

Quick Guide: Developmental Screening During School

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Ideally all screening happens with the parent present but that is not always possible. Screening during the school day can be a very effective way to increase access and overcome barriers by offering screening to children whose parents (caregivers) are unable to make a separate appointment due to lack of time, transportation, or other factors and barriers.

Similarly, offering to screen at child care centers, prioritizing centers that serve children least likely to be screened at 3, aligns with increasing equity. For example, children who may be American Indian, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Hawaiian-Pacific Islander or two or more races. Also, children who may be English learners, receiving free and reduced priced meals or experiencing homelessness or in foster care should be prioritized as much as practicable as they are also less likely to receive screening by the end of kindergarten.

In some rural communities, we have heard that districts who have the capacity offer to screen at private schools to overcome geographic barriers.

Also, caregivers may request a virtual screening if they have health or immunocompromised health concerns ([Minnesota Statutes 142D.091](#)). Guidance is found on the [DCYF screening page](#) under “Guides and standards.”

Considerations for planning to screen during the school day

Prior to screening

- Check to see if child was previously screened elsewhere through another district (ask your MARSS Coordinator for a report of children screened elsewhere in [MARSS Web Edit System 52](#)). However, these reports do not have data for the current school year. Also ask parent if child was screened in another district or Head Start previously.
- If you have a nearby Head Start, be sure to request copies of screenings annually to check if any of your students have already been screened. Then assign MARSS PS with state aid category 43 (see back side of registration form). No funds come to district. This process can be part of a Memorandum of Understanding between the district and Head Start.
- Explain the various required information to share with parents listed within Statutes 142D.091 including their right to decline, opt out or conscientiously object. Template conscientious objection forms and all other screening forms and translations are on the [DCYF screening page](#) under “Administrative forms.”
- Ask parent’s permission to screen without them present during the school day.

- Also ask parents if they wish to be present and if they do, arrange the screening prior to school or at the start of the day. Or arrange to screen near the end of the day, or after school, to meet with them when they are free after work, to have them observe the screening.
- Sending a letter home to parents ahead of time about the process and what the screening and follow up or how they will receive results entails.
- Ask that they complete the various forms: consent form (with permission to screen during school day), release of information, and registration. Some districts request forms at the time of enrollment for early education or kindergarten by training enrollment office staff on what screening is (as well as conscientious objection), and how to talk about it with parents, and the importance of referring to you if there are questions.
- Request parents submit immunizations and complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social Emotional -2 (ASQ:SE-2), child health and developmental history form, release of information form, and send back to you. Take time to explain the ASQ:SE-2 to the parent.
- Explain there will be a call or conference afterwards to ask for their thoughts on their child's development, discuss screening results and review ASQ:SE-2 results, possible resources, and answer any questions they may have and create a referral plan if needed. If you are not a nurse, and the nurse is not present during the screening, then you will also explain that a nurse will review the immunizations and health history and contact them about any follow up in these areas—which should also be noted on the summary form.
- Inform parents they will receive a paper copy of the screening summary after you have done a phone or in-person conference with the parent.

Provide the screening

- Work closely with early learning and kindergarten teachers to determine best times of day and actual dates to do the screening with their schedules. Consider including Early Learning Coordinators and Principals in planning.
- Secure a confidential, quiet space, to have accurate hearing tests and other components.
- Prepare interpreters ahead of time if needed. Share the video “Early Childhood Screening and Interpreters” (on the [DCYF screening page](#) under “Professional learning – Recorded training videos and resources”) and the Guidelines for Interpreters (under “[Guides and standards](#)”) for their review.
- Sometimes children are very shy if they do not know the screener, so if there is a way to introduce staff to students ahead of time that may be helpful. Also, if there are any available staff (or volunteers) the children know to help bring them to and from your screening area that can be very helpful. Sometimes it is helpful for the staff or volunteer to remain with you and the child if they have the capacity in order for the child to feel most comfortable.

After the screening

- Arrange with the parent a time to confidentially discuss the screening results and the parents' input on the results as well as the review of ASQ:SE-2 and child health, developmental history forms in person.
- When referrals are discussed with the parent, you may need to review the release of information to determine if other referral partners need to be added.

- If the parent declines to meet in person and prefers a phone call, after your summary phone call is completed, send a copy of the summary form home with the child in a stamped envelope with your district address for them to sign and send back to you. You would also include a copy of the summary form for the parent to keep after it is signed if possible.
- If you cannot obtain a signature, make a notation that results were discussed with the parent by phone and what time/day that occurred as well as what referral plan is and include your signature.
- If you can't reach a family by phone, document the attempts on the summary form, and plan to review the summary at a future school conference. When referrals are needed it is important to reach the parent live so a plan may be discussed. You may need to enlist the help of a teacher and/or principal, if you can't reach the parent.