

THE BOGGS CENTER ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

New Jersey's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service New Jersey's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program

Accessible Clinical Services for Early Child Development

Alexandra Peterson, MAP, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, NJLEND Psychology Fellow Robert LaRue, PhD, BCBA-D, Graduate School of Applied and Profession Psychology, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Background

Although many resources¹⁻⁴ exist to help caregivers determine what to do when concerned about a child's development, the information is often not readily available, laden with jargon, or complicated to navigate. As such, the aim of this project was to create a **brief**, plain-English **infographic** that can be easily referenced by a broad audience, including parents, caregivers, educators, and clinical service providers.

Contents

Autism New Jersey, the New Jersey state government website,² SPAN Parent Advocacy Network,³ and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁴ were assessed for parallel information regarding referral services for childhood developmental concerns. Each website contained valuable information; however, no one site provided a concise, plain-English infographic summarizing appropriate referrals for childhood developmental concerns. Information from each resource was included on this infographic in an accessible format, including via clickable links if accessed digitally and QR codes that can be scanned with a smartphone.

Concerned about a child's development? Intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.* toddlers.* Here's what to do:

Below Age 3

Contact Early Intervention Services for a free inhome developmental evaluation at 800-653-4463



Ages 3-5

Contact Children's Specialized Hospital for a free virtual developmental screening



Contact the **school district** in which the child resides for an evaluation

An evaluation may determine

An evaluation may determine that the child qualifies as "preschool disabled" - this term is used regardless of diagnosis for children ages 3-5.

Find a developmental-behavioral pediatrician by calling the number on the back of your insurance card

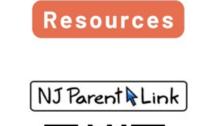
If pursuing occupational or speech therapy, ask your doctor to write a prescription for these services to be eligible for insurance coverage

Over Age 5

Contact the **school district** in which the child resides to request an evaluation from the Child Study Team

Children have a **right** to a **free**, appropriate **public** education







<u>nj.gov/njparentlink/</u>

A lack of accessible resources on how to connect a child with appropriate developmental services can result in a delay in intervention or a lack of appropriate intervention altogether. As stated on the infographic, intervention is likely to be more effective and less expensive when it is provided earlier than later.⁴ This affects the long-term wellbeing and positive outcomes for individuals facing developmental challenges, including autism spectrum disorder. This infographic aims to ease the process of obtaining evidence-based knowledge and is geared toward a broad audience.

Discussion

Specifically, this infographic provides important information about services for children older than 3 years of age—who do *not* qualify for state early intervention services—and younger than kindergarten age, when resources are more readily available through the school system. This is important as this age group (3–5) may have increased difficulty accessing services.

References

- 1. Autism New Jersey. (2019, November 25). *Age-related concerns*. Autism NJ. https://autismnj.org/information-services/age-related-concerns/
- 2. NJ Parent Link. (2024). State of New Jersey parent link: The early childhood, parenting, and professional resource center. https://www.nj.gov/njparentlink/
- 3. SPAN Parent Advocacy Network. (2022, September 1). Resources & Materials. https://spanadvocacy.org/resource-library/
- 4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, April 3). Why act early if you're concerned about development? U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/whyActEarly.html

*Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2011). The importance of early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/outcomesofearlyintervention.pdf