Information About Early Childhood Screening

What is Early Childhood Screening?

Early Childhood Screening is a free program in Minnesota that checks how a child is developing and growing. Early Childhood Screening is a brief, simple process used to identify potential health or developmental problems in young children. Screening in early childhood supports children’s readiness for kindergarten and promotes positive child health and developmental outcomes through referrals to early learning opportunities.

When should I schedule an Early Childhood Screening?

The Early Childhood Screening program is available to children when they turn three years old. It is required before a child starts kindergarten, or must take place within 30 days of when a child starts kindergarten. Although your child may be screened any time before kindergarten, it is best to do it at age three or four so that any health or developmental concerns can be addressed sooner.

How do I schedule an Early Childhood Screening?

Local school districts provide Early Childhood Screening. You can contact your school district for more information when your child turns three. To find your school district and nearest screening location, call 651-582-8412 or visit the Minnesota Department of Education website. Choose “Early Childhood Screening” from the program dropdown menu and search by county.

Does my child need an Early Childhood Screening?

Yes. All Minnesota children need Early Childhood Screening. It is recommended at age three and is required for kindergarten, and it also helps identify potential problems in your child’s health and development. It is also a perfect time to find out about what early learning opportunities are available for your child, and to make sure the right supports are available to help your child learn and grow.

What happens during an Early Childhood Screening?

An Early Childhood Screening checks your child’s health and development. It includes a review of height, weight, vision, hearing, speech, social and emotional progress and overall development. Screening is tailored to the age of the child so that a three-year-old is only asked for what is developmentally appropriate for their age.
How do I prepare for an Early Childhood Screening?

You should bring names and phone numbers of your child’s pediatrician, any other health care providers and clinic/hospital, and immunization records. You can also bring notes about:

- Things that your child does well.
- Questions about your child’s health.
- Questions about your child’s development, such as learning, walking, talking, etc.
- Questions about your child’s seeing or hearing.

What happens if the school finds a problem during the Early Childhood Screening?

There are a few options if the professional providing the screening finds an area of concern in your child’s development. They may refer your child for an evaluation by your local school district, or work with you to refer your child to other early childhood opportunities such as Head Start, School Readiness, Early Childhood Family Education, Early Learning Scholarships and community resources.

For more information about Early Childhood Screening and how to encourage and support a child’s development, visit our Development Milestones section.