



Learn the Signs. Act Early

# Introduction

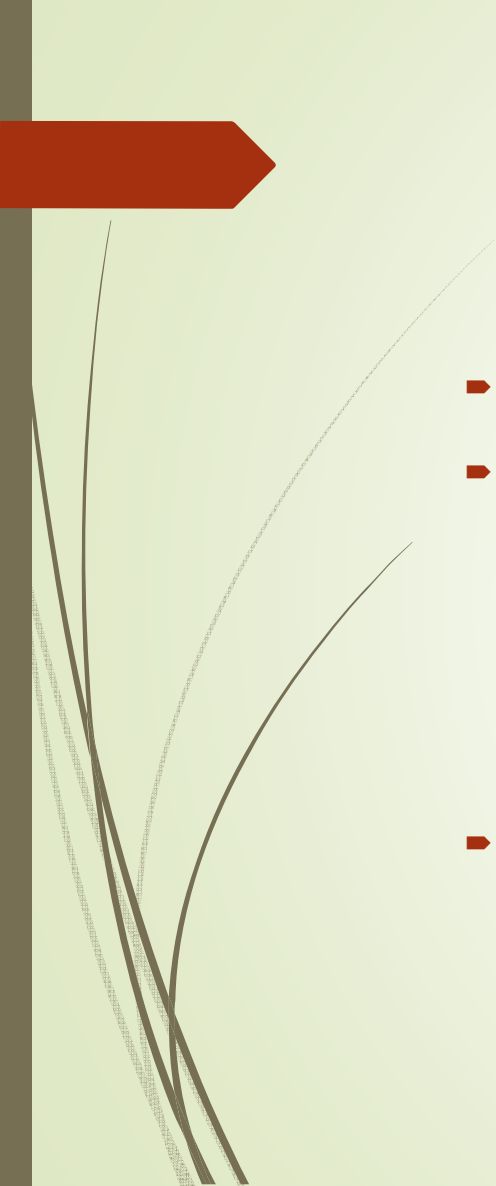




## Key Points:

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- The most important reason for monitoring each child's development is to determine if his or her development is on track
- Most children with developmental delays are not identified early enough to benefit from early intervention
- Early intervention can make a big difference in a child's development and ability to learn new skills
- If you monitor the development of each child in your care, you can help identify children early who may need early intervention
- Developmental monitoring and developmental screening are not the same thing; it's important to understand the difference
- You are in a perfect position to see and track how all children in your care play, learn, speak, act and move alongside others of their age
- It is never your role to make or suggest a diagnosis for any child
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free, easy-to-use, and interactive tools to help you look for and track developmental milestones

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- **Developmental monitoring is best done with an objective checklist of typical developmental milestones.**
  - Using milestone checklists in developmental monitoring will help you:
    - become a better observer of the development of children in your care;
    - better understand the developmental milestones children should reach at certain ages;
    - more easily pinpoint potential developmental concerns for a child;
    - have an objective basis to talk with parents when you are concerned about a child's development;
    - and be better prepared to conduct developmental screening with a more formal tool if that is asked of you.
  - Sharing milestone checklists with families and encouraging them to use them at home can also help parents become better observers of their own children's development. Using a checklist at home may confirm for families that their child is developing as he or she should, or it may give them the knowledge and self-confidence to talk with you about their concerns.

## Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns

[Watch Me! Home](#)

[Also Available in Spanish](#)

[Using this Course](#)

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**Resources**

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["Learn the Signs. Act Early."](#)

[Learn the Signs Home](#) > [Watch Me! Home](#)

### Resources



Language: [English \(US\)](#) 

### Child Development

**"Learn the Signs. Act Early"** [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

This website provides information and resources on developmental milestones, developmental monitoring, and acting early on concerns.

**Serving Young Infants – Sharing Knowledge with Infant-Toddler Teachers and Home Visitors**

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Curriculum/Teaching%20Strategies/SharingKnowledge.htm> 

This booklet describes development, security, and brain growth for infants from birth to 8 months. It was developed for Head Start Staff members who are working with teachers and home visitors.

**The Foundations for School Readiness: Fostering Developmental Competence in the Earliest Years, Technical Assistance Paper #6**

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/ECLKC\\_Bookstore/PDFs/TA6%5B1%5D.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/ECLKC_Bookstore/PDFs/TA6%5B1%5D.pdf)  

This paper explores the scientific knowledge base concerning the remarkable developmental tasks that occur in the first 5 years of life. It also illustrates the important role of early childhood programs in preparing children for school.

**What are "Behavioral Skills" in Infants and Toddlers? How Do We Screen Them?, Early Head Start Tip Sheet #27** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Individualization/Children%20With%20Challenging%20Behaviors/WhatAreBehavior.htm> 

This tip sheet provides information on understanding when infant and toddler behaviors are developmentally appropriate and when they are not.

**News You Can Use: Foundations of School Readiness: Physical Development and Health** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nvcu-foundations-sr-physical-dev-health.pdf>  

This article uses short stories to illustrate how physical development and health relate to school readiness.

**When Health Affects Assessment** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/physical-health/satf/WhenHealthAffec.htm> 

This fact sheet offers questions to consider about the impact of a child's health on assessment. It also includes a list of tools that programs use to improve child assessment strategies.

**Healthy Children Are Ready to Learn** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/physical-health/individual-wellness-plans/HealthyChildren.htm> 

### On This Page

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- [Developmental Monitoring and Screening](#)
- [Child Care Organizations](#)

**Head Start Center on Inclusion** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/Disabilities/staff%20support%20and%20supervision/orientation/headstartcenter.htm> ↗

The goal of the Head Start Center on Inclusion is to increase the competence and effectiveness of personnel in Head Start programs to include children with disabilities

## Developmental Monitoring and Screening

**"Learn the Signs. Act Early"** [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

This website provides information and resources on developmental milestones, developmental monitoring, and acting early on concerns.

**Birth To Five: Watch Me Thrive!** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/watch-me-thrive> ↗

This website contains information and resources on child development and developmental and behavioral screening.

**Developmental Monitoring and Screening** <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html>

This webpage includes information on developmental monitoring and screening.

**National Center on Health** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/mental-health/mental-health.html> ↗

This website contains information on screening and assessment of children's social and emotional development within Head Start settings.

**How Screening and Assessment Practices Support Quality Disabilities Services in Head Start** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Screening/ScreeningandAss.htm/How%20Screening%20and%20Assessment%20Practices%20Support%20Quality%20Disabilities%20Services%20in%20Head%20Start.htm> ↗

This article discusses the importance of using appropriate procedures, including consultation with content area experts when providing screening and assessment services for children with disabilities in Head Start programs.

**Office of Child Care Technical Assistance Network: Infant/Toddler Development, Screening and Assessment** <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/infanttoddler-development-screening-and-assessment> ↗

This website provides information on infant/toddler development, screening and assessment.

**What is Screening (Revised), Early Head Start Tip Sheet #6** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/early-learning/disabilities/screening.htm> ↗

This tip sheet explains developmental screening for infants and toddlers.

**Healthy Child Care America: Developmental Screening** <http://www.healthychildcare.org/DevScr.html> ↗

This webpage consists of a list of resources on developmental screening

**Developmental Screening in Early Childhood Systems: Summary Report** <http://www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/DSECSreport.pdf> ↗

This document looks at why developmental screening is important and discusses common terms, tools, implementation and effectiveness. The importance of partnering with parents is also discussed.

## Child Care Organizations

**Child Care Aware** [www.usa.childcareaware.org](http://www.usa.childcareaware.org) ↗

Child Care Aware works with state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and other community partners to ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care.



# Materials



- ▶ **How to use CDC tools for developmental monitoring**
- ▶ Developmental monitoring can be easy and fun when you have the right tools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, through its “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” program, offers free, easy-to-use milestone checklists, and other materials to help.



▶ [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials)

## Milestone Checklists

Milestone Checklists are single-page lists of developmental milestones and warning signs of potential developmental delay for specific ages.

Features:

- Each checklist focuses on a specific age; 2 months through 5 years
- Includes information about when and how a parent should “act early” on concerns
- Easily printed and photocopied
- Available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Brazilian Portuguese with tips for developmental promotion on reverse

[VIEW AND PRINT CHECKLISTS NOW](#)

## Your Child at 2 Years



Child's Name	Child's Age	Today's Date
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How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 2nd birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

### What Most Children Do at this Age:

**Social/Emotional**

- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Gets excited when with other children
- Shows more and more independence
- Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

**Language/Communication**

- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation
- Points to things in a book

**Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**

- Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games
- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
  - Might use one hand more than the other
- Follows two-step instructions such as “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet.”
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

**Motor/Physical Development**

- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws ball overhand
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

### Act Early by Talking to Your Child's Doctor if Your Child:

- Doesn't use 2-word phrases (for example, “drink milk”)
- Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't follow simple instructions
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

**Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program. For more information, go to [www.cdc.gov/concerned](http://www.cdc.gov/concerned) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development and autism at the 24-month visit. Ask your child's doctor about your child's developmental screening.

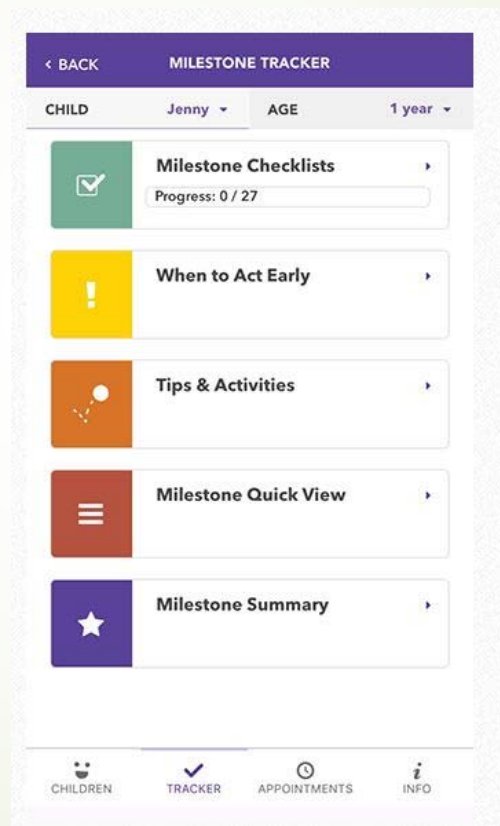
Adapted from CAREDS FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD, BIRTH TO AGE 5, 19th Edition, edited by Steven Shapiro and David Howell. Revised © 1991, 1994, 1996, 2004, 2005 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and GREAT FUTURE LEADERS FOR HEALTH SUPERVISORS OF INFANTS.

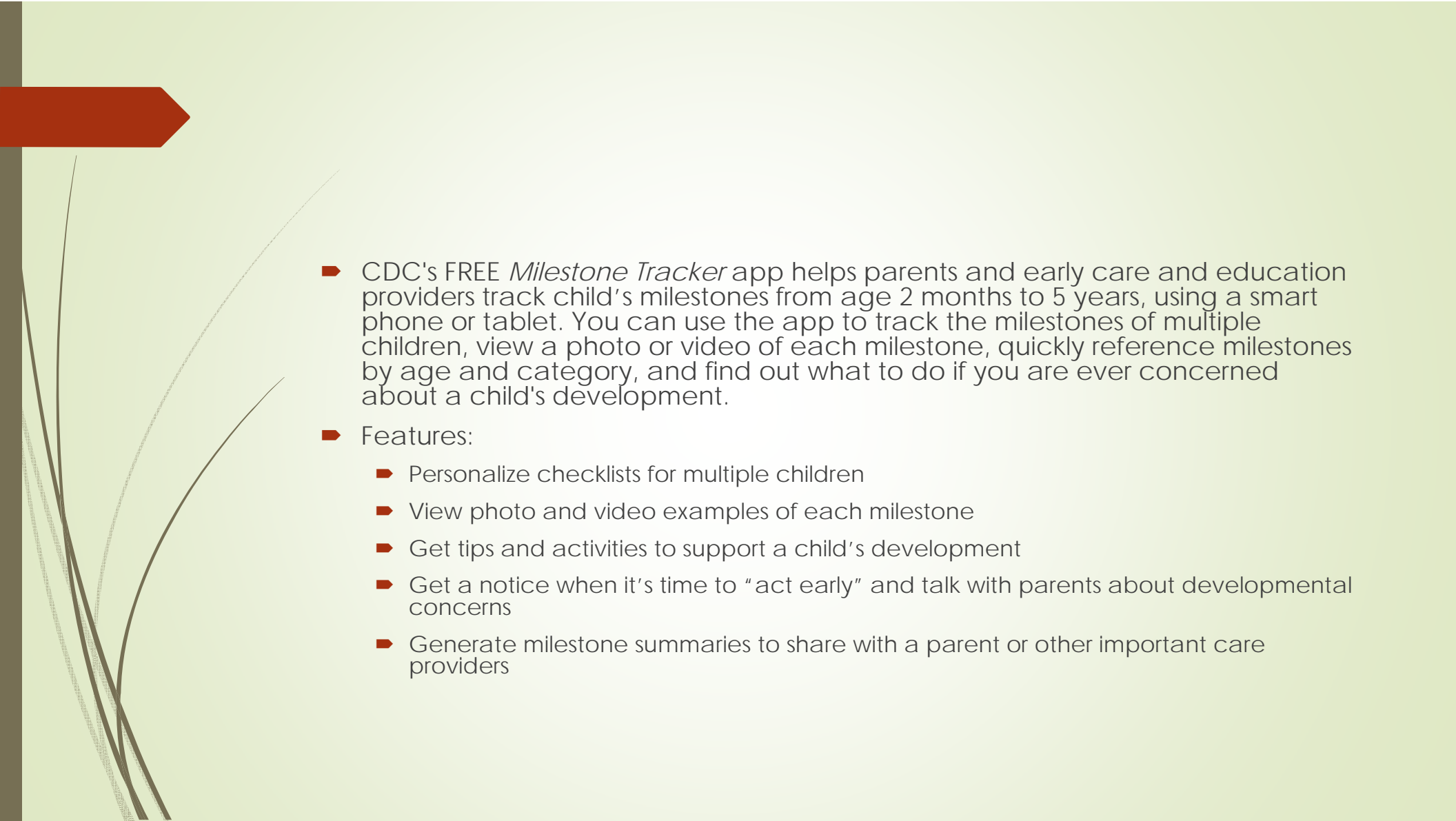


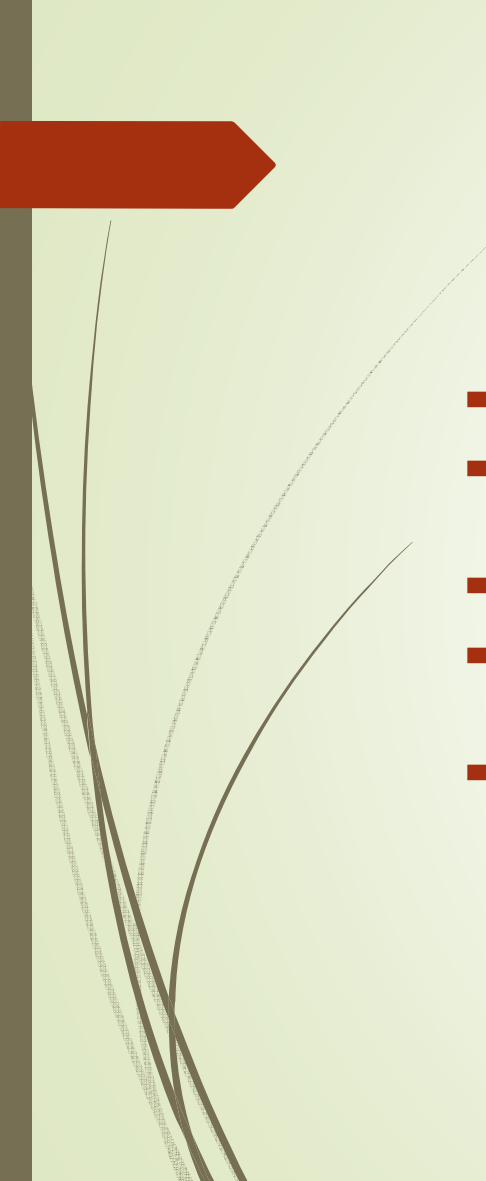
### ► **Tips for Using the Milestone Checklists**

- Print a copy of a checklist for every child at the start of the school year; every month, take time to update each child's checklist with the milestones he or she has reached
- Print a copy of a blank checklist for each child's family; let them know you'll be updating it each month and encourage them to do the same at home
- Review the latest checklists at every parent/teacher conference as a way to share the child's progress with the parents
- If a child is between two ages for which checklists are offered, use the checklist for the younger age (for example, use the 18-month checklist for a 20-month old child, NOT the 24-month checklist).

# Milestone App



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- ▶ CDC's FREE *Milestone Tracker* app helps parents and early care and education providers track child's milestones from age 2 months to 5 years, using a smart phone or tablet. You can use the app to track the milestones of multiple children, view a photo or video of each milestone, quickly reference milestones by age and category, and find out what to do if you are ever concerned about a child's development.
  - ▶ Features:
    - ▶ Personalize checklists for multiple children
    - ▶ View photo and video examples of each milestone
    - ▶ Get tips and activities to support a child's development
    - ▶ Get a notice when it's time to "act early" and talk with parents about developmental concerns
    - ▶ Generate milestone summaries to share with a parent or other important care providers

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- **Tips for Using *CDC's Milestone Tracker* app**
  - Post a link to the [\*Milestone Tracker\* webpage](#) on your organization's website
  - Post a [\*Milestone Tracker\* flyer](#) in your classroom or your center's front lobby
  - Encourage parents to download the app and use it to monitor their child's development
  - Use *CDC's Milestone Tracker* app and the milestone summary it generates to support observations and conversations with parents about age-appropriate milestones



# Booklet



- **Milestone Moments Booklet**
- The Milestone Moments Booklet is a 42-page mini-booklet that includes full milestone checklists from 2 months through 5 years of age, with milestones and warning signs for each age. It also includes age-appropriate activities that you can try in the classroom and parents can try at home to help their children learn and grow. This booklet is intended to be kept and used over time.
- Features:
  - High-quality resource to be kept and used over time to record a child's development
  - Suggests age-appropriate activities to help children learn and grow
  - Includes information about when and how a parent should "act early" on concerns
  - Available in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Korean
  - Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities





► **Tips for Using the Milestone Moments Booklet**

- Provide a copy to every family when their child enrolls; encourage families to use it at home (See end of this section to learn how to customize and print copies for every family)
- Try at least one of the suggested activities from the booklet as part of your in-classroom activities
- Include at least one of the suggested activities from the booklet in each edition of your monthly newsletter for parents to try at home



# Brochure



- ▶ **Milestones Brochure: Track Your Child's Developmental Milestones**
- ▶ The Milestones Brochure is a colorful and engaging trifold brochure that introduces a few key milestones for ages 6 months to 4 years and explains the importance of looking for milestones and acting early on concerns about development.
- ▶ Features:
  - ▶ A great introduction to the importance of developmental monitoring and acting early on concerns
  - ▶ Highlights a few key milestones for a variety of ages
  - ▶ Available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean
  - ▶ Easily printed and photocopied



### ► **Tips for Using the Milestones Brochure**

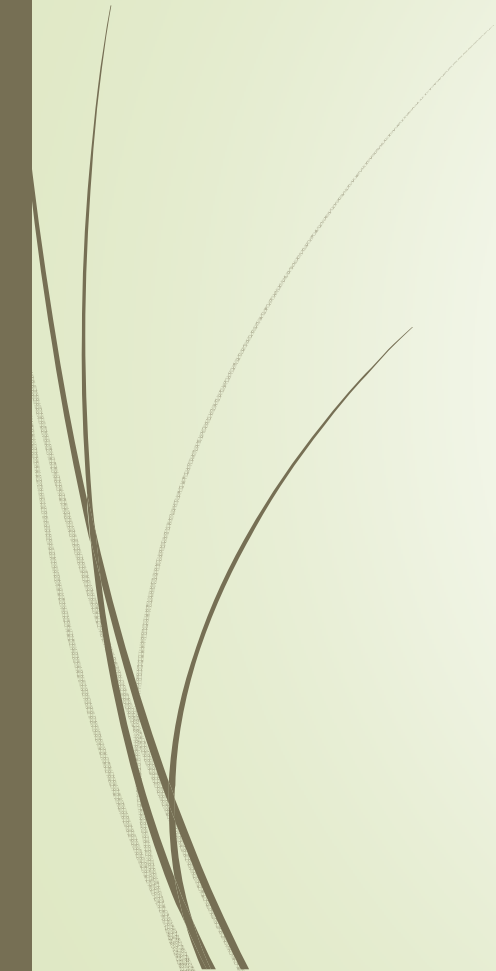
- Laminate a copy and post it to the bulletin board outside your classroom
- Include copies of the brochure in the parent resource center and in the lobby
- Post a link to the brochure on your center's website
- Post on the staff refrigerator as a friendly reminder to your coworkers of the importance of developmental monitoring



# Growth Chart



- ***Grow Up Healthy! Growth Chart***
- The *Grow Up Healthy! Growth Chart* is an engaging display for the classroom and a reminder to watch and record both physical AND developmental growth. It includes recommended immunizations by age and a sampling of milestones that children should reach by different ages.
- Features:
  - A useful reminder of the importance of tracking both physical and developmental growth
  - A nice, colorful addition to your classroom walls
  - Highlights recommended immunizations and a few key milestones at different ages
  - Available in English and Spanish
  - [Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities](#)



**¡Crece sano!**

**4-6 años**

**6 años**

Escucha y presta atención  
Tiene destreza para sujetar un lápiz  
Escribe algunos números y letras  
Puede pararse en un solo pie

**4 pies 2-3 año**

**2-3 años**

**4 feet 2-3 years**

**Grow Up Healthy!**

**4-6 years**

**6 years**

Listens and pays attention  
Has mature pencil grasp  
Prints some letters and numbers  
Balances on one foot

**5 years**

Wants to be like friends  
Speaks very clearly  
Tells a story using full sentences  
Can print some letters and numbers  
May be able to skip  
Likes to sing, dance, or act

**4 years**

Tells stories  
Cooperates with other children  
Enjoys doing new things  
Uses scissors with supervision  
Catches a bouncy ball most of the time  
Understands the idea of "same" and "different"

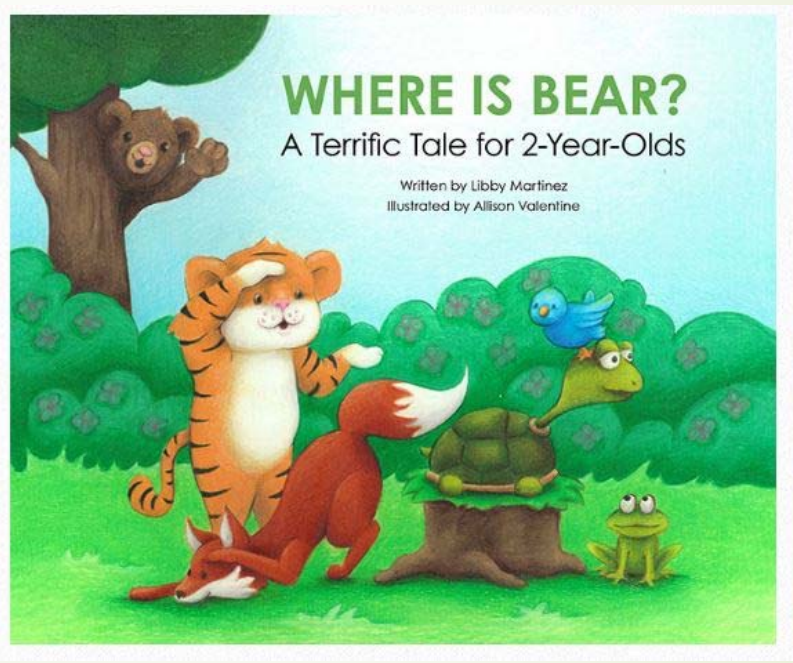
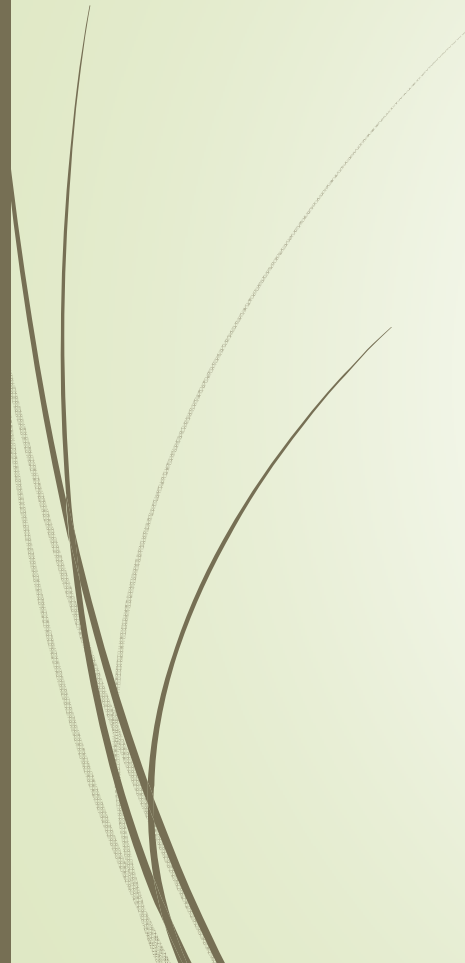
**3 years**

Shows concern for a crying friend  
Can name most familiar things  
Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time  
Turns book pages one at a time  
Runs easily  
Plays pretend with dolls, animals, and people



■ **Tips for Using the *Grow Up Healthy!* Growth Chart**

- A few times each year, mark each child's height on the growth chart. At the same time, make a mental note about how each child is meeting or working toward the milestones listed.
- Give each child their own growth chart on his or her birthday for the family to use at home. (See the end of this section to learn how to customize and print copies for every family.)



# WHERE IS BEAR?

A Terrific Tale for 2-Year-Olds

Written by Libby Martinez  
Illustrated by Allison Valentine



- ***Where Is Bear? A Terrific Tale for 2-Year-Olds***

- This children's book is a terrific tale for 2-year-old children! This engaging and interactive book encourages children to help Tiger and his forest friends in their search to find Bear. With each turn of the page, children will get closer to finding Bear and teachers and parents will learn about many important milestones to look for in 2-year-old children.
- Features:
  - Beautiful illustrations that will captivate young children
  - "Milestone Moments" called out at the bottom of the pages for teachers and parents
  - Full 2-year-old developmental milestone checklist and age-appropriate activities in the back
  - Full 3-year-old developmental milestone checklist and age-appropriate activities in the back
  - Also available in Spanish
  - [Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities.](#)

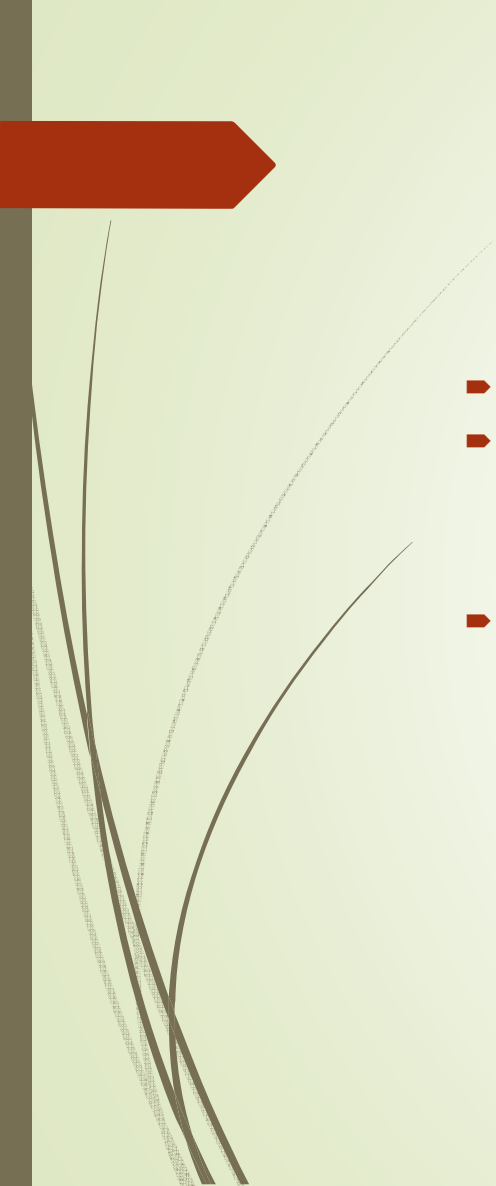


► **Tips for Using *Where is Bear?***

- Order a copy for the 2-year-old classroom and incorporate it into reading time
- Give a copy to families with 2-year-olds to help encourage them to read to their child everyday

# Amazing me- It's busy being 3!




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- ***Amazing Me — It's Busy Being 3!***
  - This children's book, for kids 2½ through 4 years of age, is really AMAZING! It tells the story of Joey and all the things he can do now that he is 3. Throughout the story, Joey's amazing developmental milestones are called out for teachers and parents at the bottom of almost every page. It's another great reminder of all the AMAZING developmental milestones to be looking for each day!
  - Features:
    - A fun story, tested with teachers, parents, and children, that keeps the attention of a young audience
    - Beautiful illustrations depicting activities relatable to many children
    - "Milestone Moments" called out at the bottom of the pages for teachers and parents; and a koala for the children to find each time Joey shows an amazing milestone!
    - Full 3-year-old developmental milestone checklist and age-appropriate activities in the back
    - Interactive e-version available at [www.cdc.gov/AmazingMe](http://www.cdc.gov/AmazingMe)
    - Pre-printed copies available free in LIMITED quantities



■ **Tips for Using *Amazing Me***

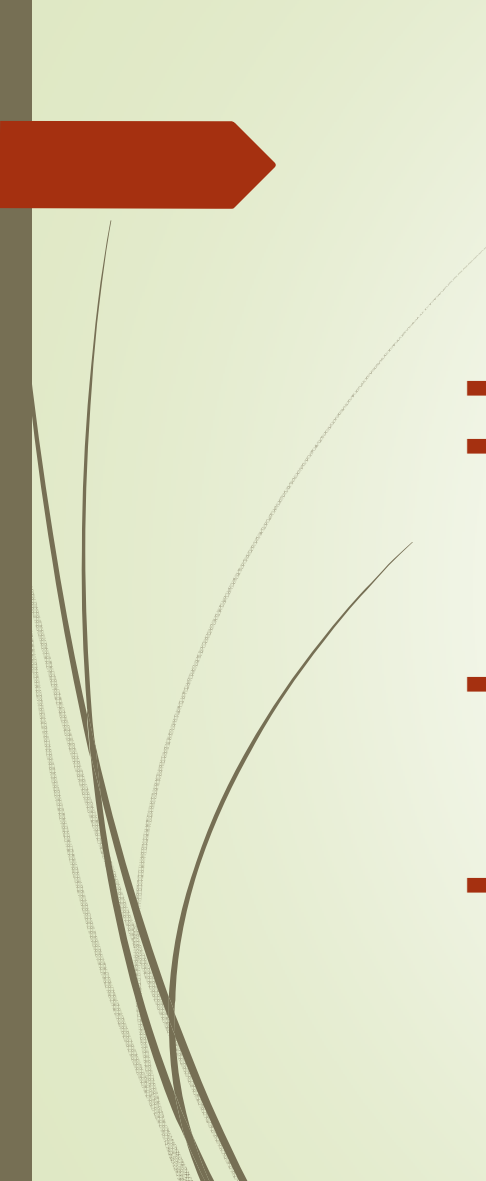
- Order a copy for the 3-year-old classroom and incorporate it into weekly reading circle time.
- Read it aloud to parents and children in the 3-year-old room during an annual “open house” or other event for parents.
- Give a copy to each child on his or her 3rd birthday so families can read it at home. (See end of this section to learn how to customize and print copies for every family.)


- 
- **All of CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials are:**
  - Research-based
  - Easy to understand
  - Parent-tested
  - Reproducible (no copyright)
  - Available in English and Spanish
  - Available to download or print
  - Popular!
  - Free in LIMITED quantities
  - CUSTOMIZABLE and can be printed locally in the quantities you need



# Communicating with Families

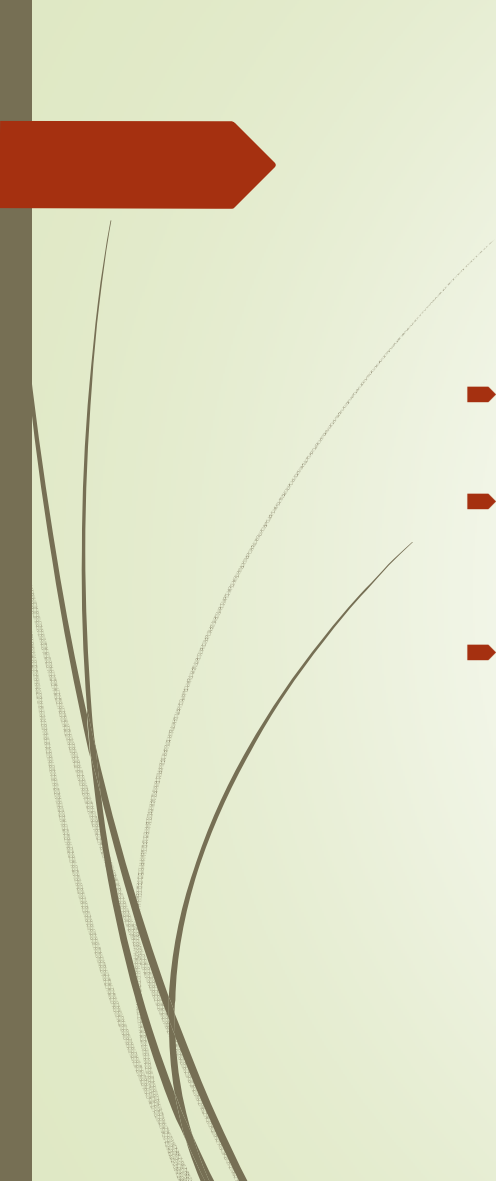
- ▶ **How to communicate with families about development**
  - ▶ Parents see you as a trusted partner in their child's care, and they look to you for information about how their child is developing. Using good listening skills can make your conversations with parents easier and help you feel more confident
- 

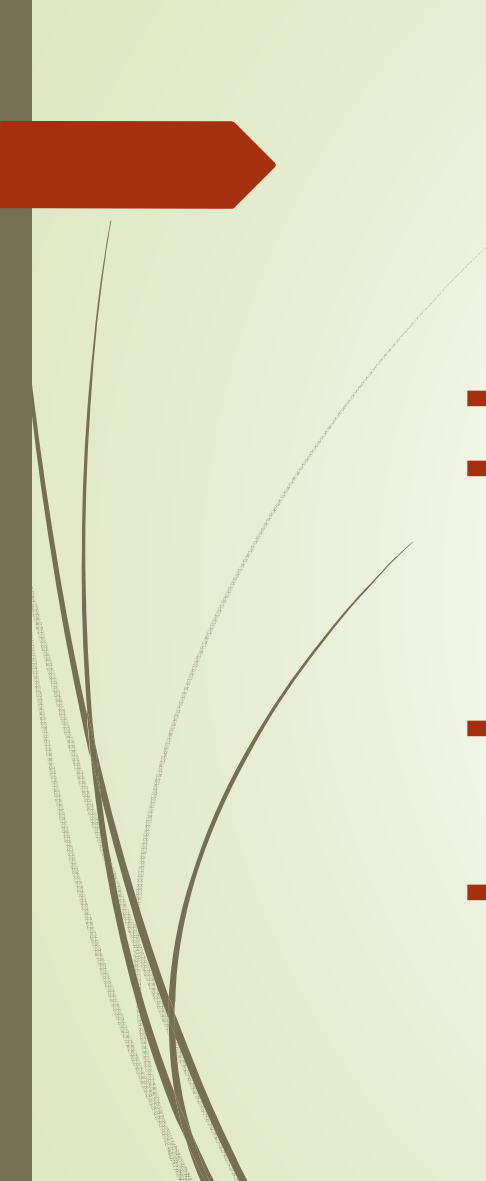
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- ▶ **Discuss healthy development with parents\* regularly**
  - ▶ Celebrating milestones is infectious! Families begin to see the importance of those accomplishments and will want to take notice as well. Children grow up so quickly; it is as if one day they are beginning to sit up and the next they are playing baseball. All the “small” steps in between represent important developmental milestones: rolling over, sitting up, crawling, cruising, walking, running, and others.
  - ▶ Just like these movement milestones that are so familiar to parents, their child’s social/emotional, communication/language, and cognitive developmental milestones also progress in a series of orderly steps. In addition, there can be clues in those steps that could alert parents to a potential developmental concern.
  - ▶ The more you, as their trusted partner and provider, routinely talk with families about their children’s development, the more families will be engaged as well.

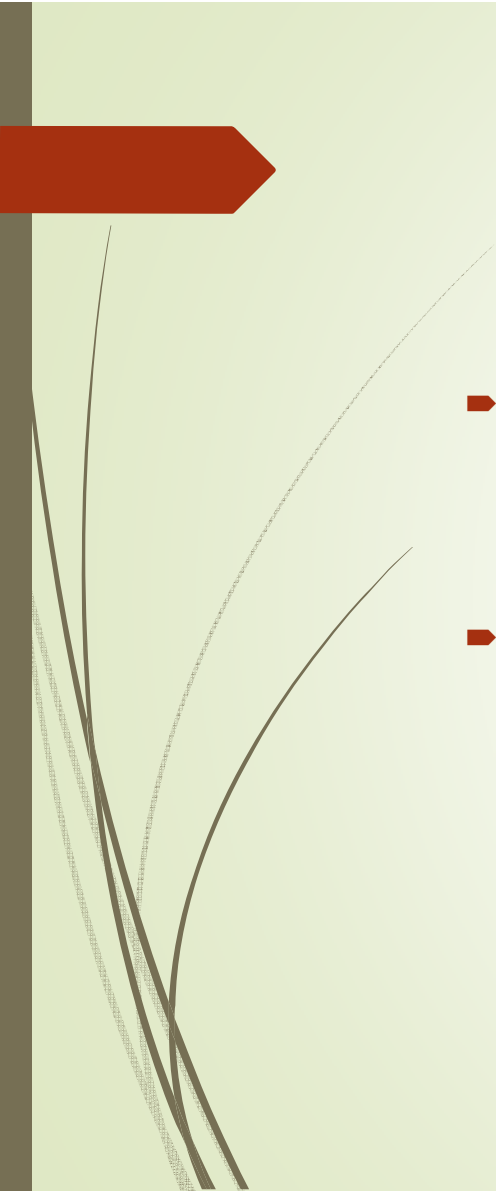
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- Sharing milestones with parents can help them have realistic expectations and better understand their child's behaviors. If parents do not know when a child should have a certain skill, they may worry unnecessarily.


- For example:

If a parent says she is concerned that her 2-month-old is not rolling over, you can reassure her that rolling over from tummy to back is a typical milestone at 4 months.

- 
- **Encourage families to use developmental milestone checklists to monitor their child's development.**
  - Milestone checklists and the Milestone Moments booklet from CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program are easy-to-use, proven tools as useful for families as they are for you.
  - These materials can help families understand what typical developmental milestones are at certain ages and can help establish appropriate expectations. Not only will these materials give parents a snapshot of what their child is doing right now, they will help them to anticipate developmental milestones that are emerging or will come next. Having milestone checklists as a reference can greatly help you and the parent think about what kinds of toys might be appropriate and how to create an environment that encourages the child's development.

- 
- Before raising concerns with families, make sure you are well prepared:
  - Beforehand, invest considerable time in building meaningful and collaborative relationships with the parents. Chances are, parents may already have some concerns of their own and might feel more comfortable having that conversation if they feel they have a relationship with you that is built on mutual respect and open communication.
  - Complete a milestone checklist for the child's age, either as a single sheet or in the Milestone Moments booklet (find both here). If the child is between ages of the milestone checklists, use the checklist for the younger age.
  - Prepare for the conversation by reviewing some helpful tips for talking with parents about developmental concerns.

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- Use the completed milestone checklist as the basis for your conversation. The checklist is an objective tool that can both confirm and pinpoint your concerns.
  - And because it was developed by CDC and is based on the gold-standard milestone lists from the American Academy of Pediatrics, it offers you enhanced credibility and objectivity in your conversation.



## Getting materials is easy with 3 simple options:

- ▶ Print FREE materials directly from [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)
  - ▶ Click on “Free Materials”
- ▶ Print materials from a FREE disc.
  - ▶ Order disk from [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders)
- ▶ Order FREE printed materials (in limited quantities) in English or Spanish from
  - ▶ [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders)
- ▶ Contact Hilory Liccini, ND Act Early Ambassador, for help on orders
  - ▶ [Hilory.Liccini@minotstateu.edu](mailto:Hilory.Liccini@minotstateu.edu)



# Questions??

- ▶ Hilory Liccini
  - ▶ Assistant Director, North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities
  - ▶ North Dakota Act Early Ambassador
  - ▶ 858-3008
  - ▶ [Hilory.Liccini@minotstateu.edu](mailto:Hilory.Liccini@minotstateu.edu)