

Making Monitoring Family Friendly

The framework for monitoring activities in the Infant Toddler Program has been established through the use of the **Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)**, the **Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)**, the **Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)** and other recommended procedures. Flexibility to meet unique individual family needs is built into monitoring activities. Family friendly practices may enhance the activity for the families and increase the likelihood that the questionnaires will be returned and the answers will be reliable and valid.

Clinical judgment is used to determine the level of professional involvement with families as they are enrolled in monitoring activities. Some families may need little assistance to complete and return the questionnaires. Others may need more personal attention and support.

All parents/guardians should be provided with some basic information about how to complete the questionnaires. Approach the activity as a partnership with the family, reaching an agreement to participate and follow through. Sample questions on the questionnaires may be reviewed and discussed as an introduction to monitoring activities. Emphasize that the child is not expected to succeed on all the tasks contained in the questionnaire. Be available by phone or in person to answer questions as the parent completes the questionnaire.

Factors to be considered in assessing the need for professional involvement in the implementation of monitoring can include the family's socioeconomic status, their mental and emotional health, reading abilities, and the child's characteristics. Telephone calls or home visits may be needed to assist the parent with completing the questionnaire. Feedback calls to all families may be provided even when scores on the questionnaire indicate normal development. Families may have questions or concerns about the results or about other aspects of development such as behavior. This call can also serve to alert the family about when to expect the next questionnaire.

Making monitoring "family friendly" may take place in many ways. By using sound clinical judgment and creativity, families are supported and encouraged to participate in monitoring at a level which is individual to their needs. Monitoring can be used to provide information and promote interest in their child's growth and development. It is a non-threatening link to other resources and services in the community. Monitoring can be a gratifying and positive learning experience for both the professional and the family.