

## 3 Steps for a Concerned Parent

### 1 Primary Care Physician (PCP)

Discuss your concerns with your child's PCP. Your child's PCP will perform an initial evaluation to determine if your child is meeting age appropriate milestones.

### 2 Help Me Grow or School District Screening

You may be eligible to receive a free screening and/or services from Help Me Grow or your child's public school district. For contact information, please refer to the back cover of this brochure. The steps for obtaining a school district screening are available online at the Ohio Department of Education or by calling (877) 644-6338. It is also available at [connectingforkids.org/childtypical](http://connectingforkids.org/childtypical).

### 3 Private Evaluation

Your child's PCP may refer you for a private evaluation with a psychologist, counselor, speech-language pathologist, or occupational therapist. Your insurance company may or may not cover the cost of these evaluations and/or services. We recommend that you check with your insurance company before your appointment.

## Who do I call for a Help Me Grow or school district screening and/or services?

If you and your PCP are concerned about your child's development, you should contact an assessment organization based on the age of your child and where you live. Your child may be eligible for services from these organizations.

### Birth to 35 months: Help Me Grow

- Cuyahoga County Help Me Grow (216) 698-7500
- Lorain County Help Me Grow (440) 284-4443

### Three to Five years: Local School District

- Avon: Soaring Little Eagles Program (440) 934-4246
- Avon Lake: LEAPS Program (440) 930-8226
- Bay Village: SEED Program (440) 617-7322
- Fairview Park: Early Education Center (440) 331-5500 ext. 1124
- Rocky River: Pupil Services Department (440) 356-6006
- Lakewood: Early Childhood Program (216) 529-4214
- North Olmsted: Pine Preschool (440) 779-3536
- North Ridgeville: Early Childhood Learning Center at Fields-Sweet School (440) 353-1184
- Olmsted Falls: Center Based Preschool Program (440) 427-6361
- Westlake: Early Childhood Education (440) 835-6309

### 5 years or older

Please refer to our brochure for school-aged children.

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Connecting for Kids

# Empower the Parent: Birth to Five Years

Concerned about your child's development?  
Information and resources to help your child.



(440) 250-5563 | [connectingforkids.org](http://connectingforkids.org)  
A nonprofit organization serving Cleveland's west side

## Who can help me?



### Connecting for Kids

Connecting for Kids' mission is to educate and support families with questions or concerns about their child's development.

Whether your child has a formal diagnosis or if you are just questioning whether his or her development is typical compared to same-aged peers, Connecting for Kids can help. We can guide you through the process of evaluation and setting up a service plan for your child.

(440) 250-5563  
connectingforkids.org



Milestones Autism Organization is dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. No question is too big or too small. Call our office

for answers and knowledgeable advice. Find help planning, preparing and prioritizing to meet your child's short and long-term needs.

(216) 464-7600  
milestones.org



The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) advocates for parent and family support services. OCECD is dedicated to insuring that every child

with a disability, ages birth through 26 years, is provided a free, appropriate public education.

(800) 374-2806  
ocecd.org

### Don't "wait and see."

Children's skills can change and/or develop significantly within six months or less. A delay or disorder in one area of development can and often does impact other areas of development. For example, a speech delay could cause a delay in social skills as well. Research has demonstrated the extreme effectiveness of early intervention and if your child does not just "grow out of it" then critical intervention time may have been lost.

### Can a counselor help our family?

Even families of toddlers and preschoolers can greatly benefit from counseling services. Counselors will work with the parent to develop practical, real-world solutions for the home or work with the child to encourage expression and interaction in therapy. Such treatment can promote positive change in the child's mood, behavior, and psychological functioning.

### Can a psychologist help our family?

Often a child will present symptoms such as anxiety or inattention, but the underlying diagnosis may be ADHD, ASD or an anxiety disorder, among others. Psychologists can work with your child and family to diagnose the underlying issue and develop an appropriate and tailored behavior plan to improve your child's social and emotional skills and behavior.

### Can a speech-language pathologist help our family?

Speech-language pathologists work on more than just articulation and grammar. They can help with multiple areas of communication including social skills (inviting children to play, turn taking, etc.) and expressive language. By teaching children to communicate their feelings and wants, tantrums may be reduced.

"I never knew my school district would give free speech therapy to my three-year-old!"

"I still can't believe that I took a four-year-old to a counselor! But she helped me to create a behavior plan that really works."

"I thought only children with autism had sensory issues!"

### Can an occupational therapist help our family?

Some children may appear anxious, angry, inattentive, withdrawn and/or the child might "meltdown" frequently because their sensory system is not functioning properly. A child's sensory system takes in sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and movement input from their environment. When a child's body over or under registers that input, the child can benefit from an occupational therapist (OT) who is trained in sensory integration. An OT can also help your child with feeding issues (picky eater), motor planning/praxis (clumsy child), fine motor skills (prewriting, dressing) and perceptual skills (puzzles, blocks).

### You're not alone

We know what it's like to worry about a child. Every child is unique and special and they all grow and develop at their own pace. Some children just need a little extra time to meet certain milestones and yours may be one of them. However, if your child's development or behavior seems different than other children the same age, don't assume your child will outgrow it. Remember, you are your child's best advocate and early intervention can be highly effective.

"My mother-in-law told me he would outgrow it. I am so glad I didn't wait to see if he would."