milestones: Ms. Carolyn discusses the importance of tracking developmental milestones



When I first started teaching, I thought I knew all about developmental milestones. I knew they were the different things children were supposed to do at particular ages – like walk, crawl, and talk. I thought I knew them all, but I really only knew a few, and I’m not sure I even had those at the right ages! Anyway, it’s really helped me understand milestones better since I learned the phrase “play, learn, speak, act, and move.” Now I use milestone checklists to keep up with each child’s progress, but I’ll tell you more about that later. As I watch my little ones, I ask myself if they are all pretty similar in their ability to “play, learn, speak, act, and move.” If anything or anyone stands out, I pay special attention. I also use the checklists to think about what kinds of things my little ones should be doing next. For example, if a child in my classroom is 9 months old and is pointing at things, then I can look on my 12-month checklist and expect that soon she will be using simple gestures like shaking her head for “no” or waving “bye-bye.” I share this information with families, so they’ll know what to look for next, too.

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Developmental milestones offer important clues about a child's developmental health.

Reaching milestones at the typical ages shows a child is developing as expected. Reaching milestones much earlier means a child may be advanced compared with his or her peers of the same age.



Not reaching milestones or reaching them much later than children the same age can be the earliest indication that a child may have a developmental delay.

Some milestones are especially important.

Not reaching those by a certain age is a developmental warning sign or red flag (examples given in learning objective 2). Children who don't reach milestones may need extra support and services to reach their full potential.

Keep in mind that developmental progress is not always steady. You may see changes in development around important life events like the birth of a new sibling. By tracking each child's developmental milestones over time, you will have a better understanding of his or her development and a better basis to judge if concern is warranted.

Developmental milestones fall into categories of development called domains.

Social/Emotional:

This domain is about how children interact with others and show emotion.

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Calms down when spoken to or picked up



Looks at a few pages in a book with you



Comforts others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend

Also: Pointing to show an airplane flying overhead, crying when mom or dad leaves, and imitating other children.

Language/Communication:

This domain is about how children express their needs and share what they are thinking, as well as understand what is said to them.



Waves bye bye



Pointing to show others what she wants



Names things in a book when you point and ask what is that

Also: Following directions and speaking so others understand what they're saying.

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving):

This domain is about how children learn new things and solve problems. It includes how children explore their environment to figure things out – whether by looking at the world around them, putting objects in their mouths, or dropping something to watch it fall. This domain also includes “academic” skills like counting and learning letters and numbers.

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Reaches to grab a toy she wants



Bangs two things together



Stacks at least two small objects, like blocks

Also: An infant staring at mom's face as she leans over his crib.

Movement/Physical Development:

This domain is about how children use their bodies. It includes many milestones parents excitedly wait for.



Takes a few steps on his own



Catches a large ball most of the time



Eats with a spoon

Some developmental milestones fit more than one domain.

For example:

- Pretending to be something else during play with others (teacher, superhero, dog) can be a social/emotional milestone as well as cognitive milestone;
- Following directions can be a language/communication milestone as well as a cognitive milestone; and
- Playing peek-a-boo can be a cognitive as well as social/emotional milestone..

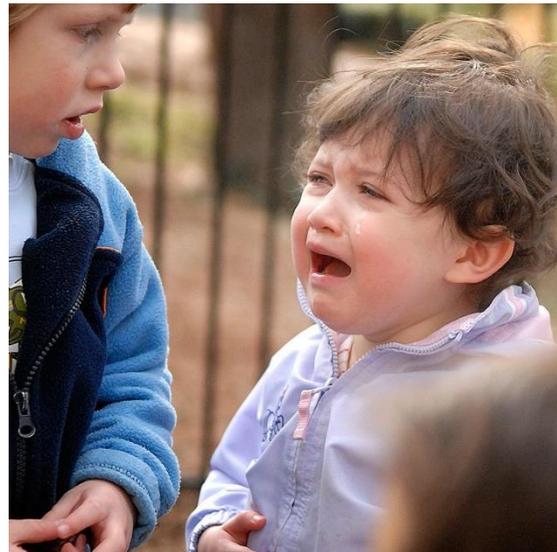




The most important reason for monitoring each child's development is to determine whether a child's development is on track.

Looking for developmental milestones is important to understanding each child's development and behavior.

Milestones can help explain a child's behavior. For example, if a 1-year-old cries when her dad leaves the classroom in the morning, she is showing a typical 12-month milestone that signifies healthy development.



WATCH

Ms. Carolyn talks about spotting milestones like dumping and sorting

<https://youtu.be/GgBvMnPhahQ>





Learning Objective 2

How to recognize developmental milestones

In your work caring for and teaching children, you are in a perfect position to observe the developmental milestones that mark how children play, learn, speak, act, and move alongside others of their age.

Below are some examples of developmental milestones and especially important warning signs of possible developmental delay for 6, 9, 12, 18, 24 and 36 months of age.

Keep in mind these are only a few examples for each age. More complete lists and lists for other ages (2 months-5 years) can be found at www.cdc.gov/Milestones.

Milestones at 6 Months

- **Social/Emotional** - Knows familiar people; Laughs
- **Language/Communication** - Takes turns making sounds with you
- **Cognitive** - Reaches to grab a toy he wants
- **Movement/Physical** - Leans on hands to support himself when sitting

WATCH

6 month milestone – Laughs

<https://youtu.be/YaAYT--3qSQ>



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Milestones at 9 Months

- **Social/Emotional** - Is shy, clingy, or fearful around strangers.
- **Language/Communication** - Makes different sounds like "mamamama" and "babababa"
- **Cognitive** - Smiles or laughs when you play peek-a-boo
- **Movement/Physical** - Gets to a sitting position by herself

WATCH

9 Month Milestone

<https://youtu.be/PHM3cLP0F0o>



Milestones at 12 Months

- **Social/Emotional** - Plays games with you, like pat-a-cake
- **Language/Communication** - Calls a parent "mama" or "dada" or another special name
- **Cognitive** - Puts something in a container
- **Movement/Physical** - Pulls up to stand

WATCH

12 month milestone

<https://youtu.be/OLQJfqjzJ2c>



Milestones at 18 Months

- **Social/Emotional** - Moves away from you, but looks to make sure you are close by
- **Language/Communication** - Tries to say three or more words besides "mama" or "dada"
- **Cognitive** - Copies you doing chores, like sweeping with a broom

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns

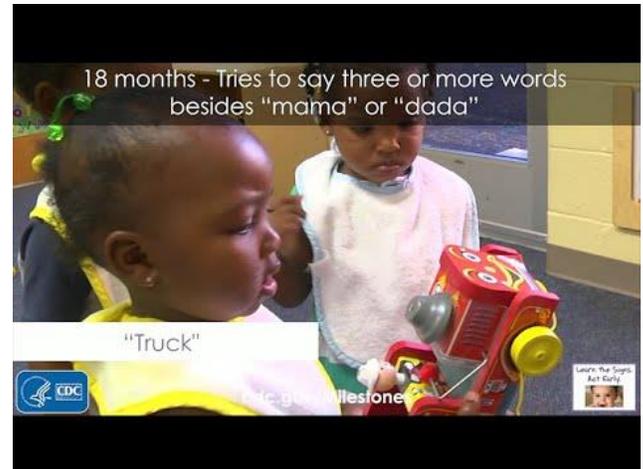


- **Movement/Physical** - Walks without holding on to anyone or anything; tries to use a spoon

WATCH

18 month milestone

<https://youtu.be/xTaU258NdPQ>



Milestones at 2 Years

- **Social/Emotional** - Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation
- **Language/Communication** - Says at least two words together, like "More milk."
- **Cognitive** - Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate
- **Movement/Physical** - Runs; Eats with a spoon

WATCH

2 year milestone

<https://youtu.be/Bt58FSU2ckQ>



Milestones at 3 Years

- **Social/Emotional** - Notices other children and joins them to play
- **Language/Communication** - Talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges
- **Cognitive** - Draws a circle, when you show him how
- **Movement/Physical** - Puts on some clothes by himself, like loose pants or a jacket

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



WATCH

3 year milestone

<https://youtu.be/gm5VScIQSoM>



Key Points:

- The best way to monitor children's development is to track their developmental milestones
- Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age
- Developmental milestones offer important clues about a child's developmental health
- Developmental milestones fall into categories of development called "domains"

Apply What You've Learned

Think of a child you know who is under the age of 5. Think of how that child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves. List at least two ways the child has shown milestones reached in each of the developmental domains.

Use the milestone checklists at www.cdc.gov/Milestones or download the [Milestone Tracker app](#) to help.



Module 2 Quiz

1. Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye-bye" are examples of developmental milestones.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. The best way to monitor children's development is to track their:
 - a. Calorie intake
 - b. Developmental milestones
 - c. Head circumference

3. A child not reaching milestones at the expected ages may indicate:
 - a. Child is on track developmentally
 - b. Child may need extra support and services

4. At what age can most children point to show others something interesting?
 - a. 9 months
 - b. 12 months
 - c. 18 months
 - d. 24 months

5. Cooing or babbling sounds are a milestone in which domain:
 - a. Social/emotional
 - b. Cognitive
 - c. Language/Communication
 - d. Movement/Physical

Module 3: Objective and Engaged Developmental Monitoring



Learning Objectives:



1. Understanding what developmental monitoring is



2. How to use CDC tools for developmental monitoring



3. How to help families when there are concerns about development



Learning Objective 1



Understanding what developmental monitoring is

Developmental monitoring means looking for developmental milestones over time and keeping a record of milestones you see.



Ms. Carolyn explains that you are already monitoring milestones



The first time I heard the term “developmental monitoring,” I was really intimidated and thought, “this sounds really complicated and time consuming. How am I going to do that on top of everything else I have to do during the day?” I was so relieved when I found out that “developmental monitoring” is just a fancy way of saying “watch, observe and record what the kids are doing to make sure they’re on track.” I just mark on a simple checklist when children meet milestones. We observe children everyday anyway. We watch what they’re doing when they play in the classroom or outside, when they eat, and so on. Monitoring is just that: watching and observing, and recording what you see. Making a check on a list when a child meets a milestone takes about two seconds, and it’s easier than just about anything else we do all day. It’s definitely easier than getting a room full of toddlers to sleep at naptime, and it’s a lot more fun than changing diapers! And if that’s all it takes to really make sure each child is on track and to make sure I’m not missing anything in all the hubbub each day, I’m all over it!

Developmental monitoring is best done with an objective checklist of typical developmental milestones.

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



Using milestone checklists in developmental monitoring will help you:

- become a better observer of the development of children in your care;
- better understand the developmental milestones children should reach at certain ages;
- more easily pinpoint potential developmental concerns for a child;
- have an objective basis to talk with parents when you are concerned about a child's development;
- and be better prepared to conduct developmental screening with a more formal tool if that is asked of you.

Sharing milestone checklists with families and encouraging them to use them at home can also help parents become better observers of their own children's development. Using a checklist at home may confirm for families that their child is developing as he or she should, or it may give them the knowledge and self-confidence to talk with you and their healthcare provider about their concerns.

Warning!

However helpful, milestone checklists have some important limitations.

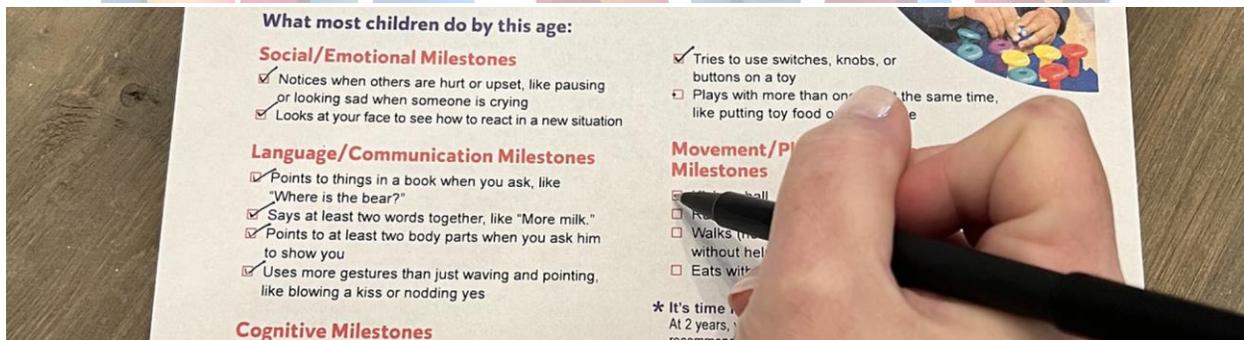
Milestone checklists are not validated screening tools. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children receive a developmental screen using a formal, scientifically tested screening tool at 9, 18, and 24 or 30 months, or whenever there is a concern, and an autism spectrum disorder screen at 18 and 24 months.

Using milestone checklists will not satisfy this recommendation. However, using a developmental milestone checklist can help determine if a child needs to be screened more frequently than what is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. You may be required to use a validated screening tool and conduct screening. It is important to follow your employer's policies regarding developmental screening and communicating with families.

Milestone checklists cannot be used to diagnose any developmental disability. Diagnosing a child with a developmental disability often requires an in-depth evaluation by one or more specialists.



Different childrearing practices and cultural expectations can influence a child's developmental milestones. For example, making eye contact or copying others might be examples of developmental milestones that are not typical in some cultures.



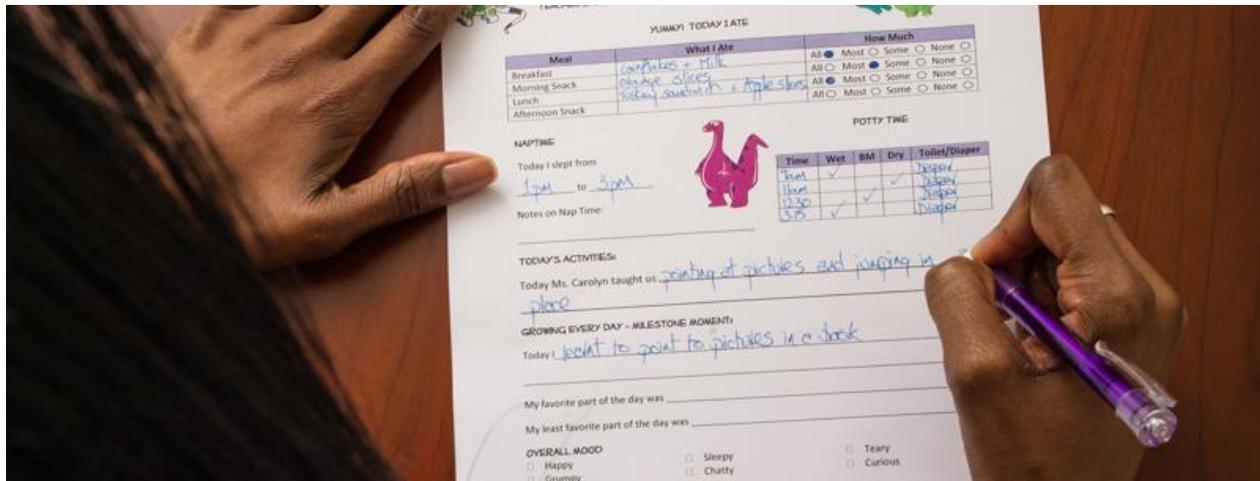
Learning Objective 2

How to use CDC tools for developmental monitoring

Developmental monitoring can be easy and fun when you have the right tools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, through its "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program, offers free, easy-to-use milestone checklists, and other materials to help.

CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials, including milestone checklists and other helpful tools, are available at www.cdc.gov/ActEarly. Visit the website to view them, print them, and begin using them today!

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



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Ms. Carolyn shares how monitoring is fun and easy with free CDC materials

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So, this may sound really surprising, but....I like tracking milestones. I think it's fun, and everything about it fascinates me. The personalities of the children in my class are always so different, but for the most part, they meet their milestones about the same time. But the order in which they meet them can be so different. Keeping up with what each child is doing, and knowing what each child still needs to learn is really easy. In the next section, you're going to learn about some materials from "Learn the signs. Act early." (the program I mentioned earlier.) I use the materials for different purposes. For tracking milestones in the classroom, I use the milestone checklists, because they're just one page, and I can print them as I need them. There are lots of format choices. One thing we did at the ABC Center was to take some of the materials and put our own logo and contact information on them. Then we had a local printer print them for us. We give them out to families and put them in the waiting areas in the Center. If you want to do this too, for your Center, all you have to do is email the Act Early people. They'll give you access to the files you need so you can plug in your information and get them printed. It's that easy!

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



Milestone Checklists

Milestone Checklists are single-page lists of developmental milestones and warning signs of potential developmental delay for specific ages.

Features:

- Each checklist focuses on a specific age; 2 months through 5 years
- Available in English and Spanish (can be printed with Spanish on reverse)
- Includes information about when and how a parent should “act early” on concerns
- Easily printed and photocopied

Your child at 2 years*

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____ Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 2. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What most children do by this age:

- Social/Emotional Milestones**
 - Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying
 - Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation
- Language/Communication Milestones**
 - Points to things in a book when you ask, like "Where is the bear?"
 - Says at least two words together, like "More milk."
 - Points to at least two body parts when you ask him to show you
 - Uses more gestures than just waving and pointing, like blowing a kiss or nodding yes
- Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**
 - Holds something in one hand while using the other hand, for example, holding a container and taking the lid off
- Movement/Physical Development Milestones**
 - Tries to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy
 - Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate
 - Kicks a ball
 - Runs
 - Walks (not climbs) up a few stairs with or without help
 - Eats with a spoon

* It's time for developmental screening! At 2 years, your child is due for an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

You know your child best. Don't wait. If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your child's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening. If you or the doctor are still concerned:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your child more; and
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/first5.

For more on how to help your child, visit cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference!

Logos: CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, etc.

View and print checklists new: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/FULL-LIST-CDC_LTSAE-Checklists2021_Eng_FNL2_508.pdf

Tips for Using the Milestone Checklists



- Print a copy of a checklist for every child at the start of the school year; every month, take time to update each child's checklist with the milestones he or she has reached
- Print a copy of a blank checklist for each child's family; let them know you'll be updating it each month and encourage them to do the same at home
- Review the latest checklists at every parent/teacher conference as a way to share the child's progress with the parents
- If a child is between two ages for which checklists are offered, use the checklist for the younger age (for example, use the 18-month checklist for a 20-month old child, NOT the 24-month checklist).

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



CDC's Milestone Tracker App

CDC's FREE Milestone Tracker app helps parents and early care and education providers track child's milestones from age 2 months to 5 years, using a smart phone or tablet. You can use the app to track the milestones of multiple children, view a photo or video of each milestone, quickly reference milestones by age and category, and find out what to do if you are ever concerned about a child's development.

Features:

- Personalize checklists for multiple children
- Get tips and activities to support a child's development
- Get a notice when it's time to "act early" and talk with parents about developmental concerns
- Generate milestone summaries to share with a parent or other important care providers



Download today from the App Store or Google Play!

Tips for Using the CDC's Milestone Tracker app



- Post a link to the [Milestone Tracker webpage](#) on your organization's website
- Post a [Milestone Tracker flyer](#) in your classroom or your center's front lobby
- Encourage parents to download the app and use it to monitor their child's development
- Use CDC's *Milestone Tracker* app and the milestone summary it generates to support observations and conversations with parents about age-appropriate milestones

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



Milestone Moments Booklet

The Milestone Moments Booklet is a 42-page mini-booklet that includes full milestone checklists from 2 months through 5 years of age, with milestones and warning signs for each age. It also includes age-appropriate activities that you can try in the classroom and parents can try at home to help their children learn and grow. This booklet is intended to be kept and used over time.



Features:

- High-quality resource to be kept and used over time to record a child's development
- Suggests age-appropriate activities to help children learn and grow
- Includes information about when and how a parent should "act early" on concerns
- Available in English and Spanish
- Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities

View and print English booklet now:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/booklets/Milestone-Moments-Booklet21_Eng_Sng_FNL-508.pdf

View and print Spanish booklet now:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/booklets/Milestone-Moments-Booklet-2021_Span_Sng_FNL_508.pdf

Tips for Using the Milestone Moments Booklet



- Provide a copy to every family when their child enrolls; encourage families to use it at home (See end of this section to learn how to customize and print copies for every family)
- Try at least one of the suggested activities from the booklet as part of your in-classroom activities
- Include at least one of the suggested activities from the booklet in each edition of your monthly newsletter for parents to try at home

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns

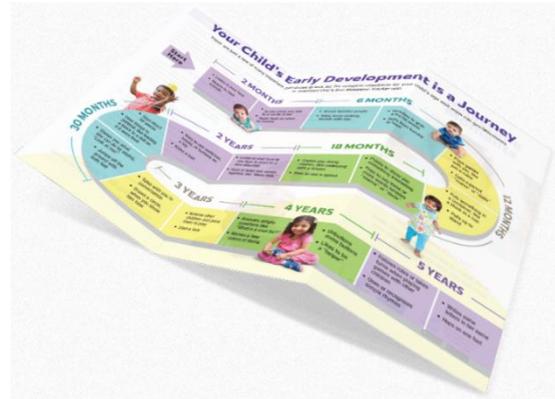


Milestones Brochure: Track Your Child's Developmental Milestones

The Milestones Brochure is a colorful and engaging trifold brochure that introduces a few key milestones for ages 6 months to 4 years and explains the importance of looking for milestones and acting early on concerns about development.

Features:

- A great introduction to the importance of developmental monitoring and acting early on concerns
- Highlights a few key milestones for a variety of ages
- Available in English and Spanish
- Easily printed and photocopied



View and print English brochure now:

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/brochure/CDC-LTSAE-Brochure-Eng_FNL2-2021-508.pdf

View and print Spanish brochure now:

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/brochure/CDC-LTSAE-Brochure2021_SPN_FNL2_508.pdf

Tips for Using the Milestones Brochure



- Laminate a copy and post it to the bulletin board outside your classroom
- Include copies of the brochure in the parent resource center and in the lobby
- Post a link to the brochure on your center's website
- Post on the staff refrigerator as a friendly reminder to your coworkers of the importance of developmental monitoring

Growth Chart

The *Grow Up Healthy!* Growth Chart is an engaging display for the classroom and a reminder to watch and record both physical AND developmental growth. It includes recommended

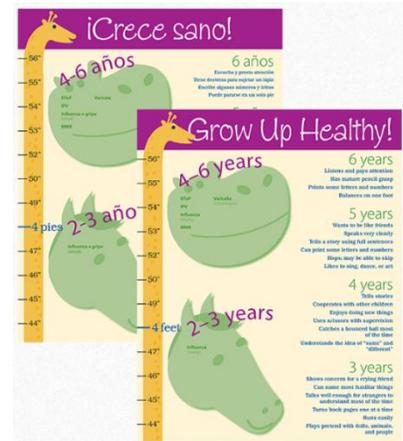
Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



immunizations by age and a sampling of milestones that children should reach by different ages.

Features:

- A useful reminder of the importance of tracking both physical and developmental growth
- A nice, colorful addition to your classroom walls
- Highlights recommended immunizations and a few key milestones at different ages
- Available in English with Spanish



Tips for Using for Using the Growth Chart

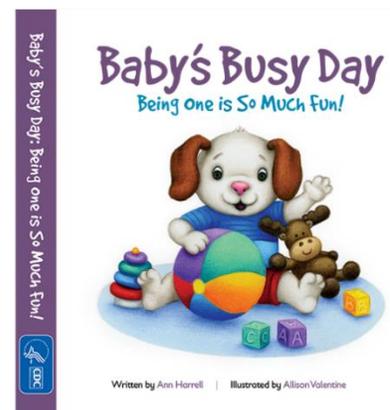


- A few times each year, mark each child's height on the growth chart. At the same time, make a mental note about how each child is meeting or working toward the milestones listed.
- Give each child their own growth chart on his or her birthday for the family to use at home. (See the end of this section to learn how to customize and print copies for every family.)

Baby's Busy Day – Being One is So Much Fun!

Meet Baby, a one-year-old puppy who is having a very busy day! Follow along as Mom, Dad, and Sis engage Baby throughout his day while encouraging his development along the way! As you read this fun story with your little one, keep an eye out for the paw prints to learn what one-year-old milestones to look for in your baby's development, and the hearts for tips on how you can help!

- Board book design, appropriate for babies
- Milestones and parent tips called out at the bottom of the pages for teachers and parents
- Information on what to do if you have concerns at the back of the book
- [Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities](#)

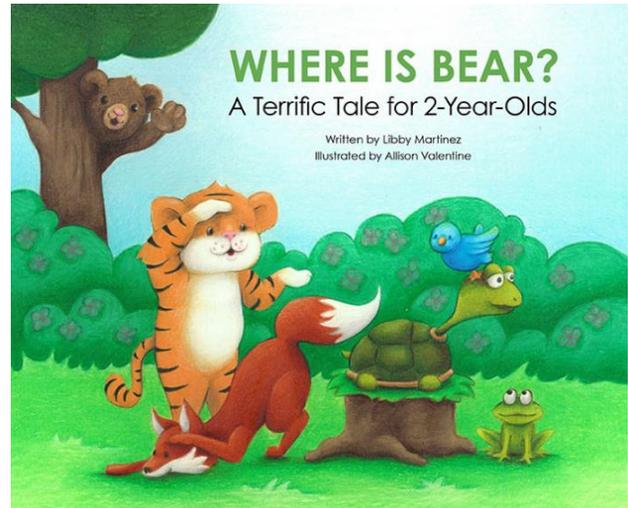


Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



Where Is Bear? A Terrific Tale for 2-Year-Olds

This children's book is a terrific tale for 2-year-old children! This engaging and interactive book encourages children to help Tiger and his forest friends in their search to find Bear. With each turn of the page, children will get closer to finding Bear and teachers and parents will learn about many important milestones to look for in 2-year-old children.



- Beautiful illustrations that will captivate young children
- "Milestone Moments" called out at the bottom of the pages for teachers and parents
- Full 2-year-old developmental milestone checklist and age-appropriate activities in the back
- Full 3-year-old developmental milestone checklist and age-appropriate activities in the back
- Also available in Spanish
- [Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities](#)



Tips for Using *Where is Bear?*

- Order a copy for the 2-year-old classroom and incorporate it into reading time
- Give a copy to families with 2-year-olds to help encourage them to read to their child everyday

Amazing Me — It's Busy Being 3!

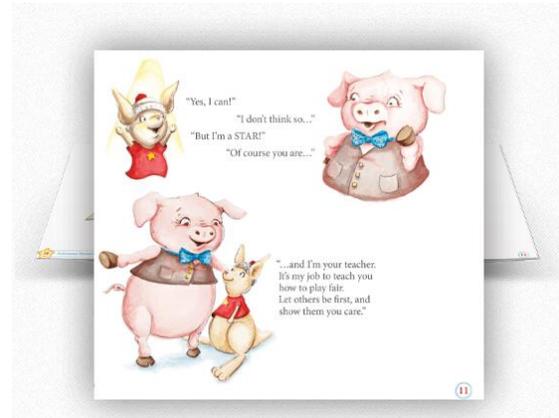
This children's book, for kids 2½ through 4 years of age, is really AMAZING! It tells the story of Joey and all the things he can do now that he is 3. Throughout the story, Joey's amazing developmental milestones are called out for teachers and parents at the bottom of almost every page. It's another great reminder of all the AMAZING developmental milestones to be looking for each day!

Features:

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



- A fun story, tested with teachers, parents, and children, that keeps the attention of a young audience
- Beautiful illustrations depicting activities relatable to many children
- "Milestone Moments" called out at the bottom of the pages for teachers and parents; and a koala for the children to find each time Joey shows an amazing milestone!
- Full 3-year-old developmental milestone checklist and age-appropriate activities in the back
- Interactive e-version available at www.cdc.gov/AmazingMe
- Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities



Tips for Using *Amazing Me*



- Order a copy for the 3-year-old classroom and incorporate it into weekly reading circle time.
- Read it aloud to parents and children in the 3-year-old room during an annual "open house" or other event for parents.
- Give a copy to each child on his or her 3rd birthday so families can read it at home. (See end of this section to learn how to customize and print copies for every family.)

All of CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials are:

- Research-based
- Easy to understand
- Parent-tested
- Reproducible (no copyright)
- Available in English and Spanish
- Available to download or print
- Popular!
- Free in LIMITED quantities
- CUSTOMIZABLE and can be printed locally in the quantities you need



Getting Materials for Every Child in Your Care

- CDC offers a limited number of free, pre-printed copies
- Items like the Milestone Checklists and Brochure print easily from the web using a desktop printer—feel free to make as many copies as you need.
- For other items, we encourage you to contact us (by emailing ActEarly@cdc.gov) to obtain the file, customize it by adding your logo and local contact information, and talk with your employer about having it printed locally
- [Click here to share information with colleagues](#) about the benefits of "Learn the Signs. Act Early." and ways to use these materials in your program.
 - [Click here for information](#) about how "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials can help Early Head Start programs.
 - [Click here for information](#) about how "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials can help meet CCDF requirements.

Remember

- Milestone checklists do NOT take the place of developmental screening with a formal, scientifically tested screening tool.
- If a child is between two ages for which checklists are offered, use the checklist for the younger age (for example, use the 18-month checklist for a 20-month old child, NOT the 24-month checklist).
- Talk with your employer about how best to incorporate CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials into your work and about the possibility of customizing materials and having them printed locally, using information from the [Early Care and Education primer](#).
- If a child was born prematurely it may be best for parents to ask the doctor for guidance on how to use milestone checklists. Depending on the child's situation and doctor's guidance it may be best to use the checklist age that matches the child's adjusted age (based on due date) not his or her chronologic age (age based on birthdate) for the first 2 years.



Learning Objective 3

How to help families when there are concerns about development

At some point, there are likely to be children in your care who are not meeting developmental milestones as expected. You can play an integral role in helping these children get the help they might need to reach their full potential.

Supporting a family with your encouragement to act early on concerns about a child's development is a critical step toward helping a child get the early services he or she might need.



A first step in supporting a family to act early is to understand the process of referrals and next steps so that you can help families navigate through it.

These are the common steps families and providers take in getting help for a child with a developmental disability:

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1. Developmental monitoring to validate and pinpoint potential developmental concerns

You've learned about developmental monitoring and how to do it earlier in this module.



2. Conversation between the family and the child's doctor about developmental concerns

It is important for parents to talk with their child's doctor about the milestones their child has reached and what to expect next. Ask families to take their milestone checklists to their child's primary healthcare provider or medical home. It is especially important that parents have that conversation if they are concerned about their child's development.



Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



3. Developmental screening using a validated screening tool is conducted to determine if action is necessary

If you or someone in your center conducts developmental screens for the children in your care, be sure to give the parents the screen result and encourage them to share that information with the child's doctor. If you don't conduct screening, encourage the family to ask their child's doctor about conducting a developmental screen. If the family does not have a regular doctor for their child, you can help them find one at the [National Center for Medical Home Implementation website](#).



4. Referral to a specialist for establishing a diagnosis

The child may also be referred to a specialist such as a developmental pediatrician, child neurologist, or child psychologist for a more in-depth medical evaluation that may lead to a specific diagnosis of a developmental disability or other condition. Usually only a pediatrician, family practice doctor, or other healthcare provider refers a family to a medical specialist.

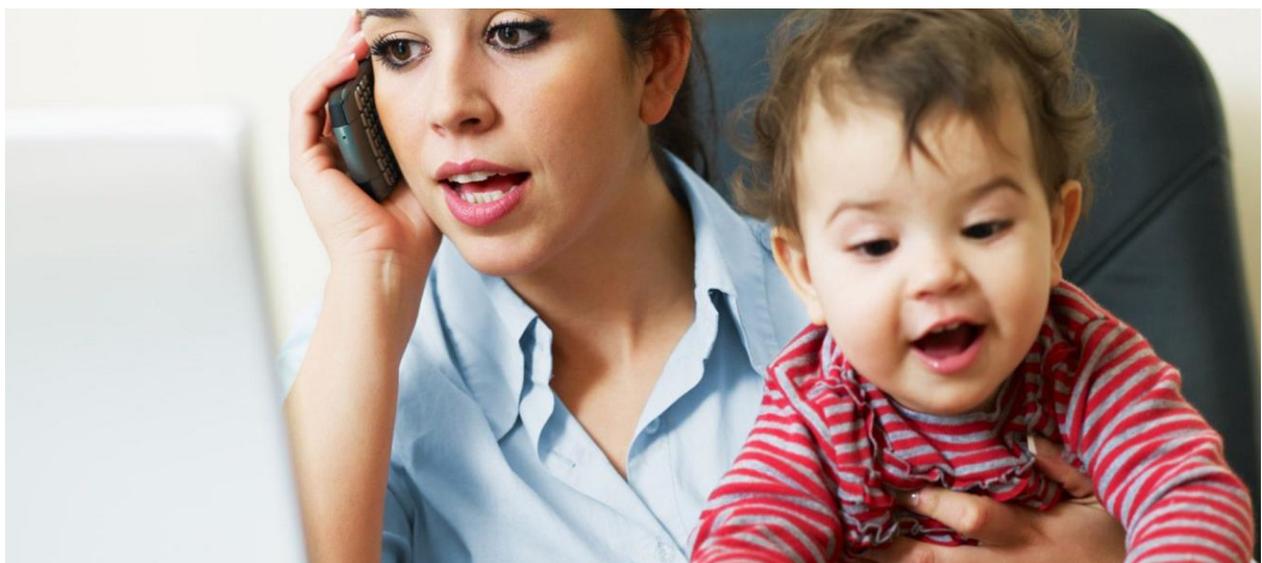
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5. **Referral to the local early intervention system to determine if the child is eligible for services**

If a parent is worried about his or her child's development, or if results of developmental monitoring or screening indicate developmental concerns, then you can encourage the family to call their local early intervention provider or local elementary school for a more detailed developmental evaluation to see if he or she would benefit from services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, or other specialized services.

The evaluation is free or low cost if conducted by the local public early intervention system or public school system. It determines whether a child is eligible for services but does not usually provide a diagnosis of any specific developmental disability.



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To refer parents to early intervention services:

If you work in a child care center or for another employer, make sure you know your center's policies. Be aware of your center's referral procedures, and let your supervisor know you plan to refer a parent to early intervention services.

Children 0-3 Years Old:

- If the child is younger than 3 years old, contact your local early intervention system. [Click here to find the website and phone number for your state or territory's early intervention system.](#)
- Tell parents to call and say *"I have concerns about my child's development and I would like to have my child evaluated to find out if he/she is eligible for early intervention services."*

Children 3 Years Old or Older:

- If the child is 3 years old or older tell parents to call any local public elementary school even if their child does not go to school there and say *"I have concerns about my child's development and I would like to have my child evaluated through the school system for preschool special education services."*
- If the person who answers is unfamiliar with preschool special education, parents should ask to speak with the school or district's special education director.

Parents do NOT need a doctor's referral or medical diagnosis to contact their early intervention system or public school to request an evaluation for services.

Key Points:

- Developmental monitoring means looking for children's developmental milestones over time and keeping a record of milestones you see
- Developmental monitoring is best done with an objective checklist of typical developmental milestones
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free, easy-to-use milestone checklists for you at www.cdc.gov/Milestones
- Supporting a family with your encouragement to act early on any concerns is a critical step toward helping a child get the early help he or she might need
- It is important to understand the process of referrals and next steps so that you can help families navigate through it

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- Parents do not need a doctor's referral or a medical diagnosis to contact their early intervention system or public school

Apply What You've Learned

Choose one "Learn the Signs. Act Early." material and describe how you can use it in your work with children and parents. List the steps you need to get this started.

Here is an example:

I choose the Milestones Brochure.

To get started, I will:

- Find the Brochure on the CDC website, www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
- Print out 15 color copies and fold them into the tri-fold format
- Show them to my center director and tell her I plan to give these out to my parents
- Hand them to parents when they come to pick up their child
- Tell parents there are some easy ways to learn more about their child's development and that I can help



Module 3 Quiz

1. Developmental monitoring (check all that apply):
 - Involves looking for children's developmental milestones over time
 - Is best done by watching children and comparing them to each other
 - Involves using an objective milestone checklist for the child's age
 - Should be done only by trained medical professionals

2. Developmental screening (check all that apply):
 - Involves using a validated developmental screening tool
 - Should be done for all children
 - Usually requires special training
 - Involves looking for children's developmental milestones at specific times

3. When there are developmental concerns, families should be referred to (check all that apply):
 - Their child's healthcare provider
 - The local chapter of the American Red Cross
 - Their local early intervention system or public school
 - The local chapter of the United Way

4. Do parents need a doctor's referral or a medical diagnosis to contact their early intervention program or their local public school for help, if they are concerned about their child's development?
 - a. It depends on their insurance requirements
 - b. Yes, always
 - c. Usually, but there are ways around it
 - d. No

[Complete the online quiz](#) at the end of **Module 3** to view answers and receive continuing education.

Module 4: How to Talk with Parents about their Child's Development



Learning Objectives:



1. How to communicate with families about development



2. How to encourage families to be aware of and monitor developmental milestones



3. How to communicate when you have a concern



4. How to encourage families to talk with their child's doctor about their child's development

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Learning Objective 1

How to communicate with families about development

Parents see you as a trusted partner in their child's care, and they look to you for information about how their child is developing. Using good listening skills can make your conversations with parents easier and help you feel more confident.

Discuss healthy development with parents* regularly

Celebrating milestones is infectious! Families begin to see the importance of those accomplishments and will want to take notice as well. Children grow up so quickly; it is as if one day they are beginning to sit up and the next they are playing baseball. All the "small" steps in between represent important developmental milestones: rolling over, sitting up, crawling, cruising, walking, running, and others.

Just like these movement milestones that are so familiar to parents, their child's social/emotional, communication/language, and cognitive developmental milestones also progress in a series of orderly steps. In addition, there can be clues in those steps that could alert parents to a potential developmental concern.



The more you, as their trusted partner and provider, routinely talk with families about their children's development, the more families will be engaged as well.

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*Parents refers to the primary caregivers of children in your care.

Sharing milestones with parents can help them have realistic expectations and better understand their child's behaviors. If parents do not know when a child should have a certain skill, they may worry unnecessarily.

For example:

If a parent says she is concerned that her 2-month-old is not pushing up onto her elbows/forearms yet, you can reassure her that pushing up onto elbows/forearms is a typical milestone at 4 months."



When a child reaches milestones as expected, it's important to share that information with parents. Parents always like to hear if their child has met a milestone.

For example:

"Today Janie pointed to ask for something! That's a milestone we don't always see at this age. Way to go, Janie!"

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Although you may find it more difficult to share that a child is not meeting expected milestones, it's important to give parents that information as well.

For example:

"Kofi is meeting the 2-year-old milestones we expect children to reach at his age. He looks at our faces to see how to react in new situations, and eats with a spoon. I haven't heard him say two words together yet, like "More milk." What are you seeing him do at home?"

Because acting early can make such a difference, sharing milestones with parents and pointing out areas of concern can also help them recognize potential developmental concerns.

When you talk with families, be mindful of cultural differences.

Not all cultures place the same emphasis on particular developmental milestones. When communicating with families, be aware of your own cultural biases in making decisions about how to communicate with families.

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Good listening skills help make a conversation more successful.

How you carry on the conversation is very important to its success. Using these skills will help build relationships and encourage better communication:

- During the conversation, listen closely; try to make eye contact, nod when appropriate, and be silent when the parent is speaking.
- After listening, repeat back in your own words the parent's main point so he or she will know you heard and understood. For example, if a mother of a child in your care says that her child is not speaking as clearly as her neighbor's child of the same age, you might say, "I hear you saying that you do not hear Ginny speaking clearly."
- As you listen, also consider how the parent feels about what he or she is saying. Watch and listen closely for clues to those feelings. If you acknowledge those feelings in what you say, you will build a stronger connection with the parent. For example, if a mother seems worried when talking about her child, you might say, "It sounds like you are pretty worried about this."

Developing and using these listening skills in your conversations with parents will help to enhance your relationships with parents and make difficult conversations more successful.

WATCH

Ms. Carolyn displays active listening skills with a mom of a typically-developing child

<https://youtu.be/JstvhNqk3is>





Learning Objective 2

How to encourage families to be aware of and monitor developmental milestones

You set a good example for families when you monitor children's development. Talk with parents regularly about their child's milestones. Encourage them to monitor their child's development at home by sharing the materials available through "Learn the Signs. Act Early."

Encourage families to use developmental milestone checklists to monitor their child's development.

Milestone checklists and the Milestone Moments booklet from CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program are easy-to-use, proven tools as useful for families as they are for you.

These materials can help families understand what typical developmental milestones are at certain ages and can help establish appropriate expectations. Not only will these materials give parents a snapshot of what their child is doing right now, they will help them to anticipate developmental milestones that are emerging or will come next. Having milestone checklists as a reference can greatly help you and the parent think about what kinds of toys might be appropriate and how to create an environment that encourages the child's development.

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Parents can refer to the positive parenting tips in the Milestone Moments booklet for ideas. Be sure to encourage families to take a look at the [“Learn the Signs. Act Early.” website](https://www.cdc.gov/actearly/) and give them ideas of ways they can use the materials:

- Put the Milestones Brochure or Milestone Checklists on the refrigerator and watch for milestones
- Put a Milestone Moments Booklet in the play area and refer to it at the respective ages



If you build developmental monitoring and feedback into your daily routines, such as in progress reports, for example, then families will begin to notice what their child is accomplishing and might begin monitoring their child's developmental milestones at home.



Having frequent conversations about development with families when they drop off or pick up their child can show the parent that you value their child and his or her development. Parents will love to hear that their child used a play phone to “call” them at work as much as how long he napped.

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



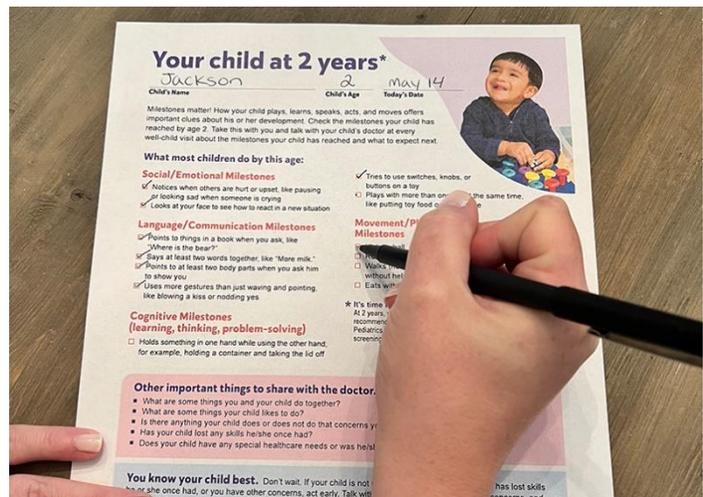
Learning Objective 3

How to communicate when you have a concern

Communicating concerns with families about their child's development will be much easier if you have already established a meaningful relationship, are prepared, and focus your conversation on specific developmental milestones.

Before raising concerns with families, make sure you are well prepared:

- Beforehand, invest considerable time in building meaningful and collaborative relationships with the parents. Chances are, parents may already have some concerns of their own and might feel more comfortable having that conversation if they feel they have a relationship with
- you that is built on mutual respect and open communication.
- Complete a milestone checklist for the child's age, either as a single sheet or in the Milestone Moments booklet ([find both here](#)). If the child is between ages of the milestone checklists, use the checklist for the younger age.
- Prepare for the conversation by reviewing some helpful [tips for talking with parents about developmental concerns](#).



Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



Warning!

Make sure you know your center's policies.

If you work in a child care center or for another employer, there are additional considerations for you:

- Be aware of your employer's policies regarding conversations with families. Your center's policy may only allow the director or other administrator to communicate developmental concerns to families.
- Be aware of your center's referral procedures and community contacts, so that you are prepared with that information if you need to give it to families.
- Let your supervisor know you plan to have this conversation with a parent(s) and consider asking for him or her to join you for the conversation.

Now that you have been observing and monitoring, you have a lot of knowledge and insight about children in your care. You will want to communicate this information in the best way possible.

Keep the following tips in mind for your conversation with a parent:

Use the completed milestone checklist as the basis for your conversation. The checklist is an objective tool that can both confirm and pinpoint your concerns.

And because it was developed by CDC and is based on the gold-standard milestone lists from the American Academy of Pediatrics, it offers you enhanced credibility and objectivity in your conversation.



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AVOID

"I think Jason is behind in his development. He can't do things other children can do at his age."



TRY

"I wanted to take a minute to talk with you about how well Jason is developing. I like to use a checklist for developmental milestones from CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. It's good for helping us understand his development and which milestones he's met, along with which ones he's still working on."

Start off the conversation by highlighting some of the child's strengths. Name some developmental milestones the child has mastered, and say how excited you are to see his or her progress in those areas.



AVOID

"Jason doesn't know what to do with a toy phone or even a spoon, and there are other milestones he hasn't met either. This list shows all the milestones he can't do."

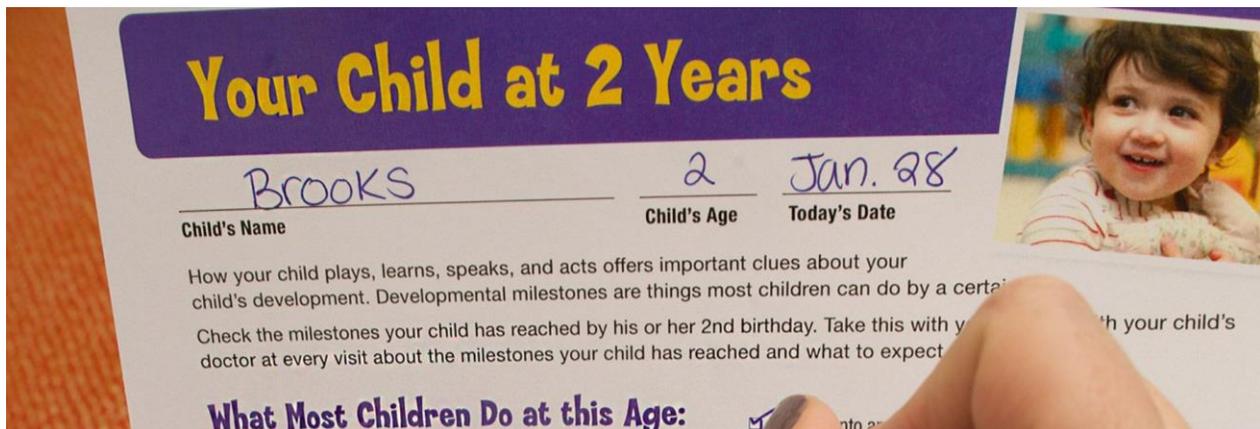
Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



TRY

"Does Jason turn and look at you when you call his name? I have noticed that he does not seem to respond to his name but continues to play with a truck, spinning the wheels around and around."

Be clear about what your goal is for the conversation. Be honest, kind, and respectful in your tone. It is okay to say you may be overly concerned, and that it is always best to check with the child's doctor.



AVOID

"Look at all these milestones Jason is missing on this checklist. That means that something is really wrong with his development. He's way behind the other kids in this room."

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



TRY

"This checklist can help us better understand Jason's development, and that's what we're trying to do. But even if he is missing some of these milestones, that doesn't necessarily mean anything is wrong. It's always a good idea to pay attention to his development and to talk about it when you take him to the doctor. I'll give you a copy of this milestone checklist so you can take it with you and talk about it with his doctor the next time you go."

Make the conversation a two-way discussion. Pause a lot, giving the parent time to think and respond – Remember your active listening skills! Listen to and watch the parent to decide on how to proceed. Pay attention to tone of voice and body language.



AVOID

"So that's the list. Take it to the doctor and see what he has to say about it. That's what I wanted to cover today."

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



TRY

"Have you seen Jason do some of these milestones at home? PAUSE. Now that we've looked at the checklist, what are your thoughts? PAUSE. What do you think is a good idea to do next? PAUSE."

Remind the parent that you care for their child and you want to make sure that the child has every opportunity to be his or her very best.



AVOID

"Jason is challenging; he's just not like the other kids. But I'm doing what I can with him."

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



TRY

"I really love Jason and I am so happy to have him in my class. I want what's best for him, and that's why I wanted to talk to you about this. If we do have a concern, it's best to address it right away. We can talk about this again in a month or so, and maybe by then you can let me know what the doctor's thoughts were."

WATCH

Ms. Carolyn has a conversation with a mom discussing her concerns for a child in her class
<https://youtu.be/LvhXmdxqC6o>



It is important to remember that when raising concerns with families, in some ways you are asking them to reconsider their image of their child and potentially their dreams and vision for their future.



Some families may be relieved because they had had the same concerns themselves but were afraid to raise them. Others may resent or deny your concerns and refuse to accept the information you give them.

Whatever the parent's response, if you have the facts based on an objective measure, then you can encourage the families to take that information to their child's healthcare provider.



Learning Objective 4

Encourage families to talk with their child's doctor about their child's development

Parents rely on their child's healthcare provider for advice and information about their child. Whether they and their child have been seeing the same doctor for years or see a different one every visit, parents can enhance their relationship with their child's doctor by having conversations routinely about their child's development.

Encourage parents to share their concerns with their child's doctor or healthcare provider. Many families have a regular pediatrician or healthcare provider who can help the family sort out their concerns and think about next steps. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children be screened using a formal, scientifically tested screening tool whenever there is a concern, along with routine screenings at 9, 18, and 24 or 30 months and autism screening at 18 and 24 months. Encourage families to ask their child's doctor about developmental screening especially if a milestone checklist pinpoints a concern.

If you or someone in your center regularly screens children in your care with a formal, scientifically tested screening tool, encourage the family to share those screening results with their child's doctor. If the family does not have a regular healthcare provider, then you may want to talk with your center director or employer about helping connect a family to a medical home. You can help them find one at the [National Center for Medical Home Implementation website](#).

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



1. Remind parents that their questions and concerns are important and that sharing them with the child's doctor is an important step to getting their child the early help he or she might need.
2. Print a copy of the tip sheet [Concerned about development? How to talk with the doctor.](#) and give it to the parent. This sheet includes:

- steps parents can take to prepare for the visit with the doctor,
- ways parents can ensure that all of their questions and concerns are addressed,
- how parents can be sure they've understood what the doctor has told them and the next steps to take, and
- what parents can do if they feel uneasy about the advice the doctor has given them.



3. Later, follow-up with the parents to find out how the visit with the doctor went. Ask if there is anything you can do in the classroom to help support the next steps for the child. (If you're unsure about agreeing to a specific request, tell the parent that you'd like to talk it over with your supervisor first.)

If the parent is not satisfied with how the visit went or is feeling uneasy about what the doctor said, encourage the parent to consider getting a second opinion.

Remember, providing support to parents to help them "act early" on developmental concerns may take a little extra effort, but can make a world of difference for the child and the whole family!



Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns



WATCH

Pulling it All Together:

Ms. Carolyn shares a case study of twins,
Jacob & Tyler

<https://youtu.be/EyenfkKNZmQ>



Key Points:

- Discuss healthy development with families regularly
- When you talk with families, be mindful of cultural differences
- Good listening skills help make a conversation more successful
- Encourage families to use developmental milestone checklists to monitor their child's development
- Before raising concerns with families, make sure you are well prepared
- Encourage the parent to talk with the child's doctor or healthcare provider

Apply What You've Learned

Are you concerned about the development of a child in your care? Have you talked with his or her parent(s) about your concerns?

If you have, think about that conversation in light of what you've learned in this module. What did you say to the parent? How did you say it? Did you encourage the parent to talk to the child's doctor? Did you suggest the parent call the early intervention program? What would you have done differently now, after this training?

If you have not talked with the parent, think about how you might have that conversation. How do you need to prepare? What resources will you gather to provide to the parent(s)? Who else at your center will you include in the conversation? What suggestions will you give the parent(s)? Use the information in this module to help you.



Module 4 Quiz

1. Discussing development with families regularly can help you (check all that apply):
 - Identify potential concerns about a child's development
 - Diagnose a child with autism
 - Have realistic expectations and better understand children's behaviors
 - Encourage parents to talk to their child's doctor if they are concerned

2. Good listening skills involve (check all that apply):
 - Listening closely, making eye contact, and nodding when appropriate
 - Repeating back in your own words the parent's main point
 - Interrupting when necessary
 - Considering how the parent feels

3. When you bring up a concern about a child's development with his or her parents (check all that apply):
 - For the first conversation, it's not necessary to talk to your supervisor beforehand or find out your center's policies.
 - It doesn't matter if you haven't talked with the parents much in the past because you can get to know them when you talk about your concerns.
 - It helps to have a completed milestone checklist to use in your conversation to provide an objective basis for your concerns.

4. It is important to encourage all parents to talk to their child's doctor about their child's development.
 - a. True
 - b. False