



# “Learn the Signs. Act Early.”

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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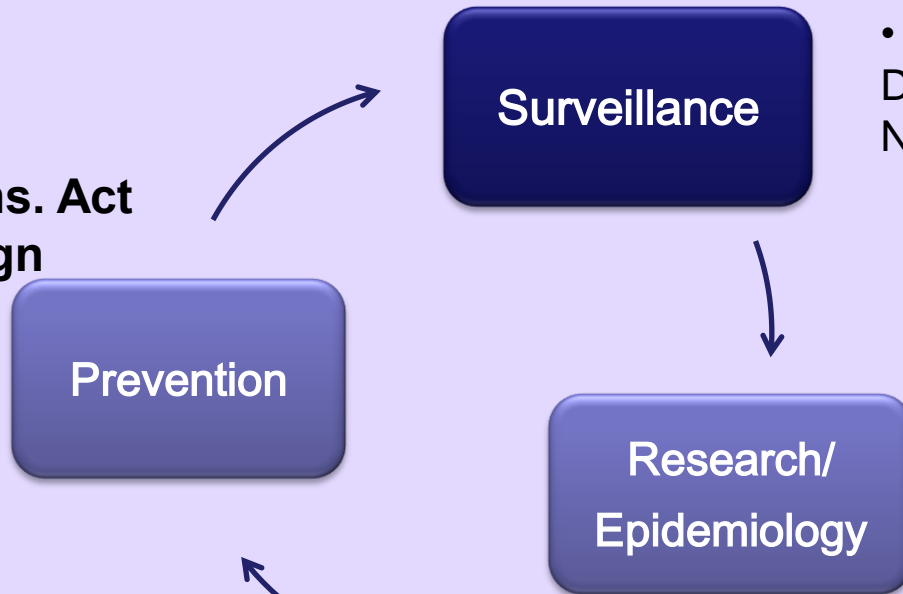
Learn the Signs. Act Early.



[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

# Autism Spectrum Disorders Activities at the CDC

**“Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign and Program**



- Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network

- Metro Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (MADDSP)

- Centers for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology (CADDRE)

- Study to Explore Early Development (SEED)



**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Program

## Overall Program Goal:

To promote early identification and early intervention to improve quality of life for children with developmental disabilities and their families

## Three Strategies:

1. “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign  
Increase awareness, knowledge, and desired behaviors
2. “Act Early” Regional Summits  
Facilitate communication/coordination among systems
3. Research & Evaluation  
Identify areas for strengthening and test innovative strategies for campaign implementation



**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign

## Goals:

- Increase awareness of developmental milestones and early warning signs of developmental disability;
- Increase dialogue among parents and providers about child development;
- Spur early action on developmental concerns

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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

# Target Audiences

- Primary audience:
  - All parents of children aged 4 and under
- Secondary audiences:
  - Health care providers
  - Early educators

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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)



# The “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign History

- 2002 Mandate from Congress
- 2003 Formative Research Conducted
- 2004 Campaign “Launch”

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# Campaign Partners: Collaborators in Campaign Development



**AUTISM SPEAKS™**  
It's time to listen.

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



*First Signs®*

**ASA**  
Autism Society of America.



**ORGANIZATION FOR  
AUTISM RESEARCH**

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# Communication Research

- Involved health care professionals, parents, and early educators
- 3 parts:
  - Formative research
  - Baseline survey
  - Message and material testing
- Altogether took >1 yr

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# Strategic Approach

- To achieve objectives:
  - go broad, stay positive, tap into parents' natural interest
- Juxtapose familiar milestones with less familiar

3 years  
shows affection for playmates  
uses four- to five-word sentences

2 years  
points to object when named  
imitates adults (claps after adult claps)

18 months  
points to interesting objects  
plays pretend ("talks" on toy phone)  
uses simple gestures (waves "bye-bye")  
makes sounds (starts as "ma" and "ba")

**It's time to change how we view a child's growth.**

It's natural to measure your child's height and weight. But you should measure other ways your child is growing, too.

From birth to 5 years, there are milestones your child should reach in terms of how she plays, learns, speaks, and acts. A delay in any of these areas could be a sign of a developmental problem, even autism. The good news is, the earlier it's recognized the more you can do to help your child reach her full potential. Talk with a doctor or nurse about your child's total development.

[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**

*Play PSAs!*

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

# Campaign Objectives

## Parents of young children...

- Know that developmental milestones exist
- Monitor their child's development
- Recognize some early warning signs of delay
- Know the importance of acting early
- Initiate discussion with provider about development

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# Campaign Objectives

**Health Care Providers** who serve young children...

- Initiate discussion with parent about development
- Are receptive to parental concern (and take action)
- Have and use campaign materials

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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)



# Campaign Objectives

## Early Educators...

- Know that developmental milestones exist
- Know the early warning signs of delay
- Have self-efficacy to talk with parents about development
- Aid in monitoring development
- Have and use campaign materials

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# Reaching Our Target Audiences

- Placement
- Presence
- Partnership
- Provision

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# Placement

Parents



Health Professionals

Early Educators



distribution better reflects the realities of practice and that various E/M codes. Renewing these will reinforce proper levels of coding for common types of visits.

**About the Authors**  
Dr. Weida is medical director of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center, University Physician Group, and professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Penn State Hershey Medical Center, in Hershey, Pa. Dr. O'Gurek is a family medicine resident physician at Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster, Pa. Author disclosure: nothing to disclose.

What first attracted you to a career in medicine probably wasn't the chance to do E/M documentation and coding. But that doesn't make it less important. Better coding leads to better payment and a healthier practice. We hope our bottom-up approach helps you improve both the speed and the accuracy of your coding.

Send comments to [fpmedit@aafp.org](mailto:fpmedit@aafp.org).

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**CDC has free information to help educate parents about childhood development.**

Autism can often be recognized at 18 months or younger. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has prepared materials to help health care professionals inform and educate parents about childhood development, including the early warning signs of autism and other developmental disabilities.

Visit [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly) to download materials or request a FREE kit.

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**

November/December 2008 | [www.aafp.org/fpm](http://www.aafp.org/fpm) | FAMILY PRACTICE MANAGEMENT | 25

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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

# Presence

Parents



Health Professionals

Early Educators



Learn the Signs. Act Early.



[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

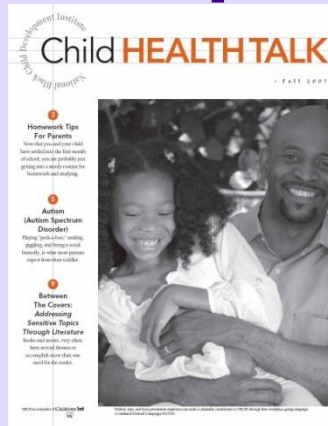


# Partnership

Parents

Health Professionals

Early Educators



**NannySpotlight**

**Learn the Signs - Act Early**

**US Dept. of Health & Human Services**

Do you know all the ways you should measure your charge's growth? We naturally think of height and weight, but from birth to 5 years, a child should reach milestones in how he plays, learns, speaks and acts. A delay in any of these areas could be a sign of a developmental problem, even autism. The good news is, the earlier it's recognized the more you can do to help your charge reach her full potential.

Learn More: [DHHS](#) > [CDC](#) > [Learn the Signs - Act Early](#)

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**FAMILY HEALTH PROGRAM™**  
Brought to you by **LYSOL® Products**

**Lysol**

Looking After You and Your Young Child

In proud partnership with [Lysol, the Experts in Disinfecting](#)

**Psychiatric and Nurse Practitioners**

**VNAA**  
Nurse, Not Just a Title

For mothers of children ages 18 months to 5 years



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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)





# Provision

Parents

Health Professionals

Early Educators

## Campaign Champion Works With Libraries To Increase Community Awareness of Developmental Disabilities

**Lisa Kowalski**

Campaign champion, Michigan

"My desire is to spread child development awareness throughout my community in the hope that it will reach audiences nationwide, especially parents. Parents need to know that there are many resources available to them, but the best tool they have is themselves," says campaign champion Lisa Kowalski.

Lisa always had a natural interest in child development. Her interest turned to passion when the younger of her two boys, Aaron, was diagnosed with autism. Lisa had been comparing Aaron's development to her oldest child's and kept noticing delays. "The first two times I brought him to his pediatrician with concerns, I was brushed off and told to wait three months," says Lisa.

Yet, Lisa knew something wasn't right. She began monitoring Aaron's behavior and writing her observations on index cards. Three months later, Lisa took her index cards with her to Aaron's doctor, packed with information. Using this information in conjunction with their own tests and observations, Aaron's doctor and specialists were able to diagnose him as having autism.

[Read more...](#)



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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

# Unique Opportunities



twitter



Hey there! CDCActEarly is using Twitter.

@CDCActEarly

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# Campaign Resources

## FREE Resource Kits

- Parents
- Health Care Providers
- Early Educators

## Other FREE Materials

[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

1-800-CDC-INFO

CDC Home  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Your Online Source for Credible Health Information

A-Z Index A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z #

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

National Center Homepage > Learn the Signs Home

**Learn the Signs Home**

- Milestones
- If You're Concerned
- Facts
- Free Materials**
- Download Materials
- Video, E-Cards, PSAs
- Links to Other websites
- About the Campaign

**Free Materials**

Fact Sheets, Resource Kits, Growth Chart, and more...

Information For...

- Parents
- Healthcare Providers
- Early Childhood Educators
- Partners
- Media
- Policy Makers

CDC has FREE materials for parents, healthcare providers, and childcare providers. All materials are printed with English on one side and Spanish on the other.

To view, print, or order materials click on one of the following links. [Questions? Please contact CDC Info](#)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)



# Resource Kits

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

**4 feet**  
5 years

**3 years**

**2 years**

**18 months**

**2 feet**

**1 year**

**1 foot**

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Some signs of development are obvious. Algunos muestran del desarrollo son obvias.

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Every day you see them reach milestones. This CD will help you spot a few more.

Information on developmental milestones for child care providers can be found on the back of this CD.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Her first tooth! And she's babbling!

It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Developmental Screening FACT SHEET

Important Milestones By The End of 2 Years (24 Months)

Autism Spectrum Disorders FACT SHEET

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



# The Messages

“Early identification is key”

“The earlier a delay is recognized the more  
can be done to help”

“You know your child best”

“Milestones monitor more than just the physical– how a child  
plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about  
his development”

“Most delays are not outgrown, with help a child can  
reach her full potential”

*Play Baby Steps Video!*

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**





**Interactive Checklist: By the End of 1 Year (12 Months)**

Simply fill out your child's name, age and today's date and then check off the milestones your child has already achieved. Then click "Create Checklist."

Child's Name:   
 Child's Age:   
 Today's Date: January 27, 2010

**Social and Emotional**

- Shy or anxious with strangers
- Cries when mother or father leaves
- Enjoys imitating people in his play
- Shows specific preferences for certain people and toys
- Tests parental responses to his actions during feedings
- Tests parental responses to his behavior
- May be fearful in some situations
- Prefers mother and/or regular caregiver over all others
- Repeats sounds or gestures for attention
- Finger-feeds himself
- Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed

**Movement**

- Reaches sitting position without assistance
- Crawls forward on belly
- Assumes hands-and-knees position
- Creeps on hands and knees
- Gets from sitting to crawling or prone (lying on stomach) position
- Pulls self up to stand
- Walks holding on to furniture
- Stands momentarily without support
- May walk two or three steps without support

**Hand and Finger Skills**

- Uses pincer grasp
- Bangs two objects together
- Puts objects into container
- Takes objects out of container
- Lets objects go voluntarily
- Pokes with index finger

**Language**

- Pays increasing attention to speech
- Responds to simple verbal requests
- Responds to "no"
- Uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for "no"
- Babbles with inflection (changes in tone)
- Says "dada" and "mama"
- Uses exclamations, such as "Oh-oh!"
- Tries to imitate words

**Cognitive**

- Explores objects in many different ways (shaking, banging, throwing, dropping)
- Finds hidden objects easily
- Looks at correct picture when the image is named
- Imitates gestures
- Begins to use objects correctly (drinking from cup, brushing hair, dialing phone, listening to receiver)

Click "Create Checklist" button, then click here to print the results.

[Return to interactive tools page](#) | [Act Early Home](#)

[Return to interactive tools page](#)

[More Checklists](#)

Select Age:

# Online Tools & Resources

- Printable Milestone Checklists
- E-Cards
- Videos, PSAs
- Website linking instructions, badges, buttons
- Interactive Milestones Chart
- "If You're Concerned...": "What to say", "While you wait"
- Positive Parenting Tips
- "Go Out & Play! Kit" for early educators



Learn the Signs. Act Early.



# Usage Data

- Website has top page view numbers in center; 88% customer satisfaction rating
- Average ~20,000 unique visitors/month
- >300,000 resource kits
- >400,000 material downloads

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# Among Those Who Have Heard of the Campaign...

## Pediatricians (Daniel et al., Public Health 2009)

- More confident discussing cognitive development with parents
- More likely to be aware of resources available for referral, treatment
- Likely to have resources to educate parents

## Parents\*

- Know the developmental milestones their child should be reaching for his/her age
- Ask the nurse or doctor for information about child development
- Talk with their child's teacher about their child's development
- Feel confident that they can find services to help

\*Results are preliminary

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**





# Our work continues...

There are new parents, health professionals,  
and early educators every single day.

Will you help us spread the word to help  
everyone “learn the signs”  
and “act early”?

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# Thank you!

Contact me anytime with questions,  
concerns, or ideas!

[KKGreen@cdc.gov](mailto:KKGreen@cdc.gov)

**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# For more information

CDC's autism website:

[www.cdc.gov/autism](http://www.cdc.gov/autism)

**ADDM Network**

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm.html>

**SEED**

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/seed.html>



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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)



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