

Developmental Concern? Next Steps for Families and Caregivers



Your child has many strengths and a supportive family. Together, we want your child to have what he/she/they need to learn and grow.

Today our office is referring your child to see if services might help their learning and development and/or see if your child may have developmental delays.



If your **child is under 3 years of age**, one of the places our office may refer you to is

_____,
your state's early intervention program. If referred to early intervention, the program will evaluate your child at no cost and provide early intervention services, if they qualify, for minimal to no cost.



If your **child is over 3 years of age**, our office may ask you to call your local public elementary school

_____. When you call the school you can say, "I have concerns about my child's development and I would like to have my child evaluated through the school system for preschool special education services." If the person who answers is unfamiliar with preschool special education, ask to speak with the school or district's special education director.



Along with referring your child to your state's early intervention, preschool special education, or Head Start program, our office may refer them to see one or more early childhood professionals, or programs, including:

- Physical Therapist** (addresses delays in head control, sitting, walking, running, jumping, kicking, or climbing).
- Occupational Therapist** (addresses sensory issues and delays in reaching, using hands together, self-feeding, undressing/dressing).
- Speech and Language Pathologist** (addresses delays in understanding and making speech sounds, words, having conversations, feeding problems, stuttering).
- Behavioral Therapist or Social worker** (addresses trouble engaging socially, paying attention to others, or having behavioral challenges).
- Early Childhood Care and Education**, eg, Head Start (provides early childhood education, health, nutrition, and family engagement services to children and families/caregivers).
- Other:** _____.



Final Steps:

1. Keep your follow up appointments at our office.
2. Contact our office if you are having trouble making the referral appointments.
3. Let our office know what the professional/specialist said and any next steps they recommend by:
 - Making an appointment at our office to discuss.
 - Contacting _____.
 - Other _____.
4. Start any early intervention services your child qualifies for, even if you are waiting for other appointments to find out if there is a cause/diagnosis for any delays.



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If you are uncertain about making appointments, or have more questions please let our office know. It is important to find out if your child needs help and not “wait and see”, because the earlier interventions are started for delays, the easier it can be for a child to learn new skills.



Tips and Additional Resources

- Connect with early education professionals (eg, your childcare providers, teachers, home visitors) for feedback on your child’s development.
- Communicate updates, including progress your child is making or roadblocks you are facing to your pediatrician.
- Visit your local library for a reading hour or to choose books to read with your child.
- Use the *Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE)* milestone tracker app for tips and activities along with milestone checklists: <https://www.cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker>.
- Visit HealthyChildren.org for information on how to support your child’s development: <https://healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/pages/default.aspx>.
- For information and assistance navigating the health care system for your child with special health care needs and disabilities, find a Family-to-Family Information Center near you: <https://familyvoices.org/findhelp>.
- Use Vroom brain building tips: <https://www.vroom.org>.
- Use tip sheets from Read Talk Sing: <https://www.ed.gov/early-learning/talk-read-sing>.
- Find your Parent Center for assistance on being an effective advocate for children with disabilities: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/the-parent-center-network>.
- To learn about Head Start and school readiness visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/about/head-start>.
- Find information on how to choose quality child care or preschool programs: <https://www.childcare.gov/consumer-education/child-care-quality-ratings>.
- Additional: _____.

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