

Emerge



A Child's Place

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How to Conduct Surveillance for Speech & Language Disorders



Bonnie Hacker, OT
Founder / Director

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) currently calls for pediatricians and family practitioners to practice surveillance for developmental delay during all well-child visits. By surveillance, they mean the process of recognizing children who may be at risk. When surveillance (including parental concern) identifies a risk, practitioners should conduct a screening in addition to the regularly scheduled screenings. In as much as the clinical detection rates of developmental delay remain below the estimated population prevalence, the AAP suggests that greater attention toward surveillance and screening should result in more timely identification of disorders.¹

Experts have suggested many factors for inclusion in speech and language disorder (SLD) surveillance criteria. Listed below are the risk factors most consistently verified by published research.

- **Family history** of SLD or learning disorders ranks as the most consistently associated risk.²⁻⁶
- SLD is three to four times more common in **males** than in females.^{2,3,5}

Other risk factors verified to correlate with speech and language disorders include:

- Childhood illness^{7,8}
- Premature birth^{9,10}
- Low birth weight^{9,10}
- Born late in the family birth order⁵
- Older parents³
- Younger mother⁶

SLD surveillance and referral can be appropriate for children as young as 18 months. Multiple studies have shown SLD evaluation methods to have acceptable specificity and sensitivity for very young children.¹¹⁻¹⁹ The preponderance of randomized, controlled trials - more than 23 - have shown various methods of speech therapy to be effective at improving expressive language, receptive auditory comprehension, lexical acquisition, and phonology in preschoolers.^{20,21}

When screening for SLD produces positive or concerning results, a full developmental evaluation is indicated. If your practice or facility does not conduct full developmental evaluations for SLD, please tell parents about Emerge - A Child's Place, where speech therapists specializing in pediatrics conduct thorough evaluations. When evaluations identify disordered speech or language, also look to Emerge for specialized pediatric speech therapy. The diagnosis of a specific developmental disorder is not necessary for an early intervention referral to be made.

**Please tell parents about Emerge - A Child's Place
Believing in a Child's Potential to Flourish**



Affordable Care at Emerge - A Child's Place

Many parents find that insurance coverage for pediatric occupational or speech therapy is often limited. In these cases, Emerge has even more to offer in addition to uncompromising quality of care and excellent facilities. The rates at Emerge are designed with the knowledge that many families pay for these services from private funds. Even though the quality of care at Emerge is at the highest levels, you will find the fees at Emerge to be the most affordable.



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