Caregiver Chronicle

Tips for Discussing Developmental Concerns with Parents

Bringing up your concerns about a child's development can be daunting. Some parents may be relieved to know that you have noticed something too, while others may not be open to hearing this information.

Educators and child care providers have a responsibility to monitor a child's development. As soon as a developmental delay or special need is suspected, it is important to report this to a parent in an in-person meeting. This will help ensure that the child will have access to early and appropriate interventions, if needed.



Here are some tips to help you prepare for the conversation:

Prior to the Meeting

Advance preparation is important. Talk to the parents and schedule a time to meet, rather than trying to fit the conversation into a pick-up or drop-off time. Make sure to tell the parents what the meeting is about, and host the session in an area that's private and comfortable.

Because you work with the child regularly, you've likely noticed developmental changes over a period of time. Comparing a child's development to <u>age-appropriate milestones</u> is one way to document your concerns, and make sure to note any modifications to care that you've made to meet the child's needs. It's also important to think about how you talk about your concerns, the words you use and what they'll mean to parents.

During the Meeting

The goal of the meeting is to have back-and-forth conversation about the child's development that leads to additional support for the child if needed.

Start by talking about the child's strengths, then talk about concerns. Have the parent share their own observations, questions or concerns about their child, or ask questions that will allow them to share their own observations before sharing your own.

It's important to keep the conversation and information you share objective. Focus on developmental milestones, specific behaviors and the need to rule out possible concerns. A developmental checklist can be a good guide, as it offers a visual tool for parents to think about without putting a label on it.

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A newsletter from ACCAP Child Care Support Services Serving Anoka and Washington Counties Volume 4, Issue 8 August 2017

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Debra S. Fish Library Resources

Did you know Minnesota's best resources for early childhood professionals are available FREE to you? The Debra S. Fish Early Childhood Library, with locations in Little Canada (St. Paul) & Minneapolis, contains the most current and comprehensive collection of resources for early childhood professionals in Minnesota. As one of St. Paul Public Library's (SPPL) branches, their resources are easily accessible to anyone in Minnesota.

What is available?

- Hard-to-find titles on a broad range of early childhood topics, such as books and DVDs on positive guidance, play, developmentally appropriate practice, anti-bias education, nature, ethics, technology, family engagement, and much more
- Multilingual children's books in Chinese, Cambodian, English, Hmong, Karen, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese
- Literacy story kits, STEM story kits and books, and big books
- Play kits, each containing a parachute, kick balls, and scarves
- Parent Aware approved assessment tools and aligned curricula kits

- FREE space for staff meetings, by appointment (8-15 people)
- Frequently updated subject specific bibliographies on our website

How do I get materials from the library?

Visit the library: Hours are Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Evenings and Saturdays when classes are scheduled (call or email to confirm) Address: 10 Yorkton Court, St. Paul, MN 55117 and 2021 East Hennepin Ave., Suite LL20, Minneapolis, MN 55413

View and request an interlibrary loan for anything in the collection at www.sppl.org or mnlink.org.

Questions? We're here to help!

If you want to get to know our collection better, we are happy to schedule a library tour for your staff, visit your location to discuss resources, help with projects, locate books and more!

Contact us at 651-641-3544 or Email: librarian@thinksmall.org to reach Jennie Walker Knoot, Librarian Website: thinksmall.org/library

Provider Spotlight

Giant Checkers and Chess

This Summer, family child care

provider Carlotta Renner was busy making an outdoor checker board and chess game for the kids in her program! It is made from Frisbees©, sod, and stomp stones. Everyone had fun playing the giant game outside!





4-year-old milestones show continued growth in development



The developmental milestones for a 4-year-old are

focused on continued growth. Just a couple of years ago, a ball was something to grasp at with little fingers; now, she's catching a bounced ball and throwing it back. Deeper cognitive reasoning is emerging, as he understands the concepts of same and different, and begins to follow more complex instructions.

While every child grows at his or her own rate, Help Me Grow offers the following developmental milestones as typical for a 4-year-old.

These markers help monitor a child's progress:

- -Catches a bounced ball most of the time
- -Tells stories and recalls parts of stories
- -Plays cooperatively with other children
- -Copies simple shapes
- -Understands the concept of same and different
- -Follows instructions with two or three steps
- -Hops and stands on one foot for a few seconds
- -Sings a song or says a rhyme from memory
- -Says first and last name
- -Communicates clearly and speaks in complete sentences
- -Negotiates solutions to conflicts
- -Prefers playing with other children than playing alone
- -Understands the concept of counting and may know some numbers
- -Draws a person with two to four body parts



For a 4-year-old, parents and caregivers can encourage a child's development in the following ways:

- -Give the child crayons, markers and a variety of play materials
- -Read with the child every day
- -Pay attention when the child is talking
- -Give the child opportunities to play with other children
- -Say positive things to the child
- -Urge the child to use words to ask for help



Developmental milestones help you understand what's typical in a child's development. To learn more about these milestones and how to encourage a child's progress at different ages, visit <u>helpmegrowmn.org</u>.

Portions of this content, developed by Help Me Grow Minnesota, may have previously appeared elsewhere.

Tips for Discussing Developmental Concerns (continued)

Give parents accurate information in a nonjudgmental way, such as, "Based on the developmental checklist we completed, your child is not meeting his/her developmental milestones," or "Your child seems to be learning in a different way." This is a good opportunity to explain the role and importance of early identification and intervention for developmental concerns.

To end the meeting in a positive way, identify next steps and reassure parents that you will support them and their child. Refer them to additional resources to learn more or seek support, such as the child's health care provider, or <u>refer the child</u> through Help Me Grow.

If a child is referred through Help Me Grow, the family will be contacted by the local school district to arrange for a screening or evaluation to determine if their child is eligible for Infant and Toddler Intervention or Preschool Special Education services.

More Tips for Successful Conversations

- Be careful not to use jargon, acronyms, labels.
- Do not diagnose. This should only be done through a comprehensive developmental or medical evaluation.
- Acknowledge a parent's concerns if they are not the same as yours.

- Remember that parents may tell you that you are wrong. Find out what the parents see their child doing in other situations. Agree to revisit the issue and check in again.
- Be supportive and respectful.
- Practice active listening techniques.
- Be calm, but show your concern.
- Be honest but kind.
- Be open to trying a parent's suggestions.

Watch these videos from Help Me Grow to learn more about discussing concerns with parents:

Conversation strategies and preparation video

Conversation with parents video

For more information, visit www.helpmegrowmn.org.

This article first appeared on the Help Me Grow



website as <u>Discussing</u> <u>Developmental Con-</u> <u>cerns with Parents</u>.

REETAIN Grants

It's that time of year!

REETAIN grant **applications will be accepted from October 1st through November 30th.** This round is for Family Child Care and everyone is encouraged to apply. Visit the Child Care Aware website at child-careaware.org for application information. Awardees will be notified by December 20th.

For more information go to http://childcareawaremn.org/professionals-caregivers/grants-scholarships

Fall into the habit of attending a free program at your local library

Libraries in Anoka and Washington County will host a wide variety of programs for youth during October 2017. All library programs are free!

Anoka County Library

Comic juggler Steve Russell provides MEA break entertainment with a free program at the Bunker Hills Activity Center on Friday, October 20 at 10:30 a.m. The Bunker Hills Activity Center is located at 550 Bunker Hill Blvd NW, Andover MN 55304. This is a fun show for all ages!

In addition to regular storytimes, Anoka County Library will partner with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for two special storytimes in October. "We Need Seeds" will be presented at the Rum River Library on Tuesday, October 10 at 10:15 a.m., while "Bat's Incredible" will fly into the St. Francis Library on Tuesday, October 24 at 10:15 a.m.

Columbia Heights Public Library

Stories Sing! The MN Opera visits on Thursday, Oct.19 at 2:00 p.m. Watch as a professional opera singer gives a new perspective on reading as Minnesota Opera presents an innovative program bridging traditional storytelling and music. Registration required.

Washington County Library

October is filled with special programs kicking off with Saturday Family Storytime on Saturday, October 7th, 10:30 a.m. at the Oakdale Library. Oakdale also hosts STEM Saturdays with the Raptor Center on Saturday, October 7th, 1:30 p.m. Join "Stories Sing" with the Minnesota Opera on Tuesday October 17th, 10:30 a.m. at the Park Grove Library in Cottage Grove. The Park Grove Library also hosts Mixed Age Movement Class presented by Music Together in the Valley on Thursday October 19th, 10:30 a.m.

For location and times of storytimes and programs, visit each library system's calendar of events: Anoka County Library: <u>http://anokacountylibrary.org/</u>

Columbia Heights Public Library: http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/index.aspx?nid=127

Stillwater Public Library: http://stillwaterlibrary.org/

Washington County Library: https://www.washcolib.org/





Parent Aware is all about? Join us for an orientation

session to get your questions answered.

Complete your

Participation Agreement for Parent Aware and receive a FREE toy from Lakeshore



Tuesday, October 17, 2017			
6:30-8pm	Blaine Human Service Center		
6:30-8pm	Peace of Mind		
Thursday, November 30, 2017			
1:30-3pm	Blaine Human Service Center		
1:30-3pm	Woodbury City Hall		
6:30-8pm	Blaine Human Service Center		
6:30-8pm	Cottage Grove City Hall		

Woodbury City Hall 8301 Valley Creek Rd Woodbury MN 55125

Cottage Grove City Hall 12800 Ravine Parkway S Cottage Grove MN 55016 **Blaine Human Service Center** 1201 89th Ave NE Blaine MN 55434

Peace of Mind Early Education 9025 Tamarack Rd Woodbury, MN 55125

Early Childhood Professional Learning Communities

Anoka County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at

Blaine Human Service Center

October 10th, 2017	March 13th, 2018
November 14th, 2017	April 10th, 2018
February 13th, 2018	May 8th, 2018

Washington County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:30pmto 8:30pm at

Peace of Mind Early Education Center

October 19th, 2017 November 16th, 2017 February 15th, 2018

March 15th, 2018 April 19th, 2018 May 17th, 2018

All Providers Welcome!

Child Care Aware of Minnesota Metro is sponsoring an Early Childhood Professional Learning Community - an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues in the field.

This is a place for you to meet with other providers, learn new things, help each other be successful, share what you know and what works for you!

Your experience being an early childhood provider and/or teacher is important for children.

Your thoughts, ideas, and wisdom will lead the discussions along with Special Guests!!!

Please RSVP to Annette Borman: aborman@accap.org or 763-783-4711