

# Screening Communication Tips Sheet

## Approaches for talking about screening

- It is best to use the language that they use at home.
- Make sure you note that screening is some normal process children go through to make sure they are on track in their development.
- Stress that a screening does **not** provide a diagnosis.
- Ask if they know whether their child has been screened in the past.
  - If so, talk about the results of past screenings in a confidential environment.
- Ask if they are currently in a screening program.
  - If so, spend time discussing how to avoid duplication and how you might share results.
- If you or someone from your staff will be conducting the screening, ask the family for permission to perform a screening using a standardized tool.
- If you'll need the family to complete the screening, let them know their responsibility. Phrase the completion steps as opportunities to provide you with information, and learn more about their child.
- Provide families with informative materials and places they can go to learn more.
- Try to make it a discussion. Give them time to listen, reflect, and provide input.
- Remind them you do your job because you love and care for children and that you are their partner on their child's developmental journey.
- Explain terms which may be unfamiliar:
  - Developmental
  - Behavioral
  - Monitoring
  - Screening

## Possible Language:

- Screening provides a quick check of your child's development.
- Talk to parents about who will see the information and how it will be used.
  - The state will see individual child information
  - Individual child data will not be shared outside the Division
  - People of within the division have had confidentiality training
  - The state will share only project level information (STARS to Quality data)
- Tell parents responses to items will show your child's strengths and if your child is showing behaviors you would like to talk about further
- Responses to items will help me know what type of information I may be able to gather for you
- Responses to items will help me get to know your child better and how I can support him in the classroom
- If you have question or concerns about any of your child's behaviors that are beyond my knowledge, then I will help you find other resources or agencies in our community that can help.

## If you have concerns about a child before screening:

- Start off by pointing out something positive. Name a skill or behavior the child is doing well and express how excited you are to see their progress.
- As you talk about the concern, point out the specific behavior the child is struggling with and ask if they observe the same behaviors at home. It is ok to say, "I may be overly concerned, but I just want to make sure".
- Use the *Learn the Signs. Act Early* developmental factsheets to support your observations on the child's strengths and challenges. This will assure families you are basing your comments on facts.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>