



Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidance

Louisiana must ensure that young children and their families receive individualized services and resources, so that all children enter the K-12 system with the competencies and support they need to access and participate in the general curriculum and in all aspects of the school.

Why is developmental screening so critical?

Developmental disabilities and delays can often go undetected. Universal screening and surveillance of all children for early identification leads to long-term achievement. When supported by early childhood educators and professionals, as well as health care professionals, problems can be identified early and accurately and support a child's trajectory for success.

Developmental Screening Background Information

Children grow and develop at different rates and it is important to know when additional support and interventions may be necessary. Early Identification leads to early intervention, which improves student achievement and reduces gaps in learning. Children who receive early and appropriate support are less likely to experience persistent academic difficulties.

The CDC outlines the following benefits of early intervention:

- Early intervention is likely to be more effective when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.
- Early intervention services can change a child's developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- Families benefit from early intervention by being able to better meet their children's needs from an early age and throughout their lives.

How do developmental screenings differ from developmental monitoring?

- Developmental screening is a process to quickly identify a child's progress in meeting early childhood developmental milestones. The results of the screening do not confirm a developmental delay or allow for diagnosis, but may indicate a deviation from the expected norms of typical development. An observation based assessment, like Teaching Strategies GOLD[®], is an ongoing process to determine if a child or groups of children are meeting specified outcomes and goals, which is also known as developmental monitoring. Both a developmental screener and an observation based assessment can work together to ensure appropriate support and interventions are in place and all necessary stakeholders, including family members, are collaborating to better understand the needs of the child.

Recommendations on Screening Tools

It's important for educators and program staff to reinforce appropriate developmental screenings at critical stages of development.

Formative Assessment LDOE: Required assessment for children in publicly funded Pre-k	Developmental Screener: The implementation of developmental screening is not a mandate or requirement. However, the Louisiana Department of Education has been building out a comprehensive universal screening initiative, which includes a long term plan for implementation of screening for all children ages birth to five.
Teaching Strategies GOLD®/SmartTeach™	Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3rd Edition (ASQ-3)

Screening Best Practices

- A developmental screener should be completed by family members at key entry points and transitions. Educators and practitioners should use the information from the screener to determine if the family members have any developmental concerns or questions.
- Practitioners should input the information collected from the developmental screener as part of the comprehensive and ongoing observation data used for developmental monitoring.
- Practitioners are encouraged to conduct their own developmental screener and compare results to the information provided by families. Communicate observations regularly:
 - Are there specific areas where observations differ from information received by family members?
 - Are there areas of concern that the family members did not address, that the teacher or practitioner would like to discuss?
 - Are there specific areas where intentional strategies and supports that are needed to monitor progress in meeting appropriate developmental milestones and objectives?
 - Are there additional concerns and a need for additional screenings or evaluations?
- Screenings should be implemented on an ongoing basis and based on the following considerations: age intervals, ongoing conversations with families and observation based data within the classroom setting.

Framework for Screening Implementation

The following framework supports achieving ambitious goals for children with disabilities by ensuring they are identified as early and as accurately as possible.

Elements of Identification	Key Actions	Resources
Coordinate Early and Accurate Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Enact a comprehensive screening and intervention plan.	Developmental Screening Guidebook

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff on the administration of screening assessments and how to use them effectively. • Choose and administer a screening assessment to every child upon entry into the program. • Collect and complete ongoing formative assessment data for every child. • Develop a sub-committee that consists of key stakeholders from various entities to support screening process 	Developmental Screening Toolkit PK - 3rd Grade Assessment Guidance
Communicate with Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host events to educate families and disseminate information on developmental milestones and the screening process. • Provide families with referral, screening and evaluation information. • Schedule regular meetings with families to share results and identify next steps. • Provide education practitioners with ongoing training and support on engaging families and building trusting relationships through the screening process. 	Learn the Signs. Act Early Developmental Screening Guidebook Early Childhood Transition Process
Communicate and Collaborate with Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community agencies to train staff on screening and referral processes. • Join Early Steps transition meetings to discuss screening, evaluation and next steps. • Provide referral, screening and evaluation information to area pediatricians, early childhood medical professionals and community agencies such as homeless shelters. • Connect with universities and other agencies to identify trained personnel for the pupil appraisal team. • Work collaboratively with the pupil appraisal team to identify effective assessments. 	Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Early Childhood Transition Process

Developmental Screening Framework Self-Assessment

The following self-assessment should be completed at the beginning, middle and end of the planning process to support a comprehensive approach to developmental screening.

Developmental Screening Framework Self Assessment				
Coordination	Not Yet	In Process	In Place	Notes
Develop a sub-committee that consists of key stakeholders from various entities to support the screening process. (Child Find, Early Steps, family members, community stakeholders, SBLC and Pupil Appraisal, etc.)				
Create and develop a written screening process that supports a network wide implementation of an approved screener.				
Develop and communicate screening best practices and importance of screening to community and families.				
Learn from families to determine the best ways to engage in screening and monitoring development (consider enrollment events, community screening clinics, virtual screening options, etc.).				
Develop strategies to support implementation in anticipation of potential challenges and questions.				
Implementation	Not Yet	In Process	In Place	Notes
Design a training plan for implementation and create guidance for various types of training (in person and virtual), onboarding, and consistency of experience with screening tools.				
Provide family engagement events throughout the year. Families should have multiple opportunities, at various times and locations, to learn about the importance of developmental milestones, monitoring, screening, interventions, etc. Ensure that this information is available on your network's March 2021 website.				
Ensure there is a comprehensive referral process that includes specific procedures, defined roles, and responsibilities.				
Collect and analyze screening data, in conjunction with formative assessment data (TS GOLD).				
Evaluate these procedures and processes for improvement through collaboration with sub-committee, e.g. family surveys and internal surveys.				