Developmental Screening Tools

Choices for Practices and Providers

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The following table is designed to help select high-quality and practical tools to screen children from birth to 8 years of age for developmental delays or disabilities. All tools listed have at least 70% accuracy – that is, sensitivity and specificity, correctly identifying at least 70% of children with and without disabilities, delays or problems.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that physicians do developmental screenings with a high-quality tool – such as ASQ (the Ages and Stages Questionnaires), PEDS (Parent’s Evaluation of Developmental Status), and PEDS:DM (PEDS: Developmental Milestones) – at least three times before a child’s third birthday – at the 9-month, 18-month, and 30-month (or 24-month) pediatric visits.¹

The screening starting point for all children is general developmental screening. All tools listed in the first section – General Developmental Screening Tools – of the following table:²

- Cover all developmental domains;
- Have high accuracy – 70-80%;
- Are short, simple parent-report instruments;
- Are low-cost and easy to administer and score;
- Are appropriate for very young children; and
- Can be completed in many settings – in a pediatric or family medicine practice, in a child care center or Head Start program, during a home visit to a family with a young child, etc.

ASQ, PEDS, and PEDS:DM:

- Are billable under CPT Code #96110 (developmental screening) in fee-for-service medical settings;
- Can be used with Electronic Medical Records (EMR); and
- Are either available online or will be shortly.
  - ASQ will be available online in English in 2009, as will be ASQ:SE (Social-Emotional).
  - PEDS is already available online in English, and the online application includes a record of parental concerns, PEDS results by developmental domains, summary report for parents, billing codes (ICD-9 and procedure codes), and a referral letter to the child’s pediatrician or Early Intervention program when indicated. An online Spanish version is expected in 2009.
  - PEDS:DM is slated to be available online in English by 2009.

To help providers select appropriate second-level screening tools for specific developmental domains, the list of General Developmental Screening Tools is followed by five clusters of specialized screening tools:

- Social-Emotional and Behavioral Screening Tools;
- Autism Screening Tools;
- Language and Cognitive Screening Tools;
- Motor Screening Tools; and
- Specialized Screening Tools – Covering Multiple But Not All Developmental Domains.

2 Note: The Denver-II Developmental Screening Test, while well-known, is not included in this table – primarily because its accuracy is much lower than the newer ASQ, PEDS, and PEDS:DM.