

Early Identification of Developmental Delay, Referral Pathways and NDIS ECEI ECA

Associate Professor Habib Bhurawala

Head of Paediatrics, Nepean Hospital

Senior VMO Paediatrician, Blue Mountains Hospital

Clinical Associate Professor- Paediatrics

Case #1

- Aarav is 26 months old and attends your clinic for review with his parents. Aarav has recently started attending childcare three days per week. Parents report that Aarav has only a few words in his home language, he will point to objects he wants or, more often, grunt to get his needs met.
- The child-care centre has discussed that Aarav has difficulty playing with his peers and is often found wandering as if lost during outdoor play. Aarav is clumsy, tripping and falling often; he cannot jump or ride a balance bike.
- He has limited interest in indoor fine motor play, avoids construction play with blocks and will not attempt to draw or paint.

Case continued

- Aarav is very dependent for feeding and dressing at this stage, he has just started showing an interest in holding a spoon himself but dislikes finger foods that are messy.
- Aarav is described as a sensitive child who can become easily upset or overwhelmed when things do not go his way; he will have 'temper tantrums', and his parents are worried that they are more common and more intense than would be expected for his age.
- Aarav has some sensory sensitivities to touch- he doesn't like to be messy and does not like the feel of certain fabrics.
- Aarav has some repetitive play behaviours and sensory sensitivities. Though you notice in the clinic he can make some eye contact, he was shy for you initially, but once warmed up, he could engage in some simple turn-taking play.

Impression

- What else you may want to know?
- What next?

Developmental check list

- Aarav is 26 months old and attends your clinic for review with his parents. Aarav has recently started attending childcare three days per week. Parents report that Aarav has only a few words in his home language, he will point to objects he wants or, more often, grunt to get his needs met.
- The child-care centre has discussed that Aarav has difficulty playing with his peers and is often found wandering as if lost during outdoor play. Aarav is clumsy, tripping and falling often; he cannot jump or ride a balance bike.
- He has limited interest in indoor fine motor play, avoids construction play with blocks and will not attempt to draw or paint.
- Aarav is very dependent for feeding and dressing at this stage, he has just started showing an interest in holding a spoon himself but dislikes finger foods that are messy.
- Aarav is described as a sensitive child, who can become easily upset or overwhelmed when things do not go his way; he will have 'temper tantrums', and his parents are worried that they are more common and more intense than would be expected for his age.
- Aarav has some sensory sensitivities to touch- he doesn't like to be messy and does not like the feel of certain fabrics.
- Aarav has some repetitive play behaviours and sensory sensitivities. Though you notice in the clinic he can make some eye contact, he was shy for you initially, but once warmed up, he could engage in some simple turn-taking play.

Your Child at 2 Years

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____ Today's Date _____ 

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 2. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by 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

Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- 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

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- Is missing milestones
- 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 and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON'T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!

★ **It's time for developmental screening!**
At 2 years, your child is due for general developmental screening and an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 2 Years



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 2. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by 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

Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- 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

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- Is missing milestones
- 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 and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON'T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!

★ It's time for developmental screening!

At 2 years, your child is due for general developmental screening and an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Download CDC's
Milestone Tracker App



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Developmental checklist

- CDC Developmental check-list
- https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/LTSAE-Checklist_COMPLIANT_30MCorrection_508.pdf

Playgroups

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLL6tFZl8gw>
- <https://www.playgroupnsw.org.au/>

Pathways Program

The Need

A significant barrier to accessing early childhood education is when a child or their family is experiencing vulnerability.

- Families not feeling confident about approaching services (previous poor experiences)
- Some services are developing their inclusive practices and have expressed being unable to meet a child's needs, thus the child cannot participate.



connect Pathways Program

Children and Families

The Program

- Personalised Connections
- Exploration of Resources
- Navigating the system
- Knowledge Sharing
- Identifying Early Supports
- Group Engagement



connect

Children and Families

Pathways Program

For More Information

www.Connectcfs.org.au/support-and-services/connect-pathways-program

Connect Pathways Program



connect
Children and Families

The Connect Pathways Program is a place of support for families with children aged from birth to three years. We're here to support families experiencing challenges accessing early childhood education and supports in the Perth and Blue Mountains community.

This program responds to individual child and family needs and aims to build confidence in families.

Our goal is to have children confidently engage in play spaces, learn alongside their peers, and actively participate in their communities.

Our supports include:

- **Personalised Consultation:** Whether it's a friendly chat over the phone or a face-to-face meeting, we're here to understand your unique situation.
- **Explores Options of Resources:** We'll guide you through the array of services and resources available within your community.
- **Navigating the System:** Our team will help you understand the referral process, checking in with you along the way.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** We believe in empowering you with information, sharing knowledge that empowers you for making decisions.
- **Identifying Early Signs:** We can provide an initial assessment of development.
- **Direct Engagement:** For families requiring more intensive support, our Pathways Program groups offer a shared learning experience that's both engaging and fun.



Our team of experienced early childhood practitioners are available to connect with you.

Request or enquire about our Connect Pathways Program by clicking on the phone, speech or mail icons at 08 4758 9966. Alternatively, you can complete the Request for Support Form using this QR code.

This program is funded by the WA Government Department of Education, Sport and Training Pathways Program.



First 2000 days

- The first 2000 days are critical times for physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.
- Child and family health nurses check the child's developmental milestones from 1 week to 4 years old.
- Call the Community Health Centre on 1800 222 608 and ask for a blue book check-up for the child.
- https://www.facebook.com/NBMLHD/videos/970961747493170/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=2Rb1fB

Child and Family Health Services

All CFH services are aligned with the First 2000 days Framework. They include:

- Child and Family Health Nurses (0-5 years)
- **Speech Pathology (0-8 years)**
- **Occupational Therapy (0-8 years)**
- Orthoptist (0-12 years)
- Hearing Tests (3-12 years)

Other PCCH services for children include counselling, child protection counselling, OOHC Health pathway, Building Strong Foundations.

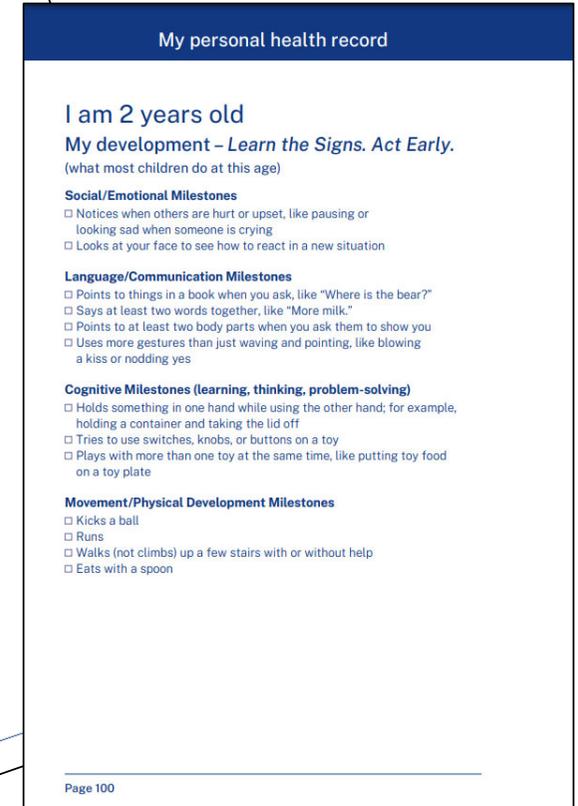
Child and Family Health Referrals

- Anyone can make a referral with the parent's consent.
- If possible avoid making referrals to both NDIS ECA partner (Lifestart) and Child and Family Health (PCCH) Therapy services. Referring to both makes waiting times longer for both services.
- While Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology have waiting lists for therapy, we offer one off TRaC appointments within six weeks of referral.

Child and Family Health Referrals

- All referrals come through Central Intake Service
- 9am to 4 pm Monday to Friday
- Phone: 1800 222 608
- Fax: 47329485
- Email: nbmlhd-referralservice@health.nsw.gov.au

Learn the signs, Act early



<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Publications/blue-book.pdf>

Speech Pathology Tips

- Refer early - it is never too early to refer for communication or feeding concerns
- Encourage parents to talk to their children in their first language
- Encourage parents to read and sing with their children everyday.
- Encourage parents to respond to both verbal and nonverbal attempts to communicate.

Occupational Therapy Tips

- Refer early – its never too early to refer for fine motor, play or sensory skills
- Encourage daily floortime.
- Encourage parents to play with their children everyday
- Encourage parents to let their children be as independent as possible in their feeding, dressing and exploring their environments.

Case#2

- McKenzie is a busy four-year-old who attends your clinic with her Mum.
- McKenzie's Mum reports that she is displaying delayed language, limited play and social interaction, frequent and intense 'meltdowns', and strong sensory preferences. McKenzie thrives on routine and has difficulty adapting to any changes; she has a restricted and repetitive diet and becomes distressed when food is not presented in its 'normal' way.
- McKenzie attends her local child-care twice a week; she loves watching the other children play but has trouble with reciprocal play, making it difficult for her to engage with her peers. McKenzie has recently become more aggressive in her interaction with other children, frequently hitting and biting in frustration when things don't go as she would like.
- McKenzie has significant sleep difficulties in both falling and staying asleep.
- McKenzie's Mum is exhausted and is keen to get support in place for her as soon as she can.

What next?

Early Childhood approach

- <https://www.bcyf.org.au/early-years-services/early-childhood-approach-ndia/>

Early childhood approach (ECA)

- Previously known as NDIS ECEI pathway (Early childhood early intervention pathway)
- The age range is changing for the NDIS early childhood approach.
- From 1 July 2023, the early childhood approach changed to include children younger than 9.
- This change is being rolled out over the next 2 years.
- The early childhood approach helps children younger than 6 with developmental delay or children younger than 9 with disability and their families to access the right support when they need it.
- **Children younger than 6 do not need a diagnosis to get support through the early childhood approach where there are concerns about their development.**

What next?

- Refer directly to Lifestart (NDIS ECEI/ECA Pathway) for consideration of NDIS support.
- Refer to Paediatrician for further assessment.
- Lifestart- NBMLHD
- Northcott-WSLHD
- Hearing- age <3 years (Hearing Australia, Next sense, private audiology)
- Hearing >3 years- community health 1800 222 608

Lifestart Early intervention service

- Q hshdq#Eαh#P rxqwdlqv=
 - ;4#K hqu|#Vuhhw#Shqukw#Q VZ #5:83
 - ; ;#Ddggd Vuhhw#Vrxwk#Erz hqihov#Q VZ #5:<3
- Skrqh#1 ;33#86#5<3
- [k w s v = 2 2 z z z 1 b l i h v d u w 1 r u j 1 d x 2 f r q w d f w 0 x v 2 f r q w d f w 0 x v 0 h q t x l u h v 0 d e r x w 0 h u y l f h v 0 d q g 0 x s s r u w 2 + i r u # i d p 1 d h v ,](#)
- [k w s v = 2 2 z z z 1 b l i h v d u w 1 r u j 1 d x 2 f r q w d f w 0 x v 2 u h i h u u d 0 f r q w d f w 0 i r u p 2 + i r u # h i h u u d α ,](#)

Referral to paediatrician

- Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne Pre-referral guidelines
- https://www.rch.org.au/kidsconnect/prereferral_guidelines/Developmental_problems/
- Healthpathways
- Initial work-up
- History (birth, family, developmental status- CDC checklist, NDIS, ECA)
- Assessment reports (speech/OT/allied health)
- Day-care, school reports
- Hearing/vision assessment

Any questions?

For any questions- habib.Bhurawala@health.nsw.gov.au

Thank you