

# Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening

## CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

### C&TC Requirements

#### General

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) screening is recommended for C&TC visits at 18 and 24 months of age or whenever a concern is identified.

ASD can be reliably diagnosed by 24 months of age (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Do not wait and see. Refer for further evaluation and intervention services when screening identifies potential developmental issues or if a parent or caregiver expresses concern.

#### Personnel

Screening personnel qualifications are instrument-specific; refer to each instrument's instruction manual for more information.

#### Documentation

Screening documentation must include the name of the screening instrument(s) used, score(s), and screening result-specific anticipatory guidance provided to the parent or caregiver. For atypical screening results, documentation must include a plan of care and appropriate referrals for evaluation and intervention.

For documentation examples, refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms \(mn.gov/dhs\)](https://mn.gov/dhs).

### Procedure

The [Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Revised \(M-CHAT-R/F\) \(mchatscreen.com\)](https://mchatscreen.com) is a commonly used ASD-specific standardized screening instrument. Follow the scoring instructions to determine whether the follow-up interview and referral are needed.

### Referral and Management

Review the screening results with the child's parent or caregiver. Prompt referral, evaluation, and treatment for concerns raised by screening or the parent can improve a child's long-term outcomes and developmental path (Hyman, 2020). Children with positive concerns for ASD should receive all the following evaluations.

### Comprehensive Medical Evaluation

Determine eligibility and medical necessity for early intervention services. Utilize the [Referral Form \(surveys.dhs.state.mn.us\)](https://surveys.dhs.state.mn.us) to help connect families with intensive behavioral and developmental intervention service.

### Educational Evaluation

Refer either directly to the local school district or through [Help Me Grow \(HelpMeGrowMN.org\)](https://helpmefromn.org) as soon as concerns are identified.

## Mental Health Evaluation

A qualified early childhood mental health professional can support families and young children with social-emotional concerns and provide a comprehensive evaluation for ASD, trauma, and more. Refer to the [map of Early Childhood Mental Health services by county \(dhs.state.mn.us\)](#) to find local providers.

## Follow-Up

Establish a process for follow-up with the family after referral for appropriate and effective services. With the parent’s permission, communicate and coordinate with other professionals. Close the loop by documenting referral results.

## Importance of ASD Screening

1 in 36 eight-year-old children in Minnesota and 1 in 44 nationally have an ASD diagnosis (University of Minnesota, 2023).

## Professional Recommendations

### American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends universal, standardized ASD-specific screening at 18 and 24 months of age (Hyman, 2020).

## Resources

### Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(dhs.state.mn.us\)](#)

- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(dhs.state.mn.us\)](#)
- [Minnesota Autism Resource Portal \(mn.gov/autism\)](#)

## Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(www.health.state.mn.us\)](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder \(health.state.mn.us\)](#)

## Other

- [Learn the Signs. Act Early. \(cdc.gov\)](#)

## References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Screening and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Retrieved from Autism Screening Disorder (ASD): [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/screening.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/screening.html)
- Hyman, S. L. (2020). Identification, Evaluation, and Management of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Pediatrics*, 145(1). doi:doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-3447
- University of Minnesota. (2023). *MN-ADDM*. Retrieved from Minnesota-Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (MN-ADDM): [www.addm.umn.edu/](http://www.addm.umn.edu/)

## For More Information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email [health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us](mailto:health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us).

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