

Ensuring That All Children in Your Care Receive Developmental Screenings



Your relationship with children and families in your care is important to ensuring that developmental concerns are detected early and that children are referred to the necessary services and supports. 0–5 year olds are at a critical stage in their development, and early detection and intervention are essential to making sure children are healthy and thrive. You play a key role in: 1) identifying any concerns, 2) referring families to the appropriate services and supports, and 3) supporting children in your programs. Screenings are easy to access, and are the first step to ensuring children receive access to the educational and health resources necessary for healthy development.

Screenings are as easy as 1-2-3

Step 1: Direct families to a free developmental screening

- **Contact the Child’s School District (0–5 year olds)**

Every school district is responsible for ensuring receipt of FREE developmental screenings as part of their “child find” obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Help families contact their local school district using the link below to request a screening and find out the child find screening calendar dates. Some school districts hold screenings monthly. If the child find dates are scheduled for months out, ask the school district for an earlier date or use one of the other ways listed below to get a screening. Illinois school district directory:

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/directories.htm>

- **Contact Your Regional Child and Family Connections Office (0–3 year olds)**

You have a Child and Family Connections Office (CFC) that helps children birth to 3 who may have developmental delays or disabilities. Contact your CFC for a list of upcoming dates and locations of NO-COST developmental screenings in your area. Locate the CFC office in your area:

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12&OfficeType=4&County>

- **Families Should Talk to their Child’s Health Care Provider (0–5 year olds)**

Remind families to reach out to their child’s health care provider and ask them to conduct a developmental screening. It is important that families also share any concerns with their health care provider. For families with children covered under Medicaid/All Kids or Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), screenings are covered. Private insurance should also cover developmental screenings as part of preventative care.

- **Contact Easter Seals Make the First Five Count (0–5 year olds)**

Easter Seals offers a FREE developmental screening. They offer the screening tool Ages & Stages Questionnaire online and in a paper format: http://es.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntlc10_mffc_homepageasq or call 1-800-221-6827. Results are mailed in 2 weeks. If you want to screen children yourself, this is a great option to use in partnership with families.

Step 2: Follow-up and referral after a screening

- **If a developmental screening does not indicate a need for an evaluation**

- Talk about the screening results with the family. Each screening tool is different—repeat the screening according to the tool’s recommended intervals. Don’t forget that you are working with children and their families all the time, and your observations are so important.

- **If a developmental screening indicates a need for an evaluation**

- Talk about the screening results with the family. Encourage and refer the family for an evaluation and determine if they qualify for special education or early intervention supports and services.
- Refer Children Birth to 3 years old to the local Child and Family Connections Office (CFC). The CFC is responsible for ensuring that children potentially eligible for Early Intervention services ages birth to 3 are evaluated for FREE, and if eligible, it will coordinate and provide services. Share concerns about an infant or toddler’s development with the family and support them through the referral and evaluation process. Child care programs are considered a primary referral source, and they are required to make a referral within 5 business days to the child’s CFC office when a delay is identified.

Locate that CFC office at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12&officetype=4&county> or call 1-800-323-4769.

- Refer Children 3 through 5 years old to their local school district. The local school district is responsible for ensuring that children ages 3 through 5 are evaluated for FREE, and if found eligible, receive special education services. Share the parent brochure “Are You Concerned with Your Child’s Development or Speech?” with families and support them through the referral and evaluation process: http://www2.illinois.gov/OECD/Documents/Early%20Learning%20Council/14_Day_Brochure.pdf. See the school district directory above for contact information.
- In addition to reaching out to either the CFC or school district, all families should talk to their child’s health care provider when screening results indicate the need for an evaluation.

Step 3: Follow-up after referral and evaluation

- If a child is not found eligible for either Early Intervention or Special Education services after a referral, and you are still concerned about their development, you can refer them again. Don’t forget, if the screening results indicated a need for a re-screen, monitor the child’s progress and follow the re-screening guidelines for the tool used.
- If a child is found eligible, make sure you are supporting the implementation of the child’s services in your program.



1226 Towanda Plaza | Bloomington, IL 61701 | p. 866.697.8278 | f. 309.828.1808 | www.excelerateillinois.com

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