

WHATCOM COUNTY CHILD HEALTH NOTES

Whatcom County Child Health Notes is distributed by Whatcom County Health and Human Services / Children with Special Health Care Needs. This newsletter is intended to provide physicians and nurse practitioners with current information regarding identification and management of special needs conditions. Contributing agencies and programs include: Washington State Department of Health - Children With Special Health Care Needs Program (Contract #N08400), University of Washington - Center on Human Development and Disability, Whatcom County Medical Home Training and Resource Project, the Whatcom County Interagency Coordinating Council, and the Whatcom County Parent to Parent Support Group. Additional Child Health Notes are available at <http://depts.washington.edu/medhome>

Red Flags in Motor Development



Motor development reflects the maturation of the child's nervous system. Conditions, including prematurity and/or chronic illness, can delay the appearance of motor milestones. Movement disorders, including cerebral palsy and muscle diseases, affect the quality of movement as well as acquisition of motor milestones. Taking parental concerns seriously and screening for motor milestones and quality of movement at well-child checks is the first step toward successful early intervention. The following red flags are based on skills demonstrated by at least 90% of children at each age (corrected for prematurity).

2 months

- ▶ Does not move both arms and legs actively in play when supine
- ▶ Does not use eyes to follow or focus on an adult's face

4 months

- ▶ Cannot hold head erect and steady when held at an adult's shoulder
- ▶ Cannot maintain head centered and bring hands together when supine
- ▶ Cannot hold onto a toy placed in either hand
- ▶ Leg(s) are stiff and feet are plantar flexed (toes pointed) in most positions
- ▶ Hand(s) are tightly fistled
- ▶ Poor visual tracking or eyes are crossed

6 months

- ▶ Does not reach and grab toys with one or both hands
- ▶ Takes little or no weight on legs or does so with legs stiffly extended, on toes
- ▶ Does not sit well with support
- ▶ Head is not vertical when infant is prone

9 months

- ▶ Does not sit alone with arms free
- ▶ Does not roll supine to prone
- ▶ Does not transfer toys from hand to hand

12 months

- ▶ Does not pull to standing at furniture
- ▶ Does not bang 2 objects together

15 months

- ▶ Does not lower himself from standing with control
- ▶ Not yet walking with one hand held

18 months

- ▶ Not yet walking alone

Consider referral for:

- Neurodevelopmental assessment for persistent asymmetry after 4 months of age or presence of one or more "red flags"
- Pediatric ophthalmologist if eye are persistently crossed after the age of 3 months

Neurodevelopmental assessment by occupational, physical and/or speech therapists is available through the St. Joseph Hospital Children's Neurodevelopmental Program: (360) 715-6430.

Where to Start: Links to local, regional and internet resources

Reviewed and updated: 01/31/2003