

Screening Tools and Evaluation in *Child Development*

Screening and evaluation are important steps in understanding your child's development. These processes help identify strengths and areas where your child may need extra support.



What is Developmental Screening?

Developmental screening is a short, standardized process used to check if a child is meeting expected milestones in areas like movement, speech, social skills, and learning. Screenings are usually done during well-child visits, but parents and caregivers can request them at any time.

Common Screening Tools



Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)

A parent-completed checklist covering your child's skills in communication, movement, problem-solving, and social interaction.



Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)

A brief questionnaire that identifies early signs of autism spectrum disorder in children 16–30 months old.



Denver Developmental Screening Test

Assesses personal-social, fine motor, language, and gross motor skills.



Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC)

Screens for emotional and behavioral problems in children.

Screenings are not diagnostic—they help decide if more information is needed.

What is a Developmental Evaluation?

If a screening shows possible concerns, a more detailed evaluation may be recommended. This is a comprehensive assessment by specialists such as psychologists, speech-language pathologists, or occupational therapists.

What to Expect During an Evaluation

Observation: The specialist watches your child play, interact, and complete tasks.

Parent Interview: You'll be asked about your child's history, behaviors, and any concerns.

Standardized Tests: Your child may be given age-appropriate tasks to assess specific skills.

Hearing and Vision Checks: These rule out sensory issues that could affect development.

Why Are Screenings and Evaluations Important?

Early Identification: The sooner a concern is found, the sooner your child can get support.

Individualized Support: Results help create a plan tailored to your child's needs.

Peace of Mind: Screenings can reassure you if your child is developing typically.

What Should Families Do?

Attend all well-child visits and complete recommended screenings.

Share any concerns with your child's healthcare provider.

If referred for evaluation, follow through with appointments and ask questions about the results.

Early screening and evaluation are key steps in supporting your child's healthy development. If you have concerns, don't hesitate to speak with your pediatrician.



For more resources, visit
mhamd.org/earlychildhood



Healthy New Families is a program of the Mental Health Association of Maryland. We promote mental health and well-being for new parents, infants and young children, and families across Maryland by connecting families and providers with resources, education, and support.

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