

Tips for Birth to 3 Program Referrals

Understand your role in the Birth to 3 Program referral network

As a health care professional, child care provider, educator, child welfare staff, or other professional who works with children, you are part of the [Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program](#) referral network. This tip sheet will help you understand the importance of noticing signs of delays or disabilities in young children, your responsibility to refer families to early intervention programs, and how to make a referral to the Birth to 3 Program.

Early intervention can help children catch up developmentally and can help parents get answers to important questions so they can better meet their child's needs. For more tools and information on early intervention, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#) website.

1 Notice signs of a delay or disability

If you notice a child who shows signs of developmental delays or disabilities or has atypical development, a screening can help you understand more. The Birth to 3 Program encourages health, child care, and education professionals to use the [Ages & Stages Questionnaires](#) screening tool to pinpoint developmental progress and identify possible delays in young children. A screening can be valuable to understanding a child's development, but it is **not** required to have completed a screening before you make a referral to the Birth to 3 Program.

If you suspect abuse or neglect, you **must** contact your local child protective services agency to [make a report](#). You can then also make a referral to the Birth to 3 Program.

2 Explore options with the family

If you think early intervention could benefit the child, talk with the family about program benefits and your steps to making a referral. They will probably have a lot of questions. Learning that a child in their care has a possible delay or disability can result in different reactions and feelings.

Use the Birth to 3 Program First 1,000 Days toolkit to learn more about talking with families about the program. You can also direct them to contact their [county Birth to 3 Program](#) to learn more.

3 Make a referral to the county Birth to 3 Program

When you identify a child with signs of developmental delays or a disability, you should make a referral. **If you are a Medicaid-enrolled provider**, you **must** make a referral. Remember, anyone can make a referral, including doctors, nurses, day care staff, child welfare staff, therapists, and others who work with children. It is helpful to talk with families about the program and what a referral means.

To make a referral, you can use the [Referral to Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program](#) form, F-00688, and send it to the [primary point of referral](#) for the county Birth to 3 Program where the family lives. You do not need the family's consent to refer them to the Birth to 3 Program. Getting the family's consent, however, is encouraged so medical information can be shared between medical providers and the Birth to 3 Program. Children who might be eligible include:

- Children with a diagnosed condition
- Children suspected of having developmental delays
- Children with atypical development
- Children with disabilities
- Children who have been affected by abuse, neglect, or trauma

The child does **not** need a diagnosis to be eligible for the Birth to 3 Program. Once you have completed the referral form, please attach any screening results you collected and indicate all areas of delays or disabilities. After receiving the referral, the county Birth to 3 Program will conduct an eligibility evaluation.

Note: All health, social service, education, and tribal programs that receive Medicaid funding, including Medicaid-enrolled providers, are required to refer eligible children to the Birth to 3 Program within two days of identification. More information about this requirement can be found in the [Requirements for Providers](#) topic (#788) in the ForwardHealth Online Handbook.