

Transcription

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Michelle: Hello, everyone and welcome to the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" webinar. I'm Michelle Vatalaro and I'm on the Healthy Start EPIC Center training team. I'll be moderating today's webinar.

With me are other members of the EPIC Center team as well as MCHB division of Healthy Start and perinatal services staff. We have approximately 60 minutes set aside for this webinar. This webinar is being recorded. The recording, along with the transcript and slides will be posted to the EPIC Center website following the webinar.

Before I introduce your great speaker for today, I wanted to let you know that we want your participation during this activity. So at any point, if you have questions or comments, please chat them in at the bottom left corner of your screen. We will only be taking questions via chat and we'll take them at the end. If we don't get to them by the end of the webinar, we will include them in a "Frequently Asked Questions" document that we'll post with the webinar materials on the EPIC Center website.

The only other housekeeping reminder that I wanted to make is that you'll be able to complete an evaluation survey at the end of the webinar. We appreciate your feedback, so please take a moment to complete it.

So now, let me take a moment to introduce your speaker for the day. Dr. Camille Smith is an educational psychologist with the "Learn the Signs. Act Early campaign" with the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. She is currently working on a program that aims to increase early identification of children with developmental delay by improving parents' awareness of early development, the importance of monitoring development and increasing healthcare and childcare provider awareness of the importance of developmental screening. Her research interests include the study of caregiver/child interactions and improving child developmental outcomes through programs designed to influence parenting behavior. Dr. Smith is also a certified postpartum doula. Dr. Smith, I'll now hand it off to you.

Dr. Smith: Thank you so much and good afternoon, everybody. It's my pleasure to introduce you to the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" program. I just really want to

start off by thanking you for the work that you do to improve the lives of some of our nation's most at-risk mothers and young children and I really want to applaud you. I hope that by the end of this presentation, you'll come to view our program as a helpful partner and resource for free high-quality tools and information to support the important work that you do each day. Next slide.

I'm going to share with you what our program is all about and how you can integrate the materials into your community-based programs. Next slide. What do I help you take away from today's presentation? That you realize just how important the early years are in the life of a young child and that they form the foundation for a child's future, academic success and happiness, as well as their lifelong health status. I hope you realize just how common developmental disabilities are and that early intervention is important and can make a big difference for a child and family.

Most importantly, that you realize the important role you can play in encouraging families to be aware of their child's development and act early if they ever have any concerns. We at CDC are here to help you with the wealth of free resources and support. Next slide.

Why "Learn the Signs. Act Early?" What are we all about? CDC's recent epidemiological data from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network in 14 states showed that 1 in 68 children has autism spectrum disorder. This new estimate is roughly 30% higher than previous estimates from CDC's autism tracking system. The diagnosis still occurs five times higher in boys, about 1 in 42 boys versus about 1 in 189 girls. Next slide.

Most children that are identified with autism actually had a developmental concern documented in their evaluation records before the age of two. The diagnosis often didn't happen until after age four. Only 18% of children identified had a diagnosis by age three. Next slide.

As the nation's public health agency here at CDC, we're really concerned about young children with developmental delays and disabilities not getting identified early, so that they can get services as soon as possible. We know that children with developmental problems are at increased risk for a wide range of poor outcomes and that early intervention can make a big difference. We also know that less than

50% of children are not identified until kindergarten or later, missing those really important first years of intervention. Recent data often also shows that children from low-income and/or minority families experience longer delays in receiving services. Next slide.

But the big important thing to know is that early intervention can make a big difference in preparing children for school, in improving skills and it can also provide support to families to develop strategies and obtain needed resources. Next slide.

So why you? Why are we coming to you with this program, "Learn the Signs. Act Early?" Because you can make a significant difference in the lives of these children and their families. You may be seeing children every day in your care and you feel unsure about what to do. "Learn the Signs. Act Early" provides important information and resources you need to help the children in your care reach their full potential that early intervention can unlock. You're a trusted partner, friend and resource to new moms and families. You work in very vulnerable communities. You can help pregnant women and families with young children learn about developmental milestones and celebrate those milestones with their young child, as well as continue to monitor. You can help connect families with services and support and we know that you want the best outcome for each child and family that you serve in your community.

So "Learn the Signs. Act Early" materials can help you increase families' awareness of early developmental milestones, work with families to monitor their young children's development, encourage families to take action on early concerns that they may have and facilitate action by helping you make appropriate referrals to the child's doctor or your state's early intervention provider. Next slide.

So how do we help you learn the signs? By providing resources for monitoring developmental milestones and red flags that can indicate concern and by acting early to help families also monitor their child's developmental milestones and use the positive parenting tips to encourage and facilitate their child's development. Next slide.

The way that we do this is by helping families and many types of care and family support providers to "Learn the Signs. Act Early" by focusing on three specific

strategies. Our strategies include a health education campaign, to help families learn the signs of healthy development and understand when and how to act early on a concern, various "Act Early" initiatives to improve communication and coordination among the many national state and local systems that must work together to identify and care for children with disabilities. As well as ongoing research and evaluation to help us find the best ways to improve early identification and access to care. Next slide.

So as you can see here, you're really in good company using "Learn the Signs. Act Early" materials. We are integrated through the Administration on Children and Families in the Offices of Head Start and Child Care. We're integrated into home visitation programs. We work very closely with the American Academy of Pediatrics. We know that many Healthy Start providers are using our materials and you'll actually see at the end of this presentation some quotes from them. We work very closely with the Child Care Resource & Referral Network through Child Care Aware which serves over 99% of the ZIP Codes in the country. We are embedded into many WIC clinics and programs around the country. We work with the YMCAs that have an early childhood component and we also work with the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, in particular their project launch.

So what are developmental milestones? I'm just going to very briefly lay a little bit of a context and a foundation. I imagine that all of you are well aware of this, but I just wanted to kind of give you an idea of what it is that we're looking at when we talk about our developmental milestone checklists and when we talk about monitoring children's development.

So what are developmental milestones? They're behaviors or skills that most children can do by a certain age, such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, waving bye-bye, pointing to something interesting. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak and act and move and though all children develop at their own pace, most children reach developmental milestones at or about the same age. Next slide.

What are the domains that children share milestones in? There's social/emotional, which is about how children interact with others and show emotion. It includes

things like smiling when you look at her playing with other children, giving hugs and kisses. There's a language and communication domain which is about how children express their needs and share what they're thinking as well as understand what is said to them. Examples are cooing, babbling, saying "Mama," pointing to a cup of juice when they want some, following directions and speaking so that others understand what they're saying.

There's also the cognitive domain, which is how children learn new things and problem solve. It includes how children explore their environment to figure things out. Whether by looking at the world around them, putting objects in their mouths or dropping something to watch it fall. This domain also includes academic skills like counting and learning letters.

Then, there's the movement of physical domain, which is how children use their bodies, like rolling over, sitting up, crawling and walking, as well as eating with a spoon and copying lines and circles. Some developmental milestones fit more than one category. For example, playing make-believe can be a social/emotional milestone, as well as a cognitive milestone. Next slide.

So what we do is we have a variety of resources and materials that help parents and providers track those very important milestones so that parents and providers can celebrate when a child is doing good things that they should be doing at their age, as well as looking forward to what that next milestone is going to be. We have a variety of ways that you and parents can monitor a child's development. You can use these as monitoring tools. You can use them to encourage parent/provider dialogue about development and you can use them to be aware of what typical development looks like, as well as what to expect next. Next slide.

Here's a quick peek at just a sampling of our most popular materials and I'm going to show you a little bit more about each of those as we go along. There's a milestone checklist, milestone brochure, milestone moments booklet and growth chart. Next slide.

These parent-tested materials focus on milestones from amount two months through five years, when to act early and what to do when there's a concern about development. You can read some of their other features on this slide, but I'll just point out that the materials are free, that they're research-based, that they're built

off of the American Academy of Pediatrics Gold Standard. They're easily customizable and I'll talk to you more about that in a minute. Most are available to print immediately directly from your desktop.

When I say that they're customizable, I mean that you can take them, put your contact information on them and individualize them to fit your community context. Because we're the Centers for Disease Control in the federal government, everything that we produce is in the public domain. So what we create is really for you. Everything that we have is available to you free of charge. Next slide.

This is one of our most popular products with families and home visitors. It's the "Milestone Moments" booklet. It has milestones up to five years of age, along with parenting tips, a developmental health watch that has warning signs of potential concerns and parents and providers can check the little box when the child meets the milestone that you see. Next slide.

This gives you a good idea of what it looks like. They are in all domains as well, as I mentioned earlier. Here's just an example of the cognitive and movement/physical domain along with the health watch and parenting tips. You can see that the parenting tips are designed to help facilitate those particular developmental milestones that are appropriate to that particular age. Next slide.

What can you do with the "Milestone Moments" booklet? You'll hear from some of the other Healthy Start providers that have been using them as I go on through the presentation. But you can give the "Milestone Moments" booklets to families that you serve, show them how to be aware of developmental milestones, how to check off and monitor their child's development, use the positive parenting tips, and also encourage them to share any concerns that they may have with their child's doctor. If they ever have anything that they're wondering about or they're not quite sure about or just want to ask and encourage their doctor to do a developmental screen on their child, these booklets are really helpful for the family to take to their child's doctor and share them with the child's doctor so that they can both be on the same page when they have those very important conversations. Next slide.

What some of the Healthy Start providers have been doing, which they've said has been very helpful, is they, themselves, have had a "Milestone Moments" booklet. They've given one to the family. What they've done is they've reviewed the

milestones when they come to the home to make their visit and they each pull out their booklets, they talk about the booklets, they talk about what the child is doing and they talk about the parenting tips with each family on a regular basis. So both the parent and the provider use the booklet as a resource and as a monitoring tool. Next slide.

So this is another format that we have available to you that you can easily download and print right off of your computer. These are milestone checklists. These are being used in a number of diverse groups of settings, from WIC clinics to childcare settings. Many home visitors take them with them and they're available. . . it's English on one side, Spanish on the other side. But all of our materials are also available in several other languages as well.

You can also take them and have them translated into whatever language that you may have, the population that you serve. So as I said, they're customizable. We can help you with that or you can find someone who actually can assist with the translation as well. But this is kind of what the milestone checklist looks like and as you see, there are little boxes off to the side. So you just follow along to see what your child is doing. Again, they go up to five years of age and they have the milestones on one side and they have the developmental health watch in the little box. Then at the bottom of the health watch, it tells you what to do if you ever have a concern about a child's development. Next slide.

So home visitors and community health workers can use these milestone checklists and compare milestone moments with families at home visits, encourage families to take them to their child's doctor and also, some of the Healthy Start providers have said that they have told or shared with the families the milestone checklist. The families have shown them to their child's childcare provider as well. It's helped to kind of individualize some of the classroom instruction that has happened within the childcare setting. Next slide.

So I wanted to just share with you some of the quotes that came from Healthy Start providers that are using the materials. These are quotes that came right out of the evaluation. "For new parents, this has been extremely educational and a benefit to learn what their son is doing at different ages." "One of my parents was worrying about her child's development, but she realized her child is progressing normally

and was anxious to see what her child would be doing next." "The parent wrote down her concerns for the pediatrician, took the 'Milestone Moments' booklet to her doctor and the doctor referred her to First Steps Early Intervention." Next slide.

"The parents fill out the 'Milestone Moments' checklist and use the parenting tips. I fill out a milestone checklist and we compare and talk about the child's development at my visit." "The materials were integrated with our Parent as Teachers program and our developmental screening program. They're given to families at the screen. We encourage the family to monitor their child's development regularly."

So that gives you just a small idea of some of the ways that the materials are being used and how helpful they have been to Healthy Start providers. We have a long list of comments that have come from providers that have really found the materials to be extremely helpful with families and their care. They've even shared them with expectant mothers as well and the expectant mothers when they've gone to see the baby after the baby was born, they've noticed that the "Milestone Moments" booklet was sitting right on the baby's dressing table so that they could watch and keep an idea of what their baby should be doing next.

Now, I'm just going to quickly share with you some of our additional materials that are also available to you. Next slide. We have a children's book called "Amazing Me." It's an adorable story of a kangaroo named Joey. It highlights milestones that a three-year-old would typically do. There's also a parent section with milestones and tips. It can be ordered or downloaded. Some Healthy Start providers give the books to families as the children exit the program as a little gift.

We're also working on a two-year-old book now. We have developed this book in collaboration with Lysol. . . this particular three-year-old book and it's being distributed through Reach Out and Read program, which is a program in pediatric practices around the country where they're encouraging families about the importance of reading and about the importance of the early language environment. "Amazing Me" was a book that was being distributed.

So we also have a growth chart that has milestones and a place for the child's picture. Next slide. We have a milestones brochure that's just a snapshot of milestones from six months to four years. A lot of parents have really loved putting

this up on their refrigerator. We've found it in waiting rooms all over the country, in childcare settings and WIC clinics and hospitals. We actually were told that there's a Healthy Start program somewhere. . . I believe maybe New York or somewhere that they're actually laminating it and turning it into a place mat for families.

We also are taking this design and we're collaborating with a program called Too Small to Fail which is all about the importance of the early language environment that addresses the word [inaudible 00:23:19] between low-income and high-income children. So we've taken this milestones brochure and we've also made one that looks at language and communication milestones that will be distributed through the Too Small to Fail Clinton initiative within probably a couple of months. Next slide.

This is a little bit more information about the brochure. It, too, is available in English and Spanish, but we also have other languages as well. It's downloadable. It, too, is customizable. As I said, it's just kind of more of a snapshot. It doesn't go into as much detail as the "Milestone Moments" booklet. Next slide.

I'm sharing this with you because this really was developed for childcare professionals and early care and education providers. But it's available to all service delivery personnel who serve young children under the age of five. I wanted to share it with you because it's free and it has such valuable information and the training actually goes into much more detail about developmental milestones and what children should be doing at certain ages. It also goes into talking about how to talk with parents about children's development, both when their development is on track and when things are going well, but it also talks about how to have conversations with families when either you, as the provider or the family is worried about their child's development.

It's a free, one-hour online training and CEUs - Continuing Education Credits - are available. It's actually very interactive and engagig. There's video, there's audio. I wanted to share it with you even though it says that it was done with childcare professionals in mind. I think that you would find the information contained in it extremely helpful. It goes into more detail about how to monitor children's development, how to use the materials. It actually just won a very large health

communication award. So we're really excited about this new training that will be used as part of the childcare development Block Grant [SP] fund, which serves 12 million children nationally and it will be part of the new Head Start Childcare Partnerships Training Center that is currently in the process of being developed. I hope if you have time, that you go on and take a look at the training. It's really quite nice. Next slide.

We also have a few fact sheets that are available to you that you can download and print. We have one on developmental screening because our program is all about developmental monitoring, observing and paying attention to developmental milestones. But we strongly encourage developmental screening according to the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

We also have two fact sheets that are designed for families about if you're concerned. Then, also, how to talk to your child's doctor. So if you ever have a family in your care that says "You know, my child is six months old and I'm just concerned. I think that he should be holding his head up better now." Or "I think that he should be vocalizing a little bit more." Or if they ever have any concerns, you can go on our website, print off these sheets and share them with the families, so that they can then have something to go on when they talk with their child's doctor about their child's development.

We also always encourage the family to take these materials with them to their child's doctor and as they monitor, then the parent is more equipped to understand and to have conversations with their provider. We also have a one-page fact sheet on "Tips for Talking to Parents" and a number of other resources as well. Next slide.

Lastly, I wanted to just share with you about our Act Early ambassador program. Very briefly, this is the second component of the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" program. We currently have 32 ambassadors. We hope to be able to go to 50 in the next year or so. They are community champions in their state that work to increase awareness and improve early identification of young children with or at risk for developmental disabilities. They also serve as a point of contact for you, for our program. If you want "Learn the Signs. Act Early" materials and resources

incorporated into programs within your state, you can contact them and they can assist.

If you, as Healthy Start providers, however, if you ever want any information about our program and how to use our materials, you can certainly contact us. But the Act Early ambassadors are there to work within state systems as well. Next slide.

This is how to find if you have an Act Early ambassador in your state. You go on our website. You open the "About the Program" link and click on the purple map. It will bring up all the different states where we currently have an ambassador and we're hoping, as I said, that we will soon be able to go to all 50 states. We also do an enormous amount of research and evaluation to make sure that all of our messages and materials are relevant and that they resonate with the target audience. We have an extremely rigorous process that we go through, we actually have to get a quantifiable score to make sure that all of our materials meet a clear communication index. So you can be sure that what you would be using with our program is, indeed, research-based and has been well-tested and evaluated. Next slide.

So I want to just thank you for all your hard work in helping to safeguard the healthy growth and development of our nation's children. If you have any questions at all about how to obtain the materials and resources, how to customize them or how to use and integrate them into your program, please don't hesitate to call or email. We are more than happy to help you and we would love to help you get the families within your program to begin monitoring their children's development.

So with that, I will be happy to take any questions that you may have.

Michelle: Thank you, Dr. Smith. So we're going to go ahead and take some questions. If you have any, please remember to chat them in into the "Chat" down at the bottom left so that we can answer them.

We have our first question. "Dr. Smith, you said that the materials could be customized. What would we need to do to customize the materials for our Healthy Start project?"

Dr. Smith: The easiest thing to do is to go on our website, "Learn the Signs. Act Early." You see it there at the bottom of the screen. You can go to the section that says "Free materials." Then when you click on that, you will actually see a place where it'll tell you exactly how to customize the materials.

As I mentioned, you can put your contact information, you can put your own logo on it. In the state of Alaska, they even changed some of the pictures to make them look a little bit more contextually appropriate to the community and to the population that they serve. The only thing that you cannot do is you can't change the text because the text has been research-based and has undergone rigorous evaluations. That, you won't be able to do, but you can certainly put your information on it and we would be more than happy to help show you how to do that.

Michelle: Thank you. We have a second question about that. "If I wanted to talk with someone about individualizing materials to fit the needs of our project, how would we get in touch with someone?"

Dr. Smith: The best thing to do would be to jot down my e-mail address there at the bottom, cas0@cdc.gov, Camille Smith. You can send me an e-mail and I will put you in touch with the Web people who do all of our. . . we have what we call an FTP site that will help you take our files and put your information on our files. Just let us know how we can help you.

Michelle: Great, thank you. Remember, if you have any questions, you can go ahead and chat them in. Okay, so if you had any questions, feel free to chat them in. But before we end, I just want to remind everyone to mark their calendars for two upcoming webinars this month. On March 31st, from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern time, there will be a special initiative webinar about the Gabby system. On April 7th, there's going to be an "Ask the Expert" on oral health and why it's important and what Healthy Start communities can do to improve it. You can get registration information for webinars from the latest EPIC Center alert or visit the grantee forum [SP] on the EPIC Center website.

Speaking of the website, it contains all the recorded webinar information, transcripts, slide presentations and webinars that have taken place. We did get some questions here while I was talking to you about that. So we have one more,

which is "What is the process for adding a new milestone? How often are they updated based on the literature?" Dr. Smith?

Dr. Smith: What we do, we actually work very closely with the American Academy of Pediatrics and Bright Futures, in particular, to make sure that our milestones are indeed current and relevant and appropriate. We do add and change if we find that there are certain milestones. . . that if the way that they're written, it's not clear, in particular to families, what we're doing actually in the process. . . because we want to be sure that families and providers understand what these milestones look like so that they can really monitor appropriately.

So we're developing a digital library. This digital library is going to contain either pictures or video of all of the milestones that we have contained within our materials. As a result of that, we are looking very carefully at the milestones that we have in there now to see if we need to change any of the wording or to update in any way.

My primary response to that is that we really do that in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Michelle: Great, thank you. That's really-

Dr. Smith: I think once the digital library is complete and up on our website, that'll be really helpful for families because they'll then be able to. . . you know, if a milestone says that babbling. . . well, you know, a family may not know the difference between babbling and cooing. Or know what babbling really is and why it's so important. So the digital library will actually show a video of babies babbling or interacting with their mother or interacting with the provider. So I think it'll be really helpful.

Michelle: I think so too, thanks. We just got another question in. "Can we order boxes of the booklets or do we need to print them ourselves and is there a cost?"

Dr. Smith: Of the brochures, you can get large quantities free. With the booklets, you can get them in. . . I think it's a bundle of 20 now that come free. We don't have an unlimited supply of free materials just because we can't do that. We actually had, last year, 4 million visits on our website. So we have huge traffic. We cannot print enough for everybody to have free materials.

But you can get a sample. So you can get a bundle of free materials including "The Amazing Me" book. Then you would need to print within your communities, if you needed 200 or 500 or whatever.

Now, what some providers have done is they've actually gone in with other. . . and the ambassadors have helped states do this. Where programs have gone in with other programs that they work with, like other home visitation programs. They have pulled funding.

In the state of Wisconsin, they were able to print 150,000 of the "Milestone Moments" booklets because they pulled together a prenatal clinic who wanted to distribute them, as well as a home visitation program and the Early Head Start. So they all pooled resources in order to print several thousand.

We can also kind of help you brainstorm ways. But if you would like a sampling, please go on our website and go into the "Free Materials" section and order. There's an order page on the website.

Michelle: Great, thank you. We have one more question about the digital video library. "So when is the digital video library expected to be ready?"

Dr. Smith: You know, we're thinking that it will be up either the end of the spring or the first part of the summer. We did another photo shoot at a childcare center, Early Head Start and childcare center last week. So we really are just about done.

So what we're doing now is we actually contract to make sure that all the video clips are professional and clean and clear, so it's in the process of just being cleaned up. So it should be within the next couple months.

Michelle: Great. We're all really looking forward to seeing that. If you have any other questions for Dr. Smith, feel free to chat them in.

I'd like to just take a minute to remind everyone that the slides are going to be posted from this webinar to the EPIC Center website a few days after today under the training calendar. As always, you can access them at healthystartepic.org.

I'd also like to, as a final reminder, remind everyone to please complete your evaluation survey. When the webinar is closed, you're going to receive a link right then and you can go ahead and complete it. We really do value your feedback.

I'm not seeing any more questions. I just wanted to say thank you all for attending and thank you, Dr. Smith, again, for taking the time to speak with us today. This is going to conclude our webinar for the day. Thank you all for your participation and I hope you have a great day.

Dr. Smith: Thank you, it was my pleasure.

Michelle: Thank you.