



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Outcomes of Developmental Health Initiative on Early Identification of Developmental Delay in Young Children

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Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this session, participants will improve their competence and performance by being able to:

1. Identify importance of early detection of developmental delays
2. Illustrate awareness of developmental monitoring tools available
3. Identify important outcomes associated with early identification



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Did You Know?

About **1 in 6** children aged 3-17 years old had a developmental delay, disorder, or disability (DD)

About **1 in 36** children has autism spectrum disorder; however diagnosis is often not until after age 4 years



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According to the most recent Census Bureau and IDEA Data, the percentage of children under 3 receiving state early intervention services and rank among the 50 states...

- New Mexico 7.86% (3rd)
- Kansas: 5.08%, (11th)
- Texas: 2.66% (40th)
- **Oklahoma: 1.58%, (48th)**
- Arkansas 1.14% (50th)

National Average: 3.66%



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Early Identification of Children with DD

- Early identification leads to early intervention
- Improves developmental skills avoiding secondary delays
- Empowers families to seek services



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Barriers to Early Identification

- Infrequent contact with health care providers
- Insufficient routine developmental screening
- Lack of coordination between early childhood systems
- Inconsistent referral practices and eligibility criteria
- “Wait and see” approach



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Developmental “Milestones”

- Behaviors that most children can do by a certain age
- Act as a marker along the course of typical development
- Note how children play, learn, speak and act at a certain age

Welcome to *Milestones in Action* - a FREE library of photos and videos of developmental milestones.



2 months



4 months



6 months



9 months



1 year



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Utility of Developmental Milestones

- Empower families to support their child's development and growth
- Advocate for screening and services (if needed)
- Prevent parents from doubting parenting abilities
- Avoid unrealistic expectations of child behavior (parents and providers)



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“Strong family engagement is central in promoting children's healthy development and wellness.”

USDHHS, Early Childhood Development



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Developmental Monitoring is one part of developmental surveillance.

Family-Engaged Developmental Monitoring

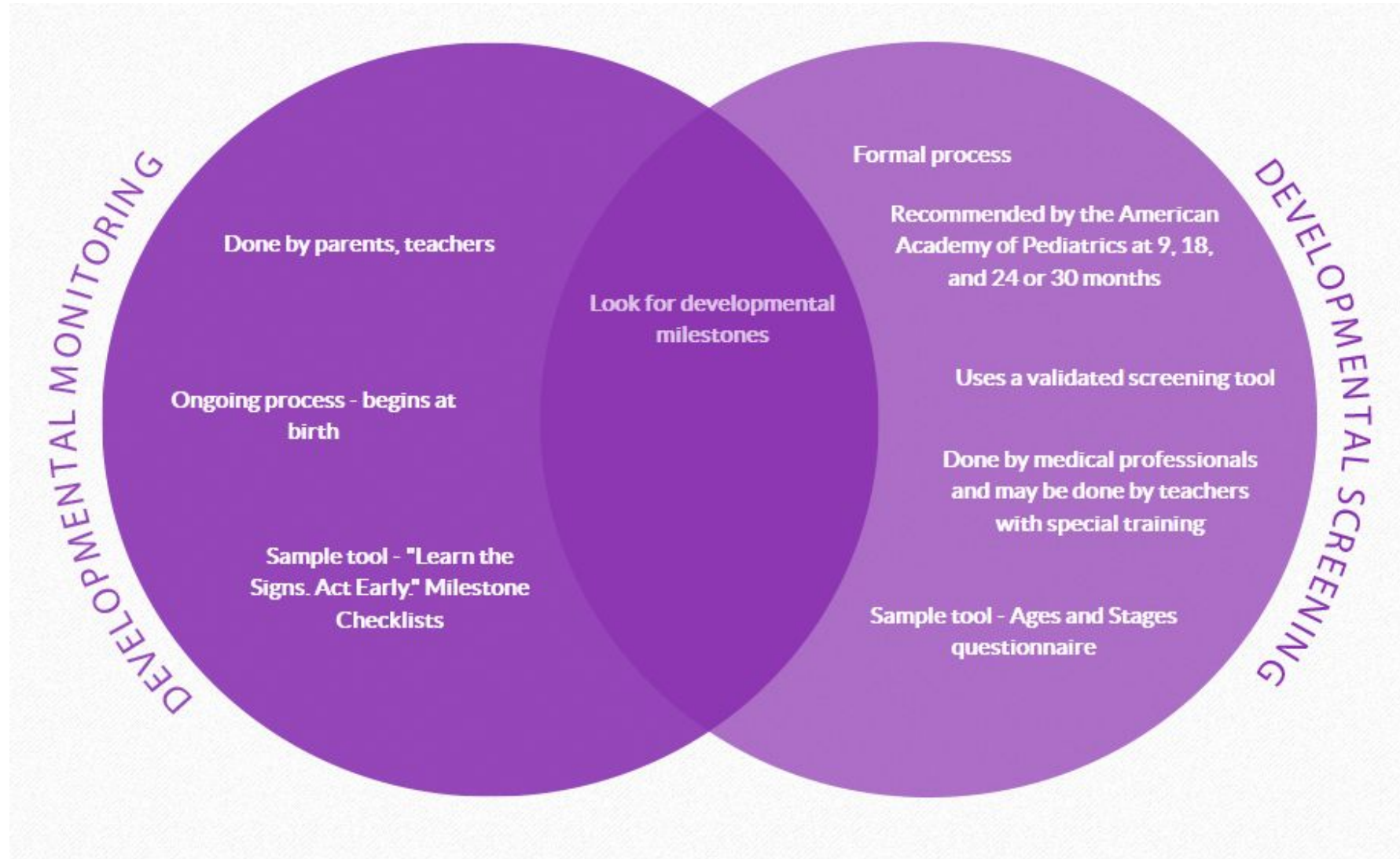
- Sharing information with parents about development
- Talking to the family about their child's development
- Asking parents if they have concerns



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Monitoring vs. Screening





Who Can Conduct Developmental Monitoring?

- Anyone can monitor a child's development (*e.g., parents, early care education and healthcare providers*)
- Does not require special training
- On-going and informal process



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Tools You Can Use To Perform Developmental Monitoring



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CDC's
*Learn the Signs.
Act Early.*



- Health promotion program to improve early identification of developmental concerns
- Promotes parent and professional partnerships to improve screening and referral
- Materials are free and customizable



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Example of Milestone Checklists

Your baby at 9 months*



Baby's Name _____ Baby's Age _____ Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your baby plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your baby has reached by 9 months. Take this with you and talk with your baby's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your baby has reached and what to expect next.

What most babies do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Is shy, clingy, or fearful around strangers
- Shows several facial expressions, like happy, sad, angry, and surprised
- Looks when you call her name
- Reacts when you leave (looks, reaches for you, or cries)
- Smiles or laughs when you play peek-a-boo

Language/Communication Milestones

- Makes different sounds like "mamamama" and "babababa"
- Lifts arms up to be picked up

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Looks for objects when dropped out of sight (like his spoon or toy)
- Bangs two things together

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Gets to a sitting position by herself
- Moves things from one hand to her other hand
- Uses fingers to "rake" food towards himself
- Sits without support

*** It's time for developmental screening!**
At 9 months, your baby is due for general developmental screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your baby's developmental screening.

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your baby do together?
- What are some things your baby likes to do?
- Is there anything your baby does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your baby lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your baby have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

You know your baby best. Don't wait. If your baby is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your baby's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening. If you or the doctor are still concerned:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your baby more; and
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your baby can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

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

- Checklists for ages 2 months through 5 years
- Milestones across 4 areas of development
- Help identify causes for celebration or concern

Don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference!



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How to Use Checklists

Your baby at 9 months*

Baby's Name _____

Baby's Age _____

Today's Date _____

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Cognitive Milestones

- (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**
- Looks for objects when dropped out of sight (like his spoon or toy)
- Bangs two things together

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Is shy, clingy, or fearful around strangers
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- Track all year
- Pay attention to how each child is meeting milestones
- Mark the checklist accordingly



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CDC's Amazing Books for Children



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"Where is Bear? Is he in the tree?" asks Tiger.
"No," says Bird. "But I will help you find him."
"Great, Bird! I'll fly like you!" says Tiger.



MILESTONE MOMENT

By age 2, most children copy others, especially adults and other children.

Let's ask Frog if he sees Bear.
Frog lives in a pond.
Splash the water and call Frog.
Splash. Splash. "Frog! Frog!"



MILESTONE MOMENT

By age 2, most children follow two-step instructions.

Splash.
Splash.



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Milestone Tracker App

Help your child grow and thrive

Your child's early years are so very important. Tracking how your little one plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves helps you support their development.

Download CDC's free *Milestone Tracker* app to find fun and easy activities for each age.



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play



Track & Share Milestones



Get Tips & Activities



Learn When to Act Early

Learn more at cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker



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Learn the Signs. Act Early. Integration ideas



- Have providers install the Milestones Track App so they are able to demo for parents
- Customize LTSAE materials and integrate into family visits/conferences
- Celebrate milestones achieved



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*Learn the Signs.
Act Early.
materials are
accessible and
easy to use*

- They are free
- Available in English and Spanish as well as other languages.
- Colorful and engaging
- Written in plain language that is accessible to families



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Fact Sheets

Tips for Talking with Parents about Developmental Concerns



TIPS	EXAMPLES
Always:	
<p>Talk about development regularly Talk with parents regularly about their child's development – not only at times of concern – and provide them with resources so they can track milestones at home.</p>	<p>I am so happy to be Taylor's new teacher! I care a lot about making sure all my children are on track in terms of how they play, learn, speak, act, and move for their age, so I will be looking for and tracking Taylor's developmental milestones and sharing his progress with you regularly. It would be great if you would look for milestones at home, too, and let me know what you're seeing as well. I have some free milestone checklists that can help.</p>
<p>Share resources Encourage families to use milestone checklists or the Milestone Moments booklet to monitor their child's development at home. Find these free resources here: www.cdc.gov/Milestones</p>	<p>A great way to monitor Taylor's developmental milestones is with these checklists. They can help you understand typical milestones he should be reaching for his age and those to look for as he gets older. You can place them on the refrigerator for quick and easy reference throughout the day.</p>
<p>Use good listening skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen closely, make eye contact, nod when appropriate, and be silent when the parent is speaking Repeat the parent's main points when you respond so he or she will know you heard and understood Consider how the parent feels about what he or she is saying Watch and listen closely for clues to those feelings and acknowledge them when you respond Probe for more information when necessary 	<p>It sounds like you are pretty worried and I hear you saying that you do not hear Taylor speak clearly at home. Is that correct? Let's talk about what you have noticed at home. Can you describe specific situations? Is there anything else about Taylor's development you'd like to talk about?</p>
When you have concerns to share:	
<p>Highlight the child's strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the parent know what the child does well and the milestones he or she is meeting Keep the conversation positive 	<p>We love having Taylor in class. He follows the classroom rules and really loves to sing, dance, and act during our circle time.</p>
<p>Make sure you are well prepared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest time in building meaningful relationships with the parents and discuss developmental progress regularly Complete a milestone checklist for the child's age to help the parent know that you are basing your comments on facts and not just feelings 	<p>Since our last meeting, I have noticed a few things about Taylor that I would like to discuss with you. I've been completing a milestone checklist for him, like I do for all the children, and I see he is meeting his cognitive milestones very well. However, he is not meeting a few of his language/communication milestones. For one, I have noticed that Taylor doesn't speak clearly enough for most people to understand. As you can see on the checklist, a five-year-old typically speaks clearly.</p>
<p>Encourage the parent to share any concerns with the child's doctor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember it's not your role to make or even suggest a diagnosis Remind parents of the importance of acting early on concerns 	<p>There might not be anything to be concerned about, but I do think it's important to talk to Taylor's doctor about this in the next few weeks to be sure. Take this checklist with you when you go, share it, and ask the doctor for a developmental screening. This will help the doctor and you to know whether Taylor might need a little extra help. Getting help early can make a big difference! Let me know if you need anything from me for that doctor's appointment.</p>
<p>Follow-up with the family in a few weeks</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to meet with me again. I know the last time we talked about Taylor's development, we were concerned about his language skills. Have you been able to talk with Taylor's doctor about this?</p>

- *Tips for Talking With Parents*
 - Ideas about how to start conversation with parents if concerned
- *Developmental Screening*
 - What it is and why it is important
- *Condition-specific fact sheets*



LTSAE Impact

- January 2023 YTD (Jan-Aug) US states and Territories
 - Milestone Tracker App (Launches)
754,538
 - Milestone Tracker App (Downloads)
223,547
 - Watch Me! Training Completions
18,764



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Integration and Customization

- LTSAE integration ideas
 - Dedicated LTSAE landing page on website
 - “Watch Me.” Training for all new staff members
 - Complete milestone checklists with families at least 2 times a year
 - Customize materials to distribute in the community (agency name and contact information).



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What Does Integration Look Like?



LEARN THE SIGNS. ACT EARLY.

With Crossroads Youth & Family Services

As a parent, you already have what it takes to help your young child learn and grow. Watch your child's amazing progress by tracking his or her developmental milestones —how he or she plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves – and sharing that progress with your child's doctor, teachers, and other early childhood professionals. Acting early on developmental concerns can make a real difference for your child and you! If you're concerned about your child's development, don't wait. You know your child best.

Crossroads Youth and Family Services Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are proud partners of the CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program, which encourages parents and providers to learn the signs of healthy development, monitor every child's early development, and act early when there is a concern.

HOW CROSSROADS YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES CAN HELP

Head Start and Early Head Start



As part of our Head Start and Early Head Start Programs children receive a quality early learning experience from our staff of early childhood professionals who work to ensure the best developmental environment and opportunities.

[More Info and Enroll](#)

Family Partnerships



We believe in strong partnerships with our families. This includes regular parent teacher conferences which all include a review and discussion of your child's developmental milestones as well as regular developmental screening.

[More Info](#)

MORE FROM *LEARN THE SIGNS. ACT EARLY*

Milestone Checklists



Complete a milestone checklist

Milestones in Action



See photo and video examples of important developmental



Pilot Details

- 7 Head Start/Early Head Start sites at Crossroads Youth and Family Services
- All staff, including Teachers, Center Directors, cooks, Family Advocates, and support staff at those 7 sites completed the online Watch Me training. This was a required training for all teacher prior to the scheduled parent/teacher conferences.
- All families of children at the pilot sights were sent Milestones checklist prior to their child's Parent Teacher Conference and teachers reviewed and/or help parents complete the checklist as part of the conference.
- Families were also given information regarding the Milestones App and were encouraged to download and use it.



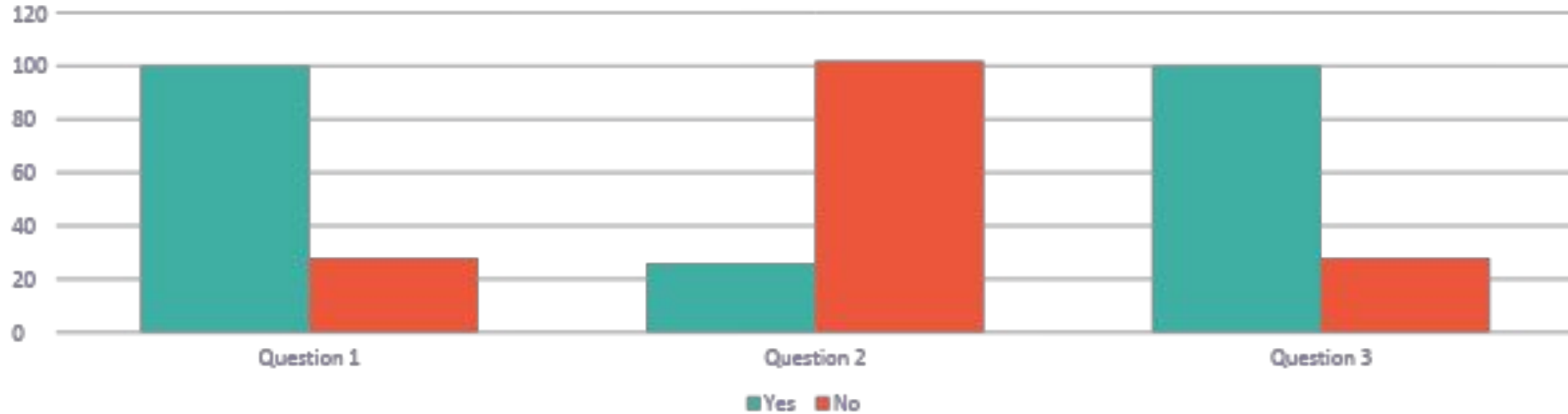
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Learn The Signs, Act Early Pilot

Parent Survey, Crossroads Head Start/Early Head Start

Parent Survey



Question 1: Did you complete the developmental checklist provided to you? Either on paper or in the App?

Question 2: Did you download the Learn the Signs, Act Early App to your phone?

Question 3: Did you find the developmental checklist helpful in understanding your child's development and becoming more knowledgeable of developmental milestones of young children?

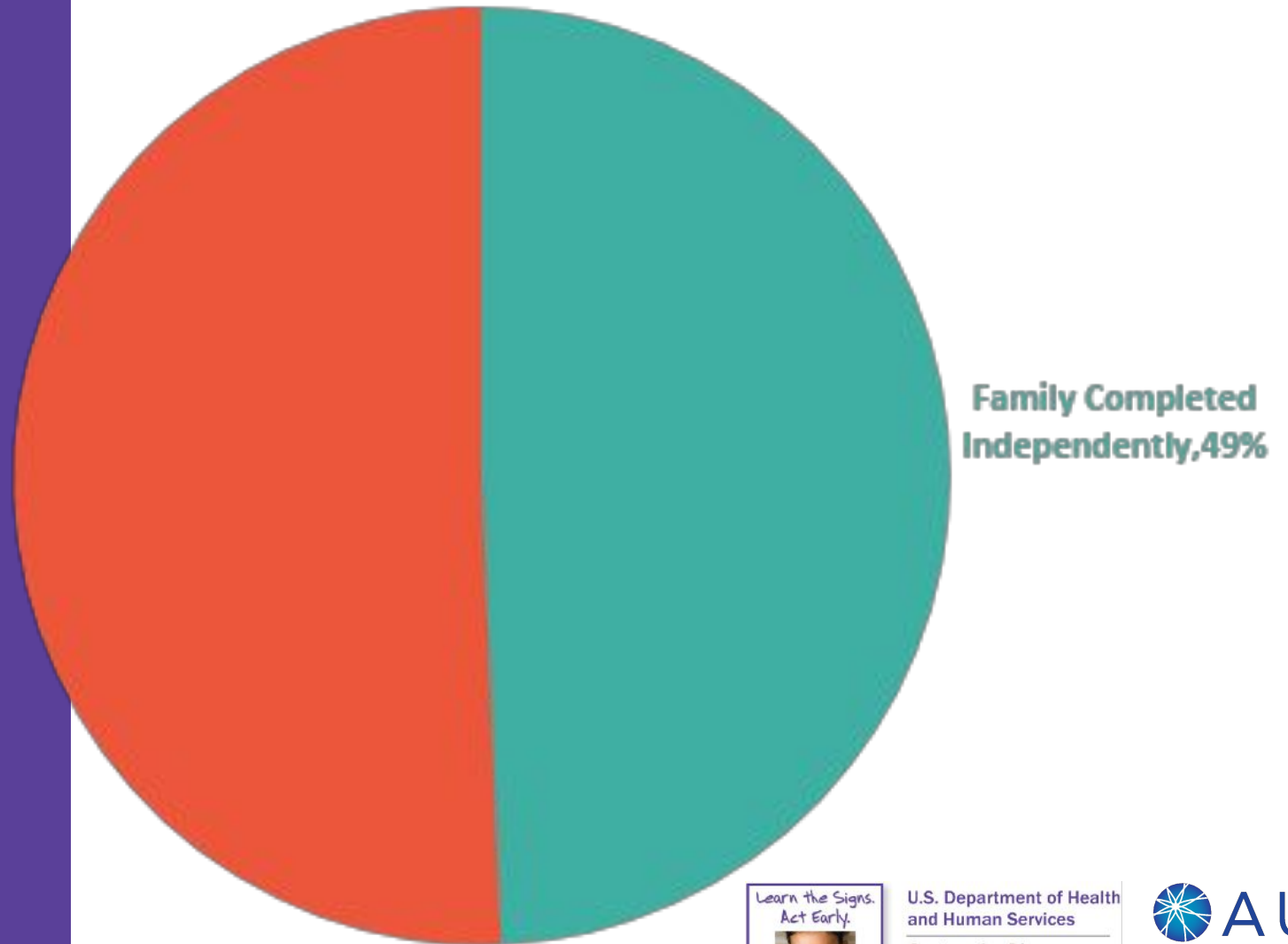


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Teacher Survey

Completion of Milestones checklist



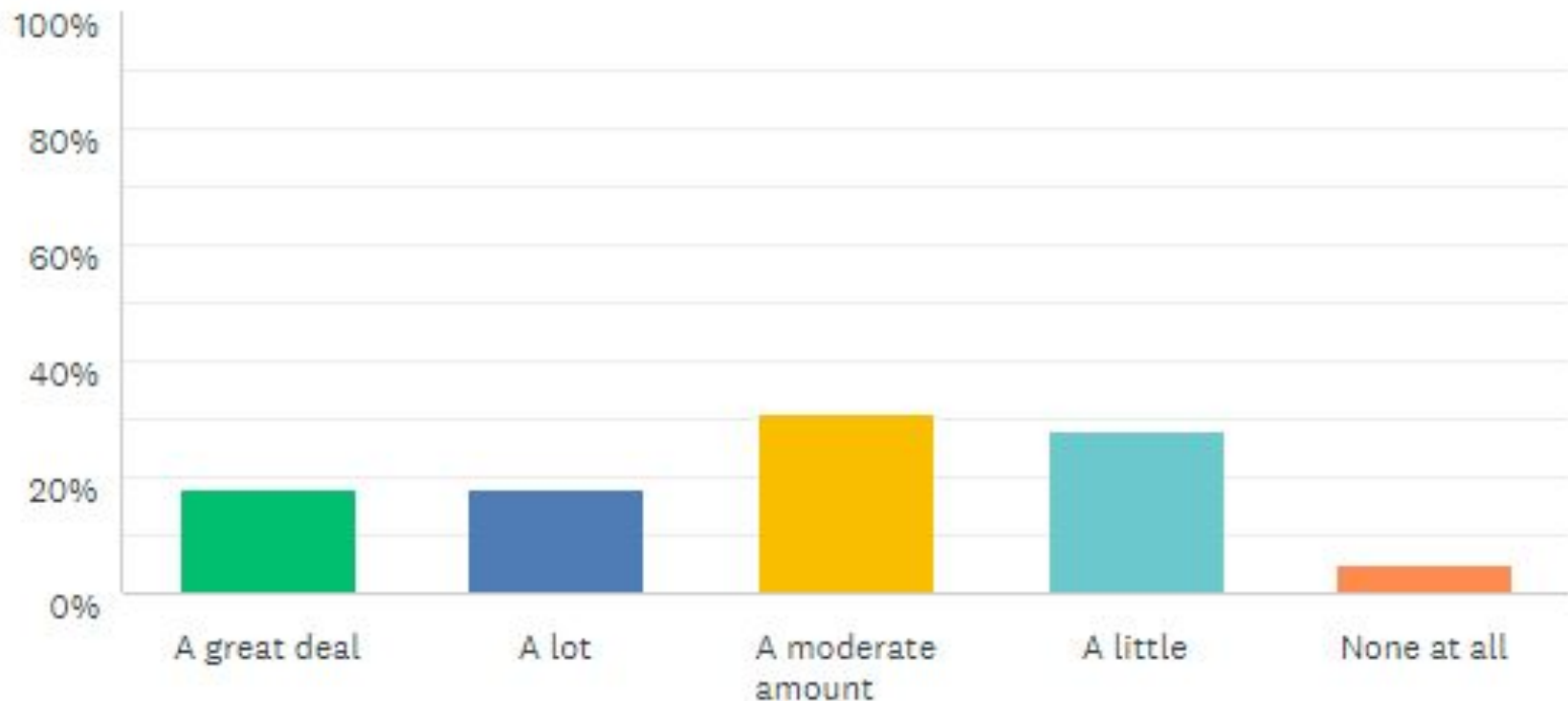
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Teacher Survey

To what degree did the checklist assist you in talking with the family about their child's development?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



Teacher Survey

- 95% of teachers said using the checklists was manageable for them and that they were likely to continue using them
- 69% of teachers reported identifying missed milestones or possible delays while using the checklists.
- 76% of teachers discussed the Milestones app with families



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Integration Sustainability

:

- Over one year later, Crossroads YFS had expanded LSTAE integration to all of their counties and HS/EHS sites and had improved impacts:
 - Teachers had 98% participation to filling out milestones for students.
 - Parents had overall 70% participation in completing milestones checklist.



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When Concerns Are Identified

And a child is under the age of three.....

- Family contact their state's public early intervention program (IDEA Part C) for assessment and intervention services.

Once a child turns the age of 3.....

- Parent contact their local public school for further assessment and to determine eligibility for special services.
- Services are provided to eligible children



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Next steps to getting a child identified

- Autism Screening – to determine *if a child is at risk for having autism*. Brief questionnaire with parent, and observation/interaction with child to assess need for further evaluation
- Diagnostic Evaluation – to determine *if a child has autism and/or associated conditions*. More in-depth, comprehensive testing by the public school, or a specifically trained/licensed clinician.



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New Projects using LTSAE in Oklahoma

- Early Access Program (OUHSC & Oklahoma Autism Center)
 - Preschool Development Grant/OPSR
- Early Access Program (OUHSC & Oklahoma Autism Center)
 - “Early Care Connections” Funded by Clearinghouse/OPSR



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2. Boyle CA, Boulet S, Schieve LA et al. Trends in the prevalence of developmental disabilities in U.S. children, 1997-2008. *Pediatrics* 2011;127:1034-42
3. Zubler, J. M., Wiggins, L. D., Macias, M. M., Whitaker, T. M., Shaw, J. S., Squires, J. K., Pajek, J. A., Wolf, R. B., Slaughter, K. S., Broughton, A. S., Gerndt, K. L., Mlodoch, B. J., & Lipkin, P. H. (2022). Evidence-Informed Milestones for Developmental Surveillance Tools. *Pediatrics*, 149(3), e2021052138.

