


# Promoting Developmental Monitoring and Referral Using the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Campaign!


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"I had not addressed child development much in PNCC visits until I received these booklets to share with moms. It is a good reminder to talk about this with moms."



"The materials prompt parents to ask questions that begin conversation from their end."



"It has helped the conversation with partners and parents."



"I feel better referring when the family is informed and comfortable with a referral concerning their baby's development."

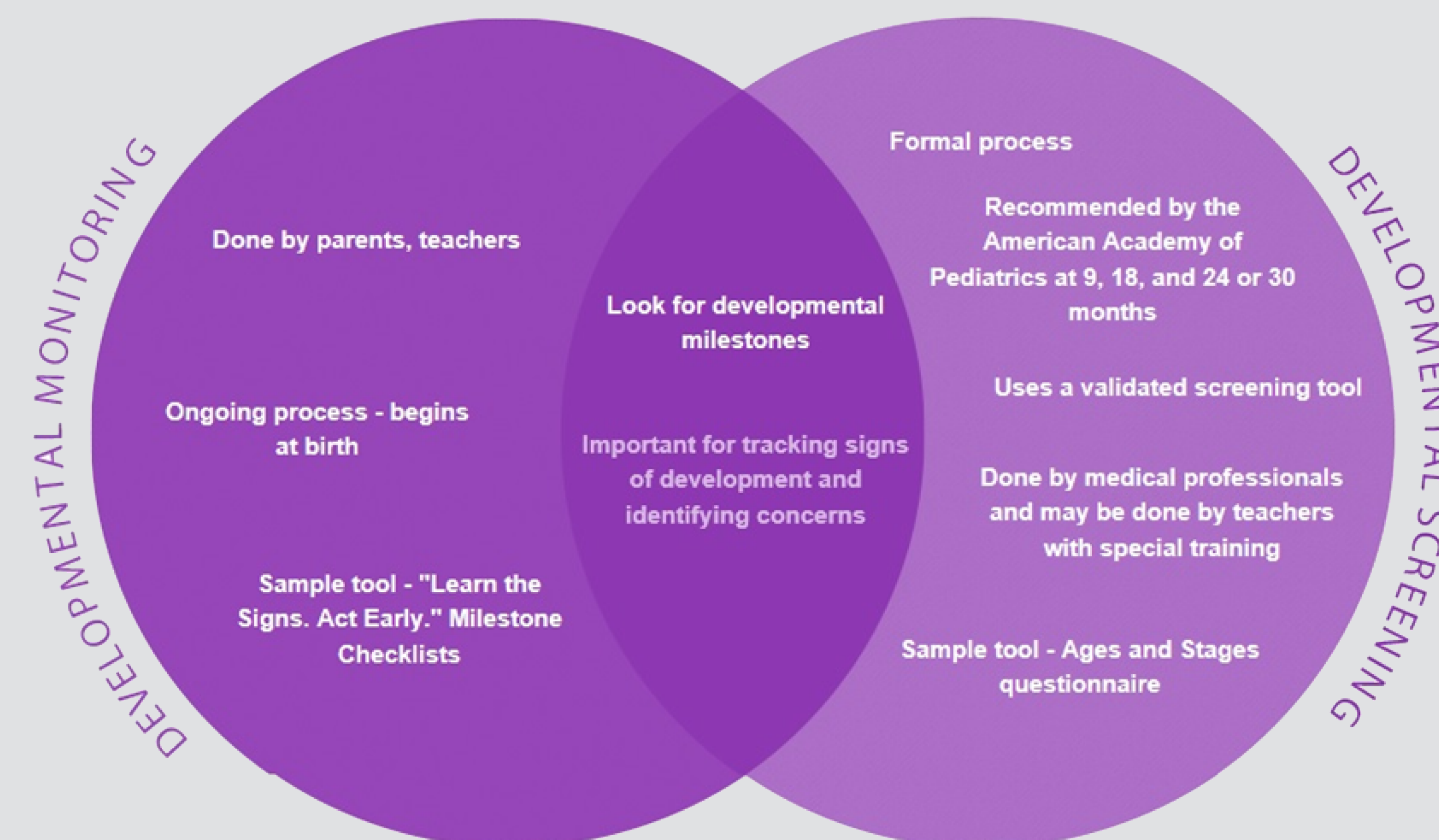
## Purpose: Beyond Identifying a Delay

CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." (LTSAE) campaign aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need.

- Its about:**
- Celebrating children's developmental milestones together
  - Promoting parent and provider knowledge about child development
  - Increasing parent-provider conversations about child development
  - Providing tools to discuss milestones in an objective way
  - Offering tips for positive ways to support child development
  - Creating opportunities for providers to work with families to support a child's development in the classroom, the community, and at home
  - Providing tools to monitor development over time
  - Training providers to be stronger observers of child development

## Need

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 1 in 68 children has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and 1 in 6 has a developmental disability of any type<sup>1</sup>
- Children with developmental problems are at increased risk for poor outcomes in many areas important to health, well-being, and success in life<sup>2</sup>
- The majority of children with developmental delays enter preschool and kindergarten without concerns having been identified or addressed through early intervention<sup>2</sup>
- ASD may be under-identified as early as 18 months<sup>3</sup>
- The mean age of ASD diagnosis is 53 months of age<sup>4</sup>



## Early Childhood Cross-Sector Systems



## Cross-Sector Collaboration

Early childhood is an important time to identify and intervene in developmental delays. Many children participate in early childhood care, education, or other services, but these occur in a cross-sector system made up of many types of professionals. Early childhood therefore presents a need as well as an opportunity to nurture cross-sector collaborations to meet that need.

The programs that touch children in the early years may include primary health care, childcare, Head Start/Early Head Start, early intervention (Part C), early childhood special education (Part B), home visiting, and other public health programs.

## Three States' Experiences

**Minnesota**  
 Created training webinars promoting to LTSAE outreach in culturally/linguistically diverse communities.

Recruited parent Act Early delegates from diverse communities (e.g. Somali, Hmong, Native America, Latino) to conduct outreach.

Customized Act Early materials for local diverse communities.

Media outreach including culturally focused radio stations, podcasts, YouTube videos in diverse languages.

MN-LEND and MN-ADDM outreach partnership.

**Virginia**  
 Integrated in existing pediatrician professional development activities

Collaborated with existing early childhood initiatives

- Including Head Start Collaboration Office, Home Visiting Consortium, Part C Administrators and Service Coordinators, Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

Expanded focus on "Birth to Five, Watch me Thrive!" initiative

- For example, encouraged use in various early childhood sectors

Supported use at local level

- For example, pilot communities for Autism Implementation Grant

Identified and supported local and state LTSAE champions

**Wisconsin**  
 Aligned language and messaging with cross-sector partners

- Agreed on terminology and messages to enable consistent outreach, to help partners work together and support parent understanding

Targeted program integration rather than dissemination

- Integrated in home visiting, prenatal care coordination, and statewide early childhood professional development

Established sustainable supply of materials

- Used UCEDD as fiscal agent for bulk group-funded printing

Customized all materials with state program information

- Created state website and used state phone numbers in materials

## References

1. CDC. (2012). "Prevalence of ASD—Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 14 sites, United States, 2008." MMWR Surveillance Summary. 61(3), 1-19.
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3. Lord, C. et al. (2006). "Autism from 2-9 years of age." Archives of General Psychiatry, 63(6), 694-701.
4. Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network Surveillance Year 2008 Principal Investigators; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). "Prevalence of autism spectrum disorders—Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, United States, 2008." MMWR Surveillance Summary. 61(55-3).

