# Developmental and Social-Emotional Screening and Surveillance in Early Childhood

## CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Developmental and social-emotional screening is strongly recommended at the intervals listed below. Developmental and social-emotional surveillance is required at every C&TC visit.

## C&TC standards

### General

Developmental and social-emotional surveillance is required at all C&TC visits.

Routine and periodic screening using a recommended standardized instrument is strongly recommended.

- **Perform developmental screening** at ages 9, 18, and 30 months and once between 3 and 5 years.
- **Perform social-emotional screening** beginning at age 6 months, continuing every 6 months through 2 years, then yearly.

Refer to the C&TC Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening fact sheet.

### Personnel

Screening personnel qualifications are instrument-specific; refer to each instrument's instruction manual for more information.

A licensed health care provider must perform surveillance, interpret all screening results, and ensure appropriate follow-up: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or a registered or public health nurse (RN or PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

### Documentation

Document developmental surveillance findings and results of screening(s) in the child's medical record. Documentation must include the name of the screening instrument(s) used, score(s), and screening result-specific anticipatory guidance provided to the parent or caregiver. Documentation of atypical screening results must include a plan of care and appropriate referrals.

Refer to the documentation forms on the C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources webpage for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

## Procedure

### Surveillance

Surveillance includes obtaining parent or caregiver concerns about development, a history of the child's developmental, social-emotional, and current functioning, making accurate observations of the child's development, identifying risk and

protective factors, and accurately documenting findings.

## Screening instruments

Use separate instruments for developmental and social-emotional screening. Refer to Instruments at a Glance for C&TC Clinic Settings.

## Referral and management

Review the screening results with the child's parent or caregiver. When concerns are identified, prompt referral, evaluation, and treatment can improve a child's long-term outcomes and developmental path.

### Comprehensive medical evaluation

A comprehensive medical evaluation performed by the primary care provider helps determine further developmental evaluation, treatment, eligibility, and necessity for early intervention services.

### Educational evaluation

Refer either directly to the local school district or through Help Me Grow *as soon as concerns are identified.*

### Mental health evaluation

Refer to the map of Early Childhood Mental Health Grants by county or Early Childhood Mental Health Providers to find local providers.

## Follow-up

Establish a follow-up process with the family after referral to ensure access to services. With the parent's permission, coordinate with educational and other professionals. Refer to Sharing Child Information to Coordinate Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Referrals (PDF).

Consider sharing additional parenting support, early childhood, and community program resources from Help Me Connect with the family.

# Professional recommendations

## American Academy of Pediatrics

Provide developmental and social-emotional surveillance at every well visit; provide screenings using standardized instruments at specific ages and whenever surveillance demonstrates risk (Weitzman et al., 2025).

# Resources

## Minnesota Department of Human Services

- C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards
- Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) Provider Manual - C&TC Section

## Minnesota Department of Health

- Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC)
- C&TC Developmental and Social-Emotional Screening in the Clinic Setting
- Follow Along Program

## Other resources

- Early Childhood Screening
- Learn the Signs. Act Early.

## For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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## Resource links

- C&TC Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening Fact Sheet (www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/ctc/autismscreen.pdf)
- C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources (https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources)
- Instruments at a Glance for C&TC Clinic Settings (www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childrenyouth/ctc/devscreenctc.pdf)
- Help Me Grow (https://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/Refer/index.html)
- Map of Early Childhood Mental Health Grants by county (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5448D-ENG)
- Early Childhood Mental Health Providers (https://helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect/Search/FamilyWell-BeingandMentalHealth/MentalHealthorSubstanceUseDisorder/EarlyChildhoodMentalHealthProviders?loc=&geo=)
- Sharing Child Information to Coordinate Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Referrals (PDF) (https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childrenyouth/ctc/devscreen/ecserefer.pdf)
- Help Me Connect (https://helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect)
- C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
- Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) Provider Manual - C&TC Section (www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
- Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) (www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
- C&TC Developmental and Social-Emotional Screening in the Clinic Setting (www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/ctc/devscreenctc.html)
- Follow Along Program (https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/fap/index.html)Follow Along Program
- Early Childhood Screening (https://dcyf.mn.gov/programs-directory/early-childhood-screening)
- Learn the Signs. Act Early. (https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/index.html)

## References

Weitzman, C., Guevara, J., Curtin, M., Macias, M., AAP Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, AAP Council on Early Childhood, AAP Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, & Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (2025). Promoting optimal development: Screening for mental health, emotional, and behavioral problems: Clinical report. *Pediatrics 156*(3). https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2025-073172