



EARLY STAGES OUTREACH SERVICES

MEDICAL COMMUNITY

ABOUT EARLY STAGES

Early Stages is the District of Columbia Public Schools diagnostic center for children between the ages of 2 years 8 months and 5 years 10 months. Early Stages partners with various medical community stakeholders to identify and screen children living in the District for developmental delays that may impact their education and provide appropriate services to help address those delays.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Children referred to the Early Stages center will receive an initial developmental screening and professional evaluations (as recommended) in the areas of education, speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and psychology. All Early Stages services are provided at no cost to all families that live in the District, whether the child goes to public school, private school, is home-schooled, or has not yet entered the school system.

YOUR ROLE AS A MEDICAL PROVIDER

- **The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends** that routine developmental screenings be administered during well-child exams.
- **Ensure that every child has a medical home** that serves as the foundation of complete care and well-being.
- As a medical partner, you are encouraged to utilize our **free professional development trainings**.
- Your practice can **schedule a time for Early Stages to train your providers and staff on how to administer the Ages & Stages (ASQ) developmental screening**. The training takes less than one hour and Early Stages will also provide your practice with the complete ASQ kit -- all free of charge.
- **If your practice currently administers developmental screenings**, please send the screening results and attach any other relevant information to Early Stages when making a referral.

If you would like more information about ways you can engage with us, please contact your Child Find Field Coordinator: **Maria-Fernanda Jackson** at **202.607.5277** or **maria.jackson@dc.gov**



THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

Regular developmental screening for children birth to age 5 is an important way to identify potential delays as early as possible. Children whose delays are identified before starting school gain precious time during which their developmental challenges can be addressed and often overcome through treatment and services.

Need more reasons to decide to screen your children?

AAP Guidelines – The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends regular developmental screening for young patients and considers the practice of screening in order to identify potential delays “critical to the well-being of children and their families.”

Strengthening Relationships with Families– Because a parent’s involvement in the developmental screening process is so important, conducting routine screenings gives community partners and parents a built-in opportunity to have meaningful conversations and deepen their own partnership as it relates to supporting a child’s developmental and education.

Identify Areas of Strength – Developmental screenings not only flag potential developmental delays in children, they also highlight areas in which a child is developing well or excelling. Knowing a child’s strengths is greatly beneficial for parent and staff as well as knowing areas in which that child may need extra support.

Citywide Commitment to Universal Screening – DC’s Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) have emphasized early childhood education, school readiness, and improving the capacity of early childhood educators to conduct regular developmental screenings in the DME’s Performance Plan.

Screening as a Safety Net – Some children with certain risk factors – such as housing instability, parental unemployment, trauma or abuse, or poor nutrition, among others – can be more likely to have a delay in their cognitive, language or emotional development. Regular developmental screening is an important safety net that can connect children and families to valuable evaluation services and improve educational outcomes.

Early Stages offers staff trainings on early childhood development, including training on how to administer developmental screenings for young children. We can also provide a full screening kit and materials for your organization at no cost, so you can support your families and refer children for additional services.