



Pediatric Patient at Preventive Care Visit

1. Developmental concerns should be included as one of several health topics addressed at each pediatric preventive care visit throughout the first 5 years of life.⁶

2. **Developmental surveillance** is a flexible, longitudinal, continuous, and cumulative process whereby knowledgeable health care professionals identify children who may have developmental problems. There are 5 components of developmental surveillance: eliciting and attending to the parents' concerns about their child's development, documenting and maintaining a developmental history, making accurate observations of the child, identifying the risk and protective factors, and maintaining an accurate record and documenting the process and findings.

Perform Surveillance

Does Surveillance Demonstrate Risk?

3. The concerns of both parents and child health professionals should be included in determining whether surveillance suggests the child may be at risk of developmental delay. If either parents or the child health professional express concern about the child's development, a developmental screening to address the concern specifically should be conducted.

4. All children should receive developmental screening using a standardized test. In the absence of established risk factors or parental or provider concerns, a general developmental screen is recommended at the 9-, 18-, and 30-month^a visits. Additionally, autism-specific screening is recommended for all children at the 18-month visit.

Is This a 9-, 18-, or 30-mo^a Visit?

Administer Screening Tool

5a and 5b. Developmental screening is the administration of a brief standardized tool aiding the identification of children at risk of a developmental disorder. Developmental screening that targets the area of concern is indicated whenever a problem is identified during developmental surveillance.

6a and 6b. When the results of the periodic screening tool are normal, the child health professional can inform the parents and continue with other aspects of the preventive visit. When a screening tool is administered as a result of concerns about development, an early return visit to provide additional developmental surveillance should be scheduled even if the screening tool results do not indicate a risk of delay.

Are the Screening Tool Results Positive/Concerning?

Make Referrals for:
Developmental and Medical Evaluations and Early Developmental Intervention/Early Childhood Services

Developmental and Medical Evaluations

7-8. If screening results are concerning, the child should be scheduled for developmental and medical evaluations. **Developmental evaluation** is aimed at identifying the specific developmental disorder or disorders affecting the child. In addition to the developmental evaluation, a **medical diagnostic evaluation** to identify an underlying etiology should be undertaken. **Early developmental intervention/early childhood services** can be particularly valuable when a child is first identified to be at high risk of delayed development, because these programs often provide evaluation services and can offer other services to the child and family even before an evaluation is complete.²⁵ Establishing an effective and efficient partnership with early childhood professionals is an important component of successful care coordination for children.⁴⁰

9. If a developmental disorder is identified, the child should be identified as a child with special health care needs and chronic condition management should be initiated (see No. 10 below). If a developmental disorder is not identified through medical and developmental evaluation, the child should be scheduled for an early return visit for further surveillance. More frequent visits, with particular attention paid to areas of concern, will allow the child to be promptly referred for further evaluation if any further evidence of delayed development or a specific disorder emerges.

Is a Developmental Disorder Identified?

Identify as a Child With Special Health Care Needs
Initiate Chronic Condition Management

10. When a child is discovered to have a significant developmental disorder, that child becomes a child with special health care needs, even if that child does not have a specific disease etiology identified. Such a child should be identified by the medical home for appropriate chronic condition management and regular monitoring and entered into the practice's children and youth with special health care needs registry.⁴¹