

# Developmental Screening in Massachusetts: An Alliance between Early Childhood Programs & Pediatricians

## Faculty Bios



**Roula Choueiri, MD** is a neurodevelopmental pediatrician and Division Chief, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, at the University of Massachusetts Children's Memorial Medical Center. Dr. Choueiri is originally from Beirut, Lebanon. She received her MD from St. Joseph University in 1992, and completed Pediatrics and Child Neurology trainings at the American University of Beirut. She moved to Boston with her family in 2001 and trained in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities at Boston Children's Hospital then completed another pediatric residency at Massachusetts General Hospital. She was on staff at the LADDERS Autism Clinic, then at Tufts Medical Center for Children with Special Needs until October 2014. Dr. Choueiri has established thriving early autism diagnosis clinics in underserved and multicultural areas in Massachusetts. She has presented several workshops to pediatricians and Early Intervention providers about autism screening, and about cultural perspectives in autism screening. She has collaborated in the MA Act Early program's Considering Culture in Autism Screening kit and training curriculum. Her research interests include autism screening, early diagnosis, and response to treatment and she is currently developing an interactive autism screening test in toddlers.



**Elaine Gabovitch, MPA** is an instructor in UMass Medical School's Department of Family Medicine & Community Health and family faculty for UMass Medical School's E.K. Shriver Center Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program. Ms. Gabovitch intimately knows the value that early screening and detection holds for families of children with ASD. As the parent of son diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder in 1997, she and many other parents had been told by their pediatricians to "wait and see" when concerned about their child's delays. This experience led her to serve as a co-founder and vice-president of the autism awareness campaign First Signs from 1999 until 2004 to educate parents and physicians about the early warning signs of ASD and other developmental disabilities. Since 2010, she has continued this critical work as the CDC's Act Early Ambassador to Massachusetts and as the State Team Leader for the Massachusetts Act Early program. She is the principal investigator of the *Considering Culture in Autism Screening* kit and training curriculum, in addition to other projects related to early identification of autism and other developmental disorders.

