

Concerned about Development? How to Talk with the Doctor



A first step toward getting help for your child when you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves) is to talk with your child's doctor.

Here are some tips for talking with your child's doctor:

1 Prepare for your visit.

- When you make your next well child appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you want to discuss.
- Write down your questions, concerns, and some examples; take these to the appointment.
- Fill out a milestones checklist for your child's age from www.cdc.gov/Milestones and take it with you to share with the doctor.
- Have other adults who know your child well fill out a milestone checklist, too.
- If you can, take another adult with you to play with your child so you can better focus on what the doctor says.

2 Ask all of your questions during the visit; you know your child best and your concerns are important!

- Tell the doctor you have concerns at the start of the visit and share the milestones checklist and any questions you might have written down.
- If the doctor seems to be in a hurry, ask if you should schedule another visit.
- Ask about your child's most recent developmental screening results. If a screening has not been done, ask for one. For information about developmental screening, go to www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.
- Take notes to help you remember what the doctor says and what to do next.

3 Make sure you understand what the doctor says and what to do next.

- Before you leave, make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- Review your notes and ask the doctor, nurse or office staff for any information you will need to do what the doctor has told you. For example, "What is the phone number for my local early intervention program?"
- When you get home, review your notes and call the doctor's office if you have any questions.
- Take the steps the doctor has told you and remember to follow up with the doctor about how it went.

www.cdc.gov/ActEarly | 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

You Know Your Child Best

Remember, acting early on concerns is the best way to help your child.

If your doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with another doctor to get a second opinion

— AND —

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.

If your child is under age 3:

Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at www.cdc.gov/FindEI.

If your child is age 3 or older:

Call any local public elementary school.

For more on how to help your child, visit www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait.

Acting early can make a real difference!

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