

RECOGNIZING & ASSISTING CHILDREN WHO ARE SHOWING DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

a handbook for teachers



discover what's inside

CONTENTS

● INTRODUCTION	Page 2
● ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	
Definitions	Page 3
What to Look for: Early Signs	Page 4
● WHAT TO DO	
Communicating With Parents	Page 5
If You Have Concerns	Page 6
Strategies for the Classroom – Communication/Social/Play.....	Page 7
Strategies for the Classroom – Behaviours and Independent Skills.....	Page 9
● IMPORTANT CONTACTS & RESOURCES	
Conclusion	Page 11
Contacts	Page 11



*Providing support and therapies
that make a difference in the daily lives
of families, all under one roof.*

INTRODUCTION

Monarch House has created this handbook as a resource for professionals working in a daycare, preschool or kindergarten environment.

At Monarch House, we understand the important role teachers and childcare workers have in the early detection of developmental delays. The research is clear that early intervention is beneficial for a child and therefore, the earlier a concern can be identified the sooner therapy can start.

This handbook outlines the steps professionals can take in identifying developmental concerns and how to support the child and parents.



ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

DEFINITIONS

Developmental delay refers to the child not meeting or showing developmental milestones, such as sitting, walking or talking.

A developmental delay can be caused by organic, psychological or environmental factors.

Developmental disability is a cognitive, physical or social impairment that occurs in infancy or early childhood and lasts throughout the lifetime.

A developmental disability can improve greatly with early intervention and supports.

Motor skills are acts that lead to complex body movements. Gross motor movements include actions such as crawling, sitting, jumping and include larger muscles and body parts. Fine motor skills involve smaller muscles (ie. hands) and are important in dressing, eating, writing etc.

Communication is the exchange of thoughts, information or feelings with another individual. This can be in the form of language or gestures and non-verbal messages.

In this handbook, difficulty refers to “not often or rarely showing age appropriate skills”.



A chart of typical developmental milestones can be found at:
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones
...or you can ask your doctor for a copy.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

- **Difficulty with communication:**
 - Uses less words than other children his/her age
 - Loss of language skills
 - Does not understand simple instructions
 - Uses few or no gestures
- **Behaviour concerns:**
 - Easily upset when routine changes
 - Often does repetitive movements with objects
 - Often does repetitive movements with body parts (ie. arms, hands)
 - Has difficulty paying attention to an activity compared to other children his/her age
- **Difficulty with social/interaction skills:**
 - Avoids making eye contact
 - Does not share interests/objects with others
 - Does not listen when called by name
- **Self care delays:**
 - Bed time and sleeping patterns are not consistent
 - Feeding issues (ie. picky eater, doesn't chew food)
 - Difficulty with toileting
 - Dependent on others for dressing
- **Motor concerns:**
 - Avoids playing on playground equipment
 - Seems to be more clumsy than other children
 - Uses one side of the body much more often than the other
 - Finds it hard to keep postural control (i.e. sitting)

Note: if a child shows two or more of the above signs regularly, an appointment should be made with their family doctor for further assessment.

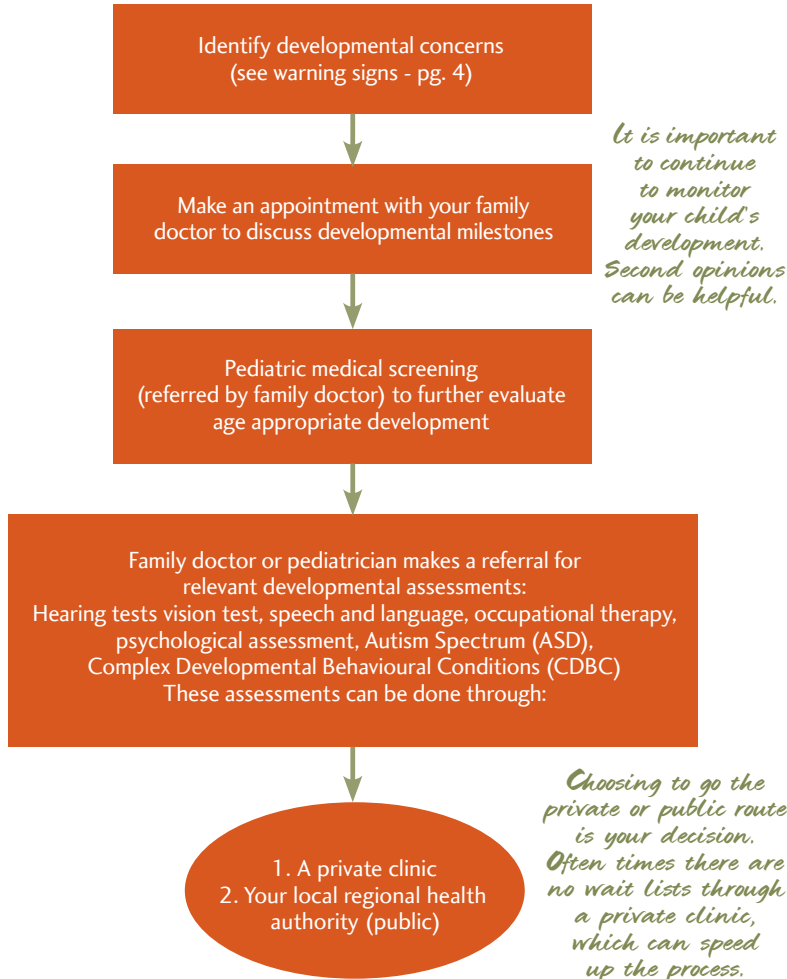
WHAT NEXT?

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

You may be the first person to notice delays in a child's development, and it is important to let the parents know of your concerns. It is possible that parents/caregivers may not immediately notice that their child is not meeting/showing typical developmental milestones. Concerns about a child's development can be an emotional experience for parents. Hence, focusing on the child's strengths and providing the parents with advice and support can make all the difference in their journey for them. Our goal at Monarch House is to educate and empower families by providing them with access to immediate services and support.

- Have a meeting with the parents and describe what you are seeing in the classroom:
 - a) Focus on the child's strengths. Give examples of the actions the child is doing well before stating your concerns.
 - b) When presenting your concerns, give specific examples of times and behaviours you have noticed the child having difficulty with. The following sentence may be helpful to use: 'I notice (child's name) often/sometimes has difficulty when it's time to _____.'
 - c) Provide a list of 2-3 mannerisms or actions the child is doing during these times of concern.
 - d) Ask the parents if they have noticed similar behaviours at home.
 - e) Talk to the parents about what appropriate behaviour for those times would look like (ie. 'We really want (child's name) to be able to _____.'
- Refer to Early Warning Signs (pg. 4) if appropriate
- Provide parents with a list of next steps (pg. 6) or a copy of the parent handbook that accompanies this handbook.
- Discuss what support and resources the school or daycare can provide (pg. 7).

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS



The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has programs to help your child (see page 11) including: Early Intervention Therapy Program, Infant Development Program and Supported Child Development. Call MCFD (1.800.663.9122) for more information

**A child does not need a diagnosis to access these programs*

IN THE MEANTIME: STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Communication/social/play activities that support interaction and basic communication skills. These activities can be facilitated among peers in the classroom as well as with the teacher.

- Imitation is a foundational skill for children's learning. Children are learning from their surroundings at every moment, by watching other children and their teacher(s). Encourage children to observe activities if they are unwilling to participate. It may be necessary to set-up opportunities/activities with just you and the child to have the child copy simple actions you are doing (ie. Row Your Boat, Ring Around the Rosie and simple play routines).
- Turn-taking is a critical skill to be successful in communication and social interactions. Building blocks, ball drop toys and push button toys can be great activities to build in turns. When a child is showing interest in a toy, watch what they do with the toy and then take a turn yourself with the toy, doing the same thing they did.



STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

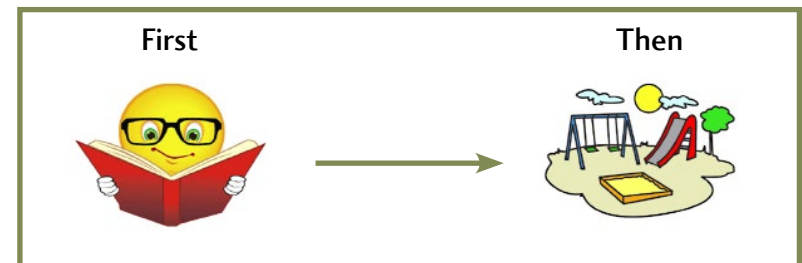
If it is difficult for the child to play with toys try playing a simple tickling or chase game:

- 1) Do a quick tickle or chase
 - 2) Stop and wait
 - 3) Encourage the child to communicate with you that they want you to “do it again” The child might communicate this by looking at you/making eye contact, using gestures or saying words. Be realistic in what you expect from the child and then be consistent in expecting this of him/her every time.
- Songs such as ‘Wheels on the Bus’, ‘Twinkle Twinkle’ & ‘Itsy Bitsy Spider’. Don’t be afraid to help a child do the actions by moving their hands.
 - Books with simple pictures, colours or shapes – this can be a great quiet activity between peers or with the teacher. It provides shared enjoyment and the opportunity to practice turn-taking when flipping the pages.

IN THE MEANTIME: STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Supporting positive behaviours and independent skills through the use of structured environments and communication style.

- Providing an environment free of distractions (auditory and visual) will increase a child’s ability to be successful in completing tasks. By clearing toys and other distractions a child will be able to focus their attention easier on your instructions or the task at hand.
- Children thrive with structure and routine. Set up consistent and clear expectations. If you know specific times when a child has more difficulty (ie. free or play time), provide the child with simple choices (you can play with the sand table or the cars) and clear expectations (participate for 2 minutes).
- Using a visual schedule allows the child to both hear and see what will be happening next, and prepares the child for the next activity. Use a large schedule for the entire class to see and smaller portable ones for individual children. Here is an example of a simple visual schedule:



Note: try pairing pictures with your words ('first reading, then recess')

helpful tips:

- Simplifying instructions and emphasize key words. For example, ‘First hang up coats, then circle time’ instead of ‘everyone hang up your coats and then get ready for circle time.’
- Remember that it is often easier for a child to take turns with an adult than another child and encourage parallel play with peers.



STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

- To make an activity more enjoyable and successful for a child, look for the positive behaviours a child is doing and let him/her know what a terrific job he/she is doing in that moment. For activities you know are more difficult for the child, try to provide more than normal reinforcement. It might also be necessary to provide physical assistance to the child to help them complete the task (your hand over their hand). Breaking the task down into smaller parts to have the child only complete the beginning or the end of the activity is often useful as well.
- Providing reminders and warnings can help children transition between activities more successfully. This can be as simple as 'five more minutes' or a countdown '3, 2, 1.' A visual schedule or an egg timer can help with this as well.



MONARCH HOUSE IS HERE TO HELP

At Monarch House we understand that supports and resources are important to teachers and childcare workers. Please see below for a list of resources both online and in the community to assist you through any challenges you may face. Remember, you are not alone; there are programs and professionals in your community to support children and families. If you have questions or concerns regarding a child's development, please do not hesitate to contact us at Monarch House. We are here to help you in any way we can.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS & RESOURCES

Monarch House

Vancouver: 604.205.9204

Victoria: 250.220.8999

www.monarchhouse.ca

At Home Funding Program

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/at_home/pdf/ahp_guide.pdf

Infant Development Program (IDP)

www.idpofbc.ca

Early Intervention Therapies (Speech & Occupational Therapy)

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs

Supported Child Development

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/scd.htm

Ministry of Children and Family Support Line

1.877.387.7027

Autism Community Training (ACT)

www.actcommunity.net

Regional Contacts for Children and Youth with Special Needs:

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/contacts.htm

*Providing support and therapies that
make a difference in the daily lives of families,
all under one roof.*

The information in this Monarch House handbook is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and is not intended to be a substitute for a health care provider's consultation. Please consult your own physician or appropriate health care provider about the applicability of any opinions or recommendations with respect to your child's developmental delays as these commonly present with variable signs and symptoms.

The information in this Monarch House handbook should not be considered complete, nor should it be relied on to suggest a course of treatment for a particular individual. It should not be used in place of a visit, call, consultation or the advice of your child's physician or other qualified health care provider. Information obtained in this handbook is not exhaustive and does not cover all signs, symptoms, ailments, physical conditions or their treatment. Should you have any health care related questions, please call or see your child's physician or other qualified health care provider promptly.

Monarch House assumes no liability or responsibility for damage or injury to persons or property arising from any use of any product, information, idea, or instruction contained in the materials provided to you.



Part of CBI Health Group

VANCOUVER

3185 Willingdon Green
Burnaby, BC, V5G 4P3
604.205.9204

VICTORIA

611 Discovery St, Suite 211
Victoria, BC, V8T 5G4
250.220.8999

FRASER VALLEY

34252 Marshall Rd, Suite 4
Abbotsford, BC, V2S 1L9
604.755.8039

info@monarchhouse.ca

www.monarchhouse.ca