

Early Childhood Developmental Screenings and Your Practice



Children who are treated early for developmental delays are more likely to be successful in school and life. As a health care provider, you have a critical role in ensuring timely screening for developmental delays.

As of January 1, 2020, there is new funding for California Medi-Cal providers to screen young children with a validated tool and according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) periodicity schedule.

The AAP recommends children be screened a minimum of three times before they turn 3.



- ✓ Developmental screenings at 9, 18, and 24/30 months
- ✓ Autism-specific screening at 18 and 24 months
- ✓ Surveillance (monitoring) at each well-child visit
- ✓ Referral for evaluation and early intervention services when a concern is identified

Providers can use developmental screenings to identify concerns early and ensure children are referred to supports that can help. Families report higher levels of satisfaction and support from providers who offer developmental screenings.

About 25–30% of problems

noted by parents during well-child visits are developmental and behavioral in nature.

Screenings continue to be covered under all health care plans under the category of preventive care. The new state incentive program, which pays \$59.90 per developmental screening to Medi-Cal providers, offers added value. Note that this incentive is set to sunset in 2021 unless there is legislation to extend it. More information on the screening incentive program is here: www.dhcs.ca.gov.

Medi-Cal providers can use CPT code 96110 when conducting a developmental screening to access the \$59.90 incentive payment. Learn more at www.dhcs.ca.gov.



Too often, developmental delays go undetected. In California:

1 in 4

children under age 6 is at



moderate- or high-risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delays.

Only 26%

of children in California receive timely developmental screenings



If a concern is detected upon screening, regardless of whether it meets the threshold for a delay, you can refer the family to their nearest Help Me Grow for help finding services: helpmegrowca.org/counties