

AFPI Karnataka Newsletter

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Child Development Assessment Tools

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Why do we need this?

A rapid advancement has significantly increased the survival rate of High risk infants and some of these infants might have higher chance of developing milestone delays or developmental disabilities. Prematurity or other medical conditions put babies at risk for developmental delays. However, prompt detection and early intervention help a child reach their full potential for growth and development.

Present Scenario

Even though early identification and intervention is critical for well-being of children and their families, yet a significant number of developmental delays continue to go undiagnosed in the early part of life. Research shows that only 20-30% of the children were identified for disabilities before the pre-school years and in addition only few of the children under the age of

three years avail early intervention services. So there is a substantial need to identify as early as possible those children in need of services to ensure that intervention is provided when the developing brain is plastic.

The next concern is that professionals use non-formal methods or observational method to identify developmental risk instead of using standardized screening tools in office practice.

The other major concern is lack of training among professionals in using standardized developmental screening tools.

Dr Nandini Mundkur and her team at Centre for Child Development, have developed online tools to help Professionals, like us Family Physicians, who are the first port of contact with Parents and Children, to pick up any signs of Developmental Delay and direct them to the right

services at the right time, i.e. for early intervention.

Why Early Intervention ???

The first three years of life often called as the pre-school years are the most critical time period for the brain development. These early years provide the foundation for a child's future growth in most aspects of life, including physical health, academics and socio- emotional well-being. Decades of research has shown that neural circuits, which create foundation of movement, behaviour and learning are plastic during the first three years of life. Beyond three years, these domains are quite difficult to change. Moreover, brain development is influenced by early positive experiences such as emotional bondage with caring and responsive adults, environment that facilitate appropriate development and appropriate nutrition. So parental handling and environment in which the child grows will have a deeper impact on holistic development of a child.

Hence, family centred/directed early services to young children who have or at risk of developmental delays brings a positive outcomes across developmental domains including physical, language, cognitive and socio-emotional development.

Online Assessment Tools

This can be administered to all children, irrespective of high risk or not, as developmental problems can occur to any child.



TOTSGUIDE is an online portal catering to the developmental needs of children <5yrs.

It is first of its kind – developed in India which is culturally appropriate with good psychometric properties.

This portal is the result of combined efforts of specialists in Developmental Paediatrics, Psychology, Special Education, Physical and Occupational Therapy.

The services enlisted in this portal are also as available as an app in Google play store (iOS can access via web browser :

1. DOLPHIN – (Developing Opportunities for Learning in Parents to Help Infant Nurture)



This is a parent app, applicable from birth to 2yrs of age.

It offers 730 activities that focus on various domains under sensory stimulation, attachment-bonding, nutrition, sleep and to monitor milestones. The parents receive one activity per day, addressing one of these domains.

Added advantage of availability in different languages (Tamil, Kannada, Hindi, English)

2. Track and Act



This app can be used by parents or professionals to assess developmental age of a child. This can be used from 4months to 5yrs. It also has provision for age correction for prematurity until 2yrs of age.

Track and Act is an online validated developmental screening tool to assess

milestones in 4 Developmental domains:

- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive
- Socio-Emotional

It generates a report which gives a score that helps a Doctor to identify any areas of developmental delay.

This has been designed especially for Indian children in Multiple Language Options (Tamil, Kannada, Hindi, and English)

Note: Professional who want to use this app in their clinic to assess children can contact the team for Partner Program.

For further information on the above apps, contact:

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Links for YouTube videos on apps:

- [Track and act](#)
- [Dolphin](#)