

Virtual Home Visits: Screenings

With the shift to virtual home visiting as a result of COVID-19, family support professionals are tasked with providing all of their services virtually, including screenings. Developmental and behavioral health screenings are important because they allow for early identification and intervention, which lead to better outcomes for children and adults. Conducting the screenings virtually presents challenges and opportunities.

Challenges:

- Lack of visual
- Safety concerns
- Privacy concerns
- Materials available
- Working with interpreters virtually
- Variety of roles for professionals in tool administration
- Lack of resources in operation

Opportunities:

- Empowerment of parents to take lead of children's development
- Empowerment of parents to take lead on own mental health and well-being
- Enhance observation skills of children's development
- Enhance skills of facilitation and coaching
- Tone, expressions
- Enhance active listening
- Builds family support professionals' knowledge of child development and skills in empowering families

The What:

1. Screening results are information, data, the family's data.
2. Screening tools can highlight strengths, validate concerns, or reveal area to pay attention to.
3. Family support professionals and families often use a screening to bridge communication.

The Why:

1. Linking the benefits of screening to the personal goals and needs of a family will not only empower the parent to use the results, but also will increase buy-in from all involved parties.
2. Remember to link the use of the screening to the overall services you are providing to the family. This will give context for not only why the family is doing the screening, but why you are the one to administer the screening.
3. Screening can provide reassurance or confirmation for families. Providing families with this important knowledge during a time of increased stress will build parental resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, and concrete support in times of needs - three crucial protective factors.



The How:

1. Prepare the parent for the screening
 - a. Introduce the tool
 - b. Offer options and methods for how the tool can be completed
 - c. Coach parent to gather or adapt materials, if needed to complete the tool
2. Support administration
 - a. Your role will be based on the method the parent chooses to use the tool.
 - b. Parent completed tools: Your role is to support and coach
 - c. Professional completed tools: Your role is to administer and facilitate the process
3. Document and share results
 - a. Process result visually, if possible
4. Support follow-up
 - a. Ensure resources are known prior to screening
 - b. Provide resource referral and support follow-up on resource via phone, e-mail, and video conference.

Child Developmental Screening

Example Script to Use: *

Introducing screening (overall):

“We have some tools you can use to (fill in the blank depending on the tool’s purpose; example: ‘learn how your child is growing in his development’), and we have several different ways you can use the tools. These tools will (fill in the blank depending on the tool’s purpose). You can either do them on your own outside of our call time, complete them through a secure survey link, talk them through on the call with me, or fill it out individually during our call. You can also

choose to decline these tools. It may be time to use a tool at an upcoming visit. When it is time, you can decide if you’d like to do the tool and how you’d like to participate. I’ll share more details on how we can complete the tool when the time comes. What questions might you have about the tools right now?”

Time for child screening:

“Remember when we talked about some tools you can use to learn how your child is growing in his development in different areas? It’s time to complete one of those tools now. The tool is called the ASQ-3. It’s a list of questions about your child’s development to see how he is playing, learning, speaking, acting and moving. It’s not a test. Screening highlights your child’s strengths and identifies areas where he may need extra support. It also helps you to know what to look for next. We have several different choices for how we can complete this tool. You can complete the tool after this visit, then on our next call we can discuss how it went and what it shows us. Or I can send it to you to review and then we can complete it together on our next call. It’s up to you how we do the ASQ-3 to see how your son has grown and changed over these last few months. If the screening identifies concerns, we can work together to find ways to give your child the extra support he needs to continue learning and growing.”

See page 7 for a Parents as Teachers Parent Kit suggestion.

When a child’s developmental screening indicates a concern, follow up by:

- Assisting the family to access Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education for assessment and services.
- Connecting families to an Infant Mental Health Provider, as needed.

**Scripts are not intended to be read to the family. Use your own words and practice until you can say them naturally and fluidly.*

- Supporting the family to provide the child with appropriate developmental experiences during the COVID-19 crisis by providing activity ideas the family can do with things they have available in their homes. When needed, drop off a bag of toys suitable for the child's developmental abilities and use home visits as an opportunity to coach parent-child interactions to support parental self-efficacy and children's healthy development.

Resources

Resources for Child Developmental Screening

- Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc: ASQ Online: [Build a Better Screening System with ASQ Online](#)
- [ASQ Online Demos](#)
- [Using ASQ in a Virtual Environment](#)
- Recorded Webinar: How Providers and Parents Partner Together to Use ASQ-3 in a Virtual Environment - [Register](#)
- Using ASQ-3 in a Virtual Environment: Live Q&A with Elizabeth Twombly, Tuesday, April 21, 2020, 2:00 PM EDT - [Register](#)
- , www.agesandstages.com
- Easter Seals: [ASQ Online Screening Tool for Parents](#)
- Oregon Screening Project: [Resources and Information for Virtual Developmental Screenings](#)
- Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center: [COVID-19 and EI Tele-Intervention Updates](#) – See “Articles and Documents” tab under “Available Resources”

Referrals for Developmental Assessments and Services

- Find your state or territory's [Early Intervention Program](#) (Part C of IDEA) for children birth to three.
- For children three years or older, the parent can call any local public elementary school (even if their child does not go to that school) and say, “I have concerns about my child's development and I would like to have my child evaluated through the school system for preschool education services.” The school system is required to accept and follow up on referrals, even during COVID-19 school closures.

Resources to Support Child Development, Health and Wellness

- Prevent Child Abuse America: [Corona Virus Resources & Tips for Parents, Children and Others](#)
- [The American Academy of Pediatrics Advises Parents Experiencing Stress over COVID-19](#)
- [American Psychological Association: Connecting with children and adolescents on tele-health during COVID-19](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#)
- [Birth to Five. Watch Me Thrive!](#)
- [The Day We Stayed Indoors.](#) Parents as Teachers Parent Handout – suitable for families with ideas for supporting children's wellness and development indoors



Adult Behavioral Health Screening

Example script to use:*

Introducing screening (overall):

“We have some tools you use to (fill in the blank depending on the tool’s purpose; example: ‘explore your feelings, moods, relationships’), and we have several different ways you can use the tools. These tools will (fill in the blank depending on the tool’s purpose). You can either complete them on your own outside of our call time, complete them through a secure survey link, talk them through on the call with me, or fill it out individually during our call. You can also choose to decline these tools. It may be time to do a tool at an upcoming visit. When it’s time to do one, you can decide if you’d like to do it and how you would like to participate. I’ll share more details on how we can complete the tool when the time comes. What questions might you have about the tools right now?”

Time for adult screening:

“Remember when we talked about some tools you can do to explore your feelings, moods, and relationships? It’s time to complete the tool that (explores your mood and feelings, name tool here). It’s up to you how we do the tool and if we do the tool at all. This tool is one important way to acknowledge your own well-being and mental health needs so you can continue to support your children’s social and emotional needs. We have several different choices for how we can complete this tool. I can send it to you to review ahead of time and then, to support you in the process, we can complete it together on our next call. Or you can complete it on a secure survey link

and then we can discuss the results on our next call. How would you like to do this tool? And what questions might you have for me about it?”

If a parent’s behavioral health screening indicates a concern, consider these options:

- If the individual or family is in crisis, contact 911 or your state’s child abuse prevention agency for crisis support as needed. Follow your agency’s procedures for crisis intervention to ensure your safety and the safety of the family.
- If the family or individual is not in crisis, encourage the family to contact the individual’s healthcare provider. Many healthcare providers are offering virtual visits during this time. Healthcare providers are an important partner in making referrals for behavioral health concerns.
- Provide a referral to a mental health or substance abuse counselor or to a domestic violence shelter, whichever is most appropriate.
- After the referral, continue to offer support and resources for mindfulness, stress management and the safety of all family members while they are waiting for follow up from the referrals.

Resources

Resources for Adult Screening for Behavioral Health Concerns

Community Mapping:

- [211](#) - 211 is a free, confidential referral and information helpline and website that connects people of all ages and from all communities to the essential

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health and human services they need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 211 can be accessed by phone or computer. A toll-free call to 211 connects you to a community resource specialist in your area who can put you in touch with local organizations that provide critical services that can improve—and save—lives.

- [Community Mapping Tool](#) Ask - What are changes to your services during COVID-19? (hours of operation, service delivery methods, referral procedures, eligibility requirements, etc.)

Mental Health:

- National Institute for Children’s Health Quality: [Maternal Depression](#)
- National Council for Behavioral Health: Mental Health First Aid: [Best Practices for Telehealth During COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Corona Virus Disease (2019 (COVID-19): [Stress and Coping](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [COVID19 Resource and Information Guide](#)
- Mental Health America: [Mental Health and COVID-19 – Information and Resources](#)
- Northwestern [Mothers and Babies Program](#)©: An evidence-based program that is an effective intervention for the prevention of postpartum depression. Training is needed to begin implementing Mothers & Babies. Site includes resources for COVID-19 during pregnancy and after delivery.
- Mindwise Innovations: [Take a Behavioral Health Screening Online](#)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse: [NIDA](#)

[Launches Two Brief Online Validated Adolescent Substance Use Screening Tools](#)

Substance Abuse:

- National Institute on Drug Abuse: [NIDA Launches Two Brief Online Validated Adolescent Substance Use Screening Tools](#)

Interpersonal Violence:

- Futures Without Violence: [Information on COVID-19 for Survivors, Communities and DV/SA Programs](#)
- National Network to End Domestic Violence: [Resources on the Response to the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Beyond the Pill: [Best Practices and Resources for Contraception During COVID 19](#) – See “Screening for Family/Intimate Partner Violence with Telehealth”

Supporting Families:

- SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions: [Motivational Interviewing](#)
- Motivational Interviewing: [Home Visit - Video](#)
- Child Trends: Coaching to change adult behavior: What can home visiting and early education learn from each other? – [Blog Post](#)

Hotlines and Chatlines for Behavioral Health Concerns:

When providing families with hotline resources, keep in mind that they can be helpful, but they’re not a substitute for a referral to mental health, substance use or domestic violence professional. You may want to offer the most appropriate hotline resource to a person in case they need help

when you're not available, but you should always connect the individual or family to a professional who can provide assessment, diagnosis and ongoing support.

We recommend that you do NOT share this list with families, but instead provide them only with the appropriate resources. As always, if the situation is potentially life-threatening, get immediate emergency assistance by calling **911**, available 24 hours a day. If you are calling about a psychiatric emergency, it is important to notify the operator that it is a psychiatric emergency and ask for police officers trained in crisis intervention or trained to assist people experiencing a psychiatric emergency.

We also recommend that you contact the selected resource yourself prior to sharing it with a family, to ensure that it's appropriate for the individual or family and that it's currently available.

- Visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) or call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) and TTY 1-800-787-3224. Trained expert advocates are available 24/7 to provide confidential support to anyone experiencing domestic violence or seeking resources and information. Available in Spanish and other languages.
- Visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [Live Online Chat to speak with a trained crisis counselor 24/7](#).
- Substance Use and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) [Helpline](#) website and Treatment Referral Helpline, 1-877-SAMHSA7 (1-877-4727) for general information on mental health and help to locate treatment services in your area. Speak to a live person, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.

- Email the [NAMI Helpline](#) or call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. EST. NAMI is a free, nationwide peer-supported service providing information, resource referrals and support to people living with mental health conditions, their family members, mental health providers and the public. They are trained to help identify the best resource options for individual concerns. The NAMI Helpline is not a hotline, crisis line or suicide prevention line.
- Call the [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#), 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) to connect with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area that offers access to free services.

Online Hotlines - For individuals who feel more comfortable using text-based support for depression:

- [NAMI Crisis Text Line](#): Text CONNECT to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor to receive free, 24/7 support via text message.
- [IMALIVE.org](#): Click the chat box to be connected to a volunteer.
- [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#): Click the chat inbox to speak to a helpline representative.
- [National Sexual Assault Online Hotline](#): Crisis chat support is available for free, 24/7.

Youth Hotlines for Adolescents:

- [Trevor Project Lifeline](#): 1-866-488-7386
- [Child Help USA Hotline](#): 1-800-422-4453
- [Boys and Girls Town National Hotline](#): 1-800-448-3000



Parents as Teachers Parent Kit

A Parent Kit is a collection of parent–child activity materials assembled to ensure all parents in the program have access to the key materials needed to complete a child development screening throughout the duration of family enrollment. A secondary objective is to highlight the importance of parent–child interaction within the visit.

Parent kit materials can be gathered by a parent or provided by a program. When designing a parent kit ask yourself...

What materials might be in the family's home? What materials might not be available in the family's home? What materials are appropriate for infants? What materials are appropriate for toddlers? What materials are appropriate for preschoolers? What materials

might prompt a parent and child's curiosity to engage in parent–child interaction?

For example:

The Parents as Teachers @ USC Telehealth parent activity kit pictured below (see bottom left) was packaged in a 12 x 12 x 9-inch white box. Each parent kit had two colorful identifying stickers (see left) placed on the outside of the box. A kit was mailed to parents after 2 completed personal visits. The average postage was \$15.00 per box. The average cost of materials was \$50.00. Based on family feedback, the inventory of materials was narrowed down to the list below.



Welcome to Parents as Teachers @ USC Telehealth!

This is your Activity Kit for your personal visits with your parent educator. Please keep close by when you log in to meet your parent educator. We are so happy to have the opportunity to work with you and your family.



Parents as Teachers @ USC Telehealth

- Crayons or Markers
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Shoelaces
- Blocks
- Fuzzy balls (pom pom)
- Small plastic jar
- Books: Concept, Lift n Flap, Bilingual,
- Box
- Tennis balls
- Big Buttons
- Knob puzzle
- Interlocking puzzle
- Large plastic jar
- Beach balls
- Blanket



The information provided in this document is based on the research and findings of the collaborative initiative between Parents as Teachers National Center and the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work Telehealth Clinic. The virtual service delivery demonstration, conducted by Dorian Traube, PhD, at the University of Southern California and staff from Parents as Teachers National Center, served seven communities in California and Missouri.