

Delaware Developmental Monitoring & Screening

Family Event Planning Guide



*A plain language guide for
early child care providers.*

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Words to Know



Developmental milestones

Skills that most children can do by the time they reach a certain age. Children reach milestones in the ways they play, learn, speak, act, and move.

Developmental monitoring

When a parent or another caregiver watches how a child talks, learns, plays, and moves to make sure they are meeting milestones. This is an ongoing process.

Developmental screening

When a parent or another caregiver takes a closer look at a child's development by completing a standardized and research-supported tool (like the Ages and Stages Questionnaires or ASQ).

Evaluation

A more formal process of looking at a child's development. Evaluations help to determine if support services are needed. A child may be referred for an evaluation if the screening tool identifies an area of concern across one or more developmental areas.

Event feedback

When a person tells you what they thought about your event.

Event promotion

When you tell other people about an event and try to get them to attend.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

[Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#) (LTSAE) is a program through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that encourages parents and caregivers of children ages birth to 5 years and providers who care for them to learn about developmental milestones, monitor every child's development, and act early to provide children with needed intervention and supports.

Read Me First!



About Learn the Signs. Act Early.

[Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#) (LTSAE) is a program through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that encourages parents and caregivers of children ages birth to 5 years and providers who care for them to learn about developmental milestones, monitor every child's development, and act early to provide children with needed intervention and supports.

LTSAE has a library of resources to help you support children and talk with the families that you work with. Visit the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism (DNEA) website at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/early-childhood/> to view and order resources. *If you are a provider in Delaware*, the DNEA will ship these resources to you free of charge.

Why Act Early?

By engaging in regular Act Early activities, like developmental monitoring, you will be better able to identify children who are in need of additional services and supports. The earlier that children can access needed services, the better the outcomes are likely to be in school and even into adulthood.

What is a family developmental screening event?

A family developmental screening event is a great way to connect families with LTSAE information, recommendations, and resources. By hosting a family event at your child care facility, you can help to make sure your families have the supports they need for their children.

About this event planning guide

This event guide has resources and examples of activities that you can use during your next family developmental screening event. This guide also includes instructions for leading the different activities. You can choose to use some or all the activities in this guide at your next event.

Some information in this guide may be new to you or to your families. That is okay!

Before Your Event

There are many important decisions to make when planning an event. This section of the guide shares some tips for scheduling and promoting your next event.

Scheduling your event

Here are some helpful questions to think through with your planning team. These questions will help you decide the best time, location, and audience for your next event.

- **Where should the event be held?** *It is best to hold the event in an accessible and central location for families and children. A large space with Wi-Fi is recommended.*
- **What time works best for your families?** *For example, evening or weekend times might be best for working families. Scheduling your event for a time when families will already be visiting the facility (for example, during afternoon pick-up) can also be a convenient option.*
- **How many staff are available to help during the event?** *Help from staff is key. Help from the planning team can be especially important for event set-up, interacting with children, and assisting families in completing a screening.*
- **How many computers/devices are available?** *This will help determine how many families can be completing a screening at one time.*
- **Do you want to assign timeslots for families to arrive?** *This can be a helpful way to manage the flow of the event, especially if you have limited staff or resources available.*
- **How many children will be attending at one time?** *This will influence the number of activities that need to be made available during the event.*
- **What are the ages of children who are attending?** *Will children be the same age or different ages? This will determine the number and type of activities you will need to have available during your event.*
- **Are siblings invited to attend?** *For many families, finding child care for siblings can be hard. If possible, inviting siblings may make it easier for families to attend. This may also mean increasing the number of materials needed.*

Promoting your event

So, you have determined the best date, time, and location for your event. Now it is time to promote it! **Event promotion** is when you tell other people about an event and try to get them to attend. There are different strategies that you can use to promote an event. In fact, it is helpful to use multiple strategies for event promotion to make sure you are reaching as many families as possible.

When thinking about event promotion, it is important to consider the ways that your families already receive news and information at your facility. Maybe this is through a Facebook page, newsletter or daily report. Mapping your event promotion onto these familiar communication channels will make it easier to spread the word to your families.

Example event promotion materials

- Printed flyers
- Social media graphics
- Messaging for classroom newsletter
- Messaging for email listservs

Tips for creating event promotion materials

Important details to include

- Brief description of the event, including who the event is for.
- Date, time, and location where the event will be held.
- Contact information for families to ask questions or to request accommodations.
- Instructions for registering
 - If you are using an online registration website, *Eventbrite*, *Evite*, or *SignUpGenius*, include a link to register for the event on your flyers and social media images.
 - Add a QR code to the event registration page, if applicable.

Additional accessibility tips

- Create both online and print materials. Include alt-text for all online images.
- If you are using a QR code in your event promotion, include a website link underneath the QR code.
- Make sure that the color of your text has a strong contrast to the background color on your image or event flyer.
- Include a place for people to request accommodations. For instance, include the line: “To request accommodations, please contact _____.”

Reaching out to families

Communication with families is critical when planning your event. Often, email or take-home flyers are quick ways to spread the word about your upcoming event. Here is a list of important information to include in outreach messaging to families:

- Location
- Event date/time
- Registration instructions
- Who is invited to attend
- Contact information for the day of the event
- What to expect / event overview

The template below can be copied and pasted into an email or onto a print flyer to your families. Tip: Replace the text in brackets with information specific to your event.

Hello,

*Learn ways to help your child learn and grow! Join the **[Add group name here]** for a Family Developmental Screening Event on **[insert date of event here]** at **[insert location here]**.*

*A family developmental screening event is a great way to connect with families, get access to resources and get help with developmental screening. This event is free and open to the public. Families and children of all ages are welcome **[OR list the target age range here.]** Activities, take-home resources, and hands-on support with completing developmental and social emotional screeners will be available.*

[Add registration information here].

*Kindly RSVP no later than **[add due date here]**.*

*For more information, or to request accommodations, please contact **[add contact person's information here]**.*

We hope to see you there!

Follow-up messaging

It is important to send follow-up messages or reminder emails as your event date gets closer. Follow-up messages can be sent to people who have *and* have not registered for your event.

Follow-ups to families who have not registered for your event

Sending follow-up emails usually helps to get more people to register. If you are hoping to get more families to attend your event, you can re-send invitation messages to families who have not RSVP'd. When sending emails to people who have not yet registered, copy the sample email message from the template above.

Sending reminders to families who RSVP'd

Reminder emails are very helpful for families who registered for your event. These reminders can be especially helpful if invitations were sent out far in advance.

When sending event reminder emails, consider including the following information:

- Location
- Event date/time
- Parking instructions (i.e., where to go when you arrive)
- Contact information for the day of the event
- What to expect / event overview
- Photo consent form (if staff members plan on photographing the event)

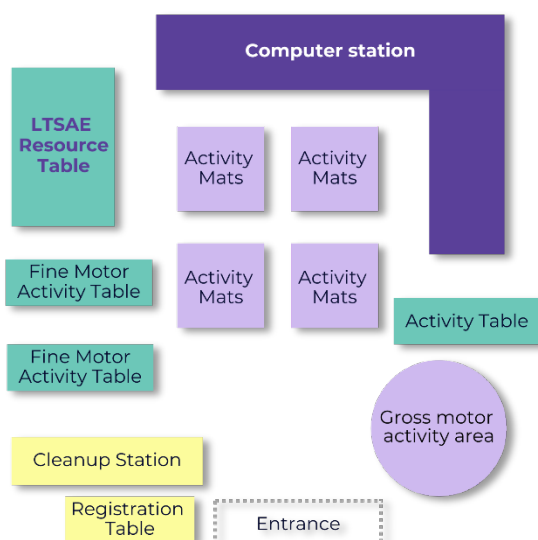
Main ideas from this section

- Work with a planning team to decide the best date, time, and location for your event.
- Determine how many people/families to invite.
- Determine the best method for communicating with your families. If possible, promote your event using both printed and digital messages.
- Provide contact information on promotional materials for families to ask questions or request accommodations.

Day of Your Event

Your event is an opportunity to interact with children and families, assist families in completing a developmental screening tool, and promote family-led developmental monitoring resources. This section of the guide provides tips for accessible event set-up and recommended materials to meet the needs of all children and families.

Event set-up



In this layout, the developmental screening tables are set up along the perimeter of the room and activity stations for children are set up in the middle of the room.

Considerations for arranging the event space

- Allow time before the event for setting up. At least one hour is recommended.
- Make sure all restrooms and handwashing stations are easily accessible. Include signs that direct families to accessible restrooms and private changing spaces.
- Set up a family area to complete developmental screenings. It is recommended that activities for children are in view of the family area.
- Arrange age-appropriate activities for children who will be in attendance. *Note:* if you are arranging activities on the floor, keep at least a 3-foot walkway in between activities for accessibility.
- Set up a system to clean toys throughout the event, as needed. Set aside a “dirty toy bin” where used toys/materials can be stored.
- Have disinfecting wipes available to wipe down computers in-between use.

Recommended activity areas for children

- **Infant area** with a soft mat, board books, rattles, soft blocks, and nesting toys.
- **Toddler area** with a soft mat, books, shape sorter, pop beads, and nesting toys.
- **Preschool area** with a mat area, books, writing opportunities, and blocks.
- **Fine Motor area** with sorting activities, safe scissor activities, and puzzles.
- **Gross Motor area** with bean bag toss, stepping blocks, balls, and ring toss.



Steps for supporting families in completing the ASQ

1. **Talk to families about the developmental screener(s) they are about to complete.** For some families, this might be the first time they are hearing about developmental screening. **See pages 3-4 of this guide** for a plain language definition of developmental screening and the importance of *Act Early*.
2. **Direct families to an available computer.**
3. **Assist families in selecting the appropriate screening(s).**
 - *Families who have children 1 month to 34 months will use the Birth to Three portal to complete the screening(s).*
 - *Families who have children 34 to 60 months will use the school district portals to complete the screening(s).*
4. Recommend that families complete **both** the Ages and Stages (ASQ) 3 Developmental Screener and the ASQ 2 Social Emotional Screener.
5. **Select the appropriate language.** Families should choose the language spoken in the home. The screenings are available in English and Spanish.

Tip: Have a staff member available at the computer station to assist with any questions.

For additional information and guidance, visit DOE's Developmental Screening Resources webpage at: https://education.delaware.gov/families/birth-age-5/early_resources/developmental_screenings/

Take-home materials

Take-home bags can be a helpful way for families to remember the information learned from your event. Here are examples of helpful materials to include in a take-home bag:

1. Learn the Signs. Act Early. resources

- Milestone Moments Booklet
- Developmental Milestone Checklists
- Developmental Milestone Brochure

Click here to order free resources: www.delawareautismnetwork.org/early-childhood/

2. Age-specific family resources



Family resources for children under age 3



Family resources for children aged 3-5 years

Recommended materials to include in family resource bags:

- Age-specific activities for children under three – For example: board books, crayons, safety scissors, wooden blocks, beads and string
- Age-specific activities for children aged three to five – For example: books, magnetic tile blocks, puzzles, lacing laces
- Informational cards/flyers

Main ideas from this section

- Layout of age-appropriate activities for children who will be in attendance.
- Keep child activity areas in view of the developmental screening computer station.
- Have a staff member available at the computer station to assist families who are completing the ASQ.
- Create take-home bags for attendees that include *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* materials and age-specific family resources.

After Your Event

This section of the guide shares some tips for things you can do after your next event.

Getting feedback

Getting feedback after an event is an important way of knowing what parts of your event went well and what parts of your event could be improved. **Feedback** is when a person tells you what they thought about something. In this case, feedback would be when a person tells you what they thought about your event. A survey is a common way to get feedback after an event. Be sure to review any event feedback with your planning team.

Example event feedback questions

Consider asking families to complete a brief survey with their thoughts on your event. Below are some sample topics that you can include on your feedback survey.

- Did families feel the information and resources provided were helpful?
 - Which activities/resources did families feel were the most helpful?
- Did families feel the staff were helpful when completing the ASQ?
- How satisfied were families with the event overall?
- Any additional thoughts or comments?

Tip: When creating event surveys, it is recommended to keep them *anonymous*. This means you do not ask for any names or identifying information on the survey.

Follow-up with families

It is important to send a follow-up after the event in case families have any additional questions or need any additional guidance. Consider sending a **thank-you email** to families who attended the event. It is also recommended to check-in with families to see if their ASQ screening results have been received. If they have received the results, check to see if they have any questions about **next steps**.

Main ideas from this section

- Send a follow-up email to families. Check to see if families need additional guidance on next steps with the ASQ.
- Review survey results and make updates for your next event as needed.

Things “To-Do” Before Your Event

*Print out this page for a checklist of things “to-do” **before** your event! This list is meant to help you and your planning team to get started. You may need to add extra items.*

- ☐ **Connect with a planning team.**
- ☐ **Assign tasks to your planning team.** Tasks could include (but are not limited to):
(1) Promoting the event; (2) Managing family registration; (3) Reserving event space; (4) Organizing materials and resources; (5) Event set-up; (6) Day-of support; (7) Event cleanup; and (8) Follow-up with families
- ☐ **Assign a point-of-contact for your event.**
- ☐ **Determine the most accessible event date/time for your staff and families.**
- ☐ **Send out calendar holds for your staff and planning team.**
- ☐ **Determine an accessible location for your event.** *Consider factors like distance for staff and families, size of space, Wi-Fi/internet access, and wheelchair accessibility.*
- ☐ **Create print and digital promotional materials with the event date/time/location.** *Promotional materials include printed and digital flyers, graphics for social media, language for email newsletters, etc.*
- ☐ **Set up a registration process for families.** Include a place to request accommodations.
- ☐ **Plan age-specific activity areas for children and families in attendance.**
- ☐ **Gather resources and materials for event activities.** If needed, check out an event kit from the lending library.
- ☐ **Create a packing list of materials and supplies for the day of your event.**
- ☐ **Locate devices/technology for the developmental screening computer station.**
- ☐ **Promote the event to families and staff.** If possible, event promotion should occur in-person and digitally **at least one month before** your event.
- ☐ **Send event reminders to staff and families at least once a week.**
- ☐ **Visit the event space ahead of time to plan out how you will set up your space.**

Things “To-Do” During Your Event

*Print out this page for a checklist of things “to-do” **during** your event! This list is meant to help you and your planning team to get started. You may need to add extra items.*

- ☐ **Check that all computers are fully charged, and that the Wi-Fi is working.**
- ☐ **Set up computer station by nearby outlets, if possible.**
- ☐ **Assign staff to specific event areas**, such as: (1) Developmental screening computer station; (2) Child activity area(s); (3) Registration table; and (4) LTSAE resource table(s).
- ☐ **Allow at least 1 hour for event set-up.** This may include setting up: (1) computer station, (2) child activity areas; (3) registration table; and (4) resource table(s).
- ☐ **Set up the registration table near the entrance to your event space.** *Be sure to include a sign-in sheet and any additional resources that you would like families to have at the start of the event.*
- ☐ **Point out important places in the event space once families arrive.** These could include: (1) restrooms; (2) private changing spaces; (3) sensory break area(s); and (4) exits.
- ☐ **Collect photo release forms from families** (if photos will be taken at the event).
- ☐ **Direct families to either complete the ASQ at the computer station or to play in the child activity areas.**
- ☐ **For families at the child activity areas**, encourage them to interact with their children and assist by modeling appropriate interaction.
- ☐ **For families completing the ASQ**, refer to page 10 of this guide for steps to supporting families in completing a developmental screener.
- ☐ **Have materials available to support the ASQ screening questions.** For example: mirrors, bells, scissors, crayons, etc.
- ☐ **Share take-home materials with families at the end of the event.**
- ☐ **Ask families to share event feedback before leaving.**
- ☐ **Allow time after the event for cleanup and sanitizing.**

Things “To-Do” After Your Event



*Print out this page for a checklist of things “to-do” **after** your event! This list is meant to help you and your planning team to get started. You may need to add extra items.*

- ☐ **Debrief with your planning team at the end of your event.** Discuss the things that staff felt went well and some of the areas that could be improved for your next event.
- ☐ **Take note of the activities and materials that were most helpful for children and families.** This will help your planning team to know which activities to bring back for the next event.
- ☐ **Assign a planning team member to manage family feedback.**
- ☐ **Send a follow-up email to families to thank them for attending.** Aim to send this thank-you email to families **1-3 days after** your event.
- ☐ **If you have a digital feedback survey,** consider emailing the survey to families 1-3 days after your event.
- ☐ **Send a follow-up message to families to see if they received their developmental screening results.**
- ☐ **If families have received their screening results,** ask if they have any questions about next steps.
- ☐ **Review event feedback results with your planning team.**
- ☐ **Take note of important feedback and make updates for your next event based on feedback received from families.**

My Event “To-Do” List

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Acknowledgments



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