

Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) screening is recommended at the 18- and 24-month visits or whenever a concern is identified. Developmental outcomes are best with early identification and referral to evaluation and intervention services.

C&TC standards

General

ASD screening is recommended for C&TC visits at 18 and 24 months or whenever a concern is identified. Provide ASD screening as outlined in the [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual – C&TC Section](#).

ASD can be reliably diagnosed by 24 months of age (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Do not wait and see.

Personnel

Screening personnel qualifications are instrument-specific; refer to each instrument's instruction manual for more information.

A licensed health care provider must interpret the results and ensure appropriate follow-up: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

Documentation

Screening documentation must include the name of the screening instrument(s) used,

score(s), and screening result-specific anticipatory guidance provided to the parent or caregiver. For atypical screening results, documentation must include a plan of care and appropriate referrals for evaluation and intervention.

Refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](#) for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

Procedure

The [Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Revised \(M-CHAT-R/F\)](#) is a commonly used ASD-specific standardized screening instrument. Follow scoring instructions to determine if the follow-up interview and referral are needed.

Referral and management

Review the screening results with the child's parent or caregiver. Refer for further evaluation and intervention services when screening identifies potential developmental issues or when a parent or caregiver expresses concern.

Prompt referral, evaluation, and treatment can improve a child's long-term outcomes and developmental path (Hyman, 2020). Indicate a referral with the appropriate HIPAA-compliant referral code on the claim.

When concerns are identified, ensure the child receives comprehensive medical, educational, and mental health evaluations.

Comprehensive medical evaluation

Determine eligibility and medical necessity for early intervention services. Utilize the [Referral Form](#) to connect families with intensive behavioral and developmental intervention services.

Educational evaluation

Refer either directly to the local school district or through [Help Me Grow](#) as soon as concerns are identified.

Mental health evaluation

A qualified early childhood mental health professional supports families and children with social-emotional concerns and provides a comprehensive evaluation for ASD, trauma, and more. Refer to the [map of Early Childhood Mental Health services by county](#) to find local providers.

Follow-up

Establish a process for follow-up with the family after referral for appropriate and effective services. With the parent's permission, communicate and coordinate with other professionals. Close the loop by documenting referral results

Importance of ASD screening

An estimated 1 in 34 8-year-old children in Minnesota and 1 in 36 nationally have been identified with ASD (Maenner, et al., 2023). Early screening and detection provide the greatest opportunity for optimal development and outcomes.

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Universal, standardized ASD-specific screening is recommended at 18 and 24 months of age (Hyman, 2020).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)
- [Minnesota Autism Resource Portal](#)
- [Communicating with Families During the Child Screening Process](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

Other resources

- [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#)
- [Minnesota Autism Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network](#)
- [Autism and Development Disabilities Monitoring \(ADDM\) Network](#)

For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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Resource links

- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual – C&TC Section](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092#asd)
(https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092#asd)
- [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources)
(<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources>)
- [Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Revised \(M-CHAT-R/F\)](https://mchatscreen.com/mchat-rf)
(<https://mchatscreen.com/mchat-rf>)
- [Referral Form](https://survey.dhs.state.mn.us/Interview/f4d1240f-0610-45aa-87a8-a5668923c223)
(<https://survey.dhs.state.mn.us/Interview/f4d1240f-0610-45aa-87a8-a5668923c223>)
- [Help Me Grow](http://www.HelpMeGrowMN.org) (www.HelpMeGrowMN.org)
- [Map of Early Childhood Mental Health services by county](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5448D-ENG)
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5448D-ENG>)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG>)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
- [Minnesota Autism Resource Portal](https://mn.gov/autism)
(<https://mn.gov/autism>)
- [Communicating with Families During the Child Screening Process](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoAN3605IGY)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoAN3605IGY>)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/autism/index.html)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/autism/index.html)
- [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html)
(www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html)
- [Minnesota Autism Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network](https://addm.umn.edu/)
(<https://addm.umn.edu/>)
- [Autism and Development Disabilities Monitoring \(ADDM\) Network](https://www.cdc.gov/autism/addm-network/index.html)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/autism/addm-network/index.html>)

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Screening and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Retrieved from Autism Screening Disorder (ASD): www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm-community-report/

Hyman, S. L. (2020). Identification, Evaluation, and Management of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Pediatrics*, 145(1). doi:doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-3447

Maenner, M., Warren, Z., Robinson Williams, A., Amoakohene, E., Bakian, A., Deborah, B., . . . Shaw, K. (2023). Prevalence and Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 8 Years — Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 11 Sites, United States, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summaries*.