

Talking with Your Child's Doctor about Developmental Concerns



As a parent, you know your child best. If you have any worries or concerns about how your child moves, acts, speaks, plays, or their overall development, it's important to share this information with your child's doctor. Make an appointment so that you can share your thoughts. It is always better to get things checked out than to potentially ignore a problem.

Having a strong relationship with your child's doctor is important. Communication is a key part of any good relationship. Keep in mind that you and your child's doctor both have the same goal. You both want to see your child's best health and development.



Before Your Appointment

- Gather any documentation you may need, such as notes about your concerns.
- Write down any questions you may have so you don't forget to ask them.
- Track developmental milestone checklists by downloading CDC's FREE Milestone Tracker app or find checklists at www.cdc.gov/Milestones.
- Keep track of any other important information to share. For instance, if anything has changed in your child's behavior or routines. The more detailed information you can share, the better.

During Your Appointment

When talking with the doctor, share all of the information you have, including the milestone checklists and the other important documentation you brought. Explain exactly what concerns you about your child's development. Give specific examples, if possible. Details are important!

Ask the doctor for a developmental screening for your child



During the appointment, it's a good idea to ask for a developmental screening for your child. These screenings will give your doctor more detailed information about your child and their development. It can also help your doctor understand the best way to help. You can find more information about developmental screenings at CDC's website www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.

After the doctor completes the screening, the doctor may recommend that your child receives a developmental evaluation. A developmental evaluation is a more in-depth look at a child's development. It is usually done by a developmental pediatrician, child psychologist, or other trained specialist. It can be done by the local CDSA, public school district, or private medical provider. A developmental evaluation from the CDSA or public school district are at no cost to you. You will be referred to the correct office first to begin an evaluation process.

Before you leave the doctor's office



Check your notes and make sure all of your questions have been answered. If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again in a different way. When you get home, follow any steps the doctor provided. You can always call the doctor's office if new questions come up.

You know your child best. If told to “wait and see,” and you still have concerns then you or your child's doctor can make a referral for a developmental evaluation, at no cost to you when referring to your local CDSA or public school. These options are further explained below.

Developmental Evaluations

If your child is under the age of 3, you can request an evaluation, at no cost to you, from your local Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA). The contact information for your local agency can be found online at <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/itp-beeearly> or call 919-707-5520. You can say something like, “I am concerned about my child's development and would like to request an evaluation.” They will ask you to share your specific concerns about your child. You will also be asked for some general information about yourself and your child (your name, your child's name and age, where you live, and more). It's a good idea to write down who you speak to, the date, and what was said. You might need this information later.

If your child is over the age of 3, evaluations are done by the public school district. To find the right person or department, you can call the local elementary school and ask who to contact about having your child evaluated for special education services. Or visit your public school district's website to find the Exceptional Children or Special Education Preschool Department. It's best to put your request in writing to create a record. Write about your concerns for your child's development. For example, “My child does not say his first name when asked.” or “My child cannot tell us what action is happening in a picture book.”

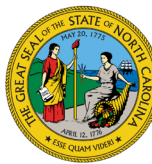


You can reach out to the CDSA or public school to check on the status of your child's referral at any time.

The Exceptional Children's Assistance Center is here to provide assistance if you have questions about getting the evaluation process started or what happens afterwards.



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NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Child and Family Well-Being
NC Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP)

www.ncdhhs.gov/itp-beeearly

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