

What To Do While You Wait?

Steps You Can Take Right Now to Support Your Child's Development

This guide is for families of children from birth to five who have concerns about their child's development and are waiting for an evaluation or services. It shares ideas and resources families can use right away to support their child's learning and development at home.

- Trust your gut! You are the expert on your child. Use your voice so your concerns are heard throughout the entire process.
- Your child does not need a formal diagnosis to start many services in Ohio, including Ohio Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education. Seek support as soon as you have any concerns.
 - If your child is under the age of three, [Ohio Early Intervention](#) is available to support your family. Anyone can make a referral by calling 1-800-755-4769 or completing this [referral form](#).
 - If your child is over the age of three, they may be eligible for [preschool special education](#). This [resource](#) helps explain the first steps you can take for requesting an evaluation with your school district.

For more guidance on the suggestions below, connect with an [OCALI Family Support Specialist](#).

➤ Start Taking These Steps:

- Track strengths and needs. [Sparkler](#) is a free app that allows you to track your child's milestones from birth to age five. It provides suggested activities you can do with your child to support their play and learning.
- Keep records of your child such as documents from medical appointments, school, or childcare. Some parents find that binders are helpful for organizing and sharing paperwork.

- Connect with your child by playing, singing, and reading together. Research shows that children learn best in the context of relationships and [back-and-forth interactions](#). This is a key element for your child's development that lays the foundation for communication, play, and early learning skills.
- Develop consistent routines for meals, bedtime, and getting dressed. Repetition supports learning and can make daily tasks easier over time.
- Use [visual supports](#). Objects such as a diaper or toothbrush, signs, or gestures can help a child understand daily tasks and situations. Visual support is a strategy that can help your child make choices and express their wants and needs.
- Be patient with the process and celebrate the small wins your child makes. Progress happens step by step building over time. You are doing an important job!

 **Explore additional resources available for your family:**

- [OCALI Resources](#):
 - [Family Resource Hub](#)
 - [Lending Library](#)
 - [Autism Center](#)
 - [Family and Community Outreach Center](#)
- [Ohio PROMISE for Families](#)
- [Pathways](#)
- [Baby Navigator](#)
- [ASHA Communication Milestones](#)

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