learn shapes and sizes.

Developmental Assessment

One of the most essential components of a complete health appraisal is assessment of developmental function. Screening procedures are designed to identify quickly and reliably children whose developmental level is below normal for their age and who therefore require further investigation. They also provide a means of recording objective measurements of present developmental function for future reference. Since the passage of Public Law 99-457, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986, much greater emphasis is placed on developmental assessment of children with disabilities, and nurses can play a vital role in providing this service. It is estimated that 16% of children are affected by developmental disabilities, but fewer than 30% of these children are identified before kindergarten (Wagner, Jenkins, and Smith, 2006). There are numerous developmental screening tools and each uses a different approach.

   In the past, the most widely used developmental screening tests for young children are the series of tests known as the Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDST) and its revision, the DDST-R, that have been revised, re-standardized, and renamed the Denver II. The American Academy of Neurology and the Child Neurology Society state that research has found that the Denver-II is insensitive and lacks specificity, and neither the American Academy of Neurology nor the Child Neurology Society recommends use of the Denver-II for primary care developmental screening (Filipek, Accardo, Ashwal, et al, 2000). A comprehensive list of child development assessment tools has been developed by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as part of its cooperative agreement with the US Office of Special Education Programs. The pediatric health promotion chapters include detailed information on developmental assessment that is unique to the age and each developmental stage of the child.

Ages and Stages

Ages and stages is a term used to broadly outline key periods in the