What you should know about the Screening Process

Screening Recommendations:
- ASD can sometimes be detected at 18 months or younger
- By age 2, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered very reliable
- Earlier diagnosis equals earlier treatment services
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends all children are screened for developmental delays and disabilities at: 9 moths, 18 months, 30 months
- AAP recommends screening specifically for ASD at: 18 months and 24 months
- Additional screening may be necessary if the child is at risk, for example, having a parent or sibling with ASD
- Common "at risk" factors that prompt more screenings might include, preterm birth, low birth weight, or have sibling or parent with ASD
- The United State Preventative Services Task Force has issued a call for more research to determine if there are potential benefits and/or harms of ASD screening in all young children (2016)

Myths in Screening Process (cdc.gov, 9.15.2021):
- There are no adequate screening tools for toddlers… This may have been true decades ago, not any longer. Many screenings tools have sensitivities that flag 70% reliability for later diagnosis.
- A great deal of training is needed to administer screening correctly… Training is usually not extensive and can often be administered by paraprofessionals, for example, day care providers.
- Screening takes a lot of time…many instruments take less than 15 minutes or less.
- Tools that incorporate information from the parents are not valid… Parent concerns are generally valid and are predictive of developmental delays can has been demonstrated in the research to be 70-80% accurate for detecting disabilities.

Selected examples of screening tools for general development and ASD (cdc.gov, 9.15.2021):

Screening Tool	Brief Description/Purpose	Link
Ages and Stages Questionnaires	General development screening tools. Parent-completed questionnaire, series of 19 age-specific questionnaires screening communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal adaptive skills, results in a pass/fail score for domains.	https://agesandstages.com/
Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales (CSBS)	Standardized tool for screening of communication and symbolic abilities up to 24-month level, the infant toddler checklist is a 1 pate, parent-completed screening tool.	https://firstwords.fsu.edu/pdf/checklist.pdf
Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)	General development screening tool. Parent-interview form, screens for developmental and behavioral problems needing further evaluation, single response form used for all ages, may be useful as a surveillance tool.	https://pedstest.com/
Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT)	Parent-completed questionnaire designed to identify children at risk for autism in the general population.	https://mchatscreen.com/

| Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children (STAT) | This is an interactive screening tool designed for children when developmental concerns are suspected. It consists of 12 activities assessing play, communication, and imitation skills and takes 20 minutes to administer. | https://stat.vueinnovations.com/ |

Selected examples of diagnostic tools for ASD (cdc.gov, 9.15.2021):

Diagnostic Tool	Brief Description/Purpose	Link
Autism Diagnosis Interview – Revised (ADI-R)	A clinical diagnostic instrument for assessing autism in children and adults. The instrument focuses on behavior in three main areas: reciprocal social interaction; communication and language; and restricted and repetitive, stereotyped interests and behaviors. The ADI-R is appropriate for children and adults with mental ages about 18 months and above.	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/7814313/
Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-Generic (ADOS-G)	A semi-structured, standardized assessment of social interaction, communication, play, and imaginative use of materials for individuals suspected of having ASD. The observational schedule consists of four 30-minute modules, each designed to be administered to different individuals according to their level of expressive language.	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11055457/
Childhood Rating Scale (CARS)	Brief assessment suitable for use with any child over 2 years of age. CARS includes items drawn from five prominent systems for diagnosing autism; each item covers a particular characteristic, ability, or behavior.	https://www.wpspublish.com/cars-2-childhood-autism-rating-scale-second-edition
Gilliam Autism Rating Scale – Second Edition (GARS-2)	Assists teachers, parents, and clinicians in identifying and diagnosing autism in individuals ages 3 through 22. It also helps estimate the severity of the child's disorder.	https://mchatscreen.com/
Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children (STAT)	This is an interactive screening tool designed for children when developmental concerns are suspected. It consists of 12 activities assessing play, communication, and imitation skills and takes 20 minutes to administer.	https://www.parinc.com/Products/Pkey/118

Pediatric Developmental Screening Flowchart

Parent completes screening tool in waiting room.

Clinical staff scores, reviews screening tool answers.

Screens Negative

Concerns

Screens Postive

No Concerns

Provider discusses results and concerns with parents.

- Immediate action required
- Provider discusses results and concerns with parents
- Performs further more specific medical & developmental assessment and/or refers for further assessment
- Provides anticipatory guidance

No Concerns

Further Concerns

- Provider discusses results with parents
- Provides anticipatory guidance
- No immediate action required
- Rescreen at next well-child visit

- Provides anticipatory guidance
- Monitor development
- Rescreen at next well-child visit

Referral to appropriate early intervention services if child is not yet 3 years old or special education program if the child is 3 years or older.