CDC’s
“Learn the Signs. Act Early.”
Campaign

October 30, 2009
Act Early Summit, Region IVb

Presented by:
Katie Green, MPH, CHES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
The “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign History

• 2002 Mandate from Congress
  …to establish a national awareness and education program that will widely disseminate information regarding autism identification and diagnosis to both families and health care providers as authorized by Sec. 103 of the Children’s Health Act of 2000. This program should be administered and piloted in partnership with voluntary organizations already working in the autism community.
The “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign History

- 2002 Mandate from Congress
- 2003 Communication Research Conducted
- 2004 (early) Message/Materials Testing
- 2004 (late) Launch to Health Professionals
- 2005 Launch to Public/Parents
- 2006 Launch to Early Educators
- 2007 Hosted 1st “Act Early” Regional Summit
Communication Research

- Involved health care professionals, parents, and early educators
- 3 parts:
  - Formative research
  - Message and material testing
  - Baseline survey
- Altogether took >1 yr
Communication Research, cont’d

• Generated ideas
• Two important recommendations helped shape the campaign:
  – Avoid use of “autism”; take a broader approach
  – Focus on development
Strategic Approach

- Juxtaposition of familiar milestones with less familiar
- “It’s time to change how we view a child’s growth.”
Campaign Objectives

Parents of Young Children…
• Know that developmental milestones exist
• Know early warning signs of delay
• Monitor their child’s development
• Know the importance of acting early
• Initiate discussion with provider about development
• Are aware of campaign resources
Campaign Objectives

Health Professionals Who Serve Young Children…

• Initiate discussion with parent about development
• Are receptive to parental concern (and take action)
• Are aware of campaign resources
• Have and use campaign materials
Campaign Objectives

Early Educators/ Childcare Providers…

• Are aware of campaign resources
• Know that developmental milestones exist
• Know early warning signs of delay
• Have self-efficacy to talk with parents about development
• Aid in monitoring development
The Messages

“Early identification is key”
“The earlier a delay is recognized the more can be done to help”
“You know your child best”
“Milestones monitor more than just the physical—how a child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about his development”
“Most delays are not outgrown, with help a child can reach her full potential”
Parents are the Primary Target Audience

- HCP materials speak to parents
- EE materials are about talking to parents
- “You know your child best.”
Campaign Partners: Collaborators in Campaign Development

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Partners: Collaborators in Campaign Implementation

- HRSA/Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- Association for University Centers on Disabilities
- Act Early Summit State Teams
- Easter Seals
- The Commonwealth Fund
- Cooperative Extension Program
- Early Head Start/Zero to Three
- Indian Head Start
- National Association of Child Care Resource Agencies
Partners: Collaborators in Campaign Implementation, cont’d

• National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Centers
• Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs
• Society for Developmental Pediatrics
• National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
• Society of Physician Assistants in Pediatrics
• National Association of Community Health Centers
• National Rural Health Association
• … and many more!
Campaign Materials

Educational
- Print
- Web

Promotional
- Print
- TV/Radio
- Web

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Educational Resources: Print

FREE Resource Kits
– Health Professionals
– Parents
– Early Educators
– Outreach

www.cdc.gov/actearly

click on “Free Materials”
Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Spanish-Language Information

- Resource kits (all materials double-sided with English on one side, Spanish on the other)
- Website – www.cdc.gov/pronto
- 1-800-CDC-INFO
Educational: Web

- Printable Milestones Checklist
- Interactive Milestones Chart
- “Baby Steps” Video
- “If You’re Concerned…”
- ECard
- Positive Parenting Tips
Educational: Web, cont’d

• Health Professional Resources (M-CHAT, coding for reimbursement, etc)
• “Go Out & Play! Kit” for Early Educators
• Website Linking Instructions
• Campaign Connections
• Ideas for Getting Involved
Promotional: PSAs for Print, TV, Radio

- Print
- Television (30-second; English only)
- Radio (60-second; Eng & Span)
Other Promotional Materials:

- Banner Ads
- Exhibit Tools
- Milestone Fun Facts

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Reaching Our Target Audiences

- Placement
- Presence
- Partnership
- Provision
Placement

Parents

Health Professionals

Early Educators

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Partnership

Parents

Health Professionals

Early Educators

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Provision

Parents

Health Professionals

Early Educators

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Unique Opportunities

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Other Notable Activities

• Autism Awareness Month Activities & Challenges
• Campaign Connections & Champion Spotlights
• Exhibit at Hispanic Health Fairs
• Promotora Training
• Children’s Book Production and Library Tour
• And more…
Accomplishments

2007- (mid) 2009

• Received requests for and distributed:
  – ~35,000 parent kits
  – ~27,000 early educator kits
  – ~20,000 HCP kits
• Recorded 30,000 web downloads
• Averaged ~20,000 homepage visits per month
• Conducted 35 presentations to HCPs
Health Communication Campaign: One of a 3-Pronged Approach

1. “Learn the Signs. Act Early.”
   Increase awareness, knowledge, and desired behaviors

2. “Act Early” Regional Summits
   Facilitate communication/coordination among systems that identify, intervene, and care for children with developmental disabilities

3. Research & Evaluation
   Identify areas for strengthening and test innovative strategies for campaign implementation

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/actearly
Early Findings…Among Those Who Have Heard of the Campaign

Pediatricians*
• believe autism can be diagnosed as early as age 18 months
• regularly screen for developmental delays
• less likely to “wait and see”

Parents*
• know the developmental milestones their child should be reaching for his/her age
• ask the nurse or doctor for information about child development
• talk with their child’s teacher about their child’s development
• feel confident that they can find services to help

*Results are preliminary
Next Steps

• Revisit materials
  – General awareness has changed
  – Expand offered languages
• Evaluate how best to implement
Will Promoting “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Be Among Your State’s Priority Activities?
Getting Campaign Materials in Hand!

- Download and print yourself
- Web order form (2-4 weeks)
  - [http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/freematerials.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/freematerials.html)
  - rush request available, by email request only
- Bulk orders (more than max) by email request only
- Non-print? Email us

ActEarly@cdc.gov
Making the Materials Your Own

• Add your state’s/organization’s logo and contact information
• No problem- we can help!
• Requires resources for printing
Making the Materials Your Own

- Co-brand and customize for your efforts
  - You provide the information/logo
  - We drop it in and provide printer-ready files
  - You take files to local printer
- Important note: HHS and CDC logos become “words” on template materials
Making the Materials Your Own: Examples

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

As they grow, children are always learning new things. These are just some of the things you should be looking for in your child. Because every child develops at her own pace, your child may reach these milestones slightly before or after other children the same age. Use this as a guide, and if you have any concerns, talk with your child's doctor or nurse.

By the end of 7 months, many children are able to:
- turn head when name is called
- smile back at another person
- respond to sound with sounds
- enjoy social play (such as peek-a-boo)

By the end of 1 year (12 months), many children are able to:
- use simple gestures (turning "head-over"
- make sounds such as "no" and "bye"
- initiate actions in their play (e.g., when you clap)
Making the Materials Your Own: Who to Call

Contact
Katie Green KKGreen@cdc.gov
or
Anna Okula AOkula@porternovelli.com
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?
Campaign Resources: Web

- Printable Milestones Checklist, Interactive Milestones Chart, Baby Steps Video
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html

- If You’re Concerned…
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned.html


- Positive Parenting Tips
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/index.html

- Health Professional Resources (M-CHAT, Coding, etc)
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/hcp/index.html
Campaign Resources: Web

- “Go Out & Play! Kit” for Early Educators
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/partners/index.html

- Website Linking Instructions
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/about.html#get

- Campaign Connections
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/partners/partners-connections.html

- Ideas for Getting Involved
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/partners/partners-connections.html