



**“Learn the Signs. Act Early.”**

## **Healthy Start Webinar**

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*Camille Smith, M.S., Ed.S., CPD - Behavioral Scientist  
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Prevention Research Branch



# Welcome

Learn the Signs.  
Act Early.



How Healthy Start providers can promote children's  
development with  
“Learn the Signs. Act Early.”



## Take-Home Points

- ❑ The early years in a child's life provide a strong foundation for lifelong health and development
- ❑ Developmental disabilities are common
- ❑ Early identification is important
- ❑ You have an important role in encouraging families to monitor their child's developmental milestones and to *Learn the Signs and Act Early*
- ❑ CDC offers resources, tools, and Ambassadors to help



# *Learn the Signs. Act Early.*

## Why this program?

- About 1 in 6 children aged 3-17 has a developmental disability<sup>1</sup>



- In the United States, about 1 in 68 children has an autism spectrum disorder<sup>2</sup>
- Median age of diagnosis 4 years (Autistic Disorder)



1. Boyle CA, Boulet S, Schieve LA, et al. Trends in the prevalence of developmental disabilities in U.S. children, 1997–2008. *Pediatrics* 2011;127:1034–42.

2. Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders. *MMWR*. March 27, 2014

## Too Many Children Are Identified Late

- ❑ Most children identified with ASD had a developmental concern documented in their evaluation records before the age of 2 years
- ❑ However, diagnosis often not until after age 4
  - 82% of children with ASD did not have a diagnosis by age 3 years
  - 21% of children with ASD did not have a diagnosis by age 8 years



CDC. Prevalence of autism spectrum disorders--Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 14 sites, United States, 2008. MMWR Surveill Summ. 2012 Mar 30;61(3):1-19.

# Public Health Concern

- Children with developmental problems are at increased risk for poor outcomes
- Early intervention before age 3 can significantly impact ability to learn skills
- Significant numbers of children are not identified until kindergarten or later
- Children from low income and/or minority families experience longer delays in receiving services





# Early Intervention Makes a Difference

## □ Early intervention services<sup>3,4,5</sup>

(also called Part C or Birth-to-3 services)

- improve skills and outcomes
- increase school readiness
- enable families to develop strategies and obtain resources needed for successful family functioning



- 3 Landa, RJ, Kalb LG. Long-term Outcomes of Toddlers with Autism Spectrum Disorders Exposed to Short-term Intervention. *Pediatrics*. 2012; 130:Supplement 2 S186-S190; doi:10.1542/peds.2012-0900Q
- 4 Rogers SJ, Estes A, Lord C, Vismara L, Winter J, Fitzpatrick A, Guo M, Dawson G. Effects of a Brief Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)-Based Parent Intervention on Toddlers at Risk for Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2012 Oct;51(10):1052-65. doi: 10.1016/j.jaac.2012.08.003. Epub 2012 Aug 28.
- 5 Dawson, G. (2008). Early behavioral interventions, brain plasticity, and the prevention of autism spectrum disorder. *Developmental Psychopathology*, 20, 775-803.



## Why You?

- ❑ You are a trusted partner, friend, and resource to new moms and families
- ❑ You work in vulnerable communities
- ❑ You can help pregnant women and families with young children learn about developmental milestones and monitoring
- ❑ You can help connect families with services and supports
- ❑ You want the best outcome for each child and family served in your community







# Learn the Signs. Act Early.

## Learn the Signs:

- Resources for monitoring key developmental milestones and “red flags” that can indicate concern

## Act Early:

- Discuss concerns
- Provide positive parenting tips
- Encourage Developmental Screening
- Refer for evaluation and services
- Find resources for early intervention and family support



**Your Child at 2 Years**

**Su Hijo de 2 Años**

Checklist of skills and behaviors for a 2-year-old child. Includes sections for Social/Communication, Language/Communication, Cognitive/Thinking, and Movement/Physical Development. The Spanish version includes a section for 'Señales de alerta' (Warning signs).

**Milestone Moments**

You can follow your child's development by watching how he or she plays, learns, speaks, and acts. Look for milestones to watch for in your child and how you can help your child learn and grow.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

# How CDC Helps Families and Providers “Learn the Signs” and “Act Early”

## □ Health Education

- To help families “learn the signs” of healthy development and understand when and how to “act early”

## □ “Act Early” Initiatives

- To improve communication and coordination among systems that must work together to identify and care for children with disabilities

## □ Research and Evaluation

- To refine our efforts and identify promising practices for improving early identification and access to care



## Some LTSAE Partners

- ❑ ACF Offices of Head Start and Child Care
- ❑ Home visiting programs
- ❑ American Academy of Pediatrics
- ❑ National Healthy Start Association
- ❑ Child Care Aware
- ❑ USDA, WIC, Cooperative Extension
- ❑ YMCA
- ❑ SAMHSA/Project LAUNCH



# What are Developmental Milestones?

- ❑ Things most children can do by a certain age
  - take a first step
  - smile for the first time
  - wave “bye-bye”
  - point to something interesting
- ❑ Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move
- ❑ Though all children develop at their own pace, most children reach developmental milestones at or about the same age



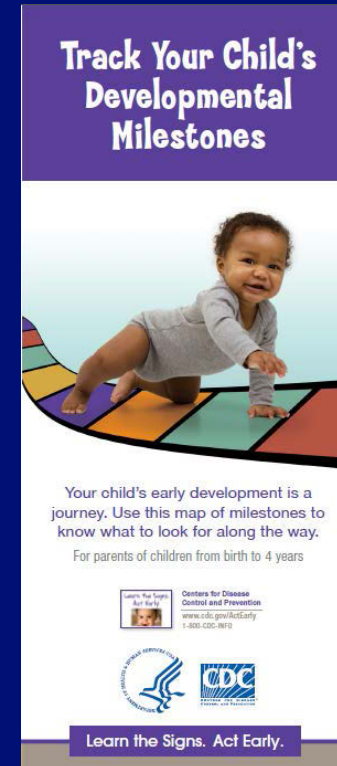
# Milestone Domains

- ❑ Social/Emotional
- ❑ Language/Communication
- ❑ Cognitive
- ❑ Movement/Physical Development



# The Milestones Collection

- ❑ Milestone Checklists
- ❑ Milestone Moments Booklet
- ❑ Growth Chart
- ❑ Parent Kit
- ❑ Milestone Brochure









# “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Materials

Parent-tested materials focused on milestones, when to act early, and what to do if concerned: <http://www.CDC.gov/ActEarly>

- Research-based, audience-tested
- Parent-friendly
- Written in plain language
- Reproducible (no copyright)
- Easily customizable
- Available in Spanish (and a few in other languages)
- Available to print immediately (most)
- Popular!!



# Milestone Moments Booklet

## Your Child at 3 Years

Talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

### Milestone Moments



You can follow your child's development by watching how he or she plays, learns, speaks, and acts.

Look inside for milestones to watch for in your child and how you can help your child learn and grow.



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

[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

What children do at this age – and how you can help their development.



#### Social/Emotional

- Copies adults and playmates
- Shows affection for playmates without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Plays well with two or three children in a group
- Cares about others' feelings
- Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- Shows affection openly
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- Gets upset with major changes in routine

#### How you can help your child's social and emotional development

- Go to play groups with your child or other places where there are other children, to encourage getting along with others.
- Name your child's emotions. For example, say, "I can tell you feel mad because you threw the puzzle piece." Encourage your child to identify feelings in books.
- Work with your child to solve the problem when he is upset.
- Set rules and limits for your child, and stick to them. If your child breaks a rule, give him a time out for 30 seconds in a chair or in his room. Praise your child for following the rules.
- When your child sees another child who is upset, encourage her to offer comfort by giving a hug or a toy.
- During play dates, set a timer for trading toys with the other child to encourage sharing and taking turns.

- ✓ Printable version available on website
- ✓ Milestones up to 5 years of age
- ✓ Parenting tips
- ✓ Developmental Health Watch information
- ✓ Use on an ongoing basis



# Inside Milestone Moments

## Your Baby at 6 Months

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Looks around at things nearby
- Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach
- Brings things to mouth
- Begins to pass things from one hand to the other

### Movement/Physical Development

- Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)
- When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce
- Begins to sit without support
- Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward

### How you can help your child learn and grow

- Point out new things to your baby and name them.
- Show your baby bright pictures in a magazine and name them.
- Hold your baby up while she sits or support her with pillows. Let her look around and give her toys to look at while she balances.
- Put your baby on his tummy or back and put toys just out of reach. Encourage him to roll over to reach the toys.

## Parenting tips on development

## Milestone checklists

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your baby:

- Doesn't try to get things that are in reach
- Doesn't respond to sounds around him
- Has difficulty getting things to mouth
- Shows no affection for caregivers
- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll
- Doesn't roll over in either direction
- Doesn't make vowel sounds ("ah", "eh", "oh")
- Doesn't laugh or make squealing sounds
- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles

**Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program. For more information, go to [www.cdc.gov/concerned](http://www.cdc.gov/concerned) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.**

## Warning signs and Referral information



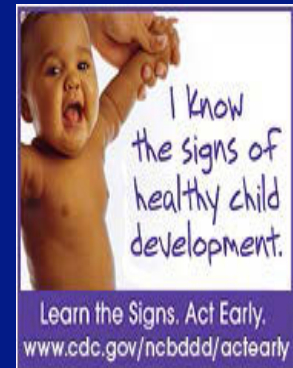
## Using Milestone Moments

- Give families a copy of a customized Milestone Moments booklet and show them how to:
  - Be aware of developmental milestones
  - Monitor their child's development
  - Use the positive parenting tips to facilitate development
  - Pay attention to the warning signs in case of a concern
  - Know what to do if they have a concern about their child's development



## Using Milestone Moments

- ❑ You as community health worker can review milestones and parenting tips with each family regularly
- ❑ You can use the booklet as a resource and a monitoring tool





# Milestones Checklists

## Your Child at 2 Years



Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Age \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 2nd birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

### What Most Children Do at this Age:

#### Social/Emotional

- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Gets excited when with other children
- Shows more and more independence
- Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

#### Language/Communication

- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation
- Points to things in a book

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games
- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- Might use one hand more than the other
- Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet."
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

#### Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run

- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws ball overhead
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

### Act Early by Talking to Your Child's Doctor if Your Child:

- Doesn't use 2-word phrases (for example, "drink milk")
- Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't follow simple instructions
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program. For more information, go to [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development and autism at the 24-month visit. Ask your child's doctor about your child's developmental screening.

Adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, PINK BOOK, written by Steven Shaker and Tanya Horner Altmann © 1991, 1995, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and GREAT FUTURE QUESTIONS FOR HEALTH SUPERVISORS OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Nagin, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Dunlap, 2006. © by Bruce Wang, Jr., American Academy of Pediatrics. This information is provided as a substitute for a standard book, without developmental screening tool.



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

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

## Su Hijo de 2 Años



Nombre del niño \_\_\_\_\_ Edad del niño \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha de hoy \_\_\_\_\_

La manera en que su hijo juega, aprende, habla y actúa nos ofrece pistas importantes sobre cómo se está desarrollando. Los indicadores del desarrollo son las cosas que la mayoría de los niños pueden hacer a una edad determinada.

Marque los indicadores del desarrollo que puede ver en su hijo cuando cumple 2 años de edad. En cada visita médica de su hijo, lleve esta información y hable con el pediatra sobre los indicadores que su hijo alcanzó y cuáles son los que debería alcanzar a continuación.

### ¿Qué Hacen los Niños a Esta Edad?

#### En las áreas social y emocional

- Copia a otras personas, especialmente a adultos y niños mayores
- Se entusiasma cuando está con otros niños
- Demuestra ser cada vez más independiente
- Demuestra un comportamiento desafiante (hace lo que se le ha dicho que no haga)
- Comienza a incluir otros niños en sus juegos, como jugar a sentarse a comer con las muñecas o a correr y perseguirse

#### En las áreas del habla y la comunicación

- Señala a objetos o ilustraciones cuando se los nombra
- Sabе los nombres de personas, cosas y partes del cuerpo
- Dice frases de 2 a 4 palabras
- Sigue instrucciones sencillas
- Repite palabras que escuchó en alguna conversación
- Señala las cosas que aparecen en un libro

#### En el área cognitiva (aprendizaje, razonamiento, resolución de problemas)

- Encuentra cosas que están escondidas debajo de dos o tres láminas
- Emplea a clasificar por formas y colores
- Completa las frases y las rimas de los cuentos que conoce
- Juega con su imaginación de maneras sencillas
- Construye torres de 4 bloques o más
- Puede que use una mano más que la otra
- Sigue instrucciones para hacer dos cosas como por ejemplo, "¡venita las zapatas y ponlas en su lugar!"
- Nombra las ilustraciones de los libros como un gato, pájaro o perro

#### En las áreas motora y de desarrollo físico

- Se para en las puntas de los dedos
- Patea una pelota
- Empieza a correr

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

Aprenda los signos. Reaccione pronto.

### Reaccione pronto y hable con el doctor de su hijo se el niño:

- No usa frases de 2 palabras (por ejemplo, "toma leche")
- No sabe cómo utilizar objetos de uso común, como un cepillo, teléfono, tenedor o cuchara
- No copia acciones ni palabras
- No puede seguir instrucciones sencillas
- No camina con estabilidad
- Pierde habilidades que había logrado

Dígale al médico o a la enfermera de su hijo si está cualquiera de estos signos de posible retraso del desarrollo para su edad, y converse con alguien de su comunidad que conozca los servicios para niños de su área, como por ejemplo el programa público de intervención temprana patrocinado por el estado. Para obtener más información, consulte [www.cdc.gov/precopado](http://www.cdc.gov/precopado) o llame 1-800-CDC-INFO.

La Academia Americana de Pediatría recomienda que, a los 24 meses de edad, se evalúe el desarrollo general de los niños y se realicen pruebas de detección del autismo. Pregúntele al médico de su hijo si el niño necesita ser evaluado.

"Forma de Caring for Your Baby and Your Child: Birth to Age 5, Purple Book, written by Steven Shaker and Tanya Horner Altmann © 1991, 1995, 1998, 2004, 2009 por la Academia Americana de Pediatría y GREAT FUTURE QUESTIONS FOR HEALTH SUPERVISORS OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, tercera edición, editado por Joseph Nagin, Jr., Judith S. Shaw y Paula M. Dunlap, 2006. © by Bruce Wang, Jr., Academia Americana de Pediatría. Esta información es un sustituto de un instrumento de evaluación del desarrollo no es un instrumento de evaluación del desarrollo estandarizado y validado.



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)

# Making the Materials Your Own: Milestone Checklists

- ❑ For monitoring developmental milestones of all children
  - not a formal, standardized screening tool
- ❑ Helpful for communicating with parents and healthcare providers about a child's development
- ❑ Available online for ages of well child doctor visits





## Healthy Start Provider Quotes

- ❑ “For new parents, this has been extremely educational and a benefit to learn what their son is doing at different ages.”
- ❑ “One of my parents was worrying about her child’s development, but she realized her child is progressing normally and was anxious to see what her child would be doing next.”
- ❑ “Parent wrote down her concerns for the Pediatrician, took the Milestone Moments booklet to her Doctor. The Doctor referred her to First Steps Early Intervention.”



## Healthy Start Provider Quotes

- “The parents fill out the Milestone Moments checklist and use the parenting tips. I fill out a Milestone checklist and we compare and talk about the child’s development at my visit.”
- “The materials were integrated with our Parents as Teachers program and our developmental screening program – they are given to families at the screen. We encourage the family to monitor their child’s development regularly.”

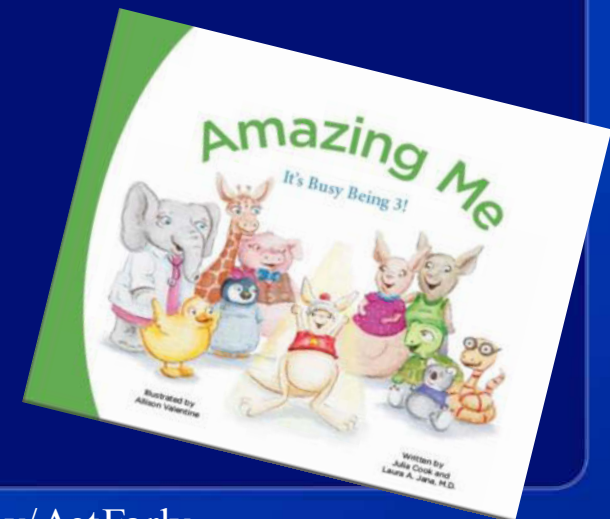


# Additional Materials from “Learn the Signs. Act Early.”



# Amazing Me—It's Busy Being 3!

- ❑ Children's book
- ❑ Milestones highlighted throughout story
- ❑ Parent section includes 3-year-old milestones, tips, when to act early
- ❑ You can give one to families as they exit the program



# Growth Chart



**Growth Chart** includes height and milestones with a spot for a photo in the middle. Pairing height and milestones reminds parents there is more than one type of growth.





# Milestones Brochure


## Track Your Child's Developmental Milestones



Your child's early development is a journey. Use this map of milestones to know what to look for along the way.

For parents of children from birth to 4 years

Learn the Signs. Act Early.  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
www.cdc.gov/actearly  
1-800-422-9670



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

## Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

Check off the milestones your child has reached and share your child's progress with the doctor at every visit.



**6 MONTHS**

- Turns his head when you call his name
- Smiles back at you
- Responds to sound by making sounds
- Sits without support for a short time
- Likes social play (games like peek-a-boo)
- Uses simple gestures such as shaking head for "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- Pulls up to stand

**12 MONTHS (1 YEAR)**

- Copies you during play (like clapping when you clap)
- Responds when told "no"
- Says "mama" and "dada"

**18 MONTHS (1 1/2 YEARS)**

- Uses 2- to 4-word phrases
- Shows more interest in other children
- Looks at something when you point to it and say "look!"
- Uses several single words to get what she wants
- Walks without help
- Plays pretend (like talking on a toy phone)
- Points to interesting things

**2 YEARS**

- Follows simple instructions
- Kicks a ball
- Points to something (like a toy or picture) when you name it

**3 YEARS**

- Shows affection for playmates
- Uses 4- to 5-word sentences
- Copies adults and playmates (like running when other children run)
- Climbs well
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people (like feeding a teddy bear)

**4 YEARS**

- Follows 3-step commands (like "get dressed, comb your hair, and wash your face")
- Hops and can stand on one foot for up to five seconds
- Uses 5- to 6-word sentences
- Shares and takes turns with other children
- Draws circles and squares

These are just a few of many important milestones to look for. For more complete checklists by age visit [www.ActEarly.wiso.edu](http://www.ActEarly.wiso.edu) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.



# Milestones Brochure

- ❑ Lists a few milestones for ages 6 months to 4 years
- ❑ English and Spanish
- ❑ Downloadable, customizable
- ❑ Can hand out them out or put them in waiting rooms



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

The journey of your child's early years includes many developmental milestones for how he or she plays, learns, speaks, and acts.

Look inside to learn what to look for in your child. Talk with your child's doctor about these milestones.

Not reaching these milestones, or reaching them much later than other children, could be a sign of a developmental delay.

**YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD BEST.**  
If you are concerned about your child's development, talk to your child's doctor.

If you or the doctor is still concerned, ask the doctor for a referral to a specialist and call **1-800-CDC-INFO** to learn how to get connected with your state's early childhood system to get the help your child might need.

**DON'T WAIT.**  
Acting early can make a real difference!

For more information about your child's development and what to do if you have a concern, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)  
**OR CALL:**  
**1-800-CDC-INFO**

to request a FREE "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Parent Kit or to get help finding resources in your area.

Developmental milestones adapted from Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 (AAP, 2009) and Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents (AAP, 2008).

**Track Your Child's Developmental Milestones**

Your child's early development is a journey. Use this map of milestones to know what to look for along the way.

For parents of children from birth to 4 years:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)  
1-800-CDC-INFO

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



# *Watch Me!* *Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns*

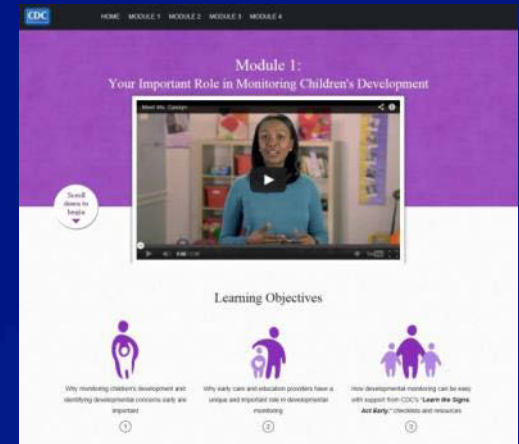
<http://www.cdc.gov/watchmetraining>

## □ Training on developmental monitoring with LTSAE

- For child care professionals (CCPs)
- Free, 1 hour, online
- CE's available

## □ 4 Modules:

- CCPs important role in developmental monitoring
- Understanding children's developmental milestones
- Objective and engaged developmental monitoring
- How to talk with parents about their child's development



# Fact Sheets

- ❑ Download and print
- ❑ Developmental Screening
- ❑ If You're Concerned: <http://www.cdc.gov/concerned>
- ❑ Talking to Your Child's Doctor
- ❑ Resources
- ❑ Tips for Talking to Parents



## Act Early Ambassadors

- ❑ Community champions to increase awareness activities and improve early identification practices
- ❑ Serve as state or territory point-of-contact for the national LTSAE program; they can help you



# Find Ambassador Contacts

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

## Learn the Signs Home

- Milestones
- If You're Concerned
- Facts
- Free Materials
- Multimedia & Tools
- Info For Families
- Info For Healthcare Providers
- Info For Early Childhood Educators
- Info For Partners
- Get Involved
- ▶ **About the Program**
- Health education campaign
- Act Early Initiative
- Research and evaluation

[National Center Homepage](#) > [Learn the Signs Home](#)

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## About The Program

CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program addresses autism and other developmental disabilities so children get the support they need.

The program is made up of three components:

- **Health education campaign**
- **Act Early Initiative**
- **Research and evaluation**

[Learn the Signs. Act Early Factsheet](#) » 

**"Learn the Signs. Act Early."  
Paints the Country Purple**  
Click on the map for the [full story](#).

### Information For...

- Media
- Policy Makers



# Thank You!!

Thank you for all your hard work in helping to safeguard the healthy growth and development of our nation's children - we look forward to helping you with this most important mission!

Tell us how we can help!

Camille Smith

[cas0@cdc.gov](mailto:cas0@cdc.gov)

