Learn the Signs. Act Early. Overview for Parent Centers

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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Simply put ...

Helping parents and other care providers **learn the signs** of typical development and **act early** on concerns.

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Signs of typical development=

**MILESTONES**

Act Early=

**Talk with the doctor, ask for screening.**

**Get referral to specialist and connect with early intervention.**
Learn the Signs. Act Early. Materials and Resources
Act Early Ambassadors

- 59 Ambassadors: all states, Washington, D.C., and 3 territories
- Champions for *Learn the Signs. Act Early.*
- Professionals passionate about early identification
- 2019-2022 cohort
- [cdc.gov/ActEarly/Ambassadors](https://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Ambassadors)
Ambassadors reported partnering with …

- Child Care: 78%
- Early Head Start/Head Start: 69%
- Home Visiting: 69%
- Child Find, IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619: 65%
- Medical/Pediatric Offices or Hospitals: 53%
- Title V: 53%
- LEND or UCEDD Programs: 51%
- Help Me Grow: 43%
- WIC Clinics: 41%

From Act Early Ambassador reported activities in 2019
The Act Early Response to COVID-19 Project

- **Scope:** Support early childhood state/territorial programs through the Act Early Network to target families most impacted by COVID-19 and promote resiliency for children, families, and communities.

- **Purpose:**
  - Bolster the 4 steps of early identification of developmental delays and disabilities using LTSAE
  - Advance the promotion and distribution of tools, materials, and programs to improve resiliency among families with young children during COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts.
Project Goals

1. Develop and coordinate an Act Early Ambassador-led (or co-led) state/territorial team.

2. Engage the state/territorial team in conducting a needs assessment to identify CURRENT *(during COVID-19)* barriers and opportunities related to the 4 key steps of early identification.

3. Develop, implement, and evaluate a work plan to address the identified barriers and realize the identified opportunities related to the first step AND any of the additional 3 steps of early identification.

4. Identify, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve resiliency of very young children (birth to age 5) and their families.
Project Details

- Federally funded by the CARES Act
- A national endeavor and private/public partnership
- $4M+ Awarded to 41 state and 2 territorial teams
- Current project period: September 2020 through the end of August 2021
- Each team creates work plans describing their activities to meet the project goals
- Each team participates in 2 group TA calls and a 1:1 call monthly
Response Team Partner Composition

At least 7 different key early childhood programs:

• Title V
• Part C
• Help Me Grow (HMG)
• Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact Grant programs (ECCS)
• American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
• Disability Advocacy
• At least one statewide high-reach organization
  • Home Visiting
  • WIC
  • Child Welfare
• Head Start Start/Early Head Start, Childcare

Frequency of Early Childhood Programs Named in Preliminary State Plans

State and Territory Team Early Childhood System Partners
Other Key Partners from Preliminary Plans

- Family advocacy organizations were named as partners for 81% of the state and territory teams.
- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities programs were documented in 65% of the preliminary plans, and autism programs in 35% of the plans.
Act Early COVID-19 Response Rapid Needs Assessment

- Respondents (n = 392)
  - Partner survey: n = 349
  - Team lead survey: n = 43
- 91.3% indicated COVID-19 has highly impacted early identification (n = 378)
  - Only 2.6% reported COVID-19 had no impact
- 48.0% reported number of children served in their program has decreased (31.9% unsure; n = 119)

- Barriers
  - Collective trauma due to COVID-19
  - Decrease in screening, referral, evaluation
  - Disparities exacerbated by COVID-19
  - Access issues
  - Change in service delivery to virtual
  - Resources (e.g., staffing, funding, time)
  - Challenges establishing & maintaining relationships
  - Poor program/system coordination
  - Difficulty communicating between families, providers, & programs
  - Competing priorities to meet basic survival needs
  - Misconceptions about available services
Contact Information

• Email questions to ActEarly@cdc.gov

• Find Ambassador contact info
  www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Ambassadors

• Find state team contact info and summary work plans
  www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=1185

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CDC’s Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Lisa Sanderson, SD Parent Connection
CDC’s Act Early Ambassador to South Dakota

LTSAE Mission: To improve early identification of developmental disabilities and delays, including autism, so children and their families can get the services and support they need as early as possible.
You may already be using…

You can follow your child’s development by watching how he or she plays, learns, speaks, and acts.

Look inside for milestones to watch for your child and how you can help your child learn and grow.

Milestone Moments

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 18 Months

What children do at this age

Social/Emotional

- Likes to hand things to others in play
- May have temper tantrums
- May be afraid of strangers
- Shows affection to familiar people
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll

Language/Communicative

- Sings simple songs
- Says words based on “uh”
- Points to show someone what he or she wants

How you can help your child’s development

- Provide a safe, loving environment. It’s important to be consistent and predictable.
- Praise good behaviors more than you punish bad behaviors (pump only one fist when you win).
- Describe the emotions. For example, say, “You are happy when we read this book.”
- Encourage empathy. For example, when a child is sad, encourage them to cry or act out.
- Read books and talk about the pictures using simple words.
- Copy your child’s words.
- Use simple, clear phrases.
- Ask simple questions.

Amazing Me

It’s Busy Being Me

Your Baby at 9 Months

What Most Babies Do at This Age:

Social/Emotional

- May be afraid of strangers
- May be difficult to soothe

Language/Communicative

- Understands “no”
- Names a few objects using the “no-no” or “uh-oh”
- Copies sounds and gestures of others
- Uses big words to point to things

Cognitive/Learning, thinking problem-solving!

- Notices the subtle changes in the environment around him
- Plants to a task
- Has fine motor skills
- Moves objects around from hand to hand
- Puts things together

Hearing/Physical Development

-raham, talking
- Can play with others
- Uses visual support
- Feeds himself
- Drinks

What your child needs and will expect:

- Food
- Play
- Sleep
- Love
- Learning
Partner with Ambassador / Share your Data

- Newsletters/Publications
- Social Media/Website
- Trainings
- Individual Assistance
  - Utilize LTSAE information / resources
  - Example...
    Supporting successful transition into childcare for four-year old child with Autism
Your Child at 1 Year

Child's Name: [Name]
Child's Age: [Age]
Today's Date: [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 1. 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
- Smiles or laughs when mom or dad leaves
- Recognizes familiar people
- Shows fear in some situations
- Tries to read a book when he wants to hear a story
- Repeats sounds or actions to get attention
- Put's out arm or leg to help with dressing
- Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

Language/Communication
- Responds to simple spoken requests
- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no"
- Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)
- Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamation like "uh-oh"
- Tries to say words you say
- Responds to some gestures

Cognitive (Learning, thinking, problem-solving)
- Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing
- Finds hidden things easily
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- Copies gestures
- Starts to use things correctly, for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair
- Range two things together
- Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container
- Likes things go without help
- Puts with index (pointer) finger
- Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"

Movement/Physical Development
- Gets to a sitting position without help
- Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising")
- May be a few steps without holding on
- May stand alone

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Doesn't crawl
- Can't stand when supported
- Doesn't search for things that he sees you hide
- Doesn't say single words like "mama" or "dada"
- Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking hand
- Doesn't point to things
- Likes skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned
1. Ask for a referral to a specialist.
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/FindEI.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Acting early can make a real difference!
Your Child at 18 Months (1 1/2 Yrs)

Child's Name: [Name]
Child's Age: 18 months
Today's Date: [Date]

Milestone Checklist Example

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional
- Likes to hand things to others as play
- May have temper tantrums
- May be afraid of strangers
- Shows attention to familiar people
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
- May cling to caregivers in new situations
- Points to show others something interesting
- Explores alone but with parent close by

Language/Communication
- Says several simple words
- Says and shakes head “no
- Points to show someone what they want

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)
- Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon
- Points to get the attention of others
- Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed
- Points to one body part
- Scribbles on his own
- Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say “sit down”

Movement/Physical Development
- Walks alone
- May walk up steps and run
- Pulls toy while walking
- Can help undress herself
- Drinks from a cup
- Eats with a spoon

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Doesn’t point to show things to others
- Can’t walk
- Doesn’t know what familiar things are for
- Doesn’t copy others
- Doesn’t gain new words
- Doesn’t have at least 6 words
- Doesn’t notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- Loses skills he once had

Tell your child’s doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned
1. Ask for a referral to a specialist 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/FindIt.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON’T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!

It’s time for developmental screening!
At 18 months, your child is due for general developmental screening and an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child’s developmental screening.
Milestone Checklist Example

Your Child at 2 Years

Child's Name: Boy
Child's Age: 4
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
- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Gets excited when with other children
- Shows more and more independence
- Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in a chase game, "puh s instead of "teahs"

Language/Communication
- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation
- Points to things in a book

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)
- Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games
- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- Might use one hand more than the other
- Left-handed, Right-handed

- Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet."
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

Movement/Physical Development
- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on

Threws ball overhead
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Doesn't use 2-word phrases (for example, "drink milk")
- Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't follow simple instructions
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned:
1. Ask for a referral to a specialist 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/Feeding.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON'T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!

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

Learn the Signs. Act Early.
Milestone Checklist Example

Your Child at 3 Years

Child’s Name: [Name]
Child’s Age: [Age]
Today’s Date: [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 3. 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**
- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for a crying friend
- Understands the idea of “mine” and “his” or “hers”
- Shows a wider range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self

**Language/Communication**
- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like “in,” “on,” and “under”
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like “I,” “me,” “we,” and “you” and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

**Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**
- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what “two” means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- Sends and understands lots of “Turns door handle”

**Movement/Physical Development**
- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)
- Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Drools or has very unclear speech
- Can’t work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- Doesn’t speak in sentences
- Doesn’t understand simple instructions
- Doesn’t play pretend or make-believes
- Doesn’t want to play with other children or with toys
- Doesn’t make eye contact
- Loses skills he once had

Tell your child’s doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned
1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON’T WAIT.
Acting early makes a real difference.
Milestone Checklist Example

Your Child at 4 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 4. 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
- Enjoys doing new things
- Plays “Mom” and “Dad”
- Is more and more creative with make-believe play
- Would rather play with other children than by himself
- Co-operates with other children
- Often can’t tell what’s real and what’s make-believe
- Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in

Language/Communication
- Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using “he” and “she”
- Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the “Song of the Shirt” or the “Wheels on the Bus”
- Tells stories
- Can say first and last name

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)
- Names some colors and some numbers
- Understands the idea of counting
- Starts to understand time
- Remembers parts of a story
- Understands the idea of “same” and “different”
- Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts
- Uses scissors
- Starts to copy some capital letters
- Plays board or card games
- Tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book

Movement/Physical Development
- Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds

- Catches a bounced ball most of the time
- Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Can’t jump in place
- Has trouble scribbling
- Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe
- Ignores other children or doesn’t respond to people outside the family
- Resists dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet
- Can’t retell a favorite story
- Doesn’t follow 3-part commands
- Doesn’t understand “same” and “different”
- Doesn’t use “me” and “you” correctly
- Speaks unclearly
- Loses skills he once had

Tell your child’s doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned
1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON’T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!
Integrate LTSAE into

1) systems serving young children (Part C, Head Start, Child Care) and

2) Dept of Health programs (community health, WIC, NHV)

Partners

• Part C-Child Find, Head Start, Division of CCS, FCCPSD
• Tribal: Head Start, FACE, ECIPs
• DoH, 76 Community Health Offices, written into Block Grant
COVID Response Expansion

State Team Membership – *existing partners plus*

- Statewide Family Engagement Center, SD AAP/Early Childhood Champion, SD Academy of Family Physicians, SD Public Broadcasting, UCED, SD Mental Health Champion, SD Council on DD, Monument Health...

- Coordinated, consistent messaging on child development and EI
  - LTSAE integration across systems
  - Integrate family resilience throughout (opportunity for parent centers)
  - Customized materials
Customized Materials

Amazing Me
It's Busy Being 3!

WHERE IS BEAR?
A Terrific Tale for 2-Year-Olds

Written by Leslie Stroff
Illustrated by Allison Valentine

Illustrated by Allison Valentine
Written by Julie Cohen and Laure A. Jaffe, MD
It’s Busy Being 3!
In one amazing day a child can show us so much.
Watch for new milestones every day.

Written by
Julia Cook and Laura A. Jana, MD

Illustrated by
Allison Valentine

If you have concerns about your child’s development, don’t wait. Acting Early can make a real difference.

Parents have many options to seek a developmental screening for their child:
- Talk with your family or child’s doctor.
- Call your local community health staff. 1-800-305-3064.
- Call Birth to Three Connections at 800-305-3064 if your child is under age 3.
- Call your local elementary school if your child is age 3 or older.
- Call SD Parent Connection at 800-640-4553 for free information, guidance and support.
Next Steps

*How will YOU partner with your Act Early Ambassador?*

Contact Lisa Sanderson, South Dakota Parent Connection at 800-640-4553 or lsanderson@sdparent.org for assistance.
Deepa Srinivasavaradan
CDC’s Act Early Ambassador to New Jersey
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
Mission: To empower families & inform & involve professionals & others interested in the healthy development & education of children, to enable them to become fully participating & contributing members of our communities & society.
State Partners

- NJ Department of Health
- NJ Department of Children and Families
- NJ Department of Education
- NJ Department of Human Services
- Head Start Association
- Family Child Care Association
- Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
- Bogg's Center (NJ UCEDD/LEND/Act Early team lead)
- NJ American Academy of Pediatrics
- NJ Autism Center for Excellence
- NJ Pediatric Residency Advocacy Collaborative
Opportunities for LTSAE at SPAN

➢ Many opportunities and platforms to share LTSAE
  ➢ Infant Child Health Committee
  ➢ Community of Care Consortium

➢ Build on SPAN’s existing partnerships
  ➢ NJ DCF (HMG, ECCS CoIIIN, Home Visiting, PDG B-5, Strengthening Families)
  ➢ NJ DOH (Title V, WIC)
  ➢ Boggs Center (UCEDD & NJLEND)

➢ Develop new partnerships
  ➢ Autism & Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network
  ➢ NJ Autism Center for Excellence
  ➢ Newark Trust for Education
Serve on multiple projects focused on Early Childhood
- DEC aRPy Ambassador
- State Parent Lead – HMG, ECCS CoILIN, & Home Visiting
- Lead – Partnership for Autism Awareness
- NJAAP (Early Identification & Referral for Autism ECHO)
- Southern Region Coordinator – F2F HIC

Collaborate with multiple SPAN projects to reach families with young children
- NJ Inclusive Child Care Project
- Statewide TA & Resources Team
- Special Education Volunteer Advocates
- Empowering Women for Healthy Communities
Act Early Ambassador Goals

➢ Goal 1: Promote the use of LTSAE materials and child monitoring/screening by NJ’s Early Child Care and Education programs and facilitate the sustainable integration of LTSAE into their policies and practices.

➢ Goal 2: Strengthen, support, and expand the network of Act Early Parent Champions to promote awareness about developmental monitoring among parents & professionals in diverse communities.
NJ’s Child Developmental Passports

Help Me Grow NJ
Child Developmental Passport

Ayúdame a Crecer NJ
Pasaporte Para el Desarrollo del Niño

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Aprenda los signos. Reaccione pronto.
Act Early COVID-19 Response Project

- Ambassador-led State Team
- Statewide System of Focus: Family Success Centers
- Needs Assessment (completed by 13 state team partners)
- Train-the-Trainer (parent-led trainings) for FSCs & other EC programs
- Parent Champions Training
- “Noteworthy” Newsletters
- Exceptional Parent Magazine Article (highlights LTSAE & resilience resources)
- Printing of LTSAE Materials (Baby’s Busy Day Books) & Resilience Resources (Parent Engagement Cards)

View/download newsletters, articles, & resources at: https://spanadvocacy.org/programs/early-childhood/
Printed Materials

Baby’s Busy Day
A free board book for one-year-olds!
cdc.gov/AmazingBooks

Un día ocupado del bebé
¡Un libro de cartón gratuito para bebés de un año!
cdc.gov/AmazingBooks

Building Brains
in the First 36 Months of Life

 Construyendo Cerebros
 en los Primeros 36 Meses de Vida
Next Steps

➢ Find your Act Early Ambassador and reach out today!
➢ Receive access to LTSAE materials that may have been customized/printed for your state
➢ Collaborate with Act Early Ambassador & State Team to reach families with young children
➢ Help improve early identification efforts in your state
Thank You!

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