

PRIOR TO THE MEETING:

- * **Document concerns** and collect data over a period of time, document any modifications you have made to meet the child's needs and the results. Use of a **checklist** for monitoring development is highly recommended.
- * **Schedule** the meeting ahead of time; don't try to fit it into a hectic pickup or drop off time.
- * **Tell the parents** what the topic of the meeting will be. Hold the meeting in an area that is private and comfortable.
- * **Prepare:** Think about what you are going to say, the words you will use and what those words will mean to the parents.

DON'T

- Use **jargon, acronyms and labels.**
- **Diagnose. This should only be done after a comprehensive evaluation.**
- **Discredit a parent's concerns if they are not the same as yours.**
- **Argue with the parents if they tell you that you are wrong.**

DURING THE MEETING:

- * **Start** by discussing the child's strengths. Lead into the discussion of concerns by encouraging the parent to share observations, questions or concerns. Ask questions that will allow a parent to share his/her own observation, then share your own. This encourages a back and forth conversation that may validate a parent's hidden concerns and fears.
- * **When communicating** your concerns, the checklist provides a visual and gives parents something to think about without putting a label on it. It helps get the conversation started and the information is objective.
- * **Be supportive,** and respectful.
- * **Practice** active listening techniques.
- * **Be calm,** but concerned.
- * **Focus** on developmental milestones, specific behaviors and the need to “rule out” possible concerns.

DURING THE MEETING, CONT.

- * **Be honest** without being unkind. Give parents correct information but try to use kind words such as:
 1. “Based on the checklist we completed, _____ is not meeting his/her developmental milestones.”
 2. “_____, appears to be learning in a different way.”
- * **Be open** to trying parent's suggestions.
- * **Reassure** parents that you will support them.
- * **Explain** the role and the importance of early identification and intervention.
- * **Refer** to other resources.
- * **Finish** the meeting in a positive way and with a plan that may include provided resources.

RESOURCES

- ❖ **Child's pediatrician.**
- ❖ **Follow Along Program**

A free program for children birth to 3 years. Parents complete a questionnaire every four to six months about the things their child is doing. Program staff check it and send an activity sheet to help the child grow and learn. If there are areas of concern, the staff directs parents to additional resources. Call 763-684-2312 or 1-800-362-3667, ext. 2312 or email susan.demars@co.wright.mn.us.
- ❖ **Minnesota Help Me Grow**

This program is available to MN children from birth to 5 years old. A free evaluation is conducted and eligible children and families work with early childhood specialists to plan the services and supports they need. Families of non eligible children may be referred to other available community resources. The statewide number is: **1-866-693-GROW**. The Wright County number is **1-800-286-6331 or 763-682-6361**.

Resources cont.

- ❖ **Early Childhood Screening**

In order for a child to start Kindergarten in any Minnesota public school, parents need to provide child's ECS records and immunization record. The state of Minnesota recommends that all children be screened before their 4th birthday. Contact the school district of the child to find out more about ECS.
- ❖ **Internet Links for Checklists**
 - <http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us>
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
 - http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_par_agebase_dhandouts
 - <http://www.babycenter.com/>
- ❖ If you are interested in additional information about **Communicating Developmental Concerns to Parents**, a one hour PowerPoint presentation/training is available. Contact: **Jodi Altringer**-Early Intervention Teacher at: **763-682-8729**

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COMMUNICATING DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORL CONCERNS TO PARENTS

Child care providers have the responsibility to monitor a child's development. As soon as a developmental delay or special need is suspected, it is important to report this to a parent to ensure that the child will have access to early and appropriate interventions, if needed.

This brochure contains suggestions that may be helpful in communicating suspected developmental delays with parents.