

# WIC Developmental Milestone Checklist Program Deskside Reference Guide

## ROLE OF WIC STAFF

At each certification and mid-certification appointment, give parents the opportunity to complete the age-appropriate checklist. The checklist may also be used during other regular appointments and any time a parent or WIC staff has a concern or questions about a child's development.

Have the parent complete a checklist for each child being certified that day unless the child has known developmental delay or disability; if the child is between checklist ages, use the younger checklist. If the child was born prematurely, use the corrected age.

Refer the parent for follow-up if indicated. If allowed by your state, the referral can be noted in the electronic data system. See details in the box below.

## INTRODUCING THE CHECKLIST (Sample Script):

1. "You may have noticed the pictures on the walls and floor about developmental milestones. Tracking how (child's name) plays, speaks, learns, acts and moves for his/her age is just as important as measuring his/her height and weight".
2. "So, we are using this checklist to help track your child's development."
3. "Let's go through this developmental milestone checklist now to see how \_\_\_\_\_ is doing on his/her milestones. Let's answer these first two questions together. Does \_\_\_\_\_ (read first item on checklist)? Does \_\_\_\_\_ (read second item)?"
4. "Go through the rest of the checklist and let me know if you have any questions. Start by putting \_\_\_\_\_'s name and age on top, along with today's date."

Be sure the parent writes the child's name, age, and the date on the checklist and completes both columns of the checklist. Provide assistance if needed. Then review the checked boxes to determine next steps:

**IF** > ALL milestone boxes are checked AND  
NO purple boxes are checked AND  
NO written parental concerns

**IF** > ONE or more milestone\* box is NOT checked OR  
ONE or more purple box IS checked OR  
Written parental concerns

You may choose not to make a referral when the only indication of possible concern is missing milestones that begin with "May..." or "Might..." .

### THIS INDICATES THE CHILD IS REACHING HIS OR HER DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES.

"It looks like \_\_\_\_\_ is on track for meeting these developmental milestones."

"Take this checklist home with you and share it with your family and \_\_\_\_\_'s doctor so they can see how great \_\_\_\_\_ is doing."

"If you have a smart phone, you can download a free app called *CDC's Milestone Tracker* to keep tracking milestones until your next visit."

"If you ever have any concerns or questions about \_\_\_\_\_'s development, be sure to talk to the doctor."

### Give the checklist to the parent.

NOTE: If the parent answered the question about parent concerns at the bottom of the checklist, use your clinical judgment to determine if the child should be referred to their doctor or for other community services.

### THIS INDICATES NEED FOR A REFERRAL

"It would be a good idea to talk with your health care provider about this checklist. I really care about what the doctor has to say about \_\_\_\_\_'s development."

"Please call \_\_\_\_\_'s health care provider to schedule a follow-up appointment for developmental screening."

"I am going to turn this checklist over and write \_\_\_\_\_'s health care provider's name on it so that he/she knows exactly what you want to talk about."

"I want to know what the health care provider has to say the next time you come for your (date) WIC appointment."

### Check for understanding.

When possible, the referral can be noted in the child's record. If available, an alert can be set as a follow-up reminder for staff. This enables staff to ask the parent about the outcome of this referral at the next visit.

# Common Questions From Parents

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

**Do I have to do this?** No. If you prefer not to, we can just move on.

**Why are you asking me these questions?** Thinking about how a child plays, speaks, acts and moves is just as important as tracking his or her height and weight. Height and weight can be indicators of healthy growth, just like these milestones can be indicators of healthy development.

**I already filled out a checklist (here/at the doctor's office/at daycare). Do I have to do it again?** Children grow and change quickly at this early age so it's a great idea to do this kind of checklist frequently. It's a good way to make sure a child is on track. *Note: If a child already has been diagnosed with a developmental delay or is receiving specialized services for developmental concerns (e.g., speech/language therapy, early childhood special education, or other early intervention like speech therapy), there is no need for the parent to complete a checklist or for a referral to the doctor. Often this can be indicated in a child's record so the checklists are not brought up with the parent in the future.*

**Who is sponsoring this program?** WIC provides oversight for this program. [\[A state would add their identifying information here if appropriate\]](#) is also supporting the program. This program was originally developed with the WIC program in Missouri, in partnership with the University of Missouri and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a federal agency interested in the health of children and families.

Where can I go for more information or to comment on this project? Contact [\[person's name\]](#) for more information. You can call or email at [\[telephone number and e-mail address\]](#).

## ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

**What is a developmental milestone?** A developmental milestone is a skill that most children can do by a certain age. For example, most children can say "mama" or "dada" by their first birthday. These checklists have been developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* Program and are adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics' *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child* and *Bright Futures* publications.

**Where can I go for more information on developmental milestones?** Additional sources of information include:

- CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." website is an excellent resource. <http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly>
- Family Voices. An advocacy group for parents to help them identify resources and support in their state (similar to Parent to Parent). <http://familyvoices.org/>
- Center for Parent Information and Resources. A website with information about parent centers that provide information, support, and resources for children with disabilities and their families. <http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly>

**What do I do if my doctor isn't responsive to my concerns?**

- Acting early on concerns is the best way to help your child and you are doing the right thing; you know your child better than anyone
- If your doctor tells you to "wait and see" and you feel uneasy about that advice, you can seek a second opinion with another doctor

You can also call [\[insert org name and number here\]](#) to find out if your child might qualify for services to help. You do not need a doctor's referral to do so.

**How quickly do I need to contact my child's doctor? Is this an emergency? Can it wait until our next well-child visit?**

While not an emergency, developmental concerns should be addressed promptly. Please see your child's doctor before your next WIC appointment. If your next well-child check-up with the doctor is more than a month away, don't wait. Call and get the soonest appointment available.



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)  
1-800-CDC-INFO