

Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns Group Discussion Guide

The prompts below are provided to facilitate group discussion about the key learning points presented in “Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns,” a free online training course for early care and education providers offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* program and available at www.cdc.gov/WatchMeTraining.

Role-playing exercises are included to help participants practice what they have learned from the training. These exercises will prepare participants for real-life situations they will likely face as early care and education providers.

To earn continuing education units, all training components, including quizzes and the final assessment, must be completed online. This guide is intended to reinforce the online training content by facilitating group discussion among participants who have completed the training.

Before Taking the Training

Take a minute or two and write down what “developmental monitoring” means to you. Once you are done, find a partner and discuss. After five minutes of discussion, share with the group.

Discussion Prompts – Module 1

1. Why is early intervention important and what role can you play as an early educator?
2. What is the difference between developmental monitoring and developmental screening? What role, if any, should early educators play in each?
3. What do you know about early intervention services provided by your state for children with developmental disabilities?
4. How can you encourage families to monitor their children’s development at home?

Discussion Prompts – Module 2

1. What are some of the developmental milestones that you see children reach while in your care?
2. Which domains of milestones are easiest for you to recognize and understand? Why?
3. Which domains of milestones are hardest for you to recognize and understand? Why?
4. What are some warning signs of possible developmental delay that you have seen in children in your care?

Discussion Prompts – Module 3

1. Explain the benefits of conducting developmental monitoring with an objective checklist of typical developmental milestones.
 - a. Explain what other steps should be taken to conduct developmental monitoring in addition to using an objective checklist.

- b. How would you explain to the parents or guardians of children in your care, the benefit of using a developmental milestone checklist at their home?
2. Which materials from “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” shown in this module would be most helpful when monitoring milestones in your classroom?
3. How can you refer parents or encourage them to call the early intervention program when there is a concern about a child’s development?
 - a. How would a referral for intervention services differ for children under age 3 years compared with children 3 years old or older?
 - b. What has your experience been in making referrals to early intervention?

Discussion Prompts – Module 4

1. What regular opportunities do you have to discuss developmental progress with families?
2. If you have a concern about a child in your class, what steps would you take to share your concerns with the child’s parents?
3. What steps can you take to continue to support parents after you have encouraged them to talk with their child’s doctor about their child’s development?
4. Have you ever had to share your concerns with parents about their child’s development? What went well? Is there anything you wish you had done or said differently?
5. Which communication strategies do you feel are most important when discussing developmental milestones with parents? Which skills do you think you need to practice?

Role Playing Exercises: Choose a partner. One of you will play the role of the early educator and one of you will play the role of a parent. Once you have completed all exercises, switch roles and repeat.

1. After completing a developmental milestone checklist for a child in your care, you realize there may be cause for concern, so you set up a meeting with the parent. Practice discussing your concerns with the parent.
2. It is time for parent-teacher conferences. Practice communication strategies by playing the role of a parent sharing concerns and a teacher using active listening skills.
3. A child in your class is missing milestones and you are concerned that he or she may have a developmental delay. Today, you are meeting with the child’s parent to share a progress update and discuss the concerns you have about the child’s development. Practice discussing these concerns with the child’s parent. When playing the role of the parent, respond to the teacher’s concerns with various reactions, including confusion, anger, and understanding.

Case Studies: Identify which domains of development are highlighted in the following examples.

1. Kareem is a 3-year-old boy at Little Ones Learning Center. He shows a wide range of emotions, but he does not talk well enough for strangers to understand him most of the time.
2. Isabella’s mother is concerned about her daughter’s development. At 2 months old, she cannot hold her head up and she does not pay attention to faces.

3. Samir is a 5-year-old boy in a pre-kindergarten program. In the classroom, he shows a good deal of independence and can copy a triangle and other shapes. Samir also tells simple stories to his classmates using full sentences.
4. At 18 months, Raquel drinks from a cup and eats with a spoon; however, she is not able to walk alone.

Reflection

1. What was the most important thing you learned from the training?
2. What did you learn about developmental milestones that you did not know before?
3. What are two strategies or ideas you will try in monitoring development or talking with parents?
4. What additional information would be helpful to you?

Additional Ideas

1. Review the quizzes from each module as a group.
2. Explore the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” website, and spend time looking at the *Milestones in Action* image library. Review the milestones for the ages of children that you teach.
 - a. Discuss whether your classroom activities allow children to showcase all of the milestones for their age group. If not, brainstorm how to incorporate new activities into your lesson plans that would fill in any gaps you see.