



## ADMINISTRATION FOR **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

### **Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!**

**Recent statistics indicate that as many as 1 in 4 children aged 0-5 are at moderate or high risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delay.**<sup>[1]</sup> As a result, the Administration for Children and Families, Administration for Community Living, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education have partnered to launch *Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!*, a coordinated effort to encourage developmental and behavioral screening and support for children, families, and the providers who care for them. *Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!* seeks to:

- **Celebrate milestones.** Every family looks forward to seeing a child's first smile, first step, and first words. Regular screenings with early childhood professionals help raise awareness of a child's development, making it easier to expect and celebrate developmental milestones.
- **Promote universal screening.** All of our children need support in the early years to make sure they stay healthy and happy. Just like hearing and vision screenings assure that children can hear and see clearly, developmental and behavioral screenings assure that children are making developmental progress, in areas such as language, social, or motor development. Screening is a regular part of growing up.
- **Identify possible delays and challenges early.** Screenings can help kids succeed in and beyond their school years. With regular screenings, families, teachers, and other professionals can assure that young children get the services and supports they need, as early as possible to help them thrive alongside their peers.
- **Enhance developmental supports.** Families are children's first and most important teachers. Combining the love and knowledge families have of their children with tools, guidance, and tips recommended by experts, can help optimize the developmental support children receive.

*Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!* will support the implementation of these core missions by releasing:

#### **1. A compendium of research-based screening tools**

To elevate the importance of quality, standardized tools, we are releasing a compendium of first line screening tools for young children. Pertinent information will include cost, administration time, quality level, training required, and age range covered. The compendium will serve as a reference for early care and education providers, pediatricians, home visitors, child welfare case workers, behavioral health professionals, early intervention specialists, and various other relevant partners.

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<sup>[1]</sup> National Survey of Children's Health, 2011-12. With funding and direction from MCHB, these surveys were conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [National Center for Health Statistics](#).

### Criteria for Inclusion

- Designed for the purpose of screening
- Appropriate for use with children, ages 0 to 5
- Cover multiple developmental domains (physical/motor, cognitive, linguistic) and, particularly, social and emotional development
- Available for use by early childhood practitioners
- Take family input into account
- Sensitivity and specificity of 0.7 or greater



## 2. “User’s Guides” for multiple audiences

Tailored to the aforementioned audiences, this package of User’s Guides describe the importance of developmental and behavioral screening, how to talk to parents, where to go for help, and how to select the most appropriate tool for the population served as well as the provider implementing the screen. There is also a Guide for communities to foster early childhood systems that support developmental and behavioral screening, follow up, referral, and closing the loop. While each Guide is specifically written for particular stakeholders, there are common messages woven across all Guides.

## 3. An electronic package of resources for follow-up and support

This collection of resources includes materials, information, and contact information from each partner agency and relevant grantees, that will serve to bring awareness to parents and providers about general early child development, how and where to get help if a concern exists, tips and techniques to help children with disabilities or delays, and free online training modules on a range of topics.

While we are building upon and complementing current federal resources like ***Learn the Signs, Act Early*** and ***Bright Futures***, we also have developed new resources such as a *Screening Passport for Families* and *Everyday Tips for Early Care and Education Providers to Support Child Development*. Akin to an immunization record, the *Passport* will be a resource for parents to keep track of screenings, results, and follow up steps, as well as coordinate information with multiple providers to support interventions and services. Targeted to families, Head Start teachers, and child care providers, *Everyday Tips for Early Care and Education Providers to Support Child Development* is a collection of activities recommended by top researchers that can be completed with everyday items to support general child development.

This unprecedented multi-faceted initiative will assure that the wide range of adults who love, work, and care for young children are all on the same page and have an array of resources tailored to fit their needs and those of the families they serve. Visit [www.hhs.gov/WatchMeThrive](http://www.hhs.gov/WatchMeThrive) on March 25th for a complete set of resources.