

Health Condition Factsheet

Updated September 2020

Developmental Concerns

What is it?

GPs use **milestones** to track your child's development. Milestones are the skills and tasks children can do at different ages. For example, smiling at 6 weeks, or forming words around 12 months. Milestones are based on five domains: fine motor, gross motor, speech, social, and cognitive.

If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, there may be a cause for concern. Sometimes, missing milestones can be a sign of a developmental disorder.

It's normal to feel worried for your child. Try to stay positive, and continue to support your child's needs. There is plenty of help available. And, the good news is early treatment can make a huge difference.

What will my GP do now?

The next step is to work out what may be causing your child's delay so you can arrange the most suitable treatment.

Your GP will:

- Look for any health conditions that could be adding to the problem
- Treat any existing issues, such as eczema or glue ear
- Check all your child's injections are up to date
- Arrange hearing and eye tests
- Refer you to an allied health professional for early intervention

Allied Health Professionals

- Speech pathology for language and speech
- Physiotherapy for walking and balance
- Occupational therapy for physical and sensory concerns
- Psychology for cognitive, social, and behaviour concerns

If your child is not meeting more than one milestone, your GP may refer you to a paediatrician for assessment and treatment.

What will my GP do in the future?

You should see your GP regularly, even if you are also seeing an allied health professional or paediatrician. Your GP will want to track your child's progress and keep up-to-date with how things are going. Talk to your GP about how often to make an appointment.

In the future, you may need to see a specialist if you haven't already been referred to one. Your GP can advise you on this after seeing your child's progress.

The Five Domains

Fine motor skills



Small muscle movements, such as typing, buttoning, eating, and zipping

Gross motor skills



Large movements, such as crawling, running and jumping

Speech skills



Involve language, such as speaking, listening and following instructions

Social skills



Playing with others, getting dressed, going to the toilet

Cognitive skills



Problem solving and emotional awareness

Supporting Yourself

Remember to take time to look after yourself as well. Here are some helpful websites:

- HIPPY – hippyaustralia.org.au
- Raising Children – raisingchildren.net.au
- Families NSW – Love, talk, sing, read, play – families.nsw.gov.au
- Resourcing Parents – resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au



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What can I do?

There may not be a 'quick fix' for your child. But, with the right support and early intervention, you can make a difference in your child's growth.

Assessing delays takes time, but you can help this process by:

- Being aware of your child's growth
- Tracking any changes
- Arranging health checks with your GP
- Arranging referrals
- Being there for your child, by offering plenty of emotional support and love
- Supporting yourself, and taking care of your health and wellbeing

As a parent, you can also self-refer to a health professional or paediatrician. But, if a referral is made through your GP, you can get a Medicare rebate. Speak to your GP about this.



What questions could I ask my doctor?



- What can I do to help my child now?*
- What can I do to help my child over time?*
- When should I make another appointment?*

- How quickly can I expect results?*
- What happens if my child gets worse?*

What supports are available?

The **South Western Sydney Local Health District Child and Family Health Nursing Team** provide a free developmental screen for young children. If needed, this team can refer your child to the Child Development Service for a paediatric review. You or your GP can refer by phoning 1800 455 511.

Early intervention programs

South Western Sydney Local Health District Primary and Community Health provide free assessment and intervention for young children.

- For the dietetics team, call **4633 4179**
- For the occupational therapy team, call **4633 4105**
- For the physiotherapy team, call **9780 2899**
- For the psychology team, call **8788 4200**
- For the speech pathology team, call **4633 4333**

Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service

Health checks and care for Indigenous of all ages. Visit tacams.com.au or phone **4628 4837**.

Private care

Access private paediatricians or allied health professionals. Speak to your GP about rebates available.

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs