



Subject: Screening for Developmental Delays and Autism Spectrum Disorders

Scope: Unison MedPLUS

In accordance with the guidelines for Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT), please be reminded that you are required to include structured screening for developmental delays and that the screens at 18 months and 24 months include structured screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). Providers should also conduct structured screening outside of the recommended screening periodicities if medically necessary. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare has defined the guidelines for Structured Screening for Developmental Delays and Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Developmental Surveillance is the observation of a child to identify whether the child may be at risk of developmental delay. As part of surveillance, providers should perform and document the following:

- elicit and attend to parent concerns about their child's development;
- update the child's developmental progress;
- make accurate and informed observations of the child in the areas of language and cognitive abilities, social and emotional health, and physical development which are appropriate to the child's age and developmental stage;
- identify the presence of risk and protective factors; and
- document all surveillance

Issues identified should be addressed by conducting a structured screening for developmental delays, ASDs or both.

Structured screening for developmental delays and ASDs is the use of standardized, scientifically validated tools to identify and refine a recognized risk. Many validated tools have been developed that are useful. Providers are responsible for ensuring that they continue to use tools that are validated at the time they conduct the structured screening. Providers may select a specific validated screening tool that is most suitable for their practice.

Please reference www.dpw.state.pa.us for EPSDT requirements. Also, reference Medical Assistance Bulletin number 99-09-07 for a detailed list of current validated screening tools, as well as valuable resources and contact information.

Should you have any questions, please contact your Provider Relations Representative