

Health Measure TIPS (To Improve Performance Sheet): Developmental Screening in the First Three Years of Life



Importance of the Quality Measure

One in six children aged 3 to 17 years have developmental disabilities that affect how they play, learn, speak, behave, or move.¹ Early identification of developmental disorders is crucial to the well-being of children and their families. Pediatric healthcare professionals play an essential role in identifying children who may be at risk for developmental delays at an early age and are in a unique position to promote healthy development through the established relationships with the child and their families due to routine care prior to school age.² Screening for developmental issues generates timely referrals to specialists and services. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children be screened for developmental delays and disabilities

during regular well-child visits at 9, 18, 24, and 30 months.³ Please note that the Department of Social Services reimburses for developmental and behavioral health screenings, including those that are performed at intervals outside of the annual Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) visit.

This quality metric is recognized by several national quality improvement measure stewards and supports an objective of the *Healthy People 2030* initiative developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Quality Measure Description

The percentage of children screened for risk of developmental, behavioral, and social delays using a standardized screening tool in the 12 months preceding their first, second, or third birthday.

*HUSKY Health wants to help you improve your developmental screening rates for children ages one to three years and improve health outcomes for your HUSKY Health patients. **Adherence to this measure is determined by claims data.***

Required Medical Record Documentation:

For children who had a developmental screening using a standardized, validated tool in the 12 months preceding their birthday, the following documentation must be in the medical record:

- Date of service.
- Documentation of the validated screening tool. A listing of resources is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website, "Learn the Signs. Act Early": <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html> or the AAP STAR Center's website (examples of tools include: M-CHAT-R/F, Whole Child Assessment).
- Evidence of a screening result, positive or negative, or screening score that includes a numeric value associated with the validated screening tool.
- Documentation of next steps if the screening result is positive, such as age-appropriate anticipatory guidance, and referral for pediatric development specialist.

References

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.) CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/media/pdfs/ltase-program-one-pager-p.pdf?pdf>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (February 2021). Developmental Monitoring and Screening for Health Professionals. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/screening.html>

³ American Academy of Pediatrics. (April 2023). Recommendations for Preventative Pediatric Health Care. Bright Futures/American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved from: https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf

*Code for Developmental Screening

CODE	MODIFIERS
96110	Use modifier U3 for a positive screen and U4 for a negative screen.

*Code sets are routinely updated. Please reference the current year's manuals when billing for services. Not all codes listed above are reimbursable. For a list of codes reimbursed by DSS, please refer to the Physician Office and Outpatient Services Fee Schedule on the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program website: www.ctdssmap.com.

Quality Improvement Opportunities

- Educate parents/caretakers to monitor for developmental milestones such as smiling, waving, crawling, first steps, etc.
- Educate parents/caretakers and assess for risk factors for developmental delays such as preterm birth, low birth weight, lead exposure, etc.
- Optimize workflows so parents/caretakers can complete valid screenings prior to scheduled well-visit check-ups.
- Refer child to the appropriate specialist based on screening tool outcomes and determine follow-up.

Tools & Resources for Healthcare Professionals

- AAP, Developmental Surveillance and Screening:
<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/developmental-surveillance-and-screening-patient-care>
- AAP, Developmental Surveillance and Screening Resources for Pediatricians:
<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/developmental-surveillance-and-screening-patient-care/developmental-surveillance-resources-for-pediatricians>
- CDC, Child Development. Developmental Monitoring and Screening for Health Professionals:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/screening.html>

Resources for Patients & Families

- CDC, "Learn More about Your Child's Development":
<https://www.cdc.gov/autism/media/pdfs/dev-mon-and-screen-english-and-spanish-p.pdf?>
- CDC, "Concerned About Your Child's Development?":
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned.html>

Additional Information on HUSKY Health

For information on quality improvement, quality measures, or the programs and services made available through the HUSKY Health program:

- Visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/husky>, click "**Information for Providers**," then "**Quality Health Outcome Measures**" under the "**Reports & Resources**" menu item.
- Email: Quality@chnct.org
- Call: 1.866.317.3301