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Act Early: Tools for Understanding Early Child Development

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ACT EARLY: TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

August 15, 2012 by JoLynne Lyon

All parents of young children should learn about typical development so they can be better prepared to nurture a growing child.

**Act Early is a series of posts by Utah’s Act Early ambassador, taking on hard questions about early intervention.**

Whether you suspect a developmental delay or not, tracking your child’s early development is a good practice. My suggestion to all parents of young children is to surround yourself with information about typical development that can guide you in understanding your child’s early years. You will find yourself better prepared to nurture and respond to your growing child.

I wholeheartedly endorse the Learn the Signs/Act Early materials because they are free, user friendly, and streamlined to focus parents on developmental milestones for children ages 0 to 5. In addition to outlining the milestones a child should be reaching, the materials also cover early warning signs of delays.

There are a number of advantages of using these materials, or a system like them, to track healthy development. First, the materials come with checklists a parent can easily use to track development month to month. Second, if a parent detects a delay or has a concern, they can bring the checklists to pediatricians and other providers as sound documentation of their concerns. Third, the printed materials are also available online, along with an enormous reservoir of information and other resources, both at the national and State level. There are even articles and tip sheets that address concerns, including what to say to one’s doctor when you disagree.

Take a look at these materials. Consider tracking your child’s early development on a regular basis. The earlier a child can be connected to appropriate and effective services, the more positive the long term outcome is likely to be.

For further questions, access to materials and other resources, we invite you to connect in any of the following ways:

Contact Tracy Golden, Utah Act Early Ambassador, at 801.597.5386 or golden.actearly@gmail.com

Check out the Utah Act Early website.

Watch Baby and Toddler Milestones, a seven-minute video from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine that shows a baby’s development in good detail. Or view the Baby Steps video from the CDC website. It’s four and a half minutes long, and it’s captioned.

In addition, you can read the other posts in this series:

Concerns after the diagnosis
When you disagree with your pediatrician

Learning to recognize the need

Dr. Tracy Golden is Utah’s *Act Early* Ambassador for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) “Learn the Signs. Act Early” program. Its mission is to improve early identification practices for those providing services to very young children. Golden received her Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Utah and has a private clinical practice for teens and adults with High Functioning Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome. She is also a staff member at the CPD.