



DEVELOPMENTAL TESTING What You Should Know

The pediatricians and nurse practitioners at the Pediatric Group are dedicated to providing the highest quality and most comprehensive care to help you ensure your child's health and well-being. We closely follow established standards when providing comprehensive well exams, which consist of several components including physical examination, evaluation, assessment, interpretation and care management. Time and expense related to ongoing training, nursing and supplies are also incurred.

Developmental testing is a critical component of well child care. Developmental testing is designed to further the optimal development of children from birth to six years of age through early identification of issues requiring special attention. Routine physical examinations are the most important way to promote your child's healthy development.

Whether a problem is medical or behavioral, or both, finding it early and treating it can greatly improve a child's chance of reaching his or her full potential. Primary care providers are best suited to perform this testing and to provide to comprehensive, coordinated care when a screening indicates a child is at risk for a developmental problem. The pediatrician may further assess the child for a specific condition (for example, a language disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or autism), and for other potential disorders that might require specific treatments or intervention.

Research indicates that parents are reliable sources of information about their children's development and should participate in the developmental testing process. In order to assist in your child's developmental testing, you are provided with a developmental testing form which contains targeted questions that will help your pediatrician complete the developmental testing during your child's well visit. While some of the questions may seem ordinary, they have been formulated so that your pediatrician, through training, interpretation and the physical exam, can assess whether your child is developing normally.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states, "accurate and early detection of developmental problems is necessary" and "all infants and young children should be screened for developmental delays." The AAP further recommends that developmental screening be incorporated into the ongoing health care of the child. In recent study by the AAP, 12% to 16% of American children had developmental or behavioral disorders. Identifying and addressing these concerns is of great importance so that appropriate intervention can be instituted, at home and in school.

Some employer-purchased insurance plans do not recognize the improvements in and importance of developmental screening and do not provide coverage, even though the testing is required by AAP guidelines and the CDC. Until all employers and insurers catch up to the current science and AAP guidelines by covering the cost of developmental testing, the patient is responsible for the cost if it is not covered by insurance. If your employer's plan does not pay for the testing, it will be your responsibility to pay. We will continue to perform this testing in the best interests of your child, as a vital component of a well child exam. The fact that your employer has purchased a plan that does not include a benefit for these items does not mean that you should not receive them, in accordance with your physician's best judgment and AAP guidelines.

We encourage you to speak frequently with your pediatrician about your child's development. You can also visit www.pediatricgroup.com for more information, including a link to the CDC's "Learn the signs. Act Early." Campaign (also available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly/>) and current American Academy of Pediatrics clinical practice recommendations for developmental screening.

Developmental Screening

FACT SHEET

What is child development?

A child's growth is more than just physical. Children grow, develop, and learn throughout their lives, starting at birth. A child's development can be followed by how they play, learn, speak, and behave.

What is a developmental delay? Will my child just grow out of it?

Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye bye" are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in playing, learning, speaking, behaving, and moving (crawling, walking, etc.). A developmental delay is when your child does not reach these milestones at the same time as other children the same age. If your child is not developing properly, there are things you can do that may help. Most of the time, a developmental problem is not something your child will "grow out of" on his or her own. But with help, your child could reach his or her full potential!

What is developmental screening?

Doctors and nurses use developmental screening to tell if children are learning basic skills when they should, or if they might have problems. Your child's doctor may ask you questions or talk and play with your child during an exam to see how he or she learns, speaks, behaves, and moves. Since there is no lab or blood test to tell if your child may have a delay, the developmental screening will help tell if your child needs to see a specialist.

Why is developmental screening important?

When a developmental delay is not recognized early, children must wait to get the help they need. This can make it hard for them to learn when they start school. In the United States, 17 percent of children have a developmental or behavioral disability such as autism, mental retardation, or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In addition, many children have delays

in language or other areas. But, less than half of children with problems are identified before starting school. During this time, the child could have received help for these problems and may even have entered school more ready to learn.

I have concerns that my child could have a developmental delay. Whom can I contact in my state to get a developmental assessment for my child?

Talk to your child's doctor or nurse if you have concerns about how your child is developing. If you or your doctor think there could be a problem, you can take your child to see a developmental pediatrician or other specialist, and you can contact your local early intervention agency (for children under 3) or public school (for children 3 and older) for help. To find out who to speak to in your area, you can contact the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities by logging on to www.nichcy.org or calling **1-800-695-0285**. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has links to information for families at (www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/aic/resources). If there is a problem, it is very important to get your child help as soon as possible.

How can I help my child's development?

Proper nutrition, exercise, and rest are very important for children's health and development. Providing a safe and loving home and spending time with your child – playing, singing, reading, and even just talking – can also make a big difference in his or her development.

For other ideas of activities to do with your child, and for child safety information, go to www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/ and look in the "developmental milestones" section.

1-800-CDC-INFO

www.cdc.gov/actearly



Learn the Signs. Act Early.