

“Is my child meeting their milestones?”

Developmental Screening at Northeast Pediatrics

by Melissa Gagnon

Developmental screening is a standardized way to easily and accurately review a child’s development. It is important for families and healthcare providers to be aware of any developmental delays so that they may be addressed early on.

The earlier a delay is caught, the more likely intervention will be successful.

It is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics that children be screened at the 9 month, 18 month, 24 month and 30 month well visits.

Without a screening tool, only 30% of children with developmental delays are identified. Using a screening tool increased identification to 70-80%.

Screening requires parents to complete a questionnaire pertaining to 5 different areas of development, including an Autism screening at 18 and 24 months. Screening is an important part of a child’s health and should not be ignored.

Often, one area of development that is delayed may be affecting another, or sometimes what appears as a delay can be indicative of an illness. This is why it is so important to catch possible delays early

When a delay is identified there are a couple of options available. If a child is mildly delayed, activities can be provided to the parent that may help sharpen the delayed skills. If the delay appears to be more concerning then a referral to Early Intervention for further evaluation may be necessary. From there, if the child qualifies for services, Early Intervention will provide the child with the appropriate therapies. Children over age 3 are considered too old for Early Intervention and instead will be referred to their school district’s Special Education Department. The Special Education Department will then evaluate the child and determine if services are necessary.

The goal is to have all children screened at the recommended ages as well as any additional child that causes concern.

In addition, addressing parental questions and concerns are an important aspect of the screening process. Appropriate referral, follow up and communication with parents ensure complete care for all pediatric patients.

Melissa Gagnon was recently promoted to become the Developmental Coordinator at Northeast Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. Melissa earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from SUNY Potsdam and has been employed as a Clinical Assistant for 3 years.