



Collaboration
for Early Childhood
Care & Education

Physician's Network News



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Introduction to the Collaboration *Carolyn Newberry*

The collaboration is a unique public-private partnership. Participants include representatives of local governing bodies, preschools, childcare providers, agencies serving the needs of families with young children, institutions of higher learning, early childhood policy experts, and community advocates. Our mission is to make sure that all children in our local community (birth to age five) arrive at kindergarten safe, healthy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

The Physicians Network...A Personal Note *Rebecca Barbato, M.D.*

At our last meeting for the Early Childhood Collaboration (ECC), I was lamenting about how hard it is to find good dental care for my patients with public aid. Elizabeth Lippitt (Executive Director of the Children's Clinic), laughed as she pointed out that they provide dental care for public aid patients at the Children's Clinic in Oak Park. I was also pointing out that it often feels like a black hole when I refer children from 3-5 for evaluations for school. Where do they go? How do I refer them? Cynthia Michul is on the committee and she is the Early Childhood Coordinator for District 97 schools. I now feel like I have someone I can call to navigate the system.

I am a pediatrician at the North Riverside Family Health Center, part of Loyola University. Even though I have the greater safety net of Loyola behind me, I am often at a loss about taking care of my underserved patients. There are so many resources available to me and my patients, about which I was not even aware until I became involved with the ECC. My goal for the Physicians Network group of the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education is to make these resources better known to neighborhood physicians. We have had several breakfast meetings to help train neighborhood physicians regarding developmental screening, learning disabilities, and post partum depression. I am hoping that this newsletter will be helpful to physicians. We are also always looking for neighborhood pediatricians or family practice physicians to help us. If you are interested, feel free to contact me at: rabmel22@comcast.net

District 97 Educational Services

Cynthia Michul

Early Childhood screenings are offered every 4-6 weeks throughout the school year. The screenings are available to all 3 and 4 year old Oak Park residents. Families should call the Early Childhood Administrative Assistant at 708-524-3132 to schedule an appointment for a screening. The screenings will be held at Whittier School, 715 N. Harvey in Oak Park. Upcoming dates for screenings are:

February 24, 2010 8:15-9:45am

March 24, 2010 8:15-9:45 am

April 22 4-5:45pm

Early Childhood evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services are also available. Parents can call the Early Childhood Coordinator at 708-524-3132 to obtain more information about evaluation services.

For concerns about students in kindergarten through eighth grade, families should always consult with their student's classroom teacher first. All school districts are working on implementing interventions into the general education classroom to assist with a student's educational needs. If interventions are not successful and concerns still exist, please consult with the classroom teacher and the school's Team Facilitator.



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Getting Started...Developmental Screening in Your Practice

Rebecca Turk, M.D.

In the July 2006 Pediatrics publication the AAP made a policy statement recommending developmental screening be performed at the 9, 18 and 24 or 30 month well-child care visits. In addition, the statement stated that developmental surveillance should be incorporated in all well child visits. Developmental surveillance is the process where a knowledgeable health care professional identifies children who may have developmental delays. Developmental screening involves using standardized tools to identify children who may be at risk for developmental delays.

Many screening tools are available. Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) is a tool that can be used for children who are 4-60 months. It is a parent completed questionnaire that can be completed at home or in the office. This screen can be scored by a health professional in just a few minutes. It can be ordered on line using www.brookespublishing.com. A more specific tool can be used to screen for autism called the M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers). This screen can be downloaded for free using www.firstsigns.org. Other useful screening tools include Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) and Infant Development Inventory.

Primary care doctors can bill for developmental screening at the time of well child care visits using the code 96110. However, the code 96111 should be used when screening with the M-CHAT. Reimbursement varies among different health plans, but most plans provide some coverage for these important screens.

Developmental Screening: Early Intervention Birth to Age 3

Chris Davis

Developmental screening provides an opportunity for parents to check their child's development. Although the development of skills (for example, language skills) varies from one child to another, there are some expected ranges for skill development. This process allows a family to have their child checked by a professional who specializes in assessing the development of children, including pediatricians, therapists, or educators. As stated by the American Academy of Pediatrics, **early identification of and intervention in developmental disorders is critical to the well-being of children and their families.** If a developmental screening indicates the possibility of delayed development, a full evaluation should occur.

If there is concern regarding the development of a child under the age of three, a referral should be made to the local Child and Family Connections office (**1-888-KONTACT**) for *Early Intervention* services. Referral information should include the name and birthdate of the child, reason for referral, and contact information for the family. A service coordinator will be assigned to each family through the Child and Family Connections office. The service coordinator will conduct an initial intake (typically in the family's home) and provide a list of area service providers who will be able to conduct eligibility determinations and assessments for Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development. Once eligibility has been determined, either by an automatically qualifying diagnosis or evaluations demonstrating a greater than 30% delay in development, an IFSP will be developed based on the family's desired outcomes. Developmental therapy, nutrition, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, and speech/language therapy, along with 10 other services, are available through Early Intervention.

For West Suburban Cook County, the Child & Family Connections office is located at

4415 W Harrison,
Hillside, IL 60162.
708-449-0625.

Post Partum Depression

Karen Walker, M.D.

A parent's mental health has a tremendous effect on child development. Emotionally healthy parents are more likely to promote a nurturing and safe environment for their infant. The stigma of emotional problems can be reduced by discussing the prevalence of mental health issues with parents and reminding them of the importance of staying healthy for the child.

Maternal blues is considered a "normal" emotional experience for women in the immediate postpartum period. 50-80% of new mothers experience these transient symptoms of depressed mood during the first 10 days after birth. These symptoms resolve without intervention.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is the most common medical problem that new mothers face. 10-20% of new mothers will be affected. PPD may include the full range of mild to severe emotional, cognitive and neurovegetative symptoms of depression. 70% of women will only elicit minor symptoms. A majority of women who have clinically significant symptoms of depression will remain undetected by clinicians unless specifically validated PPD screening tools are used. One such tool, the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), is a quick and easy 10 question assessment to use in the office setting.

Untreated PPD can result in poor outcomes for children. Healthcare professionals can help mothers identify, cope with, and seek treatment for PPD by routinely screening new mothers for depression and providing referrals to mental health specialists.

The EPDS can be downloaded with the scoring information on the web.

1-866-364-6667 is a 24 hour crisis hotline.