



# EARLY CHILDHOOD **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**LDOE Developmental Screening Guidebook**

**Webinar Link: [Developmental Screening Guidebook Webinar](#)**

# Vision for Children with Disabilities

## Overview

*Louisiana believes that all children, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities, deserve an education that prepares them to be independent and successful in life.*

### **Early childhood programs, school systems and families:**

- need access to resources and materials that help them develop a strong understanding of developmental milestones;
- have a clear plan for what to do when children need additional support; and
- implement specialized and related supports for children so that they have an opportunity to learn in the least restrictive environment.

# Supporting Children with Disabilities

Research and best practices identify four proven strategies to improve the social/emotional and academic achievement of children with disabilities.

*Improving Outcomes for*  
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

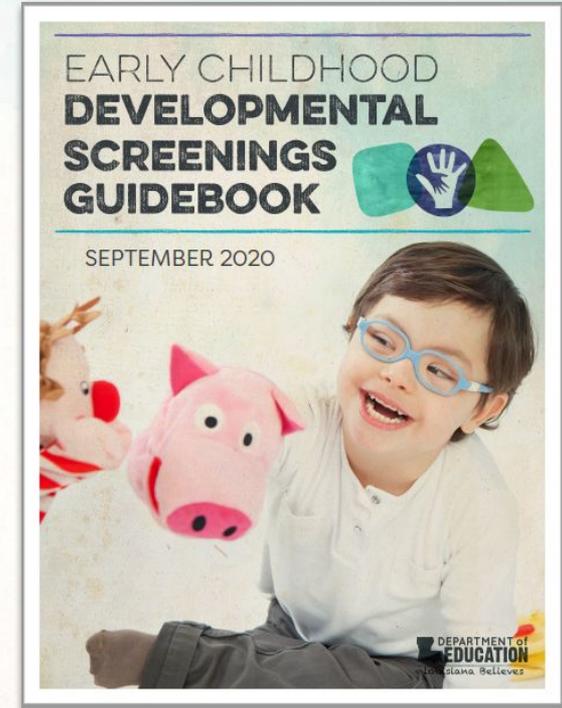


# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Introduction

The [Developmental Screening Guidebook](#) is designed as a reference guide on how to best support healthy growth and development of children in your care throughout key developmental intervals and identify children who may benefit from specialized support.

Early childhood program staff, service providers, health care systems, families, and communities all play important roles in providing support and services to young children during this critical developmental period.



# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Introduction

Children grow and develop at different rates and it's important to know when additional support and interventions may be necessary.

Early identification leads to early intervention, which improves student achievement. Children who receive early and appropriate support are less likely to experience persistent academic difficulties.

**The Developmental Screening Guidebook is designed as** a reference guide on how to best support healthy growth and development of children in your care throughout key developmental intervals and identify children who may benefit from specialized support. Early childhood program staff, service providers, health care systems, families, and communities all play important roles in providing support and services to young children during this critical developmental period. The resources within this guide are intended to help program staff deepen their understanding of how children develop, regardless of their individual needs, and establish a comprehensive early identification system.



### WHY IS EARLY IDENTIFICATION SO IMPORTANT?

Children grow and develop at different rates and it's important to know when additional support and interventions may be necessary. Early identification leads to early intervention, which improves student achievement. Children who receive early and appropriate support are less likely to experience persistent academic difficulties.

**Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE)** is a federally mandated initiative to support tracking developmental milestones and acting early if there is a concern. **The CDC outlines the following benefits of early intervention:**

- › Early intervention is likely to be more effective when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.
- › Early intervention services can change a child's developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- › Families benefit from early intervention by being able to better meet their children's needs from an early age and throughout their lives.

# Developmental Screening Guidebook Framework

The following steps are intended to provide a framework for developing an early identification system so that children are receiving the necessary support to achieve academic success in typical early childhood environments.

- › Step 1: Understand How Children Develop
- › Step 2: Encourage Development Through Daily Routines and Activities
- › Step 3: Establish a Developmental Screening, Intervention, and Referral Process
- › Step 4: Support Families in Children's Developmental Progress

# Developmental Screening Guidebook Framework

## STEP 1: UNDERSTAND HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP

There is a wide range of normally developing behaviors and skills in young children, known as developmental "milestones". These milestones serve as markers for when behaviors and skills typically emerge. While not all children will reach developmental milestones at the same time, it's important to understand the critical milestones that children are expected to achieve.

**Educators and Providers** embed training opportunities and resources that support the daily reference of developmental progression.

- ▶ The Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are designed as a continuum to help early childhood educators look across age levels and learning domains to see how children's development emerges and progresses over time. The goal is to learn what developmental steps the child is taking now, and to meet the individual needs of that child on a daily basis. Educators should use the ELDS as a daily reference and resource.
- ▶ Watch *Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns* is a free online training course that provides tools and best practices for monitoring children's development which uses the [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#), materials from the CDC.



**Families** learn more about their child's development at each stage of life.

- ▶ The LTSAE *Milestones in Action* provide a free library of pictures and videos of developmental milestones for children of all ages for families to reference.
- ▶ The *ABCs of Development* provide an easy-to-follow developmental map for families in the areas of physical development, social and emotional development, thinking skills, and communication skills.



**Community Entities** work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

- ▶ Lead Agencies and CCR&R's can support their communities by distributing *flyers* that support understanding developmental milestones.
- ▶ LDOE and LDH are collaborating to co-brand the suite of resources offered through *Learn the Signs, Act Early*. For more information regarding obtaining free co-branded materials, reach out to [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov).



The resources within this [guide](#) are intended to help program staff deepen their understanding of how children develop, regardless of their individual needs, and establish a comprehensive early identification system.

- Educators and Providers
- Families
- Community Entities

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 1: Understand How Children Develop

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**Families** learn more about their child’s development at each stage of life.

**Community Entities** work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 1: Understand How Children Develop

### Families of Young Children...

- Know that developmental milestones exist and how to monitor their child's development
- Know the early warning signs of delay and importance of acting early
- Feel confident about discussions with childcare and health care providers

### Early Educators/ Childcare Providers...

- Identify early warning signs of suspected delay
- Build self-efficacy to talk with families about development
- Aid in monitoring development



### Health Professionals Who Serve Young Children...

- Regularly screen for developmental delays
- Initiate discussion with families about development and support parental concern to take action
- Campaign materials with community network information available

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 2: Encourage Development Through Daily Routines and Activities

Promoting children's development requires intentional planning and consistent monitoring.

Quality programs take responsibility for providing high-quality interactions and instruction to all children, including those whose development may be delayed, have an identified disability, or whose home language is not English.

**Educators and Providers** participate in consistent quality training on the subjects that matter the most for supporting child development.

**Families** continuously monitor children's development and take action when there is a concern.

**Community Entities** work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 2: Encourage Development Through Daily Routines and Activities

Healthy development is supported when children are exposed to opportunities and experiences where their physical, social/emotional and education needs are met.

When teachers and caregivers understand the expectations for development, they can use that information in planning for routines and activities.

**Educators and Providers** participate in consistent quality training on the subjects that matter the most for supporting child development.

**Educators and Providers** monitor children's development through *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* to identify learning and developmental lags and gaps in order to provide appropriate interventions and make decisions on whether or not a child may be in need of additional support.

› The [Child Care Curriculum Initiative Guidance](#) is intended to support programs in choosing curricula appropriate for children age birth to five. Through a rigorous evaluation process, the LDOE has identified and ranked curricula based criteria including alignment to the Birth to Five Standards, quality and complexity of learning activities, and potential for individualizing instruction. The LDOE strongly encourages the implementation of the highest tiered curriculum.

› [Teaching Strategies GOLD® Objectives for Development and Learning](#) uses a color band system to show which skills and behaviors are typical for children of a particular age. The bands help manage the complexity and ongoing changes of young children's development.

› [Louisiana's Early Childhood Key Training Modules](#) are a set of accessible, high-quality trainings designed by experts on best practices in the field of early childhood. Early Childhood programs are encouraged to contact their local [Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies \(CCR&R\)](#) for course offerings. The following courses are recommended:

› [Standards-Based Approach](#) is designed to increase the knowledge of the theories and basic principles of child development and learning and support program staff in connecting classroom practices to early learning development standards.

› [Connecting the Pieces: Using Standards for Infants & Toddlers](#) supports designing instructional and learning outcomes for infants and toddlers by aligning standards, curriculum, and assessment.

› [Using Assessment to Support Learning and Development](#) provides practitioners with resources to identify the characteristics of useful, significant, and informative documentation of children's development and learning and ways to use assessment data to plan meaningful learning experiences.

› [Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence](#) can support educators and providers in making strong connections between traumatic life events and the manifestation of behaviors as a result.



# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 3: Establish a Developmental Screening, Intervention and Referral Process

Developmental screenings can be used to help determine if a child's learning and development is on track based on important areas of development. Results from developmental screeners can inform children's strengths and identify specific areas where more support might be considered.

A screening is typically conducted through a research-based questionnaire in collaboration with families and caregivers. Every child should be screened at the appropriate entry point using a high-quality screener and use the data to inform instruction and interventions.

**Educators and Providers** receive training to implement a diagnostic screener at key entry and transition points.

**Families** collaborate with educators to complete diagnostic screeners periodically and inform practitioners and pediatricians when there are concerns.

**Community Entities** work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

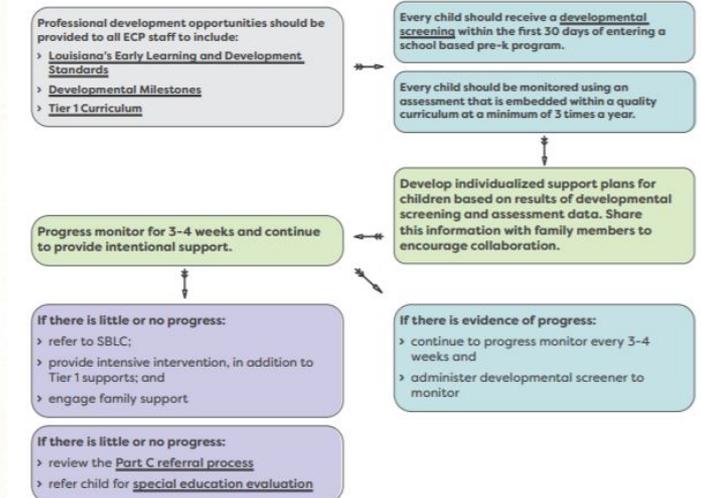
## Step 3: Establish a Developmental Screening, Intervention and Referral Process

You are a valuable resource to your program and the children and families! It's important to develop a process to support development where caregivers and families feel supported and know what to expect.

- Implement ongoing child screening
- Invest in [Ages and Stages Questionnaires®](#)
- Train staff
- Purchase any needed materials
- Dedicate time for family-teacher discussions about their observations

### APPENDIX B: SCREENING, INTERVENTION, AND REFERRAL FLOW CHART FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

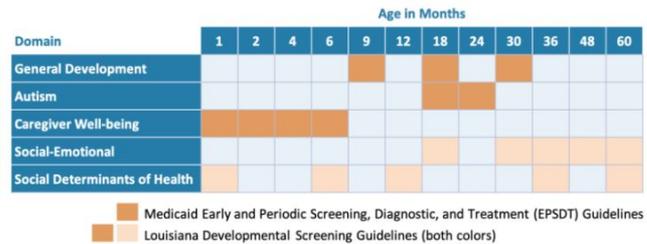
According to Title 28, Part C, [Bulletin 1508 - Pupil Appraisal Handbook](#), an immediate referral may be made to pupil appraisal services for an individual evaluation of those students suspected of having low incidence impairments such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, deaf-blindness, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disability (moderate or severe), multiple disabilities, and some students with severe autism, orthopedic impairments and/or significant health issues; or based on substantial documentation by school building level personnel of any student suspected of being likely to injure him/herself or others. Screening activities should be completed during the evaluation for these students.



# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 3: Establish a Developmental Screening, Intervention and Referral Process

Louisiana Developmental Screening Guidelines Periodicity



Louisiana Developmental Screening Guidelines Recommended Instruments

Domain	Recommended Instruments
General Development	Ages and Stages Questionnaire – 3 (ASQ-3*)
Autism	Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)
Caregiver Well-being	Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2; embedded in SEEK & ECSA)
Social Emotional	Early Childhood Screening Assessment (ECSA) Brief Early Childhood Screening Assessment (Brief ECSA) Preschool Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PPSC) Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE-2*)
Social Determinants of Health	Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK*)

\*ASQ-3, ASQ:SE-2, and SEEK each have an associated one-time nominal fee. The remainder of the recommended tools are public domain and available for free download.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends developmental screening for general development, autism and maternal depression at specific well-visits, as well as for social-emotional development and social determinants of health at regular intervals.

The recommended guidelines can be used to determine when to screen and which instruments to use for each domain of screening.

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 4: Support Families in Children's Developmental Progress

Children's development is best supported when adults who care for them work as a team. It is important that the lines of communication among all members of the team are open and ongoing in order to share information on how a child is progressing, whether there are concerns, and how those concerns should be addressed.

**Educators and Providers** develop a communication system for ongoing communication with families and caregivers and address concerns in a collaborative approach.

**Families** know their rights to ensure what is best for their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

**Community Entities** work in partnerships to ensure support is provided to the field.

# Developmental Screening Guidebook

## Step 4: Support Families in Children's Developmental Progress

### APPENDIX C: COMMUNICATING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS WITH FAMILIES

Programs should develop strategies for communicating children's developmental progress with families or caregivers on a routine basis.

- › Develop opportunities for ongoing discussions about children's development and developmental milestones. Consider including pertinent information in the programs Handbook or Guide.
- › Develop a schedule of ongoing opportunities to share individual children's developmental progress (i.e. parent/teacher conferences and family nights).
- › Routinely share activities that can support children's learning and development (i.e. sending home family engagement activities from Teaching Strategies GOLD® that are specific to child's developmental progress).
- › Encourage families to work with pediatricians or other health providers to administer screenings and communicate with programs.
- › Routinely celebrate with families when a child meets important milestones which will help them become more aware of how their child is progressing and encourage them to share what they are seeing at home with the program staff.

### APPENDIX D: COMMUNICATING CONCERNS WITH FAMILIES

Programs should develop strategies for communicating concerns about a child's development.

- › Choose a time and place where you can talk with families without being interrupted and ensure ample time is available for conversations and questions from the family.
- › Work with staff to ensure adequate evidence and documentation is available to share.
- › Start with positives - share what the child is doing well and what accomplishments he/she has achieved.
- › Be prepared for strong emotions since families may or may not sense there is a problem.
- › Share concerns based on objective evidence or documentation that has been collected during the daily routines and activities of the program; share concerns based on the developmental milestones of what is expected for a child of that age.
- › Pose thoughtful questions to families to share observations at home related to the evidence and documentation provided. Be mindful of observations that may differ from documentation being provided. Consider ways to facilitate a productive conversation to identify next steps that the family feels comfortable with.
- › Take the time to share resources and support and the process for additional screening and making referrals.
- › Remind the family that their concerns are not based on a diagnosis or evaluation and that they may want to schedule an appointment with their pediatrician or family physician for further screening.

# Next Steps

- Familiarize with the steps and resources outlined in the [Developmental Screening Guidebook](#).
- Share the companion resource, [Early Childhood Transition Process](#), with caregivers and families.
- Contact your lead agency network to obtain customized [Learn the Signs. Act Early](#) milestone checklists and brochures.
- Reach out to [brittany.braun@la.gov](mailto:brittany.braun@la.gov) with additional questions.

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Thank You!

