

Concerned about Development? How to Help Your Child



If you're concerned about your child's development, don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference!

Talk with your child's doctor.

You know your child best. If your child is not meeting the milestones for his or her age, or if you, your child's teacher, or another care provider is concerned about how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, talk with your child's doctor and share your concerns. Don't wait.

■ Use a milestone checklist

Visit www.cdc.gov/Milestones to find the milestone checklist for your child's age. Use it to track your child's development. When it's time to talk with the doctor, write down the questions you have and show the doctor the milestones your child has reached and the ones that concern you.

■ Ask the doctor about developmental screening

Developmental screening happens when the doctor asks you to complete a formal checklist or questionnaire about how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child. Developmental screening is recommended for all children at certain ages or whenever there is a concern. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned about your child's development, here's how you can help your child:

Ask the doctor to connect you with your state's early childhood program for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

If your doctor isn't able to connect you, you can reach out yourself. Go to www.cdc.gov/FindEI or call **1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)**. Ask for the phone number for the early intervention provider in your area.

If your child is 3 years or older, call any local, public elementary school and ask to speak with someone who can help you have your child evaluated—even if your child does not go to that school.

————— **AND** —————

Ask the doctor if you need to take your child to a specialist who can take a closer look at your child's development. If you do, ask the doctor for a referral and contact the specialist right away. If your appointment with the specialist is many weeks away, remember you can call back every week to see if an earlier appointment has opened up. Getting early help for your child often means being persistent.

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, what to do while you wait to have your child seen, and how to get support for your family, at www.cdc.gov/Concerned.



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Download CDC's
Milestone Tracker App



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Concerned about Development? How to Talk with the Doctor



A first step toward getting help for your child when you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves) is to talk with your child's doctor.

Here are some tips for talking with your child's doctor:

1 Prepare for your visit.

- When you make your next well child appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you want to discuss.
- Write down your questions, concerns, and some examples; take these to the appointment.
- Fill out a milestones checklist for your child's age from www.cdc.gov/Milestones and take it with you to share with the doctor.
- Have other adults who know your child well fill out a milestone checklist, too.
- If you can, take another adult with you to play with your child so you can better focus on what the doctor says.

2 Ask all of your questions during the visit; you know your child best and your concerns are important!

- Tell the doctor you have concerns at the start of the visit and share the milestones checklist and any questions you might have written down.
- If the doctor seems to be in a hurry, ask if you should schedule another visit.
- Ask about your child's most recent developmental screening results. If a screening has not been done, ask for one. For information about developmental screening, go to www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.
- Take notes to help you remember what the doctor says and what to do next.

3 Make sure you understand what the doctor says and what to do next.

- Before you leave, make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- Review your notes and ask the doctor, nurse or office staff for any information you will need to do what the doctor has told you. For example, "What is the phone number for my local early intervention program?"
- When you get home, review your notes and call the doctor's office if you have any questions.
- Take the steps the doctor has told you and remember to follow up with the doctor about how it went.

You Know Your Child Best

Remember, acting early on concerns is the best way to help your child.

If your doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with another doctor to get a second opinion

— AND —

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.

If your child is under age 3:

Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at www.cdc.gov/FindEI.

If your child is age 3 or older:

Call any local public elementary school.

For more on how to help your child, visit

www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

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